Diptych from the series 895 Marlborough Avenue, Riverside, California
Justin Lubliner '05
Alumni show featuring: Natessa Amin '06 (painting), Meredith Habermann '04 (ceramics), Hannah Kirkpatrick '07 (glass), Henry Kozinski '07 (film) and Justin Lubliner '05 (photography)
May 14–June 10 – The Romano Gallery
Headmaster Chan Hardwick discusses one of Blair’s greatest strengths: the quality, depth and leadership continuity of the Board of Trustees.

History teacher Hans Doerr is Blair’s only faculty member to have served in Teach For America, a program that places young educators in disadvantaged schools. He addressed the Blair community at Thursday Chapel, poignantly contrasting his teaching experiences in Detroit and at Blair.

In January, the Society of Skeptics welcomed a panel of young Blair alumni eager to discuss their careers and the impact that Blair had on their paths to success.

While all Blair students apply to college, the experience of the admission process is unique to each individual. In January, four seniors—in the homestretch of this rite of passage—shared their perspectives on the college admission process and candidly reflected on lessons they learned.
After an unusually mild winter in northwest New Jersey, spring arrived and transformed the campus with a mixture of green and pink foliage. The warmer weather brought students out of the dorms and onto Blair’s fields, courts, and terraces. Photos by Vickers & Beechler.
Having spent a good deal of time over the past several years pondering the role and value of mission statements, especially educational mission statements, I was quite curious to see what the newest, for-profit high school would say about itself to the world. When Nancy Van Deusen, the wife of Blair Trustee Hobart Van Deusen ’54, sent this mission statement from Avenues along (see above), it was hard not to be amazed. The school is the latest brainchild of educational entrepreneur Chris Whittle, he of Channel One fame, and the venture has enlisted the former president of Yale and headmasters of Hotchkiss and Exeter, the latter two whom I know. It is clear that the stated mission is essentially to create gods and goddesses of mortal adolescent young men and women, and all for a bit less than $40,000 a year—a bargain by any measure. Yet, even so, with the tone suggesting that student success is assured, one would think that a for-profit school might allow that part of their mission to make money for their investors. By sticking to what they perceive as traditional full-blown, idealistic educational rhetoric, Avenues clearly believes it is staking out the higher ground, even as it begins an ascent from ground level up the path that traditional independent schools have been on for hundreds of years.

In truth, successful independent schools fall into two camps—faculty-centered and student-centered. Of course, most schools are a kind of hybrid of both, but in the end, schools have a tendency toward one sort or the other. In my experience, schools that use the kind of rhetoric that Avenues has employed are so out of touch with adolescent learning and growth that even before opening, it seems the school must be faculty-centered—that is, it espouses a culture in which faculty spend lots of time planning what they are going to achieve rather than focusing some of their time on their adolescent students’ growth in a demanding and complicated world. In that regard, we can envision a group of earnest adults wordsmithing their most wonderful hopes, commercial or otherwise, without much of a tether to the reality of daily life in an adolescent educational community. That is why Blair rejected such an adult/educational philosophy process when the School revised our mission statement two years ago.

The creation of the Blair mission statement included faculty, Trustees, students and parents—all engaged in drafting straightforward principles that focused on the strengths of our School, the values of our community and the clarification of our goals. Nowhere in the Seven Principles that Define a Blair Education do we describe the perfect boy or girl—the apotheosis of the Blair student—but we clearly explain our values and how those values fit into life at Blair and the lives of our graduates going forward. It is not a modest mission, nor is it a lofty projection of future immortality, but it is pragmatic, ambitious and attainable. Finally, our mission is not arrogant—“transcend the ordinary,” indeed. The Avenues mission statement does not define “ordinary,” but if you have to ask, you cannot afford the tuition.

So what are we to make of this progressive for-profit entry into the elite primary and secondary education field? As a day school, Avenues is hoping to take advantage of the undersupply of good New York City day schools, and apparently with an ambitious plan to do the same thing in urban settings around the world. There is nothing wrong with that. In fact, as a rule, I would look with both interest and open-minded neutrality on this effort to create such a school. However, having read the mission statement, I am certain Avenues will fail, not perhaps at making money, or even at being a reputable high school, but at fulfilling an absurd description of human life. Perhaps they are polishing the pristine halls of Avenues at this moment. Do they realize that the school walls will soon reflect the reality of daily life, their luster lost in the active demands of educating today’s boys and girls?

At the heart of any great educational enterprise is the successful, supportive and consistent communication between a teacher and a student, a communication that has little connection with the empty rhetoric of education-speak idealism. There is no evidence from its mission statement that Avenues, or its founders, really understand that.
He phone call would sometimes come in the middle of the night, or more often I might walk into my office and a note on my keyboard would read: “Dave Low needs to see you.” The worst of these moments is always on a trip away from School, in the middle of wherever—an airport, a meeting, a different time zone—when the curt “need to talk” message appears in my e-mail. All businesses and organizations have their periodic crises and urgent issues, but even so, boarding schools seem especially prone to the unexpected and usually human event, a moment in the adolescent world when a school’s reaction defines the values and philosophy of the community. The arising issue is rarely important beyond the school walls (though, in recent years, social media is a euphemism for rumor mill), but within the Blair world, the issue is invariably very important, if only to a small group of people. And when these times occur, the question has to be considered: “When do we tell the Board?”

The good news is that most events at Blair do not mean calling the Chairman or informing the Board of Trustees about a thorny situation until the details are clear and an executive summary can be rendered. Yet it is that intersection between an event and the decisions necessary to manage the outcome that most people believe represents the relationship between board governance and school administration. Here, I seek to provide insight into the real workings of Blair’s Board of Trustees, which happily does not include much crisis management, even as the Trustees are always there to help.

One of Blair’s greatest strengths is the quality, depth and continuity of the leadership of our Board of Trustees. During the 1970s, Board Chairman Dr. J. Brooks Hoffman ’36 drove regularly from Connecticut to Blairstown—before the completion of Rt. 287—to ensure the School was able to meet its payroll, such were the financial challenges facing Blair at that time. In the ’80s and ’90s, Chairman Emeritus John C. Bogle ’47 devoted his considerable energy and commitment to establishing his alma mater, once again, as one of the nation’s great independent boarding schools. This work was carried on, with similar dedication, over the past decade by Chairman William R. Timken ’53, who traveled tirelessly between Blair and his home in California, and current Chairman James P. Jenkins ’66. The leadership of these four Chairmen, spanning 50 years, is perhaps some of the best, most continuous leadership enjoyed by any independent school. Most significant to me, as Headmaster, is that all four men remain involved, invested and committed to Blair Academy—and they are joined by a score of other equally committed and long-serving Trustees.

Over those past 50 years, the time devoted to “governance” by the Board of Trustees has increased steadily. What used to

“One of Blair’s greatest strengths is the quality, depth and continuity of the leadership of our Board of Trustees.”
require a half-day of meetings three times a year has evolved into two days of meetings in the fall, winter and spring, supplemented by numerous committee meetings in between. Governing the School today is a more complex job due to additions to the campus, growth in the endowment and the expansion of Blair’s programs. Furthermore, the significant sums of money now being raised, invested and expended require careful planning and prudent oversight.

What issues are addressed during a typical Board weekend on campus? In addition to setting tuition and the annual budget, discussing campus and facility projects, and overseeing the investment of the endowment, Trustees also meet regularly with students and faculty on various topics, everything from social issues (such as gender equity or dorm life) to academic programs (such as college counseling or the impact of technology). Over the past year, Board meetings have focused frequently on issues related to strategic planning, and this winter’s meeting included an extensive plenary session on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) education as Trustees considered the need to add more space to Bogle Hall.

Beyond working with the administration and faculty to guide the School, Trustees have three other major responsibilities: choosing and hiring the head of school; managing the School’s finances; and ensuring that the values and mission of the School are preserved and supported. Much of that is thankless, selfless work—no shares of stock, no remuneration, no exotic locations (unless you count Blairstown in that category) or posh hotels (the third floor of Sharpe House recently had a shower upgrade)—along with plenty of non-educational discussions about sewer plants, steam lines, planned giving and the annual audit. There is always, however, an understanding that the work of governance is critical to the success of the School and, by virtue of that success, the promotion of the values that underscore our work with students.

To clarify the responsibilities of trusteeship at Blair, the School’s philosophy in four discreet areas is illustrated below:

**Service:** The Trustees at Blair are very good at making the good of the School their top priority. While it is important for any well-functioning group to have debate, competing ideas and strategies, and even constructive questioning and challenging of the status quo, the Blair Board remains unified in working toward consensus and agreement. Moreover, once decisions are made and the work is divided up, Trustees are unfailingly willing to meet, travel, do homework, locate resources, fundraise and, in a variety of critical ways, put the necessary effort into the successful completion of a project or task.

**Collegiality and Communication:** A board of trustees is many things, but it is also a team that must work together. After the first criteria of service is met, the next critical requirements are the ability to work well with others, to disagree respectfully, to seek compromise or creative options when disagreement does occur, to respect the will of the majority and—at the end of the day—to enjoy the work, the
relationships and the extraordinary responsibility of governing Blair. The best Trustees—beyond their commitment, philanthropy and expertise—also possess the ability to communicate well within the boardroom and to the many constituents Blair serves.

**Balance and Perspective:** The size of the Board of Trustees is limited to 33 active members, including three members of the Presbytery. Therefore, the Governance Committee of the Board seeks to solicit membership in such a way that various constituencies are represented—alumni, parents and past parents. There is also a desire to have diversity in those ranks, so the Board looks for alumni members from various decades, alumni with international backgrounds and parents of both boys and girls. Cultural, religious, gender and racial diversity are also sought, and the Governance Committee has to weigh a desire for balance with a need for expertise, service, capacity for philanthropy and outside experience. In that regard, many current Blair Board members serve on other boards, giving them perspective and experience when serving Blair.

**Roles and Boundaries:** One of the challenges every board faces is determining its proper role with regard to the internal management of a school. The most obvious challenge is the parent trustee whose child faces a problem, which requires the parent, but not the trustee, to be involved. In my experience at Blair, Trustee parents are remarkably aware of which “hat” to wear, and when, in such situations. Schools also worry about trustees who attempt to micromanage or become so close to individual faculty members as to lose perspective. At Blair, we have been fortunate to avoid those challenges, but I certainly know of schools where that is not the case.

The Blair Board of Trustees is an especially strong, responsive, talented and generous group of individuals who unselfishly serve the School’s mission. In my tenure as Headmaster, I have developed deep respect for both the integrity and the independence of these men and women. They make the faculty and me better at our jobs. They support and care for students. They provide many of the resources required to ensure the progress of the institution. Ultimately, the traditions of outstanding leadership and loyal service that characterize Blair’s Board of Trustees promise that the School’s future rests in capable hands. And the trust between Head and Board, so critical to a healthy and successful school, means that I, as well as future headmasters, can lead with confidence, even when there is an urgent message waiting at the end of a trip.
Committee Chairs of the Blair Academy Board of Trustees

Each committee of the Blair Academy Board of Trustees has specific responsibilities associated with the governance of the School, and Committee Chairs devote significant time and expertise to fulfilling these responsibilities, working closely with fellow Trustees and School administrators. Here, we briefly introduce our Board Committee Chairs and share their answers to the question: Why do you serve on the Blair Board of Trustees?

MR. JAMES P. JENKINS ’66
Chairman of the Board

Occupation: Managing Director, King Street Capital Management, L.P., New York City
Education: Stanford University, BA in English, MBA in finance
Year elected to the Board: 1992

Interesting fact: Jim’s father, George P. Jenkins ’32, former chairman of Metropolitan Life, served as Board Chairman from 1978–86.

