When in Rome . . . Androcles and the Lion
by James Sharp

Androcles and the Lion, the fourth Junior School production, highlighted the talents of many people. Dr. Seay, the phenomenal director, assembled an impressive group of actors, actresses, and technicians. Everyone executed his or her role very well to make for an enjoyable theater experience for the audiences of all three shows.

These students turned in extraordinary performances: Colin Caldwell, the thoughtful, persistent Androcles; Cecilia Bellet, the self-centered, complaining Hermione; Vince Panvini, the intimidating, yet comical, lion; Jackson Crook, the bossy aide to Caesar; Andrew Scott, the maniacal Caesar; Mark Lowe, a greedy, self-serving slave dealer; Mattison Asher, the humorous flunky; and Emma McCurdy as Diana, a slave who sings of her love for Marcus. The slaves and soldiers also contributed to the musical’s entertainment. In addition, eighth-grade English teacher, Mrs. Carole Pettus, portrayed the bossy, angry mother of Hermione. Kevin Wang’s musical talents were a highlight of each performance.

All of the cast members were able to memorize their many lines and songs to perfection, and they also performed them in a way that was comical and fun to watch. Another amazing

Continued on page 2
fact about this play is that the cast and crew started rehearsing after Christmas break, giving them less than a month to get the show ready for presentation.

Students who attended the play or were involved in it had positive reactions. Jack Emerson said, “Androcles and the Lion was a perfect blend of comedy and drama.” Will McFadden remarked, “The Junior School play of Androcles and the Lion was a phenomenal production that was well organized and directed.” I must say that I agree with Jack and Will.
Androcles and the Lion

“Ladies, call me at 1-800-EMPEROR!”

The IRS hunts down Colin for back taxes.

“The burning question: Will Joe remember his one line?”

“Get back, Jo Jo!”

“Attention: Caesar’s grocery list!”
A Techie’s View

by Parrish Preston

Recently, twenty-four cast members and eleven crew members worked daily for several weeks to get Androcles and the Lion ready to present. Now, I’ll tell you, even from a tech’s point of view, one month to get this job done was not an easy task. From day one, the directors had to block each scene, and the cast had to repeat line after line, all while listening to Dr. Seay’s harsh directions such as, “No, Colin, from stage left!” or “Vince, I know you can roar louder than that!” I’m not saying actors have it easier than the tech crew. Colin, for example, had to memorize about 400 lines and sing eight songs. Every actor and actress did a fantastic job with his or her part, and hats are off to each one.

For crew, Saturdays were tech calls. The crew was responsible for producing the set. Bright and early at 10:00 a.m., we were painting benches, using power tools, or doing whatever was needed. The stage crew, led by floor managers John Mellow and Hunter Crabtree, was responsible for moving set pieces for every single scene change, every show. Within thirty seconds or less, they somehow managed to get the set moved quickly and efficiently. During shows, I was up in the booth talking on my headset to the rest of the crew, giving light cues, sound cues, changing slides, and making sure the actors looked good on stage. It is essential that floor and booth crews are on the same page and work well together. However, it is even more important that the actors mesh, making sure their lines are correct and picking up on the right cues.

If you ever wonder if you should be in a future play, especially seventh graders, I highly recommend the experience. It may sound intense the way I’ve presented it, but I speak on behalf of the cast and crew: we all somehow found a way to make it enjoyable. Now the eighth graders have finished their final performance in the Junior School and prepare for the next level of high school plays. Come out and support the arts at MBA!
Androcles and the Lion

Touchdown at the Colosseum

Men in Black--behind the scenes

Rush hour in Rome

“Now, Mark knows how to bellow!”

“I could do this in my sleep.”
ON THE HILL

Geography Genius

by Robert Papel

This year’s Geography Bee, emceed by Mr. Russ, took place from January 13 to the 16. Geography Bee, the geo bee for short, is a national test taken annually by thousands of students in the fourth through eighth grades. It is sponsored by the National Geographic Society.

