Faculty Charity Basketball Game Packs the Gym
by Michael Seitz
Staff Writer

The MBA community got its first glimpse of March Madness on Wednesday, March 5th, as the Montgomery Bell faculty defeated Hillsboro’s faculty in the first annual Faculty Charity Basketball Game.

In a 40-minute frenzy, the rag-tag team of mostly out-of-shape men put on a Globetrotter-esque show. Having spent months working on their game before school and during lunch periods, MBA faculty-athletes hit the hardwood to prove their skills to a packed crowd in Currey Gym.

The teachers and coaches played their hearts out to raise money for Saigon Children’s Charities, an organization that provides scholarships, school supplies, bicycles, and rice for needy children in Vietnam. A Big Red victory brought in over $2600, with roughly $1600 coming from admissions to the game and $1000 coming from advisee pledges for points each player scored.

With head bands and high socks, the pumped-up faculty team was made up of former star athletes ranging from Division 3 college football players to a college cheerleader. But it didn’t take long to see who the true players were on MBA’s campus, as Vanderbilt basketball legends Kevin Anglin and Ronnie McMahan displayed their shooting abilities and even attempted some alley-oop dunks.

While McMahan led the team in money raised with $83.80 and 10 points and Anglin added $53 and 14 points, it was tennis coach Zac Hood who found his groove from 3-point range and led the team in points with 16. It is refreshing to see the tennis program carrying the basketball program for a change.

MBA players were able prove victorious despite Hillsboro’s dominating 6’6” post player, George Brown. A highlight of the game came from Coach Sean Kinch who showed his skills by doing a behind-the-back move and blowing by Hillsboro’s one woman player, Katrina Carter, on a fast break.

Players even brought in money from more creative pledges. Referee Bill Compton gave a technical to the announcer, Jamie Tillman, to raise money, and although Matt Golener scored only 2 points, he brought in $30.50 by throwing his boomerang at one end of the court while the rest of the players were on the other.

“It was the best basketball game I’ve seen played in the gym all year,” Latin teacher Mr. Gaither said. “It’s fun to see the faculty’s athleticism match its intellectualism.” J.P. Bernatavitz, who scored 4 points and raised $27 commented, “Mr. Tillman did a terrific job in the organization of the event. It allowed us to raise money for a good cause, and it gave the students an opportunity to see their teachers and coaches in a different light.”

Discussions are already underway to have the game again next year, probably at Hillsboro.

A Painful Look At MBA’s Discussion Board
by Dalton Fouts
Staff Writer

Hmm… an article on students’ use of the First Class Discussion Board, that would be an interesting article to research, wouldn’t you think? You’d think… but you would be wrong.

701 posts and an hour of my life later, I have lost all hope for MBA’s future. An online forum where students can discuss ideas, post announcements, list what they’ve lost… that’d be pretty useful, right? Well, again… one would think so, but again, you would be wrong.

In my short tenure at The Bell Ringer, no report has been more painful to research. Instead of a useful electronic tool, the Discussion Board is fly paper for intellectually-undisciplined junior schoolers.

Of the 701 comments I mentioned, a mere three were made by high school students. But does that mean the page is inherently bad? You be the judge.

First, let’s observe some recent colored fonts. I can even take a couple of pictures of cross-dressing presidential candidates. BUT… after 60 minutes of such insults as “nooby noob,” a line has to be drawn.

When a poor soul posts an item on the Lost and Found, I have to be the least bit skeptical that all of the 58 who responded actually knew what had happened to his UFO Rubik’s cube. And even when semi-serious discussions actually take off, they’re soon after shot down with sensitive responses like “idk what u talking about, but ya u run across the border, u should be shot”. As insightful as you are, Mr. 7th Grader, that had nothing to do with the U.S. debt.

The real question is: should something be done about such use of the Student Information page? Or better phrased in the enlightened words of another 7th-grader, “what if mccain has seven arms? so lets discuss that now.” Yes, let’s.
Write for the Bell Ringer!

We need a few strong monthly columnists!