Why I Serve: “I followed in my father’s footsteps coming to Blair, and it was a transforming experience that led to my undergraduate and graduate education at Stanford and career on Wall Street. For this, I will always be incredibly grateful. When offered the opportunity to join the Board, I felt I had some good skills, financial and otherwise, that I could use to play a role in the School’s operations and future. As a former chairman of the Budget Committee and a member of the Investment Committee, I felt I could help explain to other Board members the policies and procedures we utilize at Blair to meet our goals. As Board Chairman, I feel even more strongly that committee heads should explain their activities, conclusions and decisions and receive feedback from other Board members along the way. Everyone on the Board has a reason for being there and has a unique contribution to make. It is my job to create an environment where each member’s skills and resources can be utilized for the School’s best benefit.”

James P. Jenkins ’66

MS. ANNE E. CRAMER ’75
Chair, Governance Committee

Occupation: Attorney (health and employment law), Board member and Shareholder; Primmer, Piper, Eggleston & Cramer, PC, Burlington, Vt.
Education: Dartmouth College, BA in geography/urban studies; University of Wisconsin, JD
Year elected to the Board: 1992 (served through 1998); re-elected in 1998

Interesting fact: The Board’s longest-serving alumna, Anne is an accomplished outdoorswoman—often found hiking, biking and skiing in Vermont and in far-off places like Chile or British Columbia.

Why I Serve: “Very simply, I was honored to be asked to serve, as I love Blair and want to do whatever I can to ensure that Blair continues to provide students the great educational experience and opportunities I was given so many years ago. The extraordinary faculty, community and environment of Blair launched me on my path to an Ivy League education and to an excellent life and career. The Seven Principles that Define a Blair Education, developed and adopted as part of Blair’s strategic plan, demonstrate the Board’s commitment to maintaining and enhancing the educational experience that I enjoyed. In chairing the Governance Committee, it has been my priority and my challenge to include more women and greater diversity in the membership of the Board. I am proud to be a part of such a thoughtful and generous group of individuals. It has been rewarding to come back to Blair and play a small part in the School’s dynamic community.”
Mr. Dominick J. Romano ’74, P’04 ’07 ’10
Vice Chairman of the Board & Chairman of the Budget Committee

Occupation: Vice President and COO, RoNetco Supermarkets, Inc., northwest N.J.
Education: Fairleigh Dickinson University
Year elected to the Board: 2002
Interesting fact: DJ has been active on the boards of several significant non-profit organizations in northwest New Jersey.

Why I Serve: “I have enjoyed my service on the Blair Board of Trustees both as an alumnus and a parent. When I was elected to the Board in 2002, I was especially interested to learn more about the School that my children were then attending, as Blair had changed so much since my own days as a student. My goal as a Trustee is to keep the School financially sound for the future, and I’ve become increasingly involved in the work necessary to accomplish this goal. I’ve seen the dynamics of the Board change over my years of service—we now have a much more involved committee structure, giving each Board member the opportunity to be more active, to share ideas and work together through discussion and compromise. Through my efforts and experience, I hope to add value to the ongoing work of the Board.”

Mrs. Stacey Willits McConnell P’05 ’07 ’10 ’12
Chair, Education & School Life Committee

Occupation: Attorney (estate planning), Lamb McErlane, PC, Bryn Mawr, Pa.
Education: Duke University, BA;
Stetson University College of Law, JD;
Boston University School of Law,
LLM in taxation
Year elected to the Board: 2005
Interesting fact: Stacey serves on the board of the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia and is a committed blood donor, having given more than 120 times.

Why I Serve: “Four of my children have attended Blair; three have graduated, one is a senior. I was asked to serve when my second child was a sophomore, and I continue to serve. Before that time, I had been impressed by how well the faculty knew my children and by the quality of instruction my children were receiving. When I had the opportunity to join the Board, I saw ‘behind the scenes’ how this knowledge of each child came about and how top-quality faculty were recruited, hired and trained on an ongoing basis. This view impressed me even more. I continue to marvel at the process behind a Blair education and the closeness of the community that exists at Blair. It is a privilege to serve on the Education and School Life Committee and to be a part of the important work of bringing Blair’s teachers and students together with the Trustees.”
MR. KEVIN L. CLAYTON P’03 ’09
Chair, Investment Committee

Occupation: Principal, Oaktree Capital Management, LP, New York City
Education: Lehigh University, BA; St. Joseph’s University, MBA
Year elected to the Board: 2008
Interesting fact: Kevin is also a Corporate Trustee at Lehigh University, where he serves as chair of the Advancement Committee and a member of the Endowment Fund Investment Committee.

Why I Serve: “The opportunity to serve on the Blair Board of Trustees is an honor and a privilege. As parents of two graduates, my wife and I have seen firsthand the comprehensive and valuable learning experience Blair provides. I strongly believe it is important to ‘give back’ so that present and future generations of Blair students, faculty, staff, parents and alumni can have the resources necessary to make Blair an even greater institution. It is very rewarding to be a member of a Board that will continue to generate outstanding results because of a shared passion, gratitude and advancing vision for the future of Blair Academy.”

DR. MARK D. MOON ’84
Chair, Advancement Committee

Occupation: Section Head, Executive and International Health, Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville, Fla.
Education: Kenyon College, AB in political science; Wright State University, MD; Mayo Clinic College of Medicine
Year elected to the Board: 2005
Interesting fact: While continuing in his full-time job as Section Head of Executive Health at the Mayo Clinic, Mark is pursuing an MS in health care delivery science through the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College.

Why I Serve: “My service on the Board is, very simply, a matter of giving back a mere fraction of what I was given by Blair. My two years at Blair changed my life’s path, and I have reaped considerable professional and personal rewards as a result. Blair inspired in me a lifelong love of learning. Even today, at the age of 46, I continue my educational voyage in a master’s degree program at Dartmouth. I am challenged every day in my work at Mayo Clinic. I love practicing medicine and helping patients. Without Blair, none of this would have been possible. Blair was the single best educational experience of my life. I view my service as Chair of the Advancement Committee as vitally important to the future of our great School. Blair not only depends upon Blair Fund gifts to bolster critical educational programs today, but we also depend upon capital funding to enhance the School’s reputation as one of America’s premier college preparatory boarding schools.”
THE REV. DAVID G. HARVEY
Chair, Covenant Committee

**Occupation:** Minister, First Presbyterian Church, Blairstown, N.J.

**Education:** Northeast Missouri State University, BS in health and psychology; Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, MDiv

**Year elected to the Board:** 2000

**Interesting fact:** Active in the Warren County Habitat for Humanity, Dave has traveled with Blair students on Habitat for Humanity trips and has helped extensively with the School’s community service program.

**Why I Serve:** “The promise and potential a Blair student offers should come with little surprise—especially when one considers the *Seven Principles that Define a Blair Education*. Two of those principles in particular come to mind: ‘Beyond Self Is Happiness’ and ‘Outcomes Are Important.’ Being part of an institution that takes seriously the transformation of human lives is a wonderful opportunity. Blair does a fabulous job molding adolescents with much promise and potential and moving them to their next stage in life. For me, as a Trustee, the joy comes in knowing that the leadership I provide enacts decisions that build a strong foundation today so that Blair may flourish tomorrow. It is a privilege to serve the School in this capacity.”

MR. ROBERT G. SIGETY ’75
Chair, Buildings & Grounds Committee

**Occupation:** President, The Piper Group (real estate), Perkasie, Pa.

**Education:** Duke University, BA; Harvard University, MBA

**Year elected to the Board:** 2003 (served until 2009); re-elected in 2010

**Interesting fact:** Rob and his wife, Liz, an attorney, enjoy a busy, active family life with four children under the age of 15. Sailing and camping are their favorite ways to relax.

**Why I Serve:** “I serve on the Board of Trustees simply because I love the School. My brother, Neal ’76, and I both attended Blair, and our experience was very special. Afterward, I attended Duke, and later, both Neal and I attended Harvard Business School. I am proud to be a Blair graduate and to support the School. I became involved in the Board of Governors in the ’80s and was elected to the Board of Trustees in 2003. Following the untimely death of fellow Trustee Jack Turpin ’62 in 2010, I was asked to chair the Buildings and Grounds Committee. My career is in real estate development, construction and property management, so my background is well suited for this work. My pride in being a Blair graduate and serving on the Board of Trustees is steadily increasing as the School’s reputation continues to grow. I look forward to making a contribution to the School and to possibly having one or more of my four children attend in the future.”
Blair Academy Board of Trustees, 2011–2012

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New Vernon, New Jersey
Students Attend Model United Nations Conference at Columbia

From January 12-15, seventeen Blair student delegates, along with history teacher Dr. Marty Miller, traveled to Manhattan to attend the 2012 Columbia University Model United Nations. This annual four-day international affairs conference for high school students is one of the most successful Model UN experiences in the United States. According to the organization’s website, “CMUNCE is known for its original committees, intense crisis simulations, extraordinarily dedicated staff and focus on introducing its delegates to both Columbia and to New York City.”

Upon arrival, the students enjoyed a lecture by keynote speaker Anne-Marie Slaughter. Slaughter was the director of policy planning for the U.S. State Department from 2009-11. She is currently the Bert G. Kerstetter ’66 University Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University. She spoke to the Columbia MUN delegates about the role of social media, including Twitter and Facebook, and how it shaped the Arab Spring.

Current UN committee work and historical simulations were the focus of daily sessions where students from all areas of the United States discussed and debated a wide range of issues. The goal was to create resolutions to address various world problems, much like the function of the United Nations itself. The World Health Organization and the Security Council were complemented by such committees as the Arab League and the Yalta Conference 1945. Four members of the strong Blair delegation garnered individual awards: Celia Jia ’13, Brian Levinson ’14, Kyle Tierney ’13 and Caterina Gleijeses ’13.

Epidemiology Students Attend University Lecture

On November 30, epidemiology teacher Rachel Stone and five students traveled to New York City to attend the Columbia University Epidemiology Grand Rounds (CUEGR)–Howe Memorial Lecture. A prominent program on the Columbia University Medical Center campus, this monthly series hosts global leaders in epidemiology who share their ground-breaking work with Columbia’s faculty and students, as well as with visitors. Leslie Bernstein, PhD, spoke on the topic “Tackling breast cancer risk and prognosis: Can we improve our game?”

Mrs. Stone, a Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health alumna, attended the lecture with seniors (pictured, left to right): Joe Frick ’12, Ali Johnson ’12, Victoria Small ’12, Sam Beck ’12 and Elizabeth Fox ’12. She noted, “This experience gave Blair’s epidemiology students the opportunity to sit among members of the Columbia medical/public health community and hear firsthand about the connection between physical activity and a reduced risk of breast cancer. Dr. Bernstein highlighted results from case-control and cohort studies that have taken place over the past 30 years, and she addressed myriad epidemiological issues, including dose-response, biological plausibility, measures of association, recall/reporting bias and the concepts of prevention versus lowering one’s risk.”
Student Named Semi-Finalist in Siemens Competition

In October, Moo Been Chung ’14 was named a national semi-finalist in the Siemens Competition of Math, Science and Technology. The contest “reveals the brightest high school minds in contention for the nation’s most coveted teen science prize.” According to the Siemens Foundation website, an all-time record of 2,436 students registered to enter the 2011-12 Siemens Competition, with an unprecedented 1,541 projects submitted. The competition, administered by The College Board and funded by the Siemens Foundation, gives students an opportunity to achieve national recognition for science research projects that they complete in high school. Student research is judged on creativity, field knowledge, comprehensiveness, interpretation, a literature review, scientific importance, clarity of expression and presentation.

A banner from the Siemens Foundation representing Moo Been’s achievement hangs in Bogle Hall.

Freshman Awarded College Scholarship

Jonathan Nowell ’15, who attended the KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) Academy in Atlanta, Ga., before enrolling at Blair, recently received word that he is a recipient of the Doris Fisher KIPPster of the Year Award. Established in 2007 and supported by the Fisher family, the award recognizes up to six outstanding eighth-grade KIPPsters each year from across the nation with a $10,000 college scholarship. It honors students who consistently set a superlative bar for what it means to be a KIPP student. These KIPP scholars excel academically and make a difference in their communities, their schools, and the lives of their peers through their exceptional practices of leadership and character.