In the geo bee this year at MBA, seven seventh graders and eighteen eighth graders started off in the preliminary rounds. Each student had seven questions, going one at a time, giving the answer aloud. The types of questions varied per round. For example, one round of questions was about what geographical feature is in a certain state. The questions then went to knowledge of the entire globe. This round ended the preliminary competition.

The semi-final round came next. After every student had answered, the top ten students continued in the competition. A tiebreaker round was needed to decide the last three spots of the top ten. In the end, these students made the final round: Davis Lovvorn, Sam Weien, Hayden Deakins, Tom Kaiser, Robert Papel, McKay Proctor, Jack Wagster, Galen Bullington, McLean Hudson, and Bradley Long. From this point on, if a student missed two questions, he was eliminated. During this round, everyone was given a different question, but participants were each given a map as an aid, and they had to write down their final answers. The ten started to dwindle. During the next round, each student was given the same question, and contestants had to write down the answer. These questions were more difficult, i.e. what state is Daytona Beach in? More contestants were eliminated, until two smart geographers, Sam Weien and Tom “Tree” Kaiser, were the only ones left.

The next questions were even more difficult. Sam and Tom were both given the same three questions simultaneously, and they wrote down their answers. Tom Kaiser pulled it off, winning the geo bee for the second year in a row, and thus became the first two-time winner ever at MBA. Tom will next take a written standardized test that, hopefully, will qualify him to go to the state bee; if Tom does well enough in that round, he will go to the National Geography Bee in Washington, D.C. in the summer.

The Geography Bee this year was a success, and the students who participated had a great time testing their knowledge of geographic features.

Robert Papel, Falkner Werkhaven, Tate Ramsden, and Jody Gorham present a check for $400 to Cindy Weiss and Lucy of the Cheatham County Animal Awareness Foundation. These students represent Mr. Spiegl’s homeroom; they raised the donation during their holiday bake sale.
Spelling Bee
by Davis Lovvorn

The 2009 Junior School Spelling Bee started off with a meeting in Massey Commons. Most people probably attended only because Ms. Vaughan offered a Laffy Taffy for showing up! The people who signed up then went to the preliminary rounds in Ms. Vaughan’s room. Mostly eighth graders filled the room, but there were some seventh graders here and there. Easy words were given at first, and some people missed those and had to leave. The words became more challenging, and more people were eliminated. Five contestants remained: Colin Caldwell, Armand Jhala, Penn Murfee, Galen Bullington, and Davis Lovvorn. Armand and Colin were the next to go. That left Galen, Penn, and Davis. The three went through a round. Galen was the only one to get a word correct, so he was the winner and the first contestant to get to go to the county bee at Trevecca. Penn and Davis battled it out for another five rounds of intense spelling. Finally, Davis beat Penn, qualifying him for the county bee with Galen.

CREATIVE WRITING CONTESTS: WIN MONEY!

Jesse Hill Ford Short Story Contest
Who: 7th and 8th graders
What: Short story composed during the current school year
Length: 3-8 pages, double-spaced
Prize: The best short story wins $150!
Due: Wed., April 8

Turn in a printed copy and also e-mail a copy to Mrs. Pettus (8th) or Mrs. Roberts (7th).

The Rascoe Bond Davis Creative Writing Contest
Categories: Poetry and Fiction
Prizes in both categories: 1st $50
2nd $35
3rd $10

Turn in a printed copy and also e-mail a copy to Mrs. Pettus (8th) or Mrs. Roberts (7th).
Due by Wed., April 8, for Junior School entries.
As you may already know, one Valentine tradition is for a man to deliver a dozen of the most fragrant, pure-colored, and fresh roses he can find to his girlfriend. However, I am here to tell you that all of those roses are a farce. They can be replaced by other, better items. Beware, several of these are intangible and can often be very difficult to truly give.

1. Love
2. Kindness
3. Sincerity
4. Smooth talking
5. Genuine comments
6. Movie tickets
7. Watching her sports events
8. Spending time with her at the mall
9. Dancing at parties
10. Making a CD of your “songs”
11. Believe it or not, cooking dinner for her.

If you can put a few of these together, but not overuse them, they can prove to be exceedingly helpful.

