

THE BLACH BANNER



BLACH INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

1120 COVINGTON ROAD
LOS ALTOS, CA 94024

(650) 934-3800

WWW.BLACHSCHOOL.ORG

March, 2007

IMPORTANT DATES

Mar 6	7 th Grade STAR writing sample test
Mar 6	Parent Connection, 6.45pm to 8.30pm Blach Library
Mar 7	7 th Grade Concert, 7.30pm
Mar 8	8 th Grade Concert, 7.30pm
Mar 15	8 th Grade writing test PTA Meeting, 7.30pm

IN THIS ISSUE....

- LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL
- THE COUNSELOR'S CORNER
- PTA PRESIDENTS' LETTER
- PARENT CONNECTION
- BLACH ANNUAL SERVICE AWARDS
-AND MORE



*Need to Get Your
Message Out?*

April Banner Deadline:
March 16th

Submit articles to:
Heather Lattanzi
hlattanzi@sbcglobal.net

You are invited to attend

Blach School's
Parent Connection

Parent Connection is an informal gathering of parents and teachers who meet to discuss pertinent topics related to our children. The forum for the meeting is one of group discussion. Our goal is to understand the issues that our children are facing in middle school, so that we can be better prepared to help them. The meetings are for adults only and no RSVP is required.

Date: Tuesday, March 6, 2007

Time: 6:45pm Refreshments
7:00-8:15 pm Meeting
8:15 pm Informal discussion

Location: Arthur S. Harris Library and Media Center

Session 4:

INTERNET ISSUES

**Faculty joining us this session:
Mr. Jeremy Liewer and Dr. Sharon Moerner
And a LAPD internet specialist officer**

Topics we will discuss this session:

- What's out there?
- Parental monitoring/how to evaluate web sites
- Local internet issues

Questions call: Suzanne Frank at smfamm@earthlink.net or 968-2075

Letter from the Principal

Dear Parents,

Recently, Blach has undergone some changes in the way we can communicate with you about your child's progress in school as well as to inform you about upcoming events and programs. We are very excited about these changes and we hope that you are benefiting from them too.

The first change occurred in late November when we began piloting the Parent/student portal in Powerschool with a few select teachers. This portal allows parents and students to log onto Powerschool to view a teacher's grade book. Due to the success of the pilot, we opened it up to every parent and student in the school. If you have not received the letter with your password and directions about how to log onto the site, please contact our secretary, Judy Azzarello at 934-3800.

In early February, I was given a mass email list containing, hopefully, all of our parents' email addresses. I sent my first mass distribution email out to our parent community and it was received very positively. If your email address has changed or you did not receive the mass message from me, please email your correct information at lcrane@blachschool.org. My goal is to send out an email to our parent community once a week with updates about events and programs that are happening at our school.

Finally, thanks to the efforts of two wonderful Blach parents, Phil Levy and Raju Joshi, we have updated our school's website. It is slick, cool and informative. As an added bonus, the daily bulletin will be posted on the new site. The daily bulletin is the "heart and soul" of information about our daily operations. I hope you take the time in the upcoming days and weeks to visit our new web site.

Overall, we are very proud of the new avenues of communication that have been created this year. Please take advantage of them to learn more about your child's progress and upcoming events and programs at Blach School.

Respectfully,
Leslie Crane
Principal

8th Grade Girls Basketball

The 8th grade girl's basketball team had a winning season. Every girl showed improvement and further development of their basketball skills. The team was able to execute an effective full court press in many of their games. They made it into the playoffs and lost in the semifinals to Miller, the team that went on to win the championship. Many thanks to Alan Wada for coaching the girls this season.

Roster: Malia Allen, Allie Ballesteros, Katie Kobashigawa, Sarah Magee, Susannah More, Michelle Phillips, Jasmin Roley, Kelsey Sawamura, Emily Sitler, Cailey Stuebner, Sarah Wada and Ally Watanabe.

Attention 8th Grade Parents

We need your help!

Preparations for the *8th Grade Graduation Celebration* are in the beginning stages.

Get involved in this spectacular event and help create a memorable evening for our 8th graders to take with them to high school.

This celebration is the “finale” to our kids’ middle school years. Let’s make it special to them.

Please join us on Tuesday **March 6th at 9:00 a.m.** in the **Annex Room**, located behind the Library, to take part in this “top secret” event. The kids are sure to be surprised.