In addition to the $10,000 college scholarship, Jonathan’s name will be engraved on the Doris Fisher KIPPster of the Year Award trophy (created by Fisher family friend and sculptor, Beverly Pepper), currently housed at KIPP Academy Nashville, and he will receive an engraved plaque. Each KIPPster and a parent/guardian will be invited to attend KIPP School Summit to receive the award in person.

KIPP is a highly regarded charter school program that has achieved impressive results for its students due to extended school hours, Saturday classes and a school year that only includes one month off in the summer. KIPP was founded in Texas by two Teach For America alumni and has spread to all parts of the United States. Jonathan is Blair’s first KIPP scholar.

Student Receives Scholarship for Youth Football Service

David Farr ’12 will receive the Cornwall Youth Football Scholarship upon his graduation. The scholarship is given to young men and women who have volunteered their time working with youth football programs and participating in community service.
to find John Eddie Heggenstaller and help him bale hay. Or at least that’s how I remember it. That was what I wanted to do. I wanted to farm. The kids loved it. They were all sitting politely in their seats, hands crossed like I taught them. Day one and I had them in the palm of my hand. A little later, Daniella tugged on my sleeve, looked up at me with these huge Disney eyes and asked, “Well, why aren’t you a farmer?”

I didn’t really have an answer. I still don’t. I stammered some appropriate response about how I was happy and proud to be here helping her and her classmates achieve their goals. She looked at me with more pity than I thought a fourth grader could, nodded and said, “So your dreams didn’t come true.”

She should be graduating this year. I hope. By most accounts, Detroit’s graduation rate is around 25 percent. The reality is that if I were in Vegas, I wouldn’t have taken that bet.

In the spring of my senior year at college, I was halfway through an application to Carney Sandoe, a company that helps Blair hire its teachers. I was filling out some little box or essay, when I started thinking about Teach For America. I knew a little about it, and it sounded like a good thing to do—teaching in the inner city or a rural area. I filled out an application, made it through the admission process, received a little training, was put on a threatening contract for not smiling enough as a TFA Corps member, then I set off to save the world.

Teach For America is a good organization, out to do good things. Amazing things really. It exists to bridge the achievement gap between rich and poor school...
systems. And I was lucky enough to be part of it for a couple of years.

In Detroit, I was thrown in a classroom, three weeks after the start of school, with the worst fourth graders in the building, who’d had a sub babysitting them for a month. It’s a pretty standard trick, giving the new teacher the worst kids. It’s less standard meeting your class when they’ve been going to school for a month, doing whatever they want. They weren’t that bad, but my own incompetence didn’t help.

My second year, though, I was good. Sometime in March, I got the scores back and the average was a 200-percent increase in reading and 150 percent in math. Math was tough for me. For some reason, teaching kids to tell time on a clock with hands was incredibly difficult. Think about it. Fractions, subtraction, addition, mental math, it’s all there. I kept saying, “You just look at it and...”

Back to the beginning. All of the kids have their names. Even if their parents got angry at me, we kept the names. I had a little boy named Brendan [Lieutenant Kennedy]—very quiet kid. His mom, who worked in our cafeteria, was angry with me. She picked him up after school and told me he was never going to be a policeman. Brendan was right next to her and heard every word. Think about that. Nine years old, and his mother is telling him what he won’t be, what he can’t be.

But that second year, I realized that something like genius—which is a big word, a fancy word, a special word—is commonplace. Because if I have to run around a classroom and have the future Dr. Guzman or Councilor Alcantara whisper their not only correct, but often insightful, analytical, critical, empathetic answers in my ear, they are little geniuses. And if I’m one teacher, in one room, seeing that, imagine how many geniuses there must be out there.

So what’s wrong? Well, if you believe the numbers, then the zip code you grow up in and go to school in statistically determines your fate. Let me repeat that. Your zip code at birth determines your fate. Luck.

We want to be optimistic. We want to be the country where anyone can do anything. The reality is often different. I’d like to see someone tell that to Omar Gonzalez, a hell-raiser of a genius with serious problems. His dad’s a crack addict, in and out of prison. His dad was the one who taught me what crack smells like—he was smoking when I took Omar to his car. Mom is nowhere. Someone tell him that it’s his fault if he succeeds or fails. Or Aidary Roman. She stabbed a boy in the knee with a pen, so deeply it stuck through his jeans—trust me, he deserved a slap, maybe, but not a stab. I loved Aidary. A sweet girl, plus she’s a hero. Her house burned down, and when her mother wouldn’t go back in after her baby sister, she did. Nine years old, running into a burning building to save her sister. She was illiterate when she came into my class.

So these kids needed some help. I tried to give it to them. And that second year was great. The highlight of my TFA time was definitely Christmas. I read A Christmas Carol every year, and I figured I’d read it to my kiddos. I tweaked a few words here and there, changed a couple of sentences on the fly. So I read Dickens to a bunch of fourth grade kids in southwest Detroit. By the end of the book, they’d gotten in the

“I have to assume that everyone here is doing such a good job, that collectively, we can change the world. We are teaching leaders. We are coaching game-changers. We are living with advocates of social justice.”
habit of getting out of their desks and crowding around me as I did my best Mr. Brandwood for each character. Literally hanging on me, chins on my shoulders.

The trouble was that they were well-behaved. Too good. I had the “look” down and could use it. So my administration bumped me up to a fifth grade class that needed a teacher. This was in March. They’d already had five teachers, all of whom had quit. I wasn’t going to quit. I was the young and idealistic guy. The one who tutored after school because I knew I was a failure if my kids couldn’t read at the end of the day.

But I wanted to quit. The first day, I sent half of them home for suspensions, for fighting, for trying to fight me, for stabbing with pens (remember Aidary?) and a few other things. One of the fighters, José, came back the next day with a gun. As school let out, I saw him, he saw me, and all the kids that were looking at something he had, scattered. I caught a glint of metal and started running toward him. He took off, and that was last I ever saw him. He was out of the school system forever.

Every time I saw my old class, they’d come bursting out of their orderly line and give out the best hugs. I’d pretend to stagger as if they were knocking me over, smile and head back to my new class.

So that was TFA for me. I loved it. I hated it. I was often angry and dealt with it poorly, like when one of my girls confided to me that her uncle was raping her and made me promise not to tell, even though I had to and her family fell apart. It was tough. It was a struggle. And I crammed more life into those two years than any of my friends in New York or D.C. or law school did. God knows if I made a difference.
“So that was the TFA for me. I loved it. I hated it...And I crammed more life into those two years than any of my friends in New York or D.C. or law school did. God knows if I made a difference.”

TFA left Detroit. It’s the only city they’ve had to leave (although now they’re back, but only in charter schools). I stayed on in Detroit for another three years. I started in a new school with second graders, but someone found out I didn’t have the education degree, and I turned into a sub. Subbing kept me coaching in a rowing program, which I’d fallen into two years earlier. I did that for a couple of years, but it wasn’t easy.

Subbing in a city like Detroit is exactly like it sounds. You go from total investment in kids to actively not caring—they aren’t my kids. I’m not there to help. I’m there to get through the day. That’s the job. Plus, I was the bouncer, the enforcer. When kids attacked the principal, they called me. When two girls were in a fight and one pulled the other’s braid so hard her scalp tore, I was the one to break it up. But I was a walking lawsuit. I never had the special training in breaking up fights, so I would just wade in and start hitting. I ended up with a certain degree of physicality, because it was the only thing that worked. Not that physical. Subtle. Kid starts getting antsy, I stand behind him and press heavy with a bit of grip on his shoulder. Toughest kid in school wants to shake hands, I squeeze hard. One actually said, “Man, ain’t no one can take the pimp’s grip,” which I still have to make into a t-shirt.

But it was bad. I dropped the subbing my fifth year and did whatever I could to make ends meet so I could see a huge crop of talented rowers off to college.

And now I’m here. I am not ensuring that every child has the opportunity to attain an equal education. I’m here helping, hopefully, to make excellent kids even more excellent. And this is, at times, every bit as hard as Detroit was—supposedly helping the best get better.

I’d only been here for a week or two in the spring of 2010 when I realized that this doubt, the nagging guilt about this job, can creep up on me. I was watching the Blair String Trio at a School Meeting, and I thought, what can I possibly offer these kids? What do you need from me that someone else couldn’t give you? Let’s get this out in the open. Genius is commonplace at Blair. The difference between here and Detroit is that for whatever reason, your genius has survived. That magical class I had my second year? I visited them on a lunch when I was subbing in another school. Dr. Guzman was a zombie. So was Lieutenant Kennedy. Their teacher smiled and said, “They’re so well-behaved, Mr. Doerr.” The kids that read Dickens with me, and understood it, they were flat-lining. And this is common.

So why am I here? I have my reasons. One is plain luck. I had a bad run of it for a bit, looked at a rowing website, answered Ms. Guilmet’s ad for a Blair opening and that’s that. The other is that I can’t glamorize my life in Detroit. I gained weight. I had no friends. I had nothing, aside from two, nine-month blocks of teaching and three hours a day of rowing. That’s not a life. There is no toughness there worth fighting through. Sitting in my car, angrily telling myself that I don’t need what everyone else does, that I’m strong, that I can do without, is not a good thing.

Plus, I’m a big-picture person. I had a problem operating in what was obviously a broken system and not being quite the one to reform it. Not to say that I won’t go back sometime. Maybe later I’ll go back. Right, Edwidge? You can always go back.
I can’t glamorize my past. I can respect it. I can even thank those years for making me who I am today. But they’re not glamorous and probably weren’t necessary. So here I am—teaching at an elite school.

The other reason I’m here is that this place and all of you have the power to change the world in far greater ways than I did in a classroom in Detroit.

Take a moment to think about what I called Blair. Elite. Is it the broader school? Maybe. Is it your teachers? We hope so. Is it the overall experience? Again, we hope so.

Let’s go with simplicity. You’re here. Other people aren’t. Most people aren’t. In fact, very few people are in a place like this. And when you’re here no longer, you should be conscious of the gifts you’ve been given, both by this school and life. We’ll all have problems, but they should be in perspective. The kids I coached at the Detroit Boat Club were similar to a lot of you. They came from nice neighborhoods in Grosse Pointe, a very nice suburb. They were high school kids, and high school is problematic at times. But Grosse Pointe problems are usually different kinds of problems than Detroit problems, literally a few hundred yards away.

When I had kids that were doing well in school that first and second year, I’d bring them to the boathouse, slap a lifejacket on them, bundle them up in lost and found clothing, then we’d go out in my launch and coach. I had a girl named Sheila with me and told my kids the next day that Sheila used to live in the park where our boathouse was. She’d lived in a van with her parents and three siblings. They’d go to the little beach in the summer and try to wash without anyone noticing. But she loved school, and she loved learning to read.

The point is that problems are okay, but they should be contextualized. Which is why I raised my hand, high and proud, when Mrs. Crowner asked about stress last week. Sure, I get busy, I get antsy, I get snarky, I am in the history department after all, but I know that I lead an incredibly comfortable life. We all do for the most part. That’s why my hand went up.

But I struggle with that comfort. I struggle, because it feels self-indulgent. I struggle, because how can I reconcile the difficulty of teaching in Detroit with the relative ease of teaching here? How do I motivate you? Is that my job? It was easy in Michigan. Motivating the underdog is a cakewalk. They bought into what I was selling. The state test became the enemy. The essay graders were looking for them to fail.

But here? Am I here to instill a burning love of western civilization and U.S. history in you? Probably not. I’m not comfortable with the term “dorm parent” because you have parents. Plus your parents smile and love you. So, that’s out. Coaching? Hang my hat on two hours a day for the spring season? Didn’t work the last time I tried it.

Not good enough. I have to forget me. I have to assume that everyone here is doing such a good job, that collectively, we can change the world. We are teaching leaders. We are coaching game-changers. We are living with advocates of social justice. We have to be. By virtue of your birth, you will go to college. Even
you seniors, you will go somewhere. And if you don’t, work for a year, then go. But you’ll go. You are the best. You have the advantages.