And remember…

Roses are red
Violets are blue
Listen to Docta Luv
And it will help you!
FEATURES

A New Era Begins

by Zach Waterman

On January 20, 2009, the world changed in significant ways. The inauguration of President Obama was a truly incredible event to watch. Whether you support President Obama or not, it is impossible not to recognize the importance of the dream, which on the day of Barack Obama’s inauguration, was fulfilled. That dream is the dream of Martin Luther King Jr., African-Americans across the country, the seventy million people who voted for President Obama, and anyone who believes in equality.

Quotes like “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself,” by Franklin D. Roosevelt, and “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country,” by John F. Kennedy, have been used so often that they are now thought of as almost cliché; however, the fact that these quotes are still used points to the importance and timelessness of the President’s inaugural address. So, what quotes from President Obama’s inaugural speech might become clichés forty years from now? We’ll only know for sure when that time has passed, but here are some quotes I found from the President’s speech that I thought were noteworthy:

“Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real. They are serious and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this, America — they will be met.”

“They saw America as bigger than the sum of our individual ambitions, greater than all the differences of birth or wealth or faction.”

“Now, there are some who question the scale of our ambitions — who suggest that our system cannot tolerate too many big plans. Their memories are short. For they have forgotten what this country has already done, what free men and women can achieve when imagination is joined to common purpose, and necessity to courage.”

Experiencing the Inauguration

by Hayes Cooper

I went to Washington D.C. to watch the inauguration of President Barack Obama. On Sunday, two days before the inaugural address, my family and I went to the pre-inauguration concert where Usher, Shakira, Stevie Wonder, and others performed. It was incredibly awe-inspiring to see so many people gathered in one place. On the morning of the inauguration, my brother, sister, and I woke up at five a.m. and started waiting in one of many massive lines. After walking two miles from the back to the front of the line in the Third Street tunnel, we began yet another five-hour wait in seventeen-degree weather.

While we were waiting, my brother and Will Holt started the wave, which ended up going all the way through the line and out the other end of the tunnel. After we had frozen for five hours, we got to the street where we could find no one to tell us where the line was. From there, it was a mad-dash to the security gate for purple ticket-holders. Eventually, after being jostled around in a crowd of about a thousand people, security closed the gate when we were only three feet away from the end of our long, cold journey. After that, we had to push back through a crowd to go watch the ceremony on TV. Even though I had joined the group of three thousand people who didn’t get to see the inauguration from where they had intended to, in their reserved seats that is, it was still an incredible experience to be in Washington.
Welcome!

by Nick Trogdon

Andrew Garner is the new seventh grade student at MBA. Coming to Nashville from Paradise Valley, Arizona, Andrew and his brother, Alexander (ninth grader) have decided to make MBA their new alma mater. Andrew says he chose MBA over all the other schools because he and his parents thought that MBA was a better choice over all. Andrew reports that his favorite subject is science, and his favorite foods are meat, Gatorade, and of course, junk food. Andrew likes to play sports, and he is currently playing basketball on the seventh-grade team. In addition to basketball, Andrew plans to run track in the spring. When asked about his experience at MBA so far, Andrew thought that the most interesting thing at MBA is ESPN at lunch on the big plasma. Welcome to MBA, Andrew!
**ENTERTAINMENT**

*Taken ~ Takes Your Mind Away*

by Ryan Potter

When life is going great and everything seems perfect, sometimes one incident, one choice, can change everything. The movie *Taken* depicts this idea and shows the sometimes dire results of chance. The movie, which hit theaters on January 30th, tells the story of a teenage daughter on the trip of a lifetime that is interrupted when she and her friend are captured and taken away—which is the case. The father, Bryan Millis, played by Liam Neeson, who also starred in movies such as *Chronicles of Narnia*, attempts to save his daughter Kim, played by Maggie Grace, who is taken somewhere in Europe.