Thank you,

Dana Bolognini & Kandice Righetti
Co-chairs

THE COUNSELOR'S CORNER

STAR testing is upon us already. The STAR seventh grade writing sample is scheduled for Tuesday, March 6th. The make-ups for the writing sample are March 7th. On March 15th, our eighth grade students will take a writing sample test developed by the high schools. Results of that writing test are reported to the high school English departments. Please try not to schedule doctor's appointments during the writing samples. We create a separate schedule for each day that we test so that students are allotted the appropriate amount of time for the test and also attend each of their seven periods. For the writing sample, testing starts at about 8:45 am. While the seventh graders are writing up a storm, the eighth graders will spend some time with the Mountain View High School Ambassadors, upper class men who volunteer to help orient incoming students. Their visit gives our eighth grade students a chance to ask questions about high school and receive answers from other teenagers. This will be the second year that the Ambassadors have come to campus to visit with our eighth graders.

The rest of the STAR testing will occur towards the end of April. More specific information about those testing dates will appear in the next issue of the Banner. Make sure your children are well rested and have a good breakfast before they arrive for testing! I am confident that our students will handle all this testing with ease!

Today, a parent of a student who is now in 5th grade came to see me with questions about how to prepare her child for junior high. I am used to 6th grade parents asking that question but was surprised to hear from a parent of a 5th grader. She asked me if it was true that her child might not get into college because he or she was in grade level math and wondered if she should start tutoring for her child in math so he could move up. I asked her where she heard this information and she told me that she had heard it from several parents. I corrected her misperceptions by letting her know that her son could certainly get into college if he remained in grade level math and that I did not think it was a good idea to arrange additional tutoring in math so he could move up to get into college.

This exchange reminded me of some wisdom I learned from a supervisor I had early in my career. He told me that one strategy he often used working with parents was to encourage them to not "borrow trouble" from the future. In this instance, that would be to not worry about college entrance when a child is only in 5th grade. He would have said that the family should focus on their child's needs in this time frame - what does the child need to be successful in 5th grade for the rest of this year and, perhaps, for 6th grade. I remember attending a parent meeting when my children were one month into their freshman year of high school. The counselors were talking about what parents needed to be doing to help their students prepare for the college entrance process. A parent of one of my daughters' friends leaned over to me and whispered, "College? I'm worried about how we are going to get through freshman year!" Perhaps the best approach to the "worrying-too-much-into-the future" disease is to do what that parent knew to do - whatever the issue, take a deep breath and focus on what you know about your son or daughter, what their strengths and weaknesses are now, and then define a problem relevant to the present time frame and not the future. Child-rearing, like many things in life, is about tackling one problem, resolving that, seeing what emerges next, dealing with that, and so on. Trying to take action about a problem that may develop years into the future skips a lot of steps along the way and presupposes that one's journey will end in the problem one is imagining will emerge. Frankly, it may not emerge as a problem depending on how things play out along the journey.

This advice is particularly applicable to parents dealing with teenagers. Just because a teen acts one way does not mean that they will continue to act that way as they progress through the teenage years. The teenage years are a time when children try on the values, beliefs, and thoughts of others. And, I mean, literally, try them on. Many of those "new clothes" will be discarded as the teenager moves on toward their more adult thoughts and beliefs. Dealing with teenage issues requires a lot of thought on the part of a parent. How to handle certain situations is not always obvious. Extra thought, deep breaths, and not borrowing trouble are part of the tool kit that helps us deal with teen issues.

Please do remember that you can come in and talk with me about any of these teenage issues at any time. Sometimes it helps to think out loud with another person not that involved with your family. Feel free to call me at 934-3815.

Judy Rothenberg, M.Ed., Ph.D.

GRACIAS AND MERCI TO ALL MARDI GRAS VOLUNTEERS

Thank you to the wonderful group of parent volunteers who made the recent Mardi Gras celebration for the 8th grade French and Spanish classes a huge success. It was a very busy and fun filled day for all the kids, Señor Lopez and Madame Wade. The students did a wonderful job performing skits for each other in either French or Spanish and enjoyed a lunch served by parent volunteers. The day ended with a Salsa dancing lesson. Thank you to all who volunteered-Kim and Owen Halliday, Vicki Levy, Virginie Metivier, Jayne Nilles, Lisa Cornelius, Vicki Moore, Carol Eder, Adelle and Henry Moore, Yoav Agmon, Basia Baney, Suzanne Montgomery, Noah Grant, John Gatta, Sue Godfrey, Peggy Tsai, Bryn Stuebner, Mary Magee, Lynn Fletcher, Judy Blumenstein, Julie Oslan, Missy Robinson, Vicki Schultz and Sherri Luther. A special thanks to Humberto for all his wonderful assistance in set up and tear down and to Peggy Benenato and Lauren Ward for helping us to coordinate the hot lunch for the day.

Mardi Gras Co-Chairs,
Mary Belinsky and Kari Lewis

Letter from PTA Presidents

Dear Blach Community,

We hope everyone had an enjoyable Winter Break and has returned thoroughly energized.