Full pay or full scholarship, someone cared. Someone cared a lot. You may not always choose to remember it. My parents are here. They cared. They still do. How then, do you pass that on? What is the burden of having the advantages we do? Is there a burden at all?

I am no longer in TFA. I went to the twentieth anniversary and came back in a serious funk. Am I changing the world anymore?

I have two options. I can teach, coach, and live in a dorm and be comfortable. Or I can root around, blurt things out during meetings, and find something to struggle against. My struggle is finding a way to guarantee, with as much certainty as possible, that you will leave this place and make the world better.

I’m not Blair Buck or Ann Williams. I lack their contagious and overwhelming kindness. I’m not Buxton. No one is. I’m not Marty Miller. I can just hope that the combination of all of us, you included, is so powerful that there is no doubt in any of our minds that Blair is not just a transformational experience here but a force for change in the world.

You’ll leave. Some of you will go to Wall Street. Some of you will go to med school. Some of you may join TFA or the Peace Corps. Those of you who do, great. Give up a few years and make a difference.

What about our future Wall Streeters? Who do you think sits on the board at Teach For America? Who does Paul Farmer, founder of Partners in Health, chase down? Look at Bill Gates. A man whose company was sued for being a monopoly starts the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation with the potential to do more than most countries can in the fields of AIDS research and education.

But what about here? If you remember anything about this talk, remember that this place needs to be special. Remember that your genius survived and that it didn’t happen in a vacuum. It survived because of family, because of friends, it might have happened because of this place. You might have come in off an average experience in middle school, only to sit up a little taller in Q’s world history class. You might have decided to learn to wrestle with the best in the country.

Keep it in perspective. This can be a difficult way to live, constantly finding something to struggle against, to change. Find a way out of comfort. That’s where life is. You want the entire emotional spectrum. I’ve gotten a few questions about the run I did last weekend. I did it because it was hard. I did it because hooting and hollering, running down a stream in the rain is being alive. It was a 25-mile metaphor. It was a struggle. It was not comfortable. This place is comfortable, and it is comfortable for the noblest of reasons. It should be an incubator of greatness. But leave here and find something to fight for.

Mom and Dad, you may leave first. Seniors second.
Each January, the Society of Skeptics welcomes a panel of young Blair alumni eager to discuss their careers and the impact that Blair had on their paths to success.

Students, faculty and alumni gathered in Cowan Auditorium to hear from alumni in four very different fields, though two had overlap in their collegiate background. History teacher Dr. Marty Miller, moderator and director of the weekly Skeptics series, introduced the alumni with anecdotes from their time on the Blair campus. The four panelists praised Blair not only for preparing them for college but for providing them with “real life skills.” Current students had the chance to meet these four alumni whose career paths began at Blair and blossomed through college and afterwards. All four of them echoed the common theme that not only does “life take you where you were meant to be,” but “so does the college counseling office.”

—Stephanie Leal

Photos by David W. Coulter
Christine Mayes ’03 – ARTIST & FASHION DESIGNER

Christine Mayes graduated from Parsons the New School for Design in 2007 as a Golden Thimble winner for excellence in design with academic honors and a BFA in fashion design. She has worked for industry heavyweights such as Bill Blass, Ruffian and Thom Browne and has made great contributions to the success of these fashion houses. Under the direction of Thom Browne, she created custom garments for prominent figures such as Kanye West, Cindy Sherman, Malcolm McLaren, Michael Maharam, John Demsey and Damon Dash. Her work has been featured in four major publications, two of which have been published by Conde Nast. She also attended Columbia University during the summer of 2009 and completed post-baccalaureate MFA courses in fine art.

“We design fashion for a singular moment in time that eventually goes away, yet sometimes returns. So, mistakes in work of any kind are then positive. That way, if the work presents itself again, there will be something to improve upon or another intriguing place to take it.” — Christine Mayes ’03
After graduating from Blair in 2002, Shaun continued his education at the Stern School of Business at New York University (as did fellow Skeptics speaker Akhil Garg), majoring in economics and marketing. While at Stern, he interned/worked for Dolce & Gabbana, as well as the Ritz-Carlton New York. After graduating from Stern, he expanded his family’s existing restaurant business by opening two restaurants (Mehndi & Ming II) and a bar (SM23) in Morristown, N.J. In the fall of 2009, Shaun enrolled at the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College. Upon graduation, he took over the Mehtani Restaurant Group, including five restaurants, a bar, a banquet hall and an adult daycare center.

“So why am I telling you my story that is rarely told? First and foremost, seniors, as you deal with college applications, rejections, waitlists and deferrals, remember, nobody will ever know or care what school you got rejected from, but they will care about how well you did at the school you went to and what mark you left on that institution.” —Shaun Mehtani ’02
Akhil Garg graduated from New York University's Stern School of Business in 2006 with a bachelor of science in finance and marketing and minor in politics. While at Stern, Akhil gained exposure to a variety of areas in the financial services industry, working on the floor of the New York Mercantile Exchange (for Peter Reinhardt, husband of former Blair faculty member Jenny Reinhardt), for the accounting division of insurance provider MetLife and for the mergers and acquisitions group at Merrill Lynch. Upon graduating from Stern, Akhil joined Goldman, Sachs & Co., working in the firm's asset-backed securities finance group. Akhil is an associate focused on the financing and securitization of consumer assets. He earned his CFA charter in 2010.

“When you lose perspective and don’t have humility, you think you are master of the universe. Blair is part of your process—don’t become bigger than the process or you will fall, just like Wall Street did.” —Akhil Garg ’02
Cara Levy graduated from Bucknell University in 2008 with a bachelor of science in electrical engineering. Since graduation, she has been working for PowerCon, an engineering firm that provides a wide range of design and testing services, specializing in large power distribution systems, emergency power systems, mission critical applications, data centers, trading floors and disaster recovery sites. The firm, based in Manhattan, serves many Fortune 500 companies in the tri-state area and has satellite offices around the country and internationally. Cara has worked on electrical designs, short circuit and arc flash studies, overcurrent protective device coordination studies, power quality studies, electrical equipment commissionings and thermal imaging studies.

“There is so much pressure to be accepted into one of the top colleges, it is easy to lose sight of the ultimate goal. When you start looking at schools, make sure you are practical about your choice in majors and do your research on career paths.” —Cara Levy ’04
‘Building’ Support for Blair’s Faculty
More than $1 Million Raised for Dorm Faculty Apartment Renovations

Talk about stepping up to the challenge—in just over nine months, the Blair community contributed $1,042,343 in gifts and pledges for dormitory faculty apartment renovations, surpassing the $1 million Faculty Housing Challenge goal by the December 31 deadline. According to Sue Habermann, director of capital giving, the results underline the tremendous respect that Blair’s alumni, parents and friends have for the School’s hard-working faculty.

“Gifts of every amount were made in support of faculty housing,” Sue noted. “And time after time, donors told us that Blair’s teachers made all the difference in their lives or in their children’s lives.” Over a dozen donors took advantage of the opportunity to “name” an apartment by contributing $50,000 to the Faculty Housing Challenge. This spring, those donors will be honored at the School’s annual Leadership Dinner, and their gifts will be commemorated with engraved bronze plaques.

Strengthening faculty support is a key strategic initiative for Blair, and improving dormitory living for faculty families helps to fulfill that initiative. Renovations to seven apartments were completed last summer; work on additional apartments will continue for the next two summers as scheduled, thanks to the generosity of the Blair community.
Financial Industry Leaders Honor John C. Bogle ’47
A Lifetime of Fiduciary Stewardship Explored at Legacy Forum

Investment, regulation and finance luminaries gathered at New York City’s Museum of American Finance on January 31 to honor Chairman Emeritus of the Blair Board of Trustees John C. Bogle ’47 for his six decades of investor advocacy and contributions to the mutual fund industry and capital markets. Founder of The Vanguard Group, Inc., the largest mutual fund organization in the world, and best-selling author of nine books with a tenth in the works, Mr. Bogle has become synonymous with fiduciary responsibility. The John C. Bogle Legacy Forum explored the restoration of investor confidence in a market system that has become increasingly mistrusted in recent years, seeking to answer the question: Does Jack Bogle offer a prescription that can help restore trust?

Blair Headmaster Chan and Monie Hardwick were among the 250 attendees at the invitation-only event. Morning panel discussions on fiduciary duty, corporate governance and compensation, and the “indexing model” of investment were followed by a luncheon conversation between former Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker and Mr. Bogle exploring Mr. Bogle’s legacy and his thoughts on restoring investor trust. Arthur Levitt, former chairman of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), introduced Mr. Volcker and Mr. Bogle as “two great American heroes who have stood against the crowd and for what is right and just.”

“I’ve done the best I could to build a better world for investors,” Mr. Bogle said in his remarks. “I’m greatly honored, truly humbled and profoundly appreciative that so many industry leaders, financial and academic professionals, friends and colleagues are joining me on this wonderful day of celebration.”

Knute Rostad, president of The Institute for the Fiduciary Standard, co-organizer of the event with CFA Institute, Bloomberg LINK and the Museum of American Finance, described Mr. Bogle as the founding father of “an investor-first compact between investors and the industry. His unyielding commitment to the ideals that define fiduciary stewardship stand out on Wall Street and Main Street alike.”
The host committee and speakers’ roster for the John C. Bogle Legacy Forum included the following “who's who” of finance industry giants:

- Sheila Bair, former chair of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
- John Biggs, former chairman and CEO of TIAA-CREF
- Alan Blinder, Princeton University economist, former member of the Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) and a former vice chairman of the Federal Reserve
- William Donaldson, former SEC chairman and former chairman and CEO of Donaldson, Lufkin & Jenrette
- Roger Ibbotson, chairman and CIO of Zebra Capital and Yale University professor of finance
- Burton Malkiel, Princeton University senior economist and former member of the CEA
- Harvey Pitt, former SEC chairman and CEO of Kalorama Partners, LLC
- David Ruder, former SEC chairman and William W. Gurley Memorial Professor of Law Emeritus, Northwestern University School of Law
- David Swensen, Chief Investment Officer of Yale University

“Jack Bogle has given investors throughout the world more wisdom and good financial judgment than any person in the history of markets.”

– Arthur Leavitt, former SEC Chairman

John C. Bogle ’47 and former Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker at dinner. Mr. Bogle signed copies of his book, *Enough*, during the event.
Heavyweight Wrestler Gains Recognition

Brooks Black ’13 and Marat Tomaev ’99 were spotlighted in the Morris County, N.J., Daily Record this past December. Black, a Blair wrestler, was noted for his dedication and love for the sport. The article highlighted Black’s connection with Blair, specifically through alumnus Marat Tomaev. Marat grew up in North Ossetia, a wrestling-obsessed region of Russia, and when he was 16, he was offered the chance to come to Blair Academy to study and train. The December 3 news article reflects Marat’s feelings on coming to Blair: “‘The primary reason was education,’ said Tomaev, 31, who arrived in the country not knowing any English. ‘Little did I know I’d stay.’” Tomaev was a standout lightweight wrestler at Blair, and seven years ago, began training with Brooks, focusing on building a foundation of skills: hand-fighting, positioning and aerobic conditioning. The news item added: “In the U.S., heavies are often looked down upon, Tomaev explained. Their combatants are seen as unskilled, relying solely on strength. In Russia, the opposite is true. ‘Heavyweights are on top of the world,’ Tomaev said.” Marat asked his former coach at Blair, Jeff Buxton, to take a look at Brooks.

The article added, “Brooks started for Blair from day 1—the first time in Buxton’s 30-year career that a freshman started at heavyweight. Last year, Brooks earned a prep national championship. He’s won prestigious tournaments such as the Beast of the East and the Walsh Ironman.”