The movie begins with the daughter Kim, at her seventeenth birthday party, receiving an invitation from a friend to go to Europe to follow a tour of the band U2. Reluctantly, the father, Millis, accepts, reminding his daughter to be safe. Upon Kim's arrival in Europe, she meets a mysterious man in a taxi, whom she regards as a lunatic. Meanwhile, men break into her hotel room and take her friend hostage. Fearing for her life, she calls her father, who tells her to hide under a bed. Knowing she will be taken hostage, the father asks his daughter to yell out everything that she can. However, she is pulled from the bed and abducted. The father, needing the captors to speak, gives them the warning that he will find and kill them. Silence, and then the powerful reply of “Good Luck” kicks the movie off as the adventure begins.

*Taken* is surely a movie not to be missed. Being in the action/thriller genre, this movie gives both the action and suspense that every movie attendee desires. This movie will keep you on the edge of your seat, while also making you think of your own destiny.

*Taken* is rated PG-13 for intense sequences of violence, disturbing thematic material, sexual content, some drug references, and language. If these elements give you pause, don’t go see this movie. However, if you want a movie full of action and suspense, mark a date on your calendar, for this is the movie that you should see next!

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*Mirror's Edge*

by Hunter Crabtree

*Mirror's Edge* is a groundbreaking game that was released by EA Games and DICE on November 11, 2008. The game takes the platforming genre to a whole new level by moving the camera into a first-person perspective. The game revolves around keeping up momentum and speed as your character, Faith, completes death-defying stunts in a manner known as parkour, or free-running. This game is genre-defining because so many first-person games released in the current market tend to revolve around shooting your opponent before he shoots you, like the *Call of Duty* series. This game, however, is not entirely devoid of gunplay, as Faith can easily disarm enemies, who are shooting at her as she runs across the city, or use her fists to take out enemies. The story is set in the near future where “…information is monitored as heavily as terrorist activity is today” (Gameinformer). Your character, Faith, is a runner or tracer, a messenger who runs information which needs to be kept secret from one point to the next. The game centers around Faith’s running from one end of the city to the other to discover what is going on when her sister is framed for a crime she did not commit. There is also an online leaderboard for those of you who play games over Xbox Live and Playstation Network. These leaderboards track the times of players as they run levels in the Time Trial mode of the game. *Mirror’s Edge* is available on the Microsoft Xbox 360, PC, and Sony Playstation 3.
The Predators Struggle
by Nicholas Green

With the loss of Alexander Radulov, the Nashville Predators had a lot of work to do for the 2008-2009 season. During the first ten games of the season, the Predators went 5-4-1, showing that this season could still be a success. However, the first four games in November proved this hope wrong, as Nashville went 1-3. However, the Preds came back by winning three straight games. They then finished the month of November with a record of 11-10-2. December was disappointing, as they won and lost six games and lost in overtime once. January, though, proved to be a time of optimism. Even though they lost three consecutive games at the beginning of the month, one player gave the entire team, coaches, and fans an emotional boost. This player was the 5’9” forward from Ontario, Steve Sullivan. Previously, he had been out for two seasons with a back injury. Once he was back on the ice versus the Blackhawks, the fans went wild, chanting, “Sully! Sully!” Also, the whole team was even more energetic once Sullivan was on the ice, and the Predators won 4-1. However, that motivation did not help them for long, as they lost the last three of four games before the All-Star break. One of those games included a thrashing of the Predators by the Atlanta Thrashers, with a score of 7-2. During this game, Nashville was booed at home in the first period once the Thrashers put up four goals. The Predators’ center and team captain said that he could not believe the fans didn’t leave by then because he would have. Hopefully, with the long break, the Nashville Predators will be able to turn their season around, finish in at least eighth place in the Western Conference to get into the playoffs, and win the Stanley Cup. GO PRED S!