Thank you to everyone who participated in Safety Appreciation Day on February 9. Safety is of paramount importance to all of us in the Blach community and we value those men and women who serve as crossing guards for our students.

Another big thank you goes to **Nan Bajka** who provided the fantastic cookies for our January and February PTA meetings.

The PTA Nominating Committee, facilitated by Parliamentarian **Debbie Torok**, has been working hard to put together a PTA Board for next year. If you receive a call from a committee member, please thoughtfully consider the possibility of volunteering. Serving on the Board is a rewarding and fun experience.

Many thanks to **Kari Lewis** and **Mary Belinsky** for coordinating the Spanish and French classes' Mardi Gras celebration on February 13.

Come celebrate the progress of Blach instrumental music students with concerts for the 7th grade on March 7th and the 8th grade for March 8th. They are gearing up for their upcoming competitions at Magic Mountain and Disneyland respectively.

The next PTA meeting is March 15 at 7:30 p.m. in the library. Hope to see you there.

Trish and Pam

PTA Co-Presidents

SOS Stressed-Out Students (Denise Pope Clark's ,LASD's recent seminar speaker,research and intervention project at the Stanford University School of Education)

Friday May 11 7:30-9:30 Kresge Auditorium,Stanford University

A free plenary session,open to the public feature two nationally acclaimed speakers and authors:
Dr. Madeline Levine(author of The Price of Privilege) and Dr. Wendy Mogel (author of The Blessing of a Skinned Knee)

" With a rise in recent years in the number of students seeking mental health services,an increase in cheating behavior in school ,and students' consistent worry about academic achievement, we feel it is time to bring the community together to address and counter problems associated with academic stress"

RSVP to sosconference@stanford.edu

***H.E.L.P. – How to Enjoy Living with a Preadolescent
Thursday, March 1st, 7pm in the Graham MUR***

Nearly all middle level learners between the ages of 10-15 go through a wide variety of changes during their preadolescent years. Their bodies are changing. Their attitudes and values change. Their relationships change, and even their intellectual processes change during this period. Whether it's hormones, brain growth or social development: Middle level learners are a unique group! Parents and teachers alike want to provide the best school and home environments to ensure a successful transition to their young adult years.

Graham Middle School PTA is bringing nationally-known educator and consultant, Judith Baenen, to HELP!

Judith Baenen, parent, educator, administrator, author and consultant has been an advocate and activist for middle grades students and their families since 1985. She has presented educational programs, teacher in-service training, and student assemblies in more than 350 districts world-wide. She is the author of *H.E.L.P. – How to Enjoy Living with a Preadolescent*, *More H.E.L.P.* and *H.E.L.P. for Teachers*.

Join other parents to hear how you, too can enjoy living with your preadolescent on March 1st at 7pm in the Graham MUR.

Sponsored by the Graham Middle School PTA.

***H.E.L.P. – Como disfrutar viviendo con un/a preadolescente.
Jueves, 1 de marzo a las 7pm en el MUR de Graham***

Más o menos todos los aprendices del nivel de la escuela intermedia entre las edades de 10 a 15 años pasan por un periodo con una gran variedad de cambios durante sus años preadolescentes. Sus cuerpos están cambiando. Sus aptitudes y valores cambian, Sus relaciones cambian e inclusive sus procesos intelectuales cambian durante este periodo. Sean las hormonas, el crecimiento del cerebro o el desarrollo social, los aprendices del nivel de la escuela intermedia son un grupo único. Los padres de familia y los maestros quieren proveer los mejores ambientes en la escuela y en casa para asegurar una transición exitosa a sus años de jóvenes adultos.

La PTA de la Escuela Intermedia Graham va a traer una educadora y consultora conocida nacionalmente, Judith Baenen, para que AYUDE.

Judith Baenen, madre, educadora, administradora, autora y consultora ha sido una abogada y activista para los estudiantes de los grados intermedios y sus familias desde 1985. Ella ha presentado los programas educativos, entrenado a los maestros y presentado en asambleas en más de 350 distritos del mundo entero. Es la autora de *H.E.L.P. – How to Enjoy Living with a Preadolescent*, *More H.E.L.P.* y *H.E.L.P. for Teachers*.

Unanse a otros padres de familia para escuchar como usted también puede disfrutar viviendo con un/a preadolescente. Tendrá lugar el 1 de marzo a las 7pm en el MUR de Graham.

Programado por la *PTA de la Escuela Intermedia Graham*.

BOY'S 8TH GRADE SOCCER TIE FOR FIRST PLACE!

The 8th grade boy's soccer team had a great season. All the players except two were returning players from the 7th grade team. They had good team chemistry and played very well together. After making it to the playoffs-they beat Kennedy in the quarterfinals and Egan in the semi finals. They faced the undefeated Cupertino Middle School team in the final game on Feb 5th. After battling back and forth the whole game with terrific efforts by all the players the score was 0-0. The game went to 4 overtime periods of 5 minutes each and still the game remained scoreless. The decision was made to let the game remain a tie . So, Blach tied for first place as co-champions with Cupertino. It was an exciting end to a successful season.

Thank you to Mr. Spenader for working with the boys as head coach and Ignatius Bezzam as the assistant coach.

Team roster: Eric Bezzam, Zachary Blumenstein, Zach Burns, Bret Cisneros, Rob Davy, Robby Gamble, Keldon Godfrey, Riley Hanley, Jay Herington, Mack Kelly, Garrett Landrith, Nick Luther, Tyler Officer, Alex Plamondon, Julien Roth and Daniel Won

7th Grade Girls' Basketball Team

The 7th grade girls' basketball team had a great season! The girls played very well as a team and each one made significant improvements over the season in their individual positions as well. The team made it to the playoffs with their final win, but lost in round one to Sunnyvale. A huge thanks to Mrs. Koren for her patience, game knowledge and commitment to the team throughout the season.

Basketball Roster: Candice Call, Taylor Deaton, Rachel Fish, Jessica Ghana, Morgan Healy, Aditi Jain, Maya Ladenheim, Lauren Lundquist, Elize Manikin, Ruchita Pendse, Mia Reified, Alexandria Vargas, Sarah Youlton.

Blach "C" Team Places 3rd!

The "C" Girls Basketball team placed 3rd in this year's league competition. They advanced as far as the Semi Finals, with a 9 - 3 record.

The team, comprised of Marisa Chao, Lynne Christopher, Alyssa de la Vega, Sophia Horowitz, Natalie Kato, Anna Morrow, Grace Ng, Krissy Sansone, Natalie Skaff, Sarah Thornton, Kara Trammel, and Devon Zuegel, was coached by Albert Lam. All season their play was marked by gritty determination and great sportsmanship.

Congratulations "C" team on a great season!!!

Scholastic TAB Book Order Update -- Online Ordering Now Available!

Thank you for your support of the Scholastic TAB book order program at Blach. Your purchases help to earn free books and educational materials for our school. The English teachers have already received a new class set of books for use in their literature circles, and we are hoping to select additional titles for this program before the end of the school year.

Book order flyers will continue to be distributed to students each month in their homeroom class and are due a week later. Once an order is placed, books are distributed to the students approximately two weeks later.

Please note that the majority of the fulfilled orders are returned to students during their 3rd period class, with only the largest orders held in the office for after school pickup. If students are unable to fit their orders in their backpacks, or if they feel that the books are too heavy to carry throughout the school day, please encourage them to leave their book orders on the "lunch pickup" table in the office during brunch, so that they can be retrieved after school.

Families are now able to view the current Scholastic TAB flyer at any time through a special Blach School ordering page. Parents also can place book club orders online using their credit card for payment. Order information will be accessible to me, so that I may distribute students' books when they arrive, but all credit card information will go directly to Scholastic's secure server.

To access the Scholastic ordering page for Blach School, go to the Scholastic webpage listed below and enter the specified user name and password information:

www.scholastic.com/parentordering

Class User Name: blachschool

Password: losaltos

For your convenience, a link to this page has also been added on the Blach School homepage.

For families wishing to submit payment by check, we will continue to accept hardcopy order forms in the Blach School office. Please make checks payable to "Scholastic Book Clubs" and note the homeroom teacher on the order form to simplify routing the student order back to the classroom. Please do NOT submit cash payment with your order.

If you have questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to let me know.

Shari Chao

Blach PTA Schoastic TAB Book Order Chair

shari_chao@yahoo.com

Blach Annual Service Awards

Can you help us uncover those individuals deserving special recognition for their outstanding contribution to Blach students? Do you know of someone who has worked tirelessly, either behind-the-scenes or in a highly visible position? In keeping with tradition, the Blach PTA would like to recognize and honor these special individuals at the annual Service Awards Luncheon in May. Please take a moment to fill out this nomination form and return it to the 1st VP folder in the office by March 31st.

Please give us any information you can on what this person(s) has/have accomplished at Blach. Please list any other people who might be able to provide us with further information about your nominees(s).

Thanks! (Nominations can also be sent via email to Lara Daetz at ddaetz@hotmail.com please include the following information in your email).

I would like to nominate the following individual(s) for their outstanding service to the Blach community.

Please give us any information you can on what this person(s) has/have accomplished at Blach.

Please list any other people who might be able to provide us with further information about your nominee(s).

Questions? Please call Lara Daetz at 961-1558 or email to ddaetz@hotmail.com.

RETURN THIS FORM TO THE 1st VP FOLDER IN THE OFFICE BY MARCH 31st.
THANKS!