NBA Player Royal Ivey ’00 Graduates from University of Texas

Royal Ivey ’00 was the topic of conversation for many NBA reporters this past fall when the Oklahoma City Thunder player chose to spend the NBA lockout completing his degree at the University of Texas. In December, he graduated with a BA in applied learning and development. In an article written by texassports.com, Ivey stated: “My mom would always say, ‘I didn’t send you to school to be in the NBA.’ That was just the icing on the cake… My ultimate goal was to come to college, get a free education, graduate and then move on. It turned into something else.” Ivey’s mother was a teacher, and she always knew that her son earning his degree wasn’t a matter of if, but when.

The news item added, “Since leaving for the NBA after the 2004 season, Ivey would return to the Forty Acres during late summer sessions and take classes. He never wavered from the goal, but finding time to complete his requirements was difficult with a professional schedule.” During his fall semester in Austin, Ivey found his way back to the practice gym and worked for the Longhorns as the student assistant coach, where his work ethic and humble nature were infectious to the team. Ivey added, “Being around these guys, and being here, has been a blessing for me, because now I know what I want to do after basketball… I’ve got a passion for this, coaching. I think it’s my calling.”
Luol Deng Foundation Provides Aid in Africa

Adam Andre ’00 and Luol Deng ’03 were featured in the Chicago Tribune in early January. The article began, “Adam Andre’s instructions were simple the day Luol Deng arrived at New Jersey’s Blair Academy as a skinny freshman. ‘Coach said, “Adam, you’re big. I just need you to foul the (crap) out of this kid,”’ Andre said, laughing. ‘We’ve been best friends ever since.’” Now, their friendship extends even deeper than basketball. As the article explains, “Andre resigned from a successful career working for a packaging and marketing company in August 2010 to run The Luol Deng Foundation in Chicago…” (after) Andre had accompanied Deng on a trip to the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya in July 2010.” Luol’s sister, Arek Deng ’01, heads the foundation’s London office.

For Adam, his trip to Kenya changed his outlook. In the news piece, he stated: “You’re seeing this and thinking about how back home you’re complaining if your steak isn’t cooked to the right temperature. These people have to walk five miles to get a pail of fresh water. It was a huge culture shock but in a good way.” He continued, “Seeing what we’ve done in one-and-a-half years is really cool. The best part is Lu can now do things he wants to do. He doesn’t have to be just a supporter of the World Food Programme or other causes, although he still is involved with those…but he can do his own initiatives, like building basketball courts over there (in Africa) or working to get hospital equipment. We say, ‘Let’s really do some good over there.’” For more information on The Luol Deng Foundation, please visit www.LuolDeng.org.

Mikey Kampmann ’04 at the South Pole

Mikey Kampmann ’04 is a young comedian who, when he’s not making cameo appearances in Portlandia episodes (look for him in the park at Spike and Iris’ wedding!), is just about the funniest thing in town. Until, that is, he decided to go AWOL and work as a line cook at the Admunsden-Scott South Pole Station in Antarctica for four months. In January, Mikey spoke to Portlandia in an interview for the Independent Film Channel, and he discussed why he decided to move to the South Pole and what it was like being there. He wrote a hilarious blog chronicling his adventures, which can be found at www.mikeygoingdown.tumblr.com.
On January 30, internationally known investment executive Mohamed El-Erian, CEO and co-CIO of Pacific Investment Management Company (PIMCO), addressed the Blair community at a special daytime Skeptics lecture in Armstrong-Hipkins Center for the Arts. Headquartered in Newport Beach, Calif., and founded in 1971, PIMCO is a “global investment solutions provider” with $1.35 trillion in assets under management and a worldwide staff of 2,038 employees.

Dr. El-Erian joined PIMCO in 1999 as a senior member of the firm’s portfolio management and investment strategy group. From 2005-07, he served as president and CEO of Harvard Management Company, the entity that manages Harvard University’s endowment, then re-joined PIMCO. Earlier in his career, he had been a managing director at Salomon Smith Barney/Citigroup in London following 15 years at the International Monetary Fund in Washington, D.C. Dr. El-Erian has written numerous articles on international finance and is the author of the highly regarded bestseller When Markets Collide. He is a graduate of Cambridge University and earned his master’s degree and doctorate in economics at Oxford University.

Following a brief introduction by veteran Blair faculty member Dr. Martin Miller, Dr. El-Erian captivated the audience of students, faculty and Trustees with a 45-minute discussion of the tremendous changes influencing the global economy and what these changes mean to Blair students. He addressed complex economic matters using accessible and highly instructive analogies, making the issues real and understandable.

Dr. El-Erian began by taking a quick survey: How many students know someone who, although qualified, has been unable to find employment? How many students know someone whose mortgage debt is higher than the current value of their home? In both cases, a majority of hands were raised. The economic insecurity that is gripping the globe is being felt here at Blair, too, Dr. El-Erian noted, and he attributed that insecurity to three factors: first, underdeveloped countries like China and Brazil are developing rapidly, and the world is having difficulty accommodating their growth; second, Europe and western nations have too much debt and too little growth; and third, institutions and politicians are not reacting quickly enough to all the changes that are taking place.

In order to successfully adapt in a rapidly changing world, Dr. El-Erian advised students that “education matters, and it matters a great deal,” as they move ahead in their lives. He urged them to be intellectually agile, to think globally and to work to understand other people’s motivations. “Be socially aware, too,” he added. “You are talented, high-achieving, privileged students. You can change the world as you get older, but don’t forget the people who haven’t had your advantages. You have a responsibility to others.”

At the conclusion of his presentation, Dr. El-Erian candidly answered students’ questions about the national economy and
the European debt crisis. The final question cut to the heart of the matter: What is the single most important change we need to make in our economy?

“What America needs today is a Sputnik moment,” Dr. El-Erian replied, referring to the shock experienced across the nation in 1957 when the Soviet Union launched the first artificial satellite into orbit and Americans’ realization that common vision and purpose were needed to catch up in the space race. “The engineering of an economic solution is not hard, but the politics of it are horrible.” Republicans and Democrats are both far from the political center where decisions are made, he went on to explain, and there must be a “Sputnik moment” of realization that political unity is absolutely necessary to pull the country out of the debt and unemployment crises.

The School secured this unique lecture opportunity through Dr. El-Erian’s niece, Nadia Rose El-Erian ’12, who is a member of Dr. Miller’s economics class.

If you would like to view Dr. El-Erian’s entire hour-long presentation—a valuable and insightful economics lesson for all—visit www.blair.edu/News_Events/2011_2012/news_ev_skep_elrian.shtm.

Q: What does all that is happening in terms of debt, loans, etc., mean for the generation that is just going into college?

A: This is a brilliant question. First, it will be harder; going forward, to do things on debt. The system is re-setting. It’s a bit like if you drop your phone, it comes back on, but you’ve dropped it so hard not everything comes on. So, for example, public universities today are having tremendous difficulty. Why? Because they rely on budgets, they rely on the states, the states rely on the federal government and, in a time when everybody has to tighten their belts, that’s less money coming in. So, there’s going to be less available at public universities. Private universities are also having challenges. They are finding it harder to get donations, etc. So, the average support that you’re going to get if you’re the average student is less. You are not the average student—that’s the good news. But, that’s also why you have a responsibility to others that are below-average students on that. The bigger issue is how do we all manage through our debt? How is your generation going to do it? How are you going to get rid of the debt that we incurred? Not because we were somehow mean people, but because we lost sight of the big issues. It’s very easy to use a credit card. When I was growing up, you would be bombarded by 10 offers a day of people telling you to get a credit card. It’s very easy to buy a house when next year you’re convinced it’s going to be worth 20 percent more. Everybody got sucked into this thing—it was like a group behavior. Then we woke up and smelled the coffee. Now how are you going to do it? There are only four ways to get over it. The best way is to grow out of it. You have problems with debt, get a second job and pay off your debt. But it’s hard. The second way is to default. That’s what’s going to happen in Europe. But you don’t want to do that because when you default, it sticks with you for a long time. The third way is to have inflation. Surprise everybody by making the prices change, and creditors suddenly are owed less. The fourth way is what we do today. It’s a very complicated way called financial regression. If you go to the bank today and say, “I want to open a savings account, how much (interest) are you going to pay me?” they’ll say, “I’ll pay you probably nothing, zero percent.” Why? Because the Federal Reserve is keeping interest rates at zero. But, you say, inflation is 2 percent, so if I gave you my dollar, next year when I come back it’s only going to be worth 98 cents. And the answer is yes, because what’s happening right now is we penalize the savers in order to transfer money to the debtors, in order to lower the debt. So that’s what we’re going to go through. You, collectively, will have to make choices because these choices are made every year. But the reality is, there’s much more debt and there’s much less growth and somehow we’ve got to make that equation work out. And it’s not just a challenge for the U.S. If you think we’re having issues, you should see Europe—this is that problem times 100.
Spreading Good Will & Cheer

In December, Blair students spread good cheer through numerous community service projects. **Olivia Davis ‘12** (top right) donated her hair to the charity “Locks of Love,” which uses donated hair to create wigs for children with cancer. **Cat Miller ‘12** (below) collected toys for a toy drive sponsored by Pass-It-Along in Sparta, N.J. **Shannon Davis ‘14** (bottom right) organized a food drive for the Outreach Center Food Pantry at the First Presbyterian Church in Blairstown. **Kyle Tierney ‘13** organized a drive for used soccer equipment including soccer balls, cleats, and shin guards to be delivered to African students by Blair students on their annual trip to Kenya. **Audrey Snyder ‘13** founded “Wood for Good” to process fallen trees into firewood, which is delivered to area residents in exchange for a donation to any one of 11 local charities. “Heating homes, warming hearts” is the group’s motto. Audrey and “Wood for Good” raised more than $2,000 this winter.
Thanks to the generosity of a dedicated and talented group of parent volunteers, the Romano Dining Hall was transformed into “CandyLand” as this year’s theme for the “girls-ask-boys” Sadie Hawkins Dance brought out the sweetness in everyone. The students enjoyed mocktails at Sharpe House, walked down a “CandyLand” path and enjoyed dinner and dancing in the dining hall.

Sadie Hawkins Dance 2012

Introduced in 2004 as a way to bridge the gap between the end of the winter sports season and the March exam period, the five-day Headmasters’ Societies Games brought students and faculty together at a variety of intramural activities.

“This is really an opportunity for students to get to know their peers,” said math teacher and the event’s co-commissioner Nathan Molteni, who oversaw this year’s competition with Ann Williams, director of the Timken Library. “Since students are randomly assigned to teams at the beginning of their freshman year, most kids had the chance to meet classmates that they didn’t know. Throughout the week, the teams competed in 40 or 50 different events, which built a strong sense of camaraderie and brought out everyone’s school spirit.”

As in the past, there were four teams, each named after a former Blair headmaster: Breed, Kelley, Howard and Sharpe. Howard won the 2012 competition, after earning more points than the other teams in the competition’s various activities, which included wrestling, tug of war, a trivia showdown, Twister contest, rock-paper-scissors competition and relay races in the pool. The games concluded on the evening of Friday, February 24, with a talent show and the awarding of the Hardwick Trophy in the Armstrong-Hipkins Center for the Arts.

“In addition to bolstering School unity and breaking up the winter months, the Headmasters’ Societies Games were a great opportunity for kids to develop leadership skills,” said Peter Curran, dean of student affairs and English teacher, who helped to coordinate the 2012 program as a first-time participant. “Everyone worked together and helped to lead the team to victory. The competition created some great memories for both faculty and students.”
International Bazaar at Blair

On January 14, the Blair community celebrated its annual International Weekend. Romano Dining Hall was the site of a Korean Café, a piñata for faculty children, and an international food bazaar with student dishes from the Philippines, China, India and South America, followed by an international fashion show of traditional garments from countries all over the world. The evening ended with international karaoke in The Black Canteen. Boys and girls from nearly two dozen countries attend the School; this event allows them the opportunity to showcase their traditional cuisine and attire and feel a bit closer to home.

