

# The Blach Banner



## BLACH INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

1120 COVINGTON ROAD  
LOS ALTOS, CA 94024  
(650) 934-3800

*If you have not received your Banner by the beginning of the month, you can always read it online at [www.blachschool.org](http://www.blachschool.org)*

February 2008

### UPCOMING DATES

Feb 1 Annual semi-formal LAYC dance  
Feb 5 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Mardi Gras  
Feb 6 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Strings at MVLH  
Feb 8 Dance  
Feb 12 Crossing Guard Appreciation Day  
Feb 18-22 Winter Break  
Feb 28 7:30 pm PTA meeting  
Mar 7 LAYC dance

### In This Issue..

- Letter from the Principal
- Letter from PTA Co-presidents
- Highway To High School

And much more.....

### March Banner Deadline: March 15th.

Submit articles to:  
Heather Lattanzi

[hlattanzi@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hlattanzi@sbcglobal.net)

*Electronic copy preferred.  
Thanks.*

## Letter from the Principal

Dear Parents,

Blach's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration will take place on Friday, April 25, 4:30 – 7:00 PM. This will be a very exciting celebration that will include chorus, drama, band and orchestra performances. We will have food, speeches, tours of the campus and I movies depicting the various decades of our school. Congressman Ira Ruskin will also be at this event to present Blach with a proclamation from the state of California. I encourage you to mark your calendars now because you will not want to forget this once in a lifetime event.

On another calendar note, the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students are taking the STAR Writing Test on Tuesday, March 4. It is important that all 7<sup>th</sup> grade students attend school on that day. With regard to the rest of STAR testing, our students will be taking those tests at the end of April into the first part of May. When we know the exact testing window, we will let you know if a future banner.

On behalf of the staff, we will wish a fun and relaxing winter break and we will see you back on February 25.

Warm Regards,  
Leslie Crane  
Principal

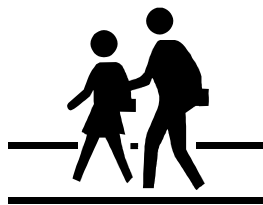
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## Crossing Guard Appreciation Day

### Tuesday, February 12th

Show a gesture of gratitude to a Crossing Guard with a homemade treat, a card of thanks or a thumbs up.

Blach has three crossing guards location which provide our students with safe access to school. These wonderful guards can be found at Portland/Carmel, Miramonte/Covington & Oak/Grant.



## From the PTA Co-Presidents



Dear Parents,

By the time this edition of the Banner reaches you, many of you will be thinking about transitions to high school while others can relax, briefly, knowing that next year will bring new challenges in a familiar setting. Either way, it's nice to take a break from looking too far forward and realize there are many exciting events still to come *this* year. On April 25<sup>th</sup> Blach will celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and our community will come together to look at the past and be impressed by our school today. All students who are involved in performing arts at Blach will play a role in the performances that day. Our band and orchestra students are thrilled about the debut of Blach's commissioned piece, "Festival of the Falcon". The students have been able to learn about the process of composing and have even used software to write a piece of their own as an assignment from Mrs. McNulty.

Starting this month, we will be giving you a progress report one of our PTA Goals:

### **Support staff, principal, students and curriculum enrichment.**



- *Purchase additional equipment to further enhance classroom instruction. (i.e. monitors, laptops, projectors, document cameras, desk top computers)*
- *Provide supplemental funds to support core curriculum and elective classroom expenses.*

Blach technology experienced a huge upgrade as the PTA gave all teachers a standard set of technology tools to enhance our students' learning experience. PTA purchases included 16 Apple computers, 16 LCD projectors, and 13 document cameras for the Blach staff. PTA has also funded the Blach TV network. Every classroom (with the exception of the PE locker rooms and the office due to a District installation delay) now has the capability to view live broadcasts. Blach TV has made its 2<sup>nd</sup> video broadcast and their first live broadcast is in the works.

PTA provides \$1500 to each core curriculum department, \$500 to electives, and \$1500 to Special Education. These dollars are used by each department at their discretion. Examples of department purchases include: VCRs, digital cameras, literature, math & engineer books, iPods, etc.

These are just a few ways your PTA monetary support and volunteering have already made a difference to our school.