Contact Will Orman or Mr. Gaither.
Beyond the Hill: Russia

cont. from p. 2

it overnight. Things were this way in
Russian society during the Empire, the
Soviet Union, and today: society is viewed
by many as a teeming mass of dumb,
crude peasants, and a small cultural
and economic elite. These days anyone who
travels around Moscow in a Hummer
thinks he has class and intelligence,
when usually he’s just a dumb peasant
in a Hummer. I think Russia is a real
land of extremes; on the one hand, you’ll
find some of the crudest people you
can imagine, and on the other, you’ll
find some of the most gifted, refined,
generous, unassuming, and sincere people
you’ll meet anywhere on earth. Luckily,
I’ve made several friends who belong
to the latter category (most of them are
mathematicians!), and that’s been the most
rewarding part of my time in Russia.

Did they show the Superbowl in Russia?

Only on some obscure cable channel
no one gets. Some Russians know that a
sport called “American football” (to
differentiate it from soccer) exists, but
that’s all they know. They confuse it with
rugby. Here, the main sports are football
(soccer!), hockey, chess, figure skating,
and the biathlon. Yes, chess is considered
a sport here. And no, I’m not kidding about
the biathlon.

What was one of your most memorable
experiences in Russia?

Probably the first time I stepped into an
Orthodox church just off Red Square—
one of many that had been destroyed by
the Bolsheviks, only to be rebuilt
after the Soviet collapse. I later became
fascinated with Orthodox philosophy
and eventually converted, but those first
aesthetic impressions inside the church
(the icons, the singing, etc.) were very
memorable. I’ve had too many memorable
experiences to count... spending time
with Russian friends at Moscow State
University playing soccer in the snow,
hearing Russian symphonies and operas
in Petersburg, and walking with my wife
around Tolstoy’s estate, which is beautiful.
Of course, getting married here was the
biggest highlight.

Have you given any consideration to
heading an MBA Russian language program?

I’ve certainly thought that it could be
interesting, although Russian is a difficult
language, and there’s something to be
said for studying a language more closely
related to English in high school and then
challenging oneself with something more
exotic in college. That’s what I did, at
any rate. Of course, I would plead with
any student to study at least one foreign
language seriously, no matter what it is—
each language, along with its literature, is
a unique window on the world. I’ve tried
to look through as many as I possibly
can, and am convinced that nothing can
broaden one’s perspective like language
study. And don’t choose the language
that you suppose will further your career—
choose the one you feel drawn to, even
if you have no idea why (I was drawn
to Russian even in high school, but had
no idea why). Alas, Russian has become
less popular since the end of the Cold
War, although interest will surely rise
as Russia reasserts itself economically
and politically. As for me, I became hooked
on Dostoevsky in college, decided I
had to read him in the original, and
finally decided to study Russian. Now,
about twelve years later, I’m finishing
a dissertation on Dostoevsky. And the
names familiar in the US—Tolstoy,
Dostoevsky, Chekhov—are just the tip
of the iceberg when it comes to Russian
literature. This is the case with any
culture and language.

Would you recommend that MBA
students visit or even temporarily stay
in Russia?

I would highly recommend that everyone
make a point of visiting Russia at least
once, especially if they’re making the
“Grand Tour” of Europe during high
school or college. Spend a day or two
in each. A.a. Leningrad and Moscow, the former Imperial
and the former Soviet capital, worth
visiting for their historical interest alone.
Western Europe is great, but nowadays
students should make a point of
pushing into Eastern Europe and Russia,
for something more exotic. If anyone
plans to visit, they can get in touch with
me, I enjoy showing visitors around
whenever I can, and most of them are
surprised by how much Russia has to
offer, whether they’re into history, art,
music, literature, or whatever.

What are your thoughts on Russian
President Vladimir Putin? Has he
made Russia a better place since he
came to power?

It’s interesting—before Putin ever
appeared on the scene, many Russians
(including the likes of Solzhenitsyn)
spoke that what Russia really
needed was something of an
omnipotence "authoritarian democrat," who would
provide stability and structure from above
(specially after the Yeltsin years, which
Russians still regard as something like the
Wild West) while encouraging economic
development and the liberalization of
society. Despite the (often justified)
criticism from the West, I believe that,
in general, Putin has been more or less
what Americans treat them as equals.

What reforms does the Russian
government need to make?