Junior Parents’ Day Features College Admission Dean

The featured speaker at January’s Junior Parents’ Day, Davidson College Vice President and Dean of Admission and Financial Aid Chris Gruber, addressed the selective college admission process. The seminar continued with Blair college counselor Jason Beck introducing Brig Boonswang, who discussed Naviance and test preparation. Finally, a panel of students discussed the college process and parents had the chance to meet with their child’s college counselor. Despite the snowy weather, the event generated great discussion and supplied useful information.
The college “process” at Blair officially begins midway through junior year: students meet with their assigned college counselor to discuss plans, dreams and responsibilities regarding the next level of their education. Parents attend Junior College Day—described by one Blair mom as “both comforting and terrifying”—and are introduced to the world of college visits, standardized testing, financial aid and online application submission. Guided by the collective wisdom of Blair’s seasoned college counselors, Dean Lew Stival, Associate Dean Joe Mantegna and associate Jason Beck, the journey to higher education begins.

While all Blair students apply to college, the experience of the admission process is unique to each individual. In January, four seniors—in the homestretch of this rite of passage—shared their perspectives on the college admission process and candidly reflected on lessons they learned.

— Joanne Miceli
**ANDREA AVILA**

**Hometown:** University Park, Florida  
**College List:** Columbia, Brown, Yale, NYU, University of Chicago, Georgetown, Northwestern, University of Miami, Trinity College of Cambridge University, University of North Carolina (Morehead-Cain Scholars Program)  
**Intended Major:** Political science, human rights concentration, with the eventual goal of studying international human rights law  
**The Positives:** Andrea was admitted early action to the University of Chicago, and she is one of Blair’s first applicants to Cambridge University. She made it far enough in the Cambridge admission process to be invited to the U.K. for an interview, an experience she found both “exciting and intimidating.” During the interview—with two Cambridge professors—she felt positive and academically well-prepared.  

**The Challenges:** Andrea’s first three notifications were tough news—she was not accepted at Cambridge or for the UNC Morehead-Cain Scholars Program, and she was deferred at Georgetown.  

**Blair in the College Process:** Andrea feels she was equipped to tackle the college admission process, thanks to the high-level courses she’s taken at Blair, SAT preparation that helped add 300 points to her scores and the self-discipline she’s gained through her Blair experience. “Mr. Stival has been great—he helped me decide where to apply and has been there through the whole process.”  

**Lesson Learned:** “The college process has been tough and stressful, but exciting, too. I’ve been building up to this point for the last three years—I’m almost sad to see it come to an end.”  

**Editor’s note:** As this issue was going to print, Andrea was also accepted at Yale, Columbia, Georgetown and Northwestern.

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**MAXWELL HVOLBEK**

**Hometown:** West Hills, California  
**College List:** Wrestling recruit at Stanford, Lehigh, Harvard and University of Pennsylvania; applied only to Stanford where he was offered an “early athletic read”  
**Intended Major:** Undecided, although he likes science  
**The Positives:** At Blair, Max is an academic standout, carrying a heavy AP course load, and a top wrestler. He says his early-November acceptance at Stanford was a “huge weight off his shoulders.” Not having the pressure of the college process for most of his senior year has been a big plus—he’s even been able to try some things just for fun, like taking a drawing class.  

**The Challenges:** It is difficult to balance the demands of high-level academics and athletics at Blair and could be so at Stanford, too, where he will most likely spend several hours a day in the gym. “It sounds cliché, but wrestling is a lifestyle,” he says. “I think about it all the time.” In order to do well, Max has to “put in the time” both in his studies and on the wrestling mat.  

**Blair in the College Process:** “Blair gave me the opportunity to go to a place like Stanford. Here, people are invested in students and in their success, and my teachers and coaches have helped me excel in my studies and in wrestling. I enjoy getting good grades, learning and going to class here, and I feel good about myself when I’m doing well in my studies and in wrestling.”  

**Lesson Learned:** “When I visited Stanford, I felt comfortable and happy because there is great support for student athletes—it mimics Blair in that regard. My goal is to be a well-rounded student at Stanford.”
“We hope that the college ‘process’ for every Blair senior will be an experience in self-realization. To that end, we try to provide effective and helpful counseling within the greater scope of the Blair educational experience, with the hope that each student finds the college process to be a fitting closure to a bigger, more important high school experience.”

—Dean of College Counseling Lew Stival

Lauren Mezzanotte

Hometown: Columbia, New Jersey

College List: Wesleyan, Rutgers, University of Rhode Island, Boston University, University of Miami, Rider, College of Charleston, UNC Wilmington

Intended Major: Environmental biology

The Positives: Lauren applied early to most of her schools both to increase her chance of acceptance and in the hope that financial aid would be plentiful. She has been accepted at Wesleyan, Rutgers, URI, Miami, Rider, College of Charleston and UNC; she is awaiting regular decision results at Boston University.

The Challenges: Finances are a big consideration in Lauren’s eventual choice of college. Although she was admitted early decision at Wesleyan, she declined the acceptance because the school offered a financial package that made her attendance there “nowhere near what we can afford.” Her family is “average middle class,” and her parents are “financially conservative.” They would like Lauren to graduate from college without the burden of debt. Lauren’s brother is a sophomore at Blair, and her parents must consider funding his education as well.

Blair in the College Process:
“Everything you do at Blair is preparing you to go to college. The classes I’ve been able to take have helped a lot. I love to learn, I love science, and I’ve been able to double up on science this year. You’re going to end up at a good school—just coming from Blair puts you ahead in the admission process. Mr. Mantegna knew my situation, helped me look at schools in terms of academics, athletics and finances, and eased the stress of deciding where to apply.”

Lesson Learned: “As much hard work as you put into the college process, sometimes reality hits you. I was frustrated at the financial situation and, at times, frustrated with my parents, but everything happens for a reason. I’ve come to realize that coming from an amazing school like Blair, any college you go to will be a great one, even if it’s not your first choice.”

Dan Kim

Hometown: Seoul, Korea

College List: Brown University

Intended Major: Undecided; his favorite subject right now is English

The Positives: Dan was accepted early decision at Brown—it was the only application he submitted. He has been very involved in the Blair community and spent a great deal of time writing his Brown supplement, two factors he thinks may have helped distinguish his application from others. As for kids who do hours and hours of test prep, he says, “While test scores are important, I don’t think they matter as much as some people think they do—there are lots of other ways to make yourself stand out.”

The Challenges: In his junior year, Dan felt obliged to visit schools that “everyone else” was visiting, but he really didn’t like what he saw. Research led him to Brown, a school where he feels the curriculum is liberal enough for him to chart his own course.

Blair in the College Process: “When I came to Blair, I felt like my new purpose in life was to get into college. I understood everything that was at stake. At Blair, there is an unbelievable amount of structure, and just living here and fulfilling your responsibilities remind you of the importance of education. I am grateful to all the people who have helped me.”

Lesson Learned: “As important as it is to get into college, my mom always says that she sent me to Blair for the experience. I had a good outcome getting into Brown, but I honestly think the experience of going to Blair will end up being more valuable than the outcome.”
Peddie Day 2011: BLAIR KEEPS THE CUP!

On a perfect autumn afternoon in Hightstown, the Bucs secured another year of bragging rights by taking home the Kelley-Potter Cup for the second year in a row. Busloads of fans traveled to the Peddie School to support the Bucs on November 12 following a spirited pep rally and the traditional bonfire on Friday night. Peddie Day honors the oldest prep school football rivalry in the state and has occurred annually since 1903.
This fall, the classes of 1989-2011 went head-to-head against their Peddie counterparts in a competition based on alumni annual fund participation. We are thrilled to report that Blair won the “Peddie Challenge” by a score of 20-3. Thank you to all those who helped Blair win—your loyalty and support of the School was evident in the results.
In February, the Blair Academy Players presented Sweeney Todd, The Demon Barber of Fleet Street to a packed DuBois Theater in Armstrong-Hipkins Center for the Arts. The musical thriller, set in nineteenth century England, tells the infamous tale of the unjustly exiled barber (played by Jordon Arnold ’12) who returns to London seeking revenge against the lecherous judge (Jonathan Reichel ’12) who framed him and ravaged his young wife. His thirst for blood soon expands to include his unfortunate customers, and the resourceful proprietress (Olivia Davis ’12) of the pie shop downstairs soon has the people of London lining up in droves with her mysterious new meat pie recipe! Rounding out the cast are young lovers Johanna (Madeline Kling ’13) and Anthony (Jimmy Nieh ’12), competing barber Adolfo Pirelli (Matthew Michaud ’12), his assistant Tobias Rigg (Samuel Park ’12), the judge’s assistant Beadle (Charlie Steere ’12), the beggar woman (Nikki Thompson ’13) and the madhouse director Jonas Fogg (Connor McClain ’13). The show’s student director was Grace Kim ’12.

Working: Fall Musical Tells Stories of American Workers
The Blair Academy Players presented the musical Working November 3-5 in the DuBois Theatre in Armstrong-Hipkins Center for the Arts. Working is based on Studs Terkel’s best-selling book of interviews with American workers and tells the compelling story of those who go to work every day: the schoolteacher, the parking lot attendant, the waitress, the millworker and the housewife. This musical is a rare collection of the stories of these workers told by a varied collection of composers. The ensemble cast comprised the following students: Jordon Arnold ’12, Salley Winter Baxter ’15, Carmine Burdi ’15, Claudia Choi ’14, Olivia Davis ’12, Celeen Hefele ’12, Hanna Huntley ’12, Maddie Kling ’13, Hannah Lappin ’13, Maddie Michaud ’13, Caleb Nadeau ’15, Jimmy Nieh ’12, Sam Park ’12, Jose Rodriguez ’12, Claire Ryder ’13, Nikki Thompson ’13 and middle-schooler Trevor Van Vliet. The play was student directed by Hannah Lappin ’13.

Director Craig Evans said, “Working is a real complement to Sweeney Todd, offering lots of solos and dramatic vignettes for our highly talented and varied cast. As one reviewer said, ‘Chorus Line is about Broadway musical folks; Working is Chorus Line for the rest of us.’ This is a show that covers a wide variety of life experiences in a multitude of professions. The writers succeed in keeping true to Terkel’s man-on-the-street interviews.”
Christmas Vespers was held on December 10 at the First Presbyterian Church on Main Street in Blairstown. Parents and community members enjoyed the candlelit service, which included beautiful musical performances by the Blair Singers and String Orchestra, as well as scripture readings by Blair students.

Students Visit Artist Christo

On November 1, 18 Blair students and faculty traveled to Manhattan to visit the studio of artist Christo. During the visit, Christo spoke about many of his projects, highlighting two in-progress projects, *Over the River* and *The Mastaba*. The students asked questions, observed his drawings and learned about upcoming *New York Times* coverage of *Over the River*. This project is a 42-mile-long temporary outdoor art installation, similar to *The Gates*, over the Arkansas River in Colorado. One week after the visit, *Over the River* was given the go-ahead by federal regulators following 19 years of site searching, research, testing and planning that included a $2.5 million environmental impact study.

Students and teachers enjoyed their visit and were thrilled at the prospect of seeing another of Christo and Jeanne-Claude’s monumental works come to life. A few are even considering visiting Colorado to work on the project in the summer of 2014.
Art Teacher Exhibits in Maryland

Art teacher Rita Baragona presented a painting in the Zeuxis exhibition entitled *The Common Object*. For this exhibition, Zeuxis artists and their guests each produced a still life painting incorporating an ordinary dishtowel. According to the Zeuxis website, the artists’ “approaches to this humble tool of daily life demonstrates the many ways in which painters can, in the words of John Updike, ‘give the mundane its beautiful due.’” This exhibition concluded its two-year tour at the Meyerhoff Gallery at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore on March 18.

Nina Yuen Shows Work at Home & Abroad

Video Studies Teacher Exhibits in the Netherlands

“Lucid Dreaming,” an exhibition of the work of video studies director Nina Yuen, opened on October 15 at Stedelijk Museum Schiedam in The Netherlands. The website for the show notes “in her films, Nina Yuen visualizes an inner world, a dreamy world, in which thoughts and feelings stream onward like words in a book. Or like the surge of a river, the rolling waves of the sea. Just as thoughts and feelings can rage, the ocean pounds, frothing, on the coast… Yuen’s inner world is always an outer world. Culture and nature intersect with a mesmerizing effect.” In the installation at Stedelijk, she made a spatial installation around four films, all linking the past and the present.