Steelers Win a Nail Biter
by Nicholas Green

Kickoff starts and the first commercial comes on. It is Super Bowl XLIII between the Pittsburgh Steelers and the Arizona Cardinals. In the first quarter, the Steelers kept driving into Arizona territory, but they were only able to put up three points. The Steelers also got a touchdown; however, after a challenge by the Cardinals, it was declared that the ball was at the one yard line when the player was down. In the second quarter, a Super Bowl record was broken. Steelers linebacker James Harrison broke the longest run in a Super Bowl by picking off a throw by Kurt Warner on the one yard line and running it all the way back for a touchdown. In the third quarter, it seemed like the Steelers were going to win easily, as the score was 20 to 7. However, the Cardinals quickly drove down the field early in the fourth quarter and scored a touchdown. Also, once the Steelers had possession, an offensive foul was called in their own end zone, and therefore a safety was called. Then, with about three minutes left in the game, Kurt Warner threw a pass to Larry Fitzgerald, who ran it back 64 yards for a touchdown. When the Steelers got possession of the ball, they drove down the field. Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger threw a loftier to wide receiver Santonio Holmes, and he caught it in the air and managed to keep both feet inbounds. The Cardinals got the ball back, but Kurt Warner fumbled it on a controversial call that ruled he did not have forward motion on the attempted pass. The Steelers won the game 27 to 23 and broke a record by winning the most Super Bowls, which was six.
Up and Down NFL Season

by Sam Weien

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the period of belief, it was the period of disbelief, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness.”

This quote from Charles Dickens’ *A Tale of Two Cities* aptly describes the NFL season. The Arizona Cardinals made their first Super Bowl appearance ever in their best times. The Detroit Lions became the first team in NFL history to go 0-16 in their worst times. The wise Baltimore Ravens and the Atlanta Falcons used two rookie head coaches and quarterbacks to make the NFL playoffs. The foolish Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Denver Broncos, and New York Jets all fired their coaches after .500 or better seasons. The San Diego Chargers believed they could win the last four games to make the NFL playoffs. The Dallas Cowboys lost two out of their last three games to miss the playoffs. The Miami Dolphins had a ten-game turnaround season, thanks to the wildcat formation after going 1-15 last season in their time of light. The highly overrated Cleveland Browns went 4-12 after all three of their quarterbacks were injured in their season of darkness. The Tennessee Titans had seven players go to the Pro Bowl in their highly successful season. My theory is that offense wins the game, but defense wins championships. That was proved correct because the best offense and the best defense made the Super Bowl, and the team with the better defense, the Steelers, won. Overall, may NFL teams had a great season. Some good. Some bad. Some wise. Some Foolish.

College Basketball

by James Higgins

The college basketball regular season is heading into the make-or-break month of February to see who will make it to the madness of March. There have been several upsets this year, and it seems there are many teams ready to take the number one spot. Who will? That’s the question that seems to be hard to answer these days, but one team will surely secure that spot.

The SEC is a strong conference, but not as strong as in previous years. With Vanderbilt in a rebuilding year (zero seniors and two juniors), the SEC East is a tossup. Florida has gone a perfect 13-0 at home and 6-2 in the conference play but has a losing 2-3 record playing away. Kentucky, second in the East, has had a solid season so far with a 5-3 record in the SEC, a 10-4 record at home and .500 in away games. However, Kentucky has lost three straight games and has lost four of their last twelve games. South Carolina and Kentucky are fighting for the second seed in the SEC tournament, but look for Tennessee to go far in the tournament; they could be the new Georgia in the tournament. The SEC West looks to be under control for LSU (17-4) (5-1) and Mississippi State (15-7) (5-2); however, the last seeds are going to be a battle for Alabama, Ole Miss, and Auburn, with all three teams having almost identical records in both the SEC and overall.

The ACC is having an outstanding year putting several teams in the top 25 many weeks in a row. This conference is normally decided by either Duke (19-2) (6-1) or North Carolina (20-2) (6-2), but this year teams like Wake Forest (17-3) (4-3), Clemson (18-2) (4-2), and Boston College (18-6) (6-3) are giving them a run for their money. This conference will have a strong influence on the tournament, no doubt.

The Big East has proved that they are still among the country’s best. With teams such as Marquette (20-2) (9-0), UConn (21-1) (10-1), Louisville (17-4) (8-1), and Pittsburgh (20-2) (7-2) this conference is tough to win.
Down with the Yankees!

The Yankees are Our Problem
by Hamilton Millwee

In the past, baseball has been through many stages. The game went through the formative stages when all teams were created equal. Then, after a short time, as the momentum of the sport and its popularity increased, it became the country’s favorite sport, and the phrase “America’s Pastime” was coined. Between then and now, the face of the sport has changed, and many believe that baseball will soon decline. I believe that we are seeing now the beginning of that decline unless something changes. The end of America’s Pastime is being brought about by one main reason: the buying up of players by the New York Yankees.