Debbie Torok  
[torok111@aol.com](mailto:torok111@aol.com)

Lara Daetz  
[ddaetz@hotmail.com](mailto:ddaetz@hotmail.com)

### **Your PTA Dollars at Work**

Teacher Math Conference	\$ 243	Drama Plays	\$ 121
Engineering Text Books	\$ 241	Redwood Benches	\$ 700
Classroom DVD players	\$ 388	for Science Quad	
Bleachers for Sports Events	\$ 2,992	Technology	\$ 51,600
Basketball Equipment,	\$ 2,599	Instruments	\$ 1,200
Canopies, Training Platforms			

# BlachBuster Book Club

In this issue of the Banner we'll be recognizing our February Birthdays and August Half-Birthdays. We've been able to purchase a number of books to add to our research collection as you'll see in the titles of the new books listed below for our August birthdays. A huge thank you to all of our Blachbuster Book Club members for their support of the Blach Library!

## February Birthdays

Jennifer Adachi – Shug by Jenny Han  
Sarah Bay – Lirael by Garth Nix  
Michaela Carson – Poetry for Young People Collection  
Francesca Ciacchella – Legends or Lies? By Gary L. Blackwood  
Emily Fischer – Tanglewreck by Jeanette Winterson  
Jenny Gordon – The Counterfeit Princess by Jane Resh Thomas  
Nick Lillie – The Secret of Platform 13 by Eva Ibbotson  
Andrew Liu – The Sea of Monsters by Rick Riordan  
Cameron Lynch – Peter and the Starcatchers by Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson  
Francisco Mires – Poetry for Young People Collection  
Jai Padmakumar – The Fetch by Chris Humphreys  
Rebecca Shipper – Keeping the Moon by Sarah Dessen  
Marc Toney – Across the Wall by Garth Nix  
Keaton Torok – Nightrise by Anthony Horowitz  
Abbey Yacoe – Shakespeare's Secret by Elise Broach  
Tara Ahi – A Northern Light by Jennifer Donnelly

## August Birthdays

Kevin Bastoul – The Far Side Gallery  
Thomas Chen – Painless Grammar by Rebecca Elliot  
Kyle Fitz – The Emergence of Modern America (1890-1930) Presidents of the U.S.  
Faith Furuichi – Cleopatra Ruler of Egypt by Kerrily Sapet  
Stephanie Lin – Eleanor of Aquitaine Medieval Queen by Kerrily Sapet  
Sam Hacker – John Paul Jones America's Sailor by Bruce L. Brager  
Matthew Ishii – Development of the Industrial U.S. (1870-1890) Presidents of the U.S.  
Jeffery Persons – California Gold Rush Glimpses II by Craig & Franklin MacDonald  
Nick Sinchek – The Progressive Party by Hilarie Staton  
Naomi Stolpner – Civil War Doctor the Story of Mary Walker by Carla Joinson  
Jacquelyn Walker-Caginia – Alphabet of Dreams by Susan Fletcher  
Andrew Knochenhauer – Post-War U.S. (1945-early 1970's) Presidents of the U.S.  
Isabelle Lefebvre – Women of the Sea by Myra Weatherly  
Vivian Li – The White Dragon by Anne McCaffrey  
Madhuri Rao – Contemporary United States (1968-Present) Presidents of the U.S.  
Sean Rapp – Expansion and Reform (Early 1800s-1861) Presidents of the U.S.  
Mark Lund – Revolution and the New Nation (1750s-Early 1800s) Presidents of the U.S.

If you have questions or would like to join the Blachbuster Book Club please contact Lara Daetz at [ddaetz@hotmail.com](mailto:ddaetz@hotmail.com).



## *Life Skills, Transition to Work, School, and Vocational Training*

presented by

***Nicole Heaps, MVHS life skills teacher***

***Kim Jackson, MVLA Work Ability Coordinator***

***Scott Blow, manager at San Andreas Regional Center***

What will be the key issues your child will face after high school graduation? Come hear about the high school life skills curriculum. Learn about an array of services that lead to a successful student transition to employment & post graduation programs. This talk will address the needs of students who are unlikely to go to a four year college or who might go to college but will need substantial assistance to make an effective transition.