Nina studied fine arts at Harvard University. She is represented by the galleries Juliëtte Jongma in Amsterdam and Lombard Freid Projects in New York.

Blair Academy Faculty Show Features Nina Yuen

In October, the Romano Gallery also featured the work of Nina Yuen, director of video studies at Blair, who approaches video as a tactile medium. She notes that her “seductively honest and visually striking narratives weave elements of her personal relationships with found stories and appropriated personae.” Nina adds, “My films are unabashedly romantic and quietly profound assemblages of performance, spoken monologue, soundtrack and montage, which create a flux of vivid imagery and feeling.” Her films have been shown at exhibitions in Amsterdam, Brazil and Spain, as well as in Miami and Portland, Ore.

The Blair Academy Singers and Orchestra performed a holiday concert at the ArtsQuest Center at Steel Stacks in Bethlehem, Pa., for an audience of more than 225 alumni, parents, prospective students and friends. The student performers opened with a favorite piece from their fall concert and then moved into a repertoire that included many holiday favorites. They combined vocal and instrumental selections such as *O Holy Night* and *Glory to God* with a finale of *Deck the Halls* and *O Come All Ye Faithful*. Following the concert, Headmaster Chan Hardwick welcomed guests to a Blair reception, where Lehigh Valley parents and alumni from the past 60 years reunited and reconnected with Blair.

The Steel Stacks complex opened on May 1, 2011, and is a major part of the effort to revitalize the historic site of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation. Steel Stacks has hosted many musical groups, including The Steve Miller Band, Maroon 5, Steely Dan and more. Performing arts chair and director of instrumental music Jennifer Pagotto commented, “It was an honor for our student musicians to perform in such a spectacular venue. They are grateful for the support of so many parents and alumni from the region.”

### Fashion Designer Holds Benefit Show

The work of artist and fashion designer Christine Mayes ’03 was on exhibit in the Romano Gallery in January. Christine graduated from Parsons the New School for Design in 2007 and was the recipient of the Golden Thimble Award for Excellence in Design. She has worked for industry heavyweights, including Bill Blass, Vivienne Tam and Thom Browne. Under the direction of Thom Browne, Mayes created special pieces for Kanye West, Damon Dash, Malcolm McLaren and Cindy Sherman and headed a made-to-measure event at Harrods in London. In addition to her work in the fashion industry, Christine creates commissioned paintings for private clients and has been featured in four publications.

In this show, Christine’s works highlighted the amalgamation of the study of painting and the execution of design. Her body of work is always inspired by complex systems such as city grids, human anatomy and process in minimalist art. She says, “The multi-disciplinary approach to my career and body of work adds dimension to the undertone of this show. There will be a sense of timelessness, or ‘returning’ to a place.” All proceeds from this show benefited ECPAT International in the fight against child trafficking, prostitution and pornography.
Blair Students Perform in San Francisco, Los Angeles & San Diego Over Spring Break

Blair’s Orchestra and Singers toured California from March 6 to 12, performing in San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego. Given that so many Blair graduates live and work in these cities, the School also hosted informal receptions for local alumni following each concert.

In San Francisco, the Blair ensembles worked with the “Up-on-Top” program that benefits underprivileged youth. Following a demonstration for the youth program, the ensembles gave an evening performance at the First Unitarian-Universalist Church on March 7. Later, the students headed to Los Angeles, where they worked with college professors at Chapman University’s School of Music, attended a Los Angeles Philharmonic performance of Gustav Holst’s “The Planets” and then gave a performance at West Hollywood Park’s Auditorium on March 10. Finally, the Blair group traveled to San Diego, where they gave their last performance aboard the USS Midway on March 12.

“This was a really unique opportunity to take our music to a wide range of audiences,” said Jennifer Pagotto, chair of Blair’s performing arts department, who accompanied the students to California. “To go from San Francisco, where some of the kids in the audience hadn’t even seen real instruments before, to San Diego, where the students were concertizing on an aircraft carrier, gave the ensemble a new perspective on what it means to perform for difference audiences, as well as what it means to represent Blair many miles away from campus.”

The concerts featured orchestral works by Mussorgsky, Gliere, Tschesnokoff, Vaughan Williams, Mozart and Bach and choral works by Moses Hogan, Robert Shaw, Passereau, James Taylor, Leavitt, Gjeilo, Fonseca and others.

This is the first time in four years that the Orchestra and Singers have traveled together, which in itself was a unifying experience. “Members of the ensemble become part of a team at Blair, but to travel and perform together is a really special experience for the students and faculty members involved,” continued Mrs. Pagotto, who was joined in Los Angeles and San Diego by her husband, Blair’s Dean of Admission Ryan Pagotto ’97. A number of other faculty members also traveled with the students, including Kathryn Hylton, director of choral music, Lara Curtis, who plays flute in Blair’s Orchestra, and Andrea Magat-Molteni, accompanist for Blair’s Singers. The last trip the Orchestra and Singers took was to Eastern Europe in 2008. This was Blair’s first domestic musical tour in recent years and the first one in which alumni have been invited to participate.

“There are hundreds of Blair alumni, families and friends in San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego, so we thought this was a great opportunity for the extended Blair family to get together and see what these very talented students are capable of,” said Velma Lubliner, director of Blair’s reunion giving. Casual gatherings followed each performance.
Join Us for Another Sensational Arts Season at Blair!

**Music**

**SPRING CONCERT**  
(featuring vocal and instrumental musicians)  
Thursday, May 4, 7:30 p.m.  
Armstrong-Hipkins Center for the Arts

**Theatre**

**CYRANO DE BERGERAC**  
May 10, 11 & 12, 7:30 p.m.  
Robert J. Evans Open Air Theatre  
Edmond Rostand’s 1897 play *Cyrano de Bergerac* is the romantic tale of swashbuckling, duplicity and love. The title character is a philosopher-swordsman who pines for his beautiful cousin Roxane, yet is too ashamed of his large nose to tell her. He is recruited by the man she loves to write poetry and love letters to her in his name. Many years later the truth is revealed—in one of the theatre’s most heartbreaking finales.

**RADIUM GIRLS**  
by D.W. Gregory  
May 17, 18 & 19, 7:30 p.m.  
Wean Theatre  
In 1926, radium was a miracle cure, and luminous watches were the latest rage—until the girls who painted them began to fall ill with a mysterious disease. Inspired by a true story and set in Orange, N.J., *Radium Girls* follows the efforts of Grace Fryer, a dial painter, as she fights for her day in court. This “dramedy” offers a wry, unflinching look at American obsessions with health, wealth and the commercialization of science.

**The Romano Gallery**

The Romano Gallery is located in the Armstrong-Hipkins Center for the Arts. Normal gallery hours are 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Please check the Blair website (www.blair.edu) for the dates and times of each artist’s reception and for gallery hours affected by school vacations.

**ANNUAL STUDENT ART EXHIBITION**  
April 23-May 12, 2012

**YOUNG ALUMNI SHOW**  
May 14-June 10, 2012  
This group exhibition features the art of five Blair alumni, including Natessa Amin ’06 (painting), Meredith Habermann ’04 (ceramics), Hannah Kirkpatrick ’07 (glass), Henry Kozinski ’07 (film) and Justin Lubliner ’05 (photography). All of these young artists are committed to exploring their individuality and connection to the world as they work in various media.

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE**  
Because this calendar is subject to change, please check Blair’s website for the most up-to-date information available at www.blair.edu, or call (908) 362-6121. The DuBois Theatre, Wean Theatre and Romano Gallery are housed within Armstrong-Hipkins Center for the Arts on the Blair Academy campus in Blairstown, N.J.
Coaches vs. Cancer
Coaches vs. Cancer is a nationwide collaboration between the American Cancer Society and the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) that empowers basketball coaches, their teams and local communities to make a difference in the fight against cancer. Blair Academy hosted this year’s Coaches vs. Cancer tournament on December 3 and 4, 2011, in the Hardwick Hall performance gym. Proceeds benefited the American Cancer Society. More than $1,900 was raised during this event.

Fall Athletic Awards
Pierce Cross Country Trophy: Evan Redos ’12
Pierce Cross Country Trophy: Kelvin Serem ’13
Pierce Cross Country Trophy: Eliza Lawless ’14
Blair Soccer Award: Joseph Frick ’12
Blair Soccer Award: Ann Austin ’12
Blair Field Hockey Prize: Meredith Berry-Toon ’12
Marcial Tennis Award: Samantha Beck ’12
Brooks Football Prize: Max Kaplan ’12
Brooks Football Prize: Jihaad Pretlow ’13
Frere Football Award: Nick Flora ’12
Frere Football Award: Mack MacLeod ’12
Frere Football Award: Andrew Iacocca ’12
After a fantastic win at Peddie Day last November, Blair’s athletic teams began what turned out to be a very successful winter season. All varsity teams began practicing in November and spent the following months honing their skills in basketball, winter track, hockey, wrestling, swimming, squash and skiing. By the season’s end, a number of Blair teams competed in and won regional, state and national championships.

Boys’ basketball kicked the season off with the annual “Coaches vs. Cancer” tournament, where Blair faced, among others, St. Benedict’s, a team Blair would play several more times before competing against them in the state prep finals at the end of February. Overall, the season was a success—the team collected another MAPL title and made it to the state prep finals for the second year in a row.

The girls’ basketball team relied on the talent of both younger and older students, as well as new and returning players. Over the course of the season, the girls picked up momentum and finished with a MAPL championship victory and a state prep championship title.

The boys’ varsity, girls’ varsity and boys’ junior varsity ski teams were busy this year, despite the lack of snow in the Northeast. In late February, the varsity skiers who were honored with all-league status competed in the Race of Champions at Mt. Peter in Warwick, N.Y. All three teams remained busy with races throughout the season, and some skiers participated in the giant slalom and slalom team state championships at the end of February.

Boys’ and girls’ swimming was also busy late in the season. The team struggled early on with sickness and injury, but upperclassman leadership carried the team to success in January and February. The season ended with a record-breaking relay medley by female Blair swimmers who, in addition to breaking a school record, placed 18th overall at Easterns.

The wrestling team had another successful year, starting off the season with Mark Grey ’12 being selected as an athlete in the “Faces in the Crowd” section of Sports Illustrated. The team continued its impressive legacy by winning the Beast of the East, the Powerade, National Preps and Ironman titles this season, securing Blair’s 32nd national prep
title and again making the School the number-one ranked school for wrestling in the country.

The co-ed Blair hockey team trained at Skylands Ice World in Stockholm, N.J., where it matched up with some talented opponents. The team took on Kittatiny, Columbia Prep and Newton-Lenape, among other rivals, over the course of the season. The most competitive game was against Warwick, but the Bucs unfortunately couldn’t tie it up during that last game. Nonetheless, the Blair team took away a sense of accomplishment after such a close game to finish the season.

Winter track competed in several invitationals this winter. With many students returning to the team from last year, Blair finished the season with MAPLs at Lawrenceville, where many runners achieved personal records. It was a great way to end the season, and some winter runners look forward to participating in track again during the spring season.

The boys’ and girls’ squash teams also competed intensely this season. The boys’ team worked hard to improve their form, and though they struggled against some of the best teams in the area, they finished the season with a close win against the Pingry School. The girls’ team utilized their skills and senior leadership, winning the majority of their games in season and ultimately placing second in the MAPL championship tournament. Members of both programs improved their skills and look forward to another fun season next year.
Sons’ Blair Experience

*Inspires Parents’ Estate Gift*

Like many Blair parents, Richard and Chrysa Graber, parents of Alex ‘06 and Nick ‘09, give high marks to the School for their sons’ outstanding experience here. However, Richard and Chrysa are somewhat unique among Blair parents—they have helped make that experience available to future students by including the School in their will.