Economically, it’s well known that Russia
is overly dependent on exports of its vast
reserves of natural resources, such that
its current economic boom is due in large
part to sky-high oil prices. So there’s a
lot of concern here about diversifying
the economy and promoting growth among
small businesses, manufacturing, and
service industries. The consumer market
here is growing rapidly. Russians are
generally very well-educated and creative,
so they have a lot of human capital to
draw on. Another challenge is spreading
the wealth, especially geographically.
Wealth and power are completely
concentrated in Moscow, so that, say,
young people who live even in fairly large
cities feel that if they’re not in Moscow,
they’re literally in the middle of nowhere.
Nevertheless, growth is starting to spread
to some of these “provincial” cities as
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Sophomores Write Research Papers
by Daniel Green
Staff Writer
Every year at MBA a new batch of sophomores is put through the trials of writing their first full-length research paper. It has become a sort of rite-of-passage, if you will, for MBA students.

The experience consists of choosing a difficult and in-depth topic about an historical event, required reading of three novels based on your topic, and grueling hours of research and filling out note cards, which will eventually number enough to fill a standard note-card box. The cards contain the data about the selected historical event and about literary criticism written on the pertinent novels.

All of this information must then be structured and put into the longest outline any MBA student has ever written. Last are the rough drafts and the final product, an exhaustingly long paper that is about twice as long as a normal theme.

Some of this year’s sophomores have embraced this trying test assigned by tenth-grade English teachers Mr. Moxley and Ms. Anderson. One student remarked, “I’m actually really enjoying the assignment. While I wasn’t exactly thrilled to have assigned reading and note cards, it’s ten times better than last year’s assignment. While I wasn’t exactly thrilled to have assigned reading and note cards, it’s ten times better than last year’s assignment.

Criticism of the research paper was, as expected, widespread. One student said of the steps of the process, “I don’t like the fact that we’re required to turn in notecards and such on certain ‘deadlines,’ and, if there are any such ‘deadlines’ at all, I feel that they should be suggestions and not affect the actual grade of the paper. The product should only count, in terms of final grade at least, and not the process.”

When I mentioned the research paper to another sophomore, he simply said, “I hate it!” Some students’ issues were not with the paper itself but with a certain chemistry teacher’s scheduling a test on the same day the research paper was due.

Since every sophomore’s research paper was turned in last Thursday, the entire class has let out a collective sigh after a job well-done. The tenth-graders have survived the English department’s attempt to break them and to drive them into insanity, and they now have Spring Break to look forward to. The hardest part of English II is in the rear-view mirror for these sophomores. There are just two long and tiring years at MBA left ahead of them, and, to all you freshmen, you are the next to be initiated as true MBA students.

The Full Moon Film Festival Is Coming Soon
by Alvin Kim
Staff Writer
The Full Moon Film Festival will again this year host the Second Annual Full Moon Film Festival. Like last year, the competition is open to anyone in grades 9-12.

With this project, MBA hopes not only to reach out to the community by using the power of film, combined with technical and artistic showmanship, to attract students from all backgrounds, but also to teach students to embrace media technology by establishing Nashville as the national hub for high school filmmakers.

The Festival program has already held two very successful seminars, educating amateur filmmakers, but those interested can still attend one last lecture on Saturday, March 29, at the University School of Nashville.

Students from MBA are strongly encouraged to consider entering the competition as many more already have. Please keep in mind that experience is not required and that MBA student Adrian Carey won first place last year without having ever made authentic movies before.

Aside from the cash prizes, (4th place: $500, 3rd place: $1000, 2nd place: $2000 and 1st place: $3000), the winner of the contest will have his/her film screened at the Nashville Film Festival.

Important upcoming dates include: March 15th: letter of intent due, and April 4th: film submission deadline. The time limit is 6 minutes and 30 seconds total, and filmmakers can make any movie based on a person or event from American history within 1770-1990, as long as it is not a horror film.

If interested, please visit www.fullmoonfilmfestival.com for more information and updates on Facebook or Myspace. For help in this competition, please contact Mr. Rozario.

Connecting Beyond the Hill: the New Alumni Network
by Pat Killian
Staff Writer
The leaders of MBA work hard to cultivate bonds of community here on the Hill, and to ensure that these bonds are put to good use the MBA Alumni Office has developed a new online Alumni Network, part-directory, part-social network, and fully equipped to perpetuate the Big Red spirit far beyond the campus itself.

The network – to be launched on Career Day (4/7) – is contained on a password-protected site accessible through the school website. In a sense, the site is just the alumni directory (published every five years) but online in an easily updatable format.

However, the system’s capabilities reach far beyond that of an address book. The main page of the site displays selectable calendars and updates (for sports, alumni events, etc.). The directory portion of the site contains all information on every alumnus in the MBA database. Once he receives his password, any alumni can then personally update and edit his information as he pleases. The directory can also be searched and broken down by a number of variables, such as class year, address, or occupation.

While the contact information available is impressive by itself, the true value of the new network lies in the interaction it promotes. The system contains message boards for any sort of discussion: job listings, common hobbies, cars for sale, whatever.

More specifically, the network encourages “mentor groups.” These groups, centered on some common interest, have similar variability and could bring together anything from a college’s alumni to golf partners. Mr. Scott O’Neal says the purpose of such groups is to “create or look it up and contact opportunities,” especially for younger graduates just entering the wider world. “It’s pretty simple,” he says, “but it’s got great potential.”

The Career Day launching is part of the Alumni Office’s “grassroots” campaign for the network’s promotion. The office plans to introduce the site to younger, more technically-inclined graduates, who would also benefit more from the network’s contact opportunities. These young alumni will put the network to more immediate use and bring it onto older alumni’s radars.

The current MBA student may think the site useless now, until he leaves the Hill. After all, high school students do not receive passwords or access to the site at all. However, Mr. O’Neal is sure that the network will provide benefits even before graduation. For those students in the midst of their college searches, the network will open doors to college students and professionals in certain fields, all of whom will probably be glad to help and talk with curious students. By just asking the Alumni Office, this network will open to any needy student.

Through the efforts of the Alumni and Technology Offices, meetings with other MBA alumni will not be chance encounters but become readily-creatable and regular occasions.

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With college decisions looming less than a month away, Austin Branstetter received the first major college success less than a month away, Austin Branstetter received the first major college success

Three-quarters of the way through their first year in the high school, the freshman class is in dire need of a break. Luckily, Spring Break is almost here! Spring Break plans are all the buzz, and many students are interesting and out-of-the-ordinary plans for their week off. Connor Pagmann is reportedly going to Disney World. Paul Wood plans on a mission trip with his church to Tijuana, and many thanks to Dr. Seay for his hard work. Have a great break!

The Spring Class is looking forward to a great fourth quarter and an even better spring break, with spring sports a strong focus. This Spring Break will be spent many different ways as juniors travel across the nation for both relaxation and college visits. Harrison Stringfellow is spending his spring break traveling to NYU, Virginia Tech, UVA, and Johns Hopkins. Aaron Barrett didn’t want to say where he was going, but he did want to mention he will be attending Ole Miss in the fall of ’09...a bit of speculation. Chunnan Park is looking forward to visiting the University of Georgia, the University of Tennessee, and Davidson College. He’s also preparing for Science Olympiad and Envirothon.

Will Holt has an exciting break planned, as he’s going to Chattanooga to get the Krystal folks to put us in the Hall of Fame. Then he’s going to Athens on March 19th, and Nick Williams’ mom is his chaperone. Will is looking at England for college, and he also wanted to add that he’s going to a Bruce Springsteen concert with Mr. Morrison later in the quarter. And for all the ladies looking for Will to take you to prom: he says his flight will be late, so save him that last dance because you can’t leave ‘til he arrives. Wow, Will! That does not sound at all concealed.

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Despite the onset of second-semester senioritis, MBA’s class of 2008 has continued to dominate in every field possible here on The Hill and around the country.

With college decisions looming less than a month away, Austin Branstetter received the first major college success by winning the Morehead-Cain award at the University of North Carolina, a full scholarship complete with stipend and numerous other perks.

On the athletic fields, Christian Waddley received the Admiral William P. Lawrence Award, recognizing him as the top high school football scholar-athlete in Middle Tennessee. Meanwhile, all the world’s a stage for seniors Brendan Mayhew and Garrett Anglin, who have starred in the most recent theatrical productions at MBA and Harpeth Hall.

In the world of speech and debate, MBA seniors continue to reign supreme around the entire nation. At MBA’s own prestigious Southern Bell Forum Extemporaneous Speaking Round Robin X, which invites the top 16 extempers from around the country to compete in a grueling three-day marathon, Max Webster claimed second place, thwarted by one of his top foes from Massachusetts, by a single point. Senior Robert Awh continues to show masterful performances, like his quarterback finish at UC Berkeley and 2nd Place at Vezastia Hills, qualifying him for the Tournament of Champions in Policy Debate. Corey Metzman is also fully qualified for the “TOC” in Lincoln-Douglas Debate.

MBA’s Mock Trial Team, led by six seniors, finally quedched the 10-year drought by winning the city championship over such foes as Hume Fogg and Ensworth. Max Webster was the A Team’s MVP, Jimmy Anderson was the B Team’s MVP, and Corey Metzman was the tournament’s Outstanding Defense Attorney.

MBA also ended a Regional drought in Science Olympiad by taking a first-place victory and a berth in the state tournament. The diversity of excellence by MBA’s senior class is a true testament to the well-rounded and dedicated students who all strive to fulfill the motto Gentleman-Scholar-Athlete.

The main activity of the class of 2011, though, in the past few weeks has been the annual Freshman Speech Competition, organized and executed due to the efforts of Dr. Seay. Each boy in the class prepared a 3-5 minute speech on one of 3 topics: the environment, sportsmanship, or discovery. They presented these speeches in small groups, with one person speaking from each group. Small group winners, who competed in the semi-finals last Friday, were Will Cranberry, Max Werthan, Tom Markham, Jack Hallemann, Mason Kirkpatrick, Philip Spelman, Kyle Meadowes, Max Coyle, and I. All of the speeches were great, on a broad range of topics ranging from global warming to overbearing parental involvement in sports. A basic breakdown of general speech topics was as follows: 27% Environment, 30% Discovery, and 43% Sportsmanship. Among the most original topics was Philip Danley’s, on “The Discovery of Diversity.” In the finals on Monday, Andrew Powell finished 1st in the competition, Philip Spelman took 2nd, and Tom Markham was 3rd. I hope that everyone learned something about public speaking from this valuable experience, and many thanks to Dr. Seay for his hard work. Have a great break!

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MBA TENNIS:
A Young Team Faces Challenges
by Kyle Brantley
Staff Writer

The MBA Tennis Program faces one of its toughest challenges in years for this upcoming season. The team, which consists of senior Captain Jim Shaub, juniors Leland Bandlow and Richard Brunsting, sophomores Naveen Chadalavada, Jake Hymes, and Chris Vaughan, freshmen Russ Anderson and Davis Thraikill, and eighth-grader Palmer Campbell, is poised to continue the MBA tradition of tennis with one of the youngest teams in recent history.

The team lost four seniors from last year, including Adam Baker (now playing at Vandy), as well as freshman Roger Briggs, who transferred to University School of Jackson. The tennis season is at MBA on March 11 against the Ensworth and Ensworth have extremely talented teams. As Coach Hood reports, “Ensworth is good and young. There is definitely potential for a rivalry there. Those guys are intense.”

The team is lucky enough this year to have some of the best coaches around. In addition to the dedicated Coach Hood, the team will have Brian Baker and Scott Brown helping out as assistants. Scott Brown was a key player for Vanderbilt a few years ago; Brian Baker was ranked number one in the world for juniors 18 and under, and he has beaten Novak Djokovic, the recent Australian Open Champion, twice. The leadership and wisdom of these three tennis sensations will prove to be a valuable asset for the group.

The first varsity match of the season is at MBA on March 11 against the University School of Jackson. The tennis team has a promising season ahead and faces one of its toughest challenges in years for this upcoming year. The team, which consists of senior Captain Jim Shaub, juniors Leland Bandlow and Richard Brunsting, sophomores Naveen Chadalavada, Jake Hymes, and Chris Vaughan, freshmen Russ Anderson and Davis Thraikill, and eighth-grader Palmer Campbell, is poised to continue the MBA tradition of tennis with one of the youngest teams in recent history.

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A. Joel Gluck DDS, MS

Board Certified Orthodontist

Father of Daniel ('03) and Jonathan ('04) Gluck

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Climb To A Great Experience

by Jimmy Baber
Staff Writer

Just a stone’s throw away from West End is a new sort of monster for the strong to conquer. Climb Nashville, in case you haven’t heard, is now considered one of the southeast’s best climbing facilities. And if you’re like me, you can use the prestige of Climb Nashville as an excuse for the incredible amount of time spent falling on your back.

To clear up one misconception many people seem to have about the climbing community: climbers are not all of one type. The climbers at Climb Nashville on any given day may range from youngsters attending a 10-year-old’s birthday party to psychos who can hold themselves upside down by one finger.

The young, beanie-wearing staff is unbelievably helpful, and many of them have climbing prowess that could show up Spiderman. The two real choices a climber has at the beginning are “routes” or “bouldering.” Both involve color-coordinated paths that are categorized by difficulty. Routes are those high walls where a climber needs a harness and a partner to enable him to finish.

Routes are probably the easier of the two paths, but are by no means easy. Some routes have what appear to be entire sections missing, and a climber has to look for dents and cracks in the wall to proceed. Recently a route was built that required a run and jump start. I didn’t see anyone get that one.

Bouldering, on the other hand, has no learning curve. The wall is only about 10 feet tall, but those 10 feet may frustrate a person to the point of insanity… and rip his hands, too. Still, a climber doesn’t need to worry about failure as he tumbles toward the mat below; he is in good company. Everyone falls.

When I asked MBA’s resident climb-master, John Michael McGinn, why he exposes himself to the physical abuse, he replied, “The real draw to Climb Nashville is probably the atmosphere. Everyone is laid back, and climbers learn and improve at their own pace.” This is good news for those who enjoy advancing their individual strength, i.e. those defeated by every little league sport imaginable.

Climbers Nick Williams and Patrick Sohr had a few more words to say about the experience: “Although the learning curve can be extremely steep, few other sports give the sense of accomplishment one feels when he grasps the last rock of a wall”. And thanks to Nashville’s (and MBA’s) increasing rock junkie population, alternative sports fans can rejoice in Climb Nashville’s growing success.

Soccer Hopes This Is The Year

by Fadi Pulous
Staff Writer

The MBA varsity and junior varsity soccer teams are looking forward to another strong year with help from every single class in the high school.

With few returning seniors, the varsity team will be relying on its juniors, sophomores, and freshmen to help lead the team to a state title. Houston Oldham, varsity team captain, returns for his fourth straight year as a varsity player. With the loss of Alexander Darsono to a professional club team, the returning seniors will have to step up and help keep the scoring alive. Seniors Jonathan Haynes, Alex Owings, and Grant Gardner will have to fill in.

Coach Cheevers has high hopes for this year’s varsity team. He believes that despite being undersized in terms of height, if the team works hard on their running, passing, and tactics, a state championship is possible.

Soccer Weights and Running was brutal in the cold, but it will pay off in the long run. Coach Lanier, the silent contributor and varsity head coach, looks forward to working with this group of men as he tries to lead them to another state championship. New varsity additions Rob Smith, Reed Stanberry, and Will Overton anticipate pulling out all the stops in an attempt to capture a win over division rival Father Ryan. A tough loss last year in a short match leaves the Varsity itching for a rematch. The Varsity’s first game was cancelled due to a raging March snow shower. Look for more updates on the varsity soccer team as the season progresses.

The MBA Junior Varsity team is also looking forward to another strong showing, coming off a 13-1-1 season last year, with the only loss coming to a strong Father Ryan team and a tie to a physical Mt. Juliet team early in the season.

This year’s JV squad expects leadership from all the junior and sophomore players as they help welcome in the freshman players. The season started off well for the JV team as they took down a Varsity/JV combo team from Martin Luther King Magnet School. The 3-0 win was a great statement from this year’s team, as Ben Crooks, William Flautt, and Stephen Bedard all scored.

Physical defense and goal-keeping from Will Andrews, Paul Van Pernis, and goalie Ryan King helped preserve the shutout. Ian Preston and Turner Henderson played phenomenal games in the mid-field, as they controlled the ball for the majority of the game and were great on the passing game.

The JV and Varsity teams go into this spring break with a bit of momentum and open up play full speed during the last week of March. Come out and support both teams as they start the long road toward a state championship.
The MBA Science Department

Talks About Pandemics
by Seth Akers-Campbell
Staff Writer

Each year, most of us get a flu shot. It works about half the time, right? But what happens when you get the flu, and you don’t get over it after a few days? Or a few weeks?

Every year, the World Health Organization picks three viral strains of influenza, known as “the flu” to most of us, to be included in its recommended flu shot. But the process to develop the shot takes time, and usually by flu season the major strain going around is not included in the vaccine. The influenza virus, like many other viