Robin Hood: Right on Target

By Aden Barton

This year’s junior school play, *The Somewhat True Tale of Robin Hood*, turned out to be a huge success. As I walked into the theater on Friday night, I was surprised to see the large number of people gathered to watch, especially because there was a conflicting basketball game at the same time.

The play follows the story of Robin Hood and his seven Merry Men on their quest to get the princess free from evil Prince John’s control and take back the kingdom. Tim Blaufuss plays the lead role of Robin Hood, and John Thornton plays the evil Prince John. Overall, I thought the play was great. Fine actors, combined with a wonderful technical aspect made for a great performance. Two Overbrook girls also took roles in the play; Katie Mendes played the princess, and Mary Catherine Claverie played her Lady in Waiting. All the actors worked together very well and created a very funny and interesting play.

There were many jokes surrounding the technical crew. Multiple times throughout the play, the characters would ask the technical director in the back of the theater for help in their adventure. The actors did a fantastic job with engaging the audience in their journey. A mix of modern culture filled the medieval play: bowling was played in the tournament for the princess’ hand, and at one point Robin Hood has to listen to “Friday” by Rebecca Black as his penal punishment.

The set was very simple. It consisted of two castle walls and one castle window. Even though the backdrop was minimalistic, it was used beautifully. The play transitions from the Castle where the Princess is being held against her will by Prince John to Sherwood forest where Robin and his Merry Men plan to get her back. The transitions are made smooth by the narrator who was played by seventh grader Thomas Peterson. The narrator actually gets involved within the play many times such as the witty scene where he must train Robin Hood to bowl.

One final aspect that I really liked about the play was the comfortable atmosphere produced by the actors and the tech crew.
Inside The Somewhat True Tale of Robin Hood

By John Thornton

After Dr. Seay retired last year, there were a lot of questions as to whom would direct the play and how the junior school theater program would move forward. Mr. Berry stepped up to direct a spin on the classic tale of Robin Hood, a story in line with the school’s yearly theme of humility. (See Aden Barton’s article for more plot detail.)

As a cast member, getting the play ready for performance was a long process. The period-fitting costumes had to be assembled, the sets built, the lights and sound effects geared up, and the scenes rehearsed. My costume consisted of a yellow embroidered coat, red tights, gold boots, a crown, and a fur piece I found, affectionately known as “the ferret.” Other cast members wore long black capes, gowns, vests, and of course, more tights.

One of the main challenges in pushing the production forward was the missed rehearsals due to snowy weather. We had to get into costume, add technical effects and use props three rehearsals ahead of time and three rehearsals before the actual performance. However, the cast impressed made up for lost time and nearly perfected our countless cues and monologues.

Mr. Berry was a forceful but understanding director and put on what Mrs. Stewart considered to be “the best play the junior school had ever done.” Perhaps it was the combination of the humor, thrilling adventure, and seeing what middle schoolers do best: goof off and show their dramatic side.

One of our main assets was the technical crew. They provided us with the sound/visuals effects, music, and lights needed to bring the play to the next level. They played an integral part in the story as the mysterious “Mr. Technical Director.” We also have the set builders to thank for bringing Nottingham to life and Ms. Moore, the costume director, for providing the actors with the clothing they needed to get into character.

In the end, Robin Hood was very popular and a great success. I’m glad I decided to do the junior school plays both years and hope that the rest of the cast and I continue our theatrical careers into high school and beyond.

Play Photos Courtesy of Dr. Cal Fuller
The Somewhat True Tale of Robin Hood

Robin Hood disguises himself as he, the guards (Matthew Miller and Nick Bailey, Lady Marian, and her Lady-in-Waiting (Mary Catherine Claverie) listen to the scheming Sheriff of Nottingham.

The Town Guy and Robin Hood are joined by the Merry Men.

Will Mader, one of the Merry Men, serves as a table for the card-playing antics of the group while Friar Tuck (Christophe Loing) looks on.

Bravo to the cast and crew of The Somewhat True Tale of Robin Hood
Microbe Debaters

By Aden Barton

So far, the Microbe Debaters have had huge success. While the idea to incorporate 7th and 8th graders into the high school debate is just three years old, there are many junior school debaters who seem interested in debate and have joined. Because most debaters around the country are in 9th grade, MBA debaters already have a head start. This year’s debate topic is the curtailment of domestic surveillance. This topic means that one team must say that the United States should decrease its surveillance while the other team says that decreasing surveillance is bad for many reasons.

The first tournament of the year was at Emory University where partners Tanuj Koli and Thomas Zeuthen went 4 and 0, starting off the year great. At the next big tournament, Chattahoochee, John Thornton and Marcus Le went 3 and 2 to advance into the elimination rounds. At the second to last novice tournament in the first semester, Johns Creek, the team of Tanuj Koli and Thomas Zeuthen went 5-1 and advanced to the octofinals. At the last tournament of the semester, Ohio Valley, seventh-grader Don Pierce went undefeated in pre-elimination rounds and made it all the way to the semifinals where he lost to the team that would later win the tournament. Another great Junior School performance occurred at Samford, where Thomas Zeuthen won the tournament. Usually teams of two are formed in debate but at this tournament, Thomas was alone.