Part of the inspiration for the Grabers’ gift is the “core feeling” so evident on Blair’s campus. Chrysa describes it as an encompassing sense of community, family and caring. “As a parent, when you send your children to boarding school, you want to know that there is someone there who cares as much as you do. At Blair, I know this is true.” Richard agrees wholeheartedly. “Blair’s faculty and staff are remarkable,” he notes. “Their focus is always on the kids!”

The Grabers describe how the academic foundation, study habits and time management skills both Alex and Nick gained at Blair served them well in college, as did their participation in a wide variety of Blair activities. “Blair gives students an amazing opportunity to grow, yet still have fun and be kids,” Chrysa remarks. “It’s a great balance.”

While their sons were Blair students, the Grabers volunteered on campus and served as members of the Parent Fund Group. Then Richard joined the Board of Trustees in 2009, and he became well aware of what he terms the School’s single “glaring weakness”—a relatively small endowment, which limits Blair’s ability to secure its financial future and to provide crucial scholarship aid. To help the School build the endowment, the Grabers decided to include Blair in their estate plans.

“We considered several giving options when we made our will, but Blair is where the money is needed, so this is where we decided it should go,” Richard says. “Besides, I’ve seen firsthand how careful and conscientious the School is about spending and investing. Blair is where our money will be put to the best use.”

A final word of advice from the Grabers to Blair parents: “Enjoy your children’s time at Blair—it will flash by before you know it!”

“I’ve seen how careful and conscientious the School is about spending and investing. Blair is where our money will be put to the best use.” – Richard Graber
**IN MEMORY OF...**

**1941**

**John M. “Tad” Fraissinet.** A World War II U.S. Navy veteran, Mr. Fraissinet graduated from Dartmouth College. He enjoyed a long career in manufacturing, working for companies such as Warsaw Button, Bird’s Eye, and Bausch and Lomb. During his postgraduate year at Blair, Mr. Fraissinet was an honor roll student and, according to the 1941 ACTA, an “excellent rider” with a passion for horses. Throughout his life, he enjoyed gardening, sports and music, and he sang in various barbershop quartets and groups. He served on the Woodbury, Conn., Commission for the Elderly for several years and was an advocate for the completion of the Woodbury Senior Center. Mr. Fraissinet was predeceased by his wife, Rita, and he is survived by two daughters and their husbands, a daughter-in-law, nine grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

**Richard A. Murphy.** A graduate of Cornell University, Mr. Murphy served in the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II. He enjoyed a career in the textile industry until 1963, when he left Bomont Industries to establish Murph’s Driving Range in Succasunna, N.J. Mr. Murphy was an avid golfer and sports enthusiast, and after selling the driving range in 1975, he opened Murph’s Sport Shop in Upper Montclair, N.J., a general sporting goods store. He operated this thriving enterprise until his retirement in 2001. Mr. Murphy is survived by his loving wife of 68 years, Georgianna, three children, four grandchildren and a great-grandchild.

**1942**

**Clement J. Lawler.** Mr. Lawler was attending New York University when he enlisted in the U.S. Army in October 1942. He served three years with the Cavalry in the European theater, earning the Purple Heart for wounds received during the Normandy invasion and a Silver Star for “gallantry in action” involving the July 1944 rescue of two fellow soldiers from a disabled tank on a French battlefield. Later in his life, Mr. Lawler worked as a broker at several northern New Jersey establishments. He was devoted to his family and a friend to many. Predeceased by his wife, Rita, and brother, Joseph Lawler ’38, Mr. Lawler is survived by five children, 18 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

**1943**

**Edwin M. Michael.** “Mike” was a three-sport varsity letterman at Blair, participating in soccer, wrestling and track, and he remained a loyal Blair man for life. He graduated from Villanova University in just two-and-a-half years with a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering. In 1946, he began a 26-year career as a U.S. Navy officer, retiring as a commander. Following his naval retirement, he launched a second career as a manager for Kamehameha schools in Hawaii, then served on the board of the Institute of Human Services. Mr. Michael and his wife, Jeanne, moved to California in 1997 and were active for the completion of the Woodbury Senior Center. Mr. Michael is survived by Jeanne, their four children and eight grandchildren.

**1947**

**John G. Voorhees.** Mr. Voorhees entered Blair in 1942 but left the following year to serve in the U.S. Navy as an aviation machinist mate during World War II. He returned to Blair in 1946, “undoubtedly one of the best things to return to campus from the war,” according to the ACTA, and graduated in 1947. Mr. Voorhees remained loyal to the School for life and greatly enjoyed attending its reunions. For over 45 years, he owned S.S. Voorhees & Sons, a greenhouse in Union, N.J., where he raised flowering potted plants to market in New York City and northern New Jersey. He was active in trade associations, including the New Jersey State Florists Association and the New York Florist Club, serving as the club’s president and helping to transition its assets into horticultural scholarships when the club dissolved. Mr. Voorhees loved to travel with Doris, his wife of 60 years, was an avid golfer and sang in the choir at both New Providence Presbyterian Church and Central Presbyterian Church in Summit, N.J. Doris, their four children and eight grandchildren survive Mr. Voorhees.

**1948**

**James W. Hall.** A varsity swimmer at Blair, Mr. Hall continued his swimming career at The College of William and Mary, where he was a member of the class of 1952. He worked...
for Pfizer Laboratories, retiring as a senior medical representative. Active in his Smithfield, Va., community, Mr. Hall was a member of the Smithfield Kiwanis Club, the Gatling Point Yacht Club, the vestry of St. John’s Episcopal Church and the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. He is survived by his loving wife of 59 years, Lillian, three daughters, seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

1952

James E. Pellett. Mr. Pellett attended Blair for his senior year of high school and was a member of the Breeze, the Rod and Reel Club, and the winter track and tennis teams. He served as U.S. Navy quartermaster aboard the USS Iowa during the Korean War and graduated from Roanoke College in 1961 with a bachelor’s degree in economics and business administration. He worked for several companies during his career, including Curtis Wright in Wood-Ridge, N.J., and Verizon in Bronx, N.Y. A boating enthusiast, Mr. Pellett was a member of the East Arm Rowing Club (Greenwood Lake, N.J.), the Sheepshead Bay Yacht Club (Brooklyn, N.Y.) and the Nereid Boat Club (Rutherford, N.J.) He is survived by his sister and several nephews and nieces.

1954

Oliver B. Zug. Mr. Zug was 1954’s class representative from 1980-2004, and he maintained close ties to his classmates and to the School that, as he said, “prepared us for the future.” A Blair Buccaneer for his junior and senior years, he managed the basketball, swimming and baseball teams. Mr. Zug matriculated at Lehigh University and served three years in the U.S. Army, assigned to the Army Security Agency in Germany. A CPA and licensed life insurance and real estate agent, he worked as chief financial officer for several grocery chains before founding the Red Carpet Travel Agency in Philadelphia and Bethlehem, Pa. Mr. Zug volunteered regularly in his community, serving as president of the Southern Lehigh Kiwanis Club, cooking meals at Victory House, and working and fundraising for the Moravian Museum. He especially enjoyed playing golf and tennis with his devoted wife of 37 years, Anne. Mr. Zug is survived by Anne, four children and five grandchildren.

1960

James E. Dillard Jr. “Always making things” is the way the 1960 ACTA described Mr. Dillard. He earned a bachelor of science degree in mechanical engineering at Vanderbilt University and enjoyed a lifelong career in engineering, beginning with aircraft engine design at Allison Transmission in Indianapolis. He eventually moved to Denver and worked for 36 years at Barber-Nichols, Inc., a firm specializing in the design and manufacture of turbines primarily for research and defense. Mr. Dillard owned a majority of the company for most of his tenure there and noted in his Blair 50th Reunion survey: “I enjoyed every day working!” A motorcycle aficionado, Mr. Dillard founded the Vintage Moto Museum in Denver. There, he displayed his collection of over 200 vintage motorcycles, many of which he restored himself, and he loved to share his passion for riding and the story behind each bike with museum visitors. Mr. Dillard dearly loved his family and was predeceased by his wife, Sandra, in May 2011. He is survived by two sons and four grandchildren, including James Dillard IV ‘09 and Logan Dillard ’13.

1966

James T. Pill. A member of the JV basketball and baseball teams at Blair, Mr. Pill matriculated at Syracuse University. He enjoyed a 20-year career with Island Oasis in Jacksonville, Fla., and was an avid sports fan. Mr. Pill is survived by his son, Jason, and his former wife, Alida.

Former Trustee

Alan N. Houghton Sr. Mr. Houghton was a member of the Blair Board of Trustees from 1966-1973. A career independent school educator, he served on the faculty of the Groton School and The Loomis Chaffee School prior to becoming headmaster of Pine Point School in Stonington, Conn., and Renbrook School in West Hartford. He was executive director of the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools until his 1989 retirement. Mr. Houghton, a Latin and ancient Greek scholar, graduated from Harvard University and did postgraduate work in the classics at Columbia University. He was a decorated World War II U.S. Army Air Corps veteran, having flown 33 missions over Europe as a B-24 bombardier-navigator. Mr. Houghton was predeceased by his wife of 56 years, Elizabeth, and is survived by four children, including Alan Houghton Jr. ’66 and seven grandchildren.
Blair Reception Held at The Union Club in New York City

On January 19, Blair welcomed more than 100 alumni, parents and guests to a reception at The Union Club in New York City. Hosted by Blair Trustee Alex Sloane ’70, the event’s featured speaker was former Assistant Headmaster Dave Low. Dr. Martin Miller moderated the discussion as Dave reflected on “Three Decades of Student Life.” Attendees enjoyed the opportunity to reconnect with Blair friends, especially Dave and Candy Low, who retired in June after 32 years at the School.

Former Assistant Headmaster Dave Low and his wife, Candy, joined 100-plus Blair alumni and friends at a New York City reception.
2012 Alumni Hockey Game

On January 28, at Skylands Ice World in Stockholm, N.J., the alumni hockey team defeated Blair’s team 12-6. An informal gathering at Tony’s Family Restaurant and Pizza Pub followed the game, and awards were presented by alumni team captain Derek Peachey ’93. MVP went to Matt Pruznick ’05, the Best Looking Award went to Jon McGrath ’03 and the Oggie Ogalthorpe Award went to Andrew Pearce ’02. It was also noted that Chris Strickland ’98 has played in 10 consecutive alumni hockey games.

Pictured from left to right (top row): Andrew Kaskel ’03, Michael McDonald ’97, Matt Pruznick ’05, Jon Gallagher ’08, Andrew Pearce ’02, Chris Strickland ’98, Corey Minerva ’06 and Jon Liegner ’80. Front row: Alex Romano ’08, John McGrath ’03, Alan Carr ’03, Jake Moore ’05, Capt. Derek Peachey ’93, Blake Cruice ’07 and Dan Kraines ’06.
Weekend Hits!

- Old Guard Luncheon
- Blair Cup Golf Scramble
- Classes without Quizzes
  Attend a class led by one of our talented teachers!
- Alumni Memorial Service
- Friday Night Class Parties
- 5K Run
- Blair’s Version of THE VIEW
  A take-off of ABC’s popular morning talk and entertainment program. We’ll give it our own spin—celebrating over 40 years of women at Blair.
- Traditional Alumni Parade
- Headmasters Assembly & Alumni Awards Presentation
- Picnic with Live Entertainment & Children’s Activities
- Alumnae Softball Game
  In celebration of Carolyn Conforti-Browse ’79’s 25th year of coaching softball at Blair!
- Alumni Lacrosse Game
- Young Alumni Art Show & Reception
  A group exhibition featuring the art of five Blair alumni: Natessa Amin ’06, Meredith Habermann ’04, Hannah Kirkpatrick ’07, Henry Kozinski ’07 and Justin Lubliner ’05.
- Headmaster’s Cocktail Reception
- All-Alumni Dinner & Dancing to the Good Times Band!

For the full weekend schedule and online registration go to:
www.blair.edu/Alumni
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