Because of the lack of a salary cap in baseball, the Yankees can spend as much money as they want on signing players. Because George Steinbrenner’s pockets are infinitely deep, the Yankee organization has the power to buy up all of the great free-agents by offering them more money than anyone else.

To get my point across, there is a joke that goes kind of like this: Mr. T, Chuck Norris, and Sylvester Stallone walk into a bar, and the bar explodes because a place can’t hold that much awesomeness. Most baseball fans believe that a similar disaster will happen if CC Sabathia, Derek Jeter, and Manny Ramirez end up on the Yankees, except the rest of the MLB will explode!

Mr. Anderson says, “The limitless spending of the Yankees is going to cause the demise of baseball. It will be a shame that one team will cause the downfall of the entire league and not win a championship.”

Because of this “buyout,” everyone’s favorite players are going to different teams once they are able, and many times these moves are to the Yankees.

The Yankees Are Good for Baseball
by Mrs. Cherie Roberts

As I read Hamilton’s and Mr. Anderson’s misguided comments about the condition of baseball and the New York Yankees, I was surprised I did not hear the typical phrases “evil empire” and “paying for pennants” that often pepper such arguments. It is often said that the pen is mightier than the sword, so here goes.

Hamilton’s editorial touches on the one object that taints all professional sports—MONEY. As a true fan of the game, I do believe that no sport has suffered more because of the all-mighty dollar than baseball. Since its inception in the late 1800’s, baseball has suffered through such money-grubbing issues as the Black Sox Scandal, Kennisaw Mountain Landis, a player’s strike, Pete Rose, juiced power-hitters, corked bats, outrageous ticket fees, and bankrupt teams only to face the true enemy, the double-edged sword of free agency. I agree with Hamilton that Steinbrenner’s (now Hank Steinbrenner’s) pockets are deep. While many complain that in these dire economic times, the $161 million dollar purchase of C.C. Sabathia is a gross and unfair display of the Yankees’ wealth, any team owner or general business person will say that the purchase was sensible in the current market and a proper use of the team’s vast assets. So is it just the Yankees who are the enemy? What about when the Yankees were bidding for A.J. Burnett? The Braves were right there with them, dollar for dollar. Like the Yankees, Atlanta had some extra cash after some

Because baseball fans cheer for their home team and the team their favorite players are on, more often than not, the fans only watch the World Series when their favorite team or the Yankees are playing. This means that viewers aren’t watching the games, and therefore, baseball’s standing as “America’s Pastime” is coming to an end.

Texiera is a perfect example of this trend. The Red Sox wanted to sign him and offered a reasonable amount of money for a contract. The Yankees then swooped in and started throwing money around in insane figures!! Then the Yankees said that they had not done anything unfair or unreasonable. No offense, but if a person can’t see that giving people preposterous amounts of money just to buy up all of the players is wrong, he is either blind or crazy.

If someone does not institute a salary cap, or if the Yankees don’t shape up, the list of beloved American treasures – Mom, Baseball, and Apple Pie – will grow one shorter, and our generation will be the one to see an American tradition end.

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Long Live the Yankees!

Marquette has had an excellent season, but in seasons past, they often seem to disappoint in the NCAA tournament. They will not disappoint this season. I expect them to make it to at least the Sweet Sixteen, if not the Elite Eight.

UConn is again a powerhouse in both the conference and nationally; look for them to stay on course and be in the Sweet Sixteen. Pittsburgh has always been a good dark horse team that would take the lives of several high-seeded teams in both conference and NCAA tournaments. Even with the strength of the conference, never count out Villanova or Syracuse, who will still be contenders.

The Big Ten has a few teams that are outstanding, but as a conference, it is middle-of-the-road. Michigan State (18-4) (8-2) looks to have to battle Illinois (18-4) (6-3) and Purdue (17-5) (6-3) for the Big Ten title, but look for Michigan State to turn up the intensity in the NCAA tournament, for they never disappoint.

The Big Twelve has a solid conference this year with teams such as Oklahoma (21-1) (7-0), Kansas (18-4) (7-0), Missouri (19-4) (6-2), and Texas (15-6) (4-3). It is a battle at the top with Oklahoma and Kansas, who will duke it out for the conference and for high seed in the NCAA tournament. I am picking Texas A&M for my upset team in this conference. They always put on a good show in tournaments.

Here are my honorable mentions for teams not in these conferences but still having a good shot at going far in the dance. Xavier is always a good school and unpredictable in the tournament. They can either get out in the second round or go as far as the Elite Eight. Butler has another good team this year but sometimes they are beat by teams they are supposed to smother. They will go to about the Sweet Sixteen if not upset in the beginning rounds. Memphis is always a fun team to watch and a team that goes far into March. I expect at least the Elite Eight for them this year. UCLA is a tough team to beat in the tournament. I expect them to get to the Elite Eight if not the Final Four. (Stats through 2/4/09)
Most of us “veterans” remembered the bus rides and coach’s dry humor, but we had forgotten what makes swimming swimming: the water part. As Coach Dobbs gave us our day’s workout, a low groan went out. The new swimmers looked around nervously: how bad could it be? The answer: bad enough. While the practices were always fairly grueling, somehow, they were always worth it. Perhaps it was the sense of pride and work ethic, or just hanging out with friends before and after, but the participants were always willing for another day in the pool.

After much hard work and preparation, our first meet arrived. The MBA/HH Middle School Invitational was held at Tennessee State University. We were all (or most of us anyways) nervous; would we be able to measure up against the other teams as in the past? That question was quickly answered. Without much challenge, MBA took the meet; no other school came anywhere close.

Spirits ran high as we saw our hard work pay off, and before we knew it, it was time for our annual dual meet with USN. For those of you who haven’t seen USN’s pool, it’s no Aqua Cube.* It consists of three lanes of twenty yards each. There is one row of benches shared by swimmers and parents. You either love it, or you hate it. I personally like it a lot, though I couldn’t tell you why. Again, we pulled away fairly quickly and were able to retain the lead with little trouble.

Our next meet, after Christmas Break, was the Middle Tennessee Invitational, held at the Williamson County Recreation Center. This meet was our first major competition, with official timing systems and separate pools for boys and girls. As soon as the meet started, we all noticed two things: Brentwood Middle School was really good, and Woodland was even better. It was a very close meet all the way through, but in the end, we came up one point short of Woodland. However, we soon learned that the meet was scored incorrectly. Instead of scoring the top sixteen placers in each event, only the

*Note: Aqua Cube is a brand of pool equipment that is widely recognized in the swimming community.
top eight were scored, and the 500 free, where we scored over twenty points, was dropped. Had it not been for these blunders, we would have won the meet convincingly.

Baylor was upon us in a short time. Everyone was excited. We all remembered or had heard about last year. The day started at 6 A.M. on Saturday, January 24th, when our bus pulled out of Harpeth Hall. After a quiet bus ride to Chattanooga, we warmed up, and the meet began. Not that the prelims weren’t exciting, but I’ll fast forward a bit. We made a rousing, post-swim visit to Chile’s, where all faces were sufficiently stuffed. We returned to Baylor, and waited for finals. Most of us played in the gym, mainly basketball and football, while others slept. Eventually, finals came, and we watched proudly as Dobber, Tate, Wesley, Falkner, Lucas, Andrew, Jack, and Jody dominated the pool, setting a few state records in the process. When all was said and swum, MBA’s score totaled 363 points, our largest margin of victory this season!

And so, about thirty-five practices, three meets, almost as many wins, and a state championship after that first day, John Wheeler made an incredibly articulate trophy presentation (you had to be at the assembly to understand), and the 2008-2009 microbe swimming season was complete.

*Aqua Cube-reference to the pool used for the Beijing Olympics*
HVAC Tournament Bound

by Penn Murfee

Coming into the basketball season with an undefeated record from their seventh-grade year, the eighth grade basketball team had to step up to the plate against the increased competition. However, no matter the improvement of the competition, Coach Blackwell led the Big Red successfully. At his side was Coach Pettus, who also gave pointers and advice to the ever-improving team. New additions to the rosters of other HVAC teams such as Brentwood Academy and Battle Ground Academy made the road to victory a harder one. However, the Big Red came into the season with a win over Page Middle School by over 15 points. Tom “Tree” Kaiser, the intimidating 6’ 4” forward, was deemed the eighth-grade star after scoring 27 points in the next game versus Lipscomb Middle School. More depth to the chart also came from Dylan Hall, John Bachmann, Will Campbell, and Kamani Hodges, players who dictated the perimeter, with “Tree” taking control of the paint. Andrew “Pony” Einstman also contributed with his outstanding rebounding and mid-range shooting. With a win over CPA, the Big Red was rolling, but “Tree” suffered a severe ankle sprain with only seconds to go in the fourth quarter.

The eighth grade carried their damaged confidence to Brentwood Middle School, where they suffered a tough loss in the final minutes. Despite a home win over BGA with relative ease, the Big Red was hurting without their gigantic forward. Due to Tom’s absence, the Microbes underwent a five-game losing streak with hard-fought losses over Brentwood Academy, Cleveland Middle School, and Battle Ground Academy. The Big Red heated up with a home win over Ensworth. “It was the Massacre at Curry,” said team player Clint Smith. Players Alex Smith and Benjamin Haynes were on fire with Alex hitting three huge three-point shots and Benjamin scoring a season high of nine points. Ben would continue to stay hot through the next game against Sunset Middle, continuing his three-point rage. In the Ensworth and Sunset games, Ben went 5/6 from the arc with additional assists. To the team’s dismay, Ben broke the growth plate in his ankle and joined the injured list. Despite the shortage of the bench due to injuries and sickness, the team rolled over Ensworth again on the Tigers’ home court. A satisfying win over Grassland Middle School, led by Kamani Hodges and Clint Smith, proved that MBA can enter the HVAC Tournament with “swagger,” as Captain Andrew Einstman likes to say. Kamani had six steals and fifteen points, along with Clint’s added assists, seven points, and “Steve Nash”-style passes. The Big Red finished the season with wins over FRA and DCA.

Come out and support your Big Red team during the HVAC tournament!
EIGHTH GRADE

Alex on the break

Penn puts up a pass to Einstman.

Andrew beats the Raiders down the court.

Furman sets up the offense.

Sharp-shooter Kamani

Nothing satisfies like beating Ensworth (unless it’s BA!)
Led by Coach McEachern and Coach Martin, MBA’s seventh grade basketball team had an outstanding season. The team finished with a record of 15-0.

The team defeated its opponents by an average of more than eighteen points per game and beat rivals Ensworth and Brentwood Academy twice each. The Big Red also defeated David Lipscomb, Woodland, Sunset, Brentwood Middle School, Grassland, BGA, CPA, FRA, DCA, and Cleveland.

All sixteen players saw significant playing time, and the team’s five starters took turns being the team’s high scorer. For the season, Jay Robertson and Duncan Smith led the team offensively, while Vinnie Gaglione led the team on defense.

At most of its home games, the team enjoyed strong support from other students and faculty who have turned out in large numbers to cheer for the team.

Coach McEachern summed up the season by saying, “The collective effort and skills of the seventh-grade basketball team gave the impression that two first-year coaches had been on the bench for decades. The team took great pride in its defensive prowess that forced steals and led to many fast-break layups. The team held its opponent under thirty points in thirteen of sixteen games and won by an average margin of more than twenty points. The wins were truly a team effort, as eleven or twelve players entered the scoring column on many nights. This class of players has a bright future in front of them at MBA.”
SEVENTH GRADE

Michael Buttarazzi heads to the basket for a layup.

D.J. focuses on the basket.

Gaines gets ready to make a move.

Jonah intimidates as he muscles down the court.

Duncan Smith drives to the hoop.

Mac sets up the offense.

Photos courtesy of Bill Gaglione
Congratulations to the cast and crew of *Androcles and the Lion*!

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