**Wednesday, March 19, 2008**

Hospitality 6:45pm

Meeting – 7 to 9 pm

Covington Elementary School, Multipurpose Room

205 Covington Rd

Los Altos

This parent education event is sponsored by the SELPA 1 CAC ([www.selpa1cac.org](http://www.selpa1cac.org)) an all-volunteer group of parents of children with special needs. Our service area includes all public school districts in Los Altos, Mountain View, and Palo Alto. All of our events are free and open to anyone who feels they might benefit. No registration is necessary.

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**Blach's First Scholastic Book Fair** will take place on April 23rd, 24th and 25th. (Details in the March Banner.) If you haven't previously signed up and want to help, please contact Shari Chao ([shari\\_chao@yahoo.com](mailto:shari_chao@yahoo.com)) or Heather Grillo ([grilloh@comcast.net](mailto:grilloh@comcast.net))

# Highway to High School

When signing up for classes for their 8<sup>th</sup> graders, many parents have questions about AP or Honors classes versus regular classes. Here are some answers:

## What are AP and Honors classes?

AP (Advanced Placement) Courses – College level courses offered at a high school setting using national curriculum. An AP exam is given in the spring. Students who score 3 or higher (out of 5) pass the exam and may be eligible for college credit. (Colleges have individual policies for awarding full, partial, or no credit for AP courses taken in high school.) AP classes receive weighted credit.

Honors Courses – Courses that are taught at the high school level but move at a faster pace, cover more material, and require more homework. Not all honors classes receive weighted credit. No freshman honors courses are weighted.

Both MVHS and LAHS have an open enrollment policy for taking AP or Honors classes, meaning that there are no specific grade requirements that students must meet to take Honors/AP classes. Students may transfer out of an Honors/AP class if they discover that it is more work than expected, however the window of time to make the transition is limited to a few weeks after the start of the school year, and there are no guarantees that there will be room in the regular college-prep level classes for a given subject. (Students may withdraw from the course later in the year, but the withdrawal will show on their transcript.) Students are encouraged to think carefully about the amount of academic challenge and homework they're prepared to handle before signing up for multiple Honors/AP classes.

Freshmen have limited options in advanced coursework. No AP classes are offered to Freshmen. At Mountain View High, Freshmen can take Geometry Honors, Chemistry Honors, and Spanish II Honors. At LAHS, Freshmen can take Geometry Honors and Spanish II Honors.

## What are weighted grades?

MVHS and LAHS calculate a student's GPA in two ways: unweighted and weighted. Both GPAs appear on the student's official transcript. Weighted classes receive an extra point in the weighted GPA calculation. For example, a "B" in AP English would be worth 3.0 unweighted, 4.0 weighted. UCs consider weighted grades for the sophomore and junior years. Other colleges have their own policies regarding weighted versus unweighted GPAs.

Weighted grades do not appear on a student's report card, and they do not alter the actual letter grade earned in a class.

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## Hot Lunch Service Volunteers needed

Our Hot Lunch Service starts the second session on Jan 28th. Thank you for your orders!

We need one or two more people to help out for the remainder of the year.

All that is needed is your time for 45 minutes once every two weeks to help serve lunch to our hungry kids!

It's fun and frantic and an opportunity to see your student in the school environment.

We are particularly looking for a new volunteer to help out every other Friday.

If you would like to sign up, please contact Maggie Lesslie at [blach-lunch@jungherr.org](mailto:blach-lunch@jungherr.org)

We look forward to welcoming you to the Hot Lunch Team!

# **Blach Calendar, February 2008 Edition**

## February 2008

Feb 18-22 Winter Break  
Feb 28 7:30 pm PTA meeting

## March 2008

Mar 7 LAYC dance  
Mar 20 Minimum Day  
Mar 20 9:00 am PTA meeting (announce  
nominating committee  
nominations)

## April 2008

April 14-18 Spring Break  
April 23-25 Book Fair  
April 24 7:30 pm PTA meeting (election)  
April 25 Falcon Fest, Blach 50th Reunion  
Open House  
April 26 Junior Olympics (elementary  
schools)

## May 2008

May 9 7th Grade Band Trip  
May 12 Minimum Day  
May 15 9:00 am PTA meeting  
May 16 8th Grade Band Trip  
May 26 Memorial Day - No School

## June 2008

June 5 Band Concert  
June 6 Minimum Day  
June 10 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Raging Waters Trip  
June 11 Last Day of School/Graduation