As you can see, the junior school debaters have consistently been getting into elimination rounds at national tournaments. These victories are especially impressive when you consider the fact that these 7th and 8th graders are almost always facing high schoolers.

The debate team owes a huge thanks to the junior school coach, Robbie Quinn. Mr. Quinn had a few words to sum up the first semester: “Although the Junior School debate team is one of the newest teams on campus, with 7th and 8th graders only able to join the Debate Team starting a few years ago, it has quickly turned into a large, successful group full of talent and wit. Although some junior schoolers debate year-round, debaters who start later in the year are quickly caught up to speed by their peers so that everyone is performing well in content and style on such a difficult topic as U.S. surveillance policy. And the tournament victories and awards speak for themselves in how much the team has improved and continues to excel, despite Mr. Quinn’s bad drawings of countries and animals on the whiteboard.”

Woodward, the national tournament, is coming up in the 2nd semester and hopefully we’ll see more Junior School debate victories!
The Force Awakens

By Frank Perazzini

**Spoiler Alert**

The Force awakened the 7th grade with the seventh chapter in the immortal space saga of good versus evil, the movie event of the year. It was an exciting experience for MBA's seventh-grade class.

The students sat down in the theater, poised for the adventure to begin. Nervous laughter, the slurping of drinks, and the rustling of hands digging deep into their popcorn bins were all around us. A reflective sense comes over me as we begin our own journey, our own awakening of the Force!

Within the first moments, a piercing image of a ship floating across the screen on its way to the planet of Jakku to raid a small village appears—like how any of us 7th graders raid and pillage the cookies during break, or at least that's how my meandering mind saw it…but I digress. The film was clearly a prized event to attend; it unraveled itself to us as we all sat there in awe, our curiosity sparked.

The villain, Kylo Ren, we sadly came to find, ends his father Han Solo's life: a disturbing image and one that stokes a sense of grief, not merely because of the wicked imagery of son killing father, but of such evil from the fruits of such good…how can this apple fall so from its tree? Truly an unsettling aspect of the film, but one that showcases the magic of what is Star Wars: the unexpected, the mind blowing. Thankfully, no spoiler alerts were sent our way, so the impact was intense.

Rey and Finn, the heroes of the flick, spare no expense in their quest for good. Rey, dueling with Kylo Ren over the values for which they stand, both quaking and torn in half, both barely escaping mortality; again, the symbols of evil and good, the ying and yang, or as I sipped my soda and nibbled my popcorn, the sweet and salty. Just like Rey said, “There are stories about what happened.” And just like Han Solo said to her, “It’s true. All of it. The Dark Side, the Jedi. They’re real.” And seventh grade at MBA? It’s true…all of it. Real.

Chewie, we’re home!

The seventh-grade holiday movie experience is a four year old tradition that has been kindly donated by Mr. John Rochford. Over the years, the MBA seventh-grade microbes have enjoyed The Hobbit trilogy, and now the continuing saga of the Star Wars franchise.

Thank you, Mr. Rochford!
October’s Harpeth Hall production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* was unique in many ways. First of all, it featured four eighth graders and two students from other schools, since many high schoolers were busy with either MBA’s play or Dr. Fuller’s one-act. It was directed by Denise Hicks, who also runs the Nashville Shakespeare Festival. The play tells the story of a group of Athenian royals and commoners who lose their way in a forest and come upon all sorts of magic and hijinks. A side plot includes the comical Mechanicals, who have adventures of their own in the woodland.

The commute to Harpeth Hall from MBA every afternoon proved to be challenging, but the boys in the cast were up to the task. As someone who had never performed a full Shakespearian play before, it was a completely unique experience. The Old English monologues were difficult to memorize, and they way they rolled off one’s tongue is a testament to Shakespeare’s attention to detail.

We practiced every afternoon, and sometimes late into the night for more than a month leading up to the performance. Denise let us be free on stage and decide what to do in a lot of our scenes. Then costumes came into play. I had two costumes: a comfortable shirt and pants, and...a dress.

Let me explain. I played the character of Francis Flute, part of the Mechanicals. Within *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, the Mechanicals decide to put on their own play. Back in Shakespeare’s time, women were not allowed to be in theater, so men played all roles regardless of gender. Therefore, I had to don a white and blue dress along with an auburn wig and cry over my dead lover’s body among other things.

The play was a hit with the audience members, and each cast member did his/her best. We put on a unique and colorful production of a classic story. This experience was one of my favorites of the year, and I will definitely remember it going forward.
Under the excellent coaching of Mrs. Maggie Qian, the MathCounts team secured another city title on Saturday, February 6. The team earned their 14th city title. Individual results are as follows: Thomas Zeuthen, 3rd place; Zach Brown, 4th place; Baylor Sai, 5th place; Colin Tang, 9th place; and Alex Kalams 10th place. Thomas Zeuthen and Zach Brown were the top two MBA students in the competition. Congratulations to the team!
Images from the Hill

Diagramming Wizards

Microbe Swim Team in a hand stand contest.

Mrs. Overton’s advisory experiences a great time at Above All.
Junior School Art Night

John Moore

Robby Barnes and Zach Brown

Jack Clarke

John Hyde

Seventh-Grade Jazz Band

McGavock Cooper

Cello Section of the Orchestra

Junior School Singers
Each year the National Geographic Society sponsors the Geography Bee, featuring competitions at the school, state, and national level, culminating with the awarding of a fifty thousand dollar scholarship to the national winner. Seventh-grader Wyatt Bettis bested twenty competitors to win this year’s school level Geography Bee. Wyatt defeated runner-up Brycen Brown in a sudden-death elimination by correctly identifying Stockholm as the Nordic capital built on islands where the Baltic Sea meets Lake Mälaren. Wyatt will represent MBA in the State Bee on April 1. Congratulations, Wyatt!

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: Wednesday, April 10th

Turn in a printed copy and also e-mail a copy to Mrs. Roberts.

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

Turn in a printed copy and also e-mail a copy to Mrs. Roberts.
Junior School Entries Due by Wednesday, April 10th.
By Marcus Le

Hyperloop is a fast traveling transporter that was originally put forth by Elon Musk and his company Space X. Since 2013 he has been working on a Hyperloop track to go from Los Angeles to the San Francisco Bay Area that is parallel to Interstate 5. He wants to get from Los Angeles to San Francisco in under 35 minutes. It would travel a 354 mi (570 km) route at an average speed of 598 mph (962 km/h), with a top speed of 760 mph (1,220 km/h). The Hyperloop would cost the United States six billion dollars. That cost would pay for the passenger version. If the United States instead paid 7.5 billion dollars, they could afford a hyperloop that could transport vehicles also. However, this version would have been out of the budget for Musk and his company, Space X. Some people have complained that Elon Musk is doing this project for commercial use and not for the benefit of the world. In response, he decided that he will make students and engineers make the pod designs.

On Saturday, January 30, a team from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) won the first stage of the SpaceX Hyperloop design competition, which was held at Texas A&M University in College Station. The MIT grad students beat out more than one-hundred other teams with their design for a passenger-carrying Hyperloop "pod" and now will start building a small-scale prototype to test this summer next to SpaceX's headquarters in Hawthorne, California.

To sum up this amazing invention, Hyperloop Transportation Technologies (HTT) is saying that by collaborating with Elon Musk and Space X, they will be able to make all cities around the US connected by Hyperloop tracks that are safe and affordable. What is fascinating is that they claim that all of these Hyperloops could be built and functioning within a decade. After a year of a kick starting campaign for initial funding, the research team released a 76-page report documenting its research into construction costs, technical specs, safety concerns, route selection, and other problems that will have to be solved to build a working Hyperloop. The question is: Will you ride it?
Road to the White House

By John Raulston Graham

In the many debates and Presidential candidate drop-outs since my last column, we have learned much about the 2016 Race for the White House. The Republican field continues to dwindle with many drop-outs, including Huckabee, Rand Paul, and Gilmore. Vice-President Biden's decision to not enter the race will keep the Democratic side to two candidates.

Republican Race

To begin, the polls look significantly different than they did back in November, and there have been many controversies on the Republican side, including the following: Is the current second place holder, Ted Cruz, even a natural born citizen of the U.S; The super PACs and establishment backing Jeb Bush; and The negative ad campaign put together by Jeb Bush.

The chart below shows the current Real Clear Politics Average compared to the November poll.

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<td>7</td>
<td>Fiorina</td>
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As the poll clearly shows, very few candidates are in the same position as they were in November. The poll also demonstrates the fickle and ever-changing nature of the Republican race. However, one constant remains. It is the candidate at the top. Donald Trump has had a substantial lead since early December. I believe something about Donald Trump's straightforward nature appeals to a wide audience of voters who are bored and tired of politician after politician being elected, and doing nothing to address any of the people's grievances. With the fading of Carson, Trump has only gained support. He has performed well in all of the recent debates, giving voters no reason to vote against him. However, Cruz, Bush, Rubio, and even Christie have seen their poll numbers rise because of strong debate performances. The Republican field continues to be very crowded; thus, it is hard to detect trends in this party.

Democratic Race

In a stark contrast to the Republican race, the Democratic race is now officially a two-person race between Former First Lady and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and declared “democratic” socialist and New Hampshire congressman Bernie Sanders after the dropout of long-shot Martin O’Malley. Clinton continues to be surrounded by on-going investigations into the attack on the American Embassy in Benghazi and her private e-mail server. Somehow the scandals surrounding Clinton have not impacted her poll numbers at all. Bernie Sanders, however, does continue to hold his position directly behind Clinton.

The chart below shows the current Real Clear Politics Average versus the poll from November.

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<td>O’Malley</td>
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<td>O’Malley(dropped-out)</td>
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Again, in a sharp contrast to the Republican race, almost no changes can be detected. Clinton still stands in first, Sanders second, and O’Malley, who has since dropped out, at third. However, Bernie has been gaining some momentum from positive debate performances, but obviously not much is changing.

Continued on page 13
Iowa Caucus Recap

Everyone knows that the Iowa caucuses are the highly-valued first votes cast in the election cycle. A good performance in Iowa translates to a promising campaign later in the cycle. With the Iowa caucus just having passed, let us take a closer look into what really happened, and the impact of the caucuses overall.

Democratic Caucus

The Democratic race was a very close affair that was decided by less than half of a percentage point. Hillary Clinton eked out a very close win against Bernie Sanders, who outperformed his Real Clear Politics average by 18% and surprisingly made Iowa interesting. The Iowa caucus also changed the landscape of the Democratic Race overall. Bernie Sanders was not expected to perform well at all, but he was able to do so through a good “ground game.” The term “ground game” is commonly used to describe a candidate's contacting people personally. This strategy has been a key component of Bernie's campaign.

Republican Caucus

First, let me address the winner in Iowa on the Republican side, Ted Cruz. If Cruz is to do well anywhere, it would be in Iowa. Ted Cruz is the ideal candidate for Iowa. He appeals to the values of the evangelical, conservative voters, which are the main voting issue in Iowa. Secondly, Trump might have suffered for not appearing in the Republican debate. However, he still finished second in a state that is not filled with Trump-supporting voters. Thirdly, Rubio, in contrast to Trump, benefited greatly from his wonderful debate performance and he carried the late deciding voters. Outside of these top three, very little change from the Real Clear Politics Average can be detected with one exception of Rand Paul, who finished 5th. However, the race might now be a three-man race after Cruz, Trump, and Rubio ran away with the Iowa caucus.

New Hampshire Primary Recap

Democratic Primary

Bernie Sanders was projected to run away with New Hampshire, the neighbor to Bernie Sanders’ home state of Vermont. He did not disappoint in this area. Sanders beat Hillary Clinton by a staggering forty points. Although Bernie Sanders did receive a huge win in New Hampshire, he will face a huge challenge in the upcoming states, in which Clinton is winning in the polls. Sanders win can be attributed to the nearness to his home state and much work put into New Hampshire.

Republican Primary

The winner, Trump, did not simply win New Hampshire, but as projected, won by almost twenty percent. Trump has not spent very much money in New Hampshire, instead relying on rallies and a strong social media strategy. Second place finisher, John Kasich, has invested almost all of his time and effort into his campaign in New Hampshire. Even though Kasich says that he has a national strategy, it remains to be seen what if any national strategy he has. There was a very close race among Rubio, Bush, and Cruz for third place. Despite many efforts to forge ahead by Bush, he did not distinguish himself from the other “establishment” candidates. Bush did perform better than he did in Iowa. Cruz, coming off a huge win in Iowa finished where most predicted he would in this pack. However, Marco Rubio was supposed to have a better showing than he did. In his post-primary speech, he blamed the loss on himself, saying that he did not do well against the attacks from Christie and Bush. Chris Christie finished in a distant sixth, despite much money, time, and effort put into the race in New Hampshire. Carson, Fiorina, and others finished far below the rest of the candidates.

The Race Overall and at MBA

The Republican race is ever-changing while the Democratic race is remaining almost constant. Most people believe that Clinton will win the Democratic nomination, but the Republican race is still up in the air. Clinton edges out a general election poll against Christie, Bush, and even front-runner Trump. However, the poll has both Rubio and Cruz pulling out very close victories against Clinton.

For a different perspective, The Top of the Hill staff has polled the junior school of MBA. The poll results are as follows: Compared to the nation, MBA had Bernie Sanders much more popular. However, almost all other candidates sit in their same position in the MBA poll as compared to the rest of the U.S.
By Patrick Powell

1. He has nine other siblings.

2. During his six years in the army, he visited the DMZ in Korea.

3. He is in his fourth year as a teacher, graduated from MBA in 2002, and has a father who works at MBA.

1. Her nickname in high school was “Sketch,” and in college it was “Rat.”

2. After a football game, she went to a party, dislocated her shoulder, and returned later to the party in a sling.

3. She graduated from Vanderbilt, after playing lacrosse there, and is in her sixth year at MBA.

Answers on page 16
Grapples, Parachutes, and Wingsuits, Oh My!

By Aaron White

Rico Rodriguez (not the actor) is back in the newest addition to the Just Cause franchise. In this video game, Rico returns to his Mediterranean island home of Medici to exact justice on the dictator who has corrupted his beautiful homeland. But the story is not why people play this game. Just Cause 3 has the most hilarious features I have ever seen in a video game. Rico has a grapple gun on his arm, a parachute that stops his falls in less that one second, and a wingsuit that deploys out of nowhere. Oh, did I mention there is a rideable cow painted to the colors of Medici's revolution force? Or the rubber ducky jet ski? Or the balloon head gun? Let me tell you about the ludicrous thing you can do in Just Cause 3. My favorite thing to do is to ride out of a cargo plane from 1.3 kilometers high. Oh, and the tractor has nitrous. Long fall story short, you don't get hurt when you hit the ground if the tractor hits first. Also, there is a supercar in the game that goes over 300 kilometers per hour. Just for a second, imagine rolling out of that car at top speed. You are thinking death. In Just Cause 3, it means you are unscathed unless a car from the other lane hits you. Even then you will not die. Even when you jump out of that cargo plane I was talking about, even if you pull out your parachute at the last second, you will not die. Even if you drive the fastest motorcycle in the game off the tallest, steepest peak in the game, Rico Rodriguez will overcome death. Now about that grapple. There is a loading screen tip that says, “As Isaac Newton once said ‘There is no better way to break a fall than grappling to the ground and going right into it.” The physics are so broken in this game it's funny.

Overall, I would rate Just Cause 3 as ten out of ten tractors dropped because of how many fun things there are to do, and also for the quotes from Rico, like, “You did it good, I did it better” and, “You know, it's hard being this good.” My favorite being when Rico liberates a military base, he will say, “That was fun let's do it again!” By far, Just Cause 3 is the best game I have played in a long time.

Fallout 4 is an Instant Success

By Landis Hall

Fallout 4 is the newest role-playing game from Bethesda Softworks, and it is the company's biggest success since Skyrim. The game takes place in an alternate future, where 1950's culture and the Cold War continues into the 21st Century, resulting in a deadly nuclear apocalypse. The game starts out in a suburban home as you create a character. Your character is having a seemingly normal day when, suddenly, the military comes and evacuates you and other residents of your town into Vault 111, a huge underground bomb shelter. Two hundred years later, you awaken from being cryogenically frozen to find your spouse dead and your son missing. You go in search of your son in a savage nuclear wasteland in what was once Massachusetts.

The game has an enormous amount of content in it, and every time I play there is always something new to do. Every location has something unique about it. There is even a town set up inside the ruins of Fenway Park. It is also fun seeing the ruins of real life locations, such as the U.S.S. Constitution and Bunker Hill.

Fallout provides many interesting characters, most of whom can travel with you throughout the wasteland. However, the feature that I found myself spending a lot of time on was building my own settlement. Bethesda finally found a use for all the useless junk you find by allowing you to scrap it and use it for building material. The building locations all have something unique about them. For example, there is one in an alleyway where you can only build upwards, and another that has a fully functioning farm.

The game also has a great soundtrack of real and original songs that reflect the culture of the 1950's. Despite Fallout 4 being the best game that I've ever played, there are some bad things about it. The new dialogue wheel only shows part of what your character can say, which leads to your saying things you do not mean. The graphics and physics can also be a little glitchy.

Overall, the game is the best game of 2015, and I give it a 10/10.
The Big Short: A Movie for the Ages

By Matthew Kaplan

The Big Short was nominated for multiple Oscar nominations this year, including Best Picture. It has been highly praised by critics all around. The movie centers around the crash of the stock market in 2008. Basically, the movie describes how the few people who predicted the crash made loads of money by betting against the market. The movie takes the viewer through the story behind how each man found out and prepared for the crash. The people who they bet against lost all of their money and jobs. In 2009, the government had to bail out the big banks that went bankrupt during the crash. The whole premise seems confusing, but the movie uses clever, and sometimes even funny, ways to give simple explanations for all the complicated terms used in economics.

The movie features an all-star cast that includes Christian Bale, Steve Carell, Brad Pitt, and Ryan Gosling. Each of these actors portrays the people who predicted the crash. Steve Carell does an exceptional job as the head of an investing firm, who slowly realizes how the entire world’s economy is about to collapse. In a way, he plays a similar character to his most famous role of Michael Scott, the main character in the award winning television series: The Office. Additionally, Christian Bale delivers a stellar performance as a social outsider, who is the first to predict the crash. All day, he studies numbers in all kinds of stocks, and he somehow notices what is going to happen. With great acting by these two actors and more, the movie was destined for success.

The Big Short is a fantastic movie and deserves any and every award it gets. The film has an excellent, original plot that makes for an interesting story that many people can remember because they were so affected by the stock market crash in 2008. Additionally, the filmmakers do a superb job of transitioning between the different characters and explaining how they all arrived at the conclusions that they did. The movie is very fast paced and doesn’t slow down.

I would recommend this movie to anyone who wants an entertaining experience, an understanding about this recent event in American history, or just an explanation of economics that doesn’t confuse the viewer.
NCAA Basketball March Madness Predictions

By John Wallace

As the NCAA starts up conference play in basketball, there have definitely been some big surprises such as the numerous upsets inside the top ten rankings. The biggest game of the season was a No. 1 versus a No. 2 with Kansas and Oklahoma. Although Buddy Hield scored 46 points, Kansas pulled it out in three overtimes. However, Kansas lost their next game to No. 10 West Virginia. The NCAA has had some great games this season such as the No. 3 Iowa and No. 6 Maryland, with Maryland prevailing.

At this point in the season, what can be said about the outcome of the crazy tournament we know as March Madness? Below are my predictions.

So, first we start with the Elite Eight. The eight teams that are going to the Elite Eight are Kansas, Oklahoma, Maryland, Michigan State, Iowa, Virginia, North Carolina and Xavier. Out of those teams, I think that North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland should be on the upset alert. Some teams that might sneak in are Texas A&M, Villanova, and West Virginia.

The Final Four comes after. Kansas, Oklahoma, Maryland, and UNC look like contenders for the Final Four. These teams will be carried by their talented players such as Wayne Seldon Jr., Buddy Hield, Melo Trimble, and Marcus Paige. The Championship decides it all. Oklahoma and UNC look like the two teams. After everything, UNC will end up on top. With Marcus Paige at point, UNC is almost unbeatable.

One Cinderella team is definitely Monmouth and their hilarious bench antics. They have been good all season but are not in the top 25. Some bubble teams this season are SEC teams; Tennessee, Vanderbilt, and LSU look to barely get in. With their standout freshman Ben Simmons, LSU could probably get a higher seed if they start playing better. The bubble teams could make it in because they have talent but have not been consistent.

Watch out for my coverage of March Madness in the next issue!
NBA Update

By Will Coulthard

The NBA season has been exciting since the start. The reigning NBA champions, the Warriors, started it off with a record-breaking start: twenty-four games in a row! People have also been wondering how the teams that hit big this offseason, like the Clippers and Spurs, would cooperate as a unit and if they would potentially challenge the seemingly unstoppable Warriors, led by Steph Curry. That seems to be the big question: who could possibly beat them in the playoffs based on what we have seen so far this year?

As we all know, the Western Conference is superior, but the finals must have an Eastern Conference team. Whichever Eastern Conference team with LeBron has a great shot at playing in the finals. The Cavaliers, led by LeBron, who is averaging over twenty-five points, looks to be the Eastern Conference champions, especially now that they have Kevin Love and Kyrie Irving, who were both injured in the playoffs. The Eastern Conference has more than just one team. The rise of the Raptors and Pacers to contender status has been a big topic. The Pacers, with the return of star player Paul George (24.1 ppg), have been great compared to last season. George has certainly come back stronger than ever. In third and fourth sit the Bulls and the Heat, both very consistent teams, though the Heat’s star players, Dwayne Wade and Chris Bosh, continue to get older, both being in their mid- to late-thirties.

Now, the West can be discussed. Many know about the winningest team in the NBA, the Golden State Warriors. However, the Western Conference has a lot of depth as far as teams are concerned.

With the acquisition of LaMarcus Aldridge this summer, the Spurs are in the running for the title with veterans Tim Duncan, Tony Parker, and the young superstar Kawhi Leonard, and they look like they might have a shot with an overlooked 34-6 record. The Clippers have also been busy this offseason by adding depth to their bench. Although their start to the season was rocky, they have maintained a 26-13 record. Always in the running are the Thunder after their finals runner-up finish a few years ago against the Heat. Finally, the Warriors have not missed a beat after their championship run. They look to be a favorite going into the latter part of the season. For Stephen Curry, just look at the stats: almost thirty points per game, 50% field goal percentage (44% from three), and a 90.5% for free throws.

The season so far has been a great one, and with the All-Star break approaching, it is sure to be an exciting continuation to an already entertaining season.
MBA Juniors School Swimmers win HVAC

By Brennan Minkoff

Once again, your MBA microbe swimmers have kept their title as HVAC champions. This year’s squad consisted of a crack team of eighth graders that includes Dudley Harmer, Peter Minkoff, Jake Stumb, Patrick Powell, Noah Rosdeutscher, and others. The squad started the season late in the second quarter and did not have their first meet until January. They only had two dual meets this season. But, the eighth graders ultimately have a 6-0 record in two seasons as MBA swimmers. Additionally, they have won HVAC in both years as microbes.

This year’s meets have been at Ensworth and USN, and the Big Red came out on top in both instances. With Coach Phillips, Overton, and Killian at the helm, the microbes dove headlong into the fray of this year’s HVAC meet. Good times were posted by both sides. However, most of the teams at the meet were hampered by a mysterious lack of swimmers (NAC meet), including MBA. With this predicament, the team stepped up and made a splash. Meanwhile, Patrick Powell was making heads turn at the dive meet. Patrick, the only diver from the MBA eighth-grade squad, was coached by the one-and-only Coach Goddard.

Back at the pool, the 500 meter freestyle race was up and Rosdeutscher remarkably swam all twenty laps without goggles. The Big Red swam all through the meet without breaking stroke despite the missing swimmers. The meet was back and forth, but the Big Red prevailed. Every team tried their hardest, but the meet came down to who wanted to win the most. With big competitors like USN, Harding and Ensworth showing up and putting up good competition, the competition was greatly appreciated as fuel for the meet. The Big Red was still making waves when the meet finished. The Big Red ended up winning first place as a team, accumulating 386 points and beating the nearest competitors: USN by thirty points, Harding by forty, and Ensworth by 62.

The Big Red returned to school as victors and hope to have a good showing at regionals.

Addendum to the article: The Microbe swim team finished 4th in the MTHSSA Championship, on January 30th.
The junior school bowling team, led by Coach Armstrong, had a great season and rolled through their only competition with an incredible comeback against The University School of Nashville.

The team started off as an inexperienced group of boys, but with Coach Armstrong's help, the group practiced and developed into a strong team of great bowlers. The team knew they had the potential to beat USN, but they also knew the game would not be easy. On Tuesday, January 26, the team entered the match against USN having only one member previously competing in a match, but that would not stop the determined hearts of the boys.

The group fell behind in the first game 6-1. Knowing they would have to make changes to win, the microbes, led by Davis Blankenship, turned the game around and won 16-11. The team could not have won that game without star performances from Braden Beach, a promising seventh grader with great potential, and Davis Blankenship, who both had the game of a lifetime.

Although Coach Armstrong wanted the boys to win, he also stressed the importance of being polite to the bowling center owner and other bowlers at the alleys. Coach Armstrong was a great coach who helped develop the boys into better bowlers and better men. By the end of the season, the once group of strangers had turned into a team of brothers who had each other's backs. Members of the team that were previously acquaintances have now become good friends, some of which include Scott Wallace and Will Renkis. The bowling team was a chance for young boys, who might not know what they want to do, to find themselves in a new sport. The team ended their season as a group of friends who had become better bowlers and had developed friendships that will last for their whole lives.
Microbe Soccer A

By Zach Brown

The Microbe Soccer A Team capped off an undefeated regular season with their thirteenth consecutive HVAC title. In the beginning, the team was in good spirits. With the new arrival of well-known eighth grade soccer player, Brycen Brown, the season was shaping up to be a good one. It began with three consecutive 4-0 victories against Brentwood Academy, Battle Ground Academy, and Ensworth. After the three substantial victories, the team began to feel a bit cocky, which led to a mid-season crisis.

The next game was against a struggling Harding Academy Team. Although the Microbes managed to defeat Harding Academy 6-1, the score does not reflect how the Big Red played at all. The team played a very sluggish first half, and things did not get much better for the second half. The team even conceded their first goal of the season after an error in the midfield. The Big Red was not happy after such a sloppy performance.

After the poor showing at Harding Academy, the boys faced off against an extremely strong CPA team. Throughout the first half, the game was very tight, but a late goal by Rasheed Sarieh was enough for the Big Red to win 1-0. The team then took a trip down to Poplar Grove. The team played adequately throughout the first half and went into half time winning 2-0, but a defending mistake early on in the second half led to Poplar Grove scoring a goal and getting back into the game. Because of the mistake, the momentum of the game changed. Now, the Big Red was trying to defend their lead with everything they had while Poplar Grove was attacking very well to attempt to make the game a tie. The team successfully defended their lead and won 2-1 although a bad taste was left in the team's mouths after the game.

In the next three games the Microbes won comfortably: 3-0, 7-0, and 8-0 against USN, Franklin Road Academy, and Donelson Christian Academy respectively. The team earned a first-round bye by managing to go undefeated. Next, the Big Red was to face a strong Brentwood Academy team. The boys began to feel full of themselves since they had previously beaten BA 4-0. After a very intense game, the boys managed a 1-0 victory. The BA game “put us in our places” for the championship game.

For the final game, the Big Red faced off against a CPA team they had only beaten 1-0 previously. The first half was a stalemate; both teams were playing very well. The MBA boys came out on fire in the second half and managed to win 3-0, achieving the thirteenth consecutive HVAC title. Throughout the season, the Big Red scored 43 goals and only conceded two.
B Team Soccer

By Camden Slinger

The MBA B team’s soccer season this year was one to remember. There was a new coach this year, Coach Lawrence, and he coached a great first season. The first game of the season was against Brentwood Academy, which ended in 3-0. Next, we played a young Harding Academy team, and it led to a 7-0 victory. These two wins were a positive way to start the season. The next game was a tough one against CPA. We had a great start to the game and led at the end of the half 3-1. The team played a decent second half but near the end CPA scored 2 late goals and the game resulted in a tie. Our next game was pitted against USN, another quality team. We did a great job shutting down their defense during the first half and were leading 1-0. We came out the 2nd half feeling cocky and let in three quick goals which slowly sapped our attitudes. We could not make any big plays, so after that we were stuck at 3-1. All of the sudden we scored a quick goal near the end of the match, and it lifted our spirits! The bench was on its feet, hoping to get the tying goal. We took one final shot at the end that was just blocked by the goalie, and the team took a tough loss 3-2. The next game was a fun match against our own MBA C team. Although we won 3-0, the C-team tried their best and did not go down without a fight. They managed to get a few good attempts at the end but could not finish.

Our final match was facing Ensworth. As we felt good going in, we displayed it on the field. The end result was a 6-0 shutout in our favor. Jack Larish had a stunning three goals in what was a great win to cap off the season.

C Team Soccer

By Patrick Pergande

The Soccer C Team came out with determination in their opener against CPA, but they fell short 2-0 after playing CPA’s A/B team. Everyone played hard, despite the first game occurring after only our second practice of the season. The team headed out to the river campus to play USN and after two goals by forward Patrick Pergande, MBA lost 2-4 after 3 free kicks from USN. Joseph “Bully” Bellardo, Bo Wilbanks, and Zak Herbstreit also had a great game. Lucas Cashwell, Patrick Pergande, and Luke Morad had valiant efforts up front. MBA then played Hillsboro and lost 2-0, but Bodie “silver bullet” Segers, Joseph Lucas and Parker “king cobra” had great games. MBA then played USN’s B-team and came out on top 2-1 after an own goal and a great score by Norris “ATV” Orndorff. Buchanan Lindsey, Matthew Kaplan and Tully Fitzpatrick also had a great game. After a win over USN, MBA then played FRA. After being tied 1-1 at halftime with a goal from Patrick “Terminator” Pergande, MBA fell behind and lost 2-1. A great game was played by Carson Potter and Jack Spivey.

The last game of the season was barreling toward us; the final game was against Ensworth. With a beautiful cross by Matthew Kaplan, Patrick Pergande chipped it right over the keeper. In the second half Charlie Hansen cleared the ball from midfield and perfectly spotted it right in front of Patrick, who scored past the dazed keeper. Towards the end of the game, Patrick Pergande crossed a ball to Roy Claverie who shot it straight into the goal. Finn “FedEx” Houghton had a great game along with Sam Meacham, Will King, and Grayson Hill.

MBA ended with a not so stellar record of 2-4 but over all had a blast playing C team soccer.
The MBA Microbe Wrestling Team

By Mauro Mastrapasqua

Wrestling is a physically demanding sport that has the ability to make anyone realize his or her strengths and weaknesses. Wrestling can injure an athlete, but it can also name champions and discover legends. Wrestling can easily separate “the men from the boys” and the champions from the quitters.

In the 2015 Winter I Junior School wrestling season, Coach Simpson, Coach McMurray, Coach Stewart, and Coach McWhirter coached forty-one of MBA’s finest microbes. The squad was led by eighth grade captains Ike Cravens, Coleman Rutherford, and Eric Russ. Coach Simpson, the head coach, taught the group tactical moves such as the cross-face cradle and the cement job. Coach McWhirter focused on getting the team hyped up for practice and pushing them through line jumps and cartwheels. Coach McMurray worked on improving the team’s attitude and taught the squad how to work for the group. Coach Stewart was always there to help everyone perfect their moves when they were stumbling.

The team had a solid record of 8-3 and placed third in the HVAC Tournament. Coleman Rutherford placed 1st in his weight class. Antonio Lithmexay, Eric Russ, Campbell Garber, and Mason Skeeters placed 3rd in their weight classes. The 4th place finishers were Foster Edwards, Robby Barnes, Cade Thornton, William Rogers, and Cole Carr.

This season, the JV received a great opportunity because Coach Stewart and Coach McMurray drove them to wrestle at Page High School. Everybody competed in at least two matches, giving many members of the team experience that they wouldn’t have otherwise received. The team fought hard, yet lost two more matches than they won. Nevertheless the squad was focused and determined to fight.

The solid season was a result of the team’s enthusiastic captains, a perfect coaching combination, and a determined team always prepared to fight. In the beginning of the season, Coach Simpson held tryouts for four days. He didn’t cut wrestlers based on their ability or experience, but he cut potential wrestlers based upon their determination and what they could contribute to the strength of the team. **

**Addendum—The end of the Winter II season saw the Microbe wrestling team finish the season with four matches and tournaments. The team finished sixth in the big McCallie Tornado Duels.**

The 2015-2016 MBA Microbe Wrestling Team
The staff and sponsors of Top of the Hill would like to thank the MBA Mothers and Fathers Clubs for their generous support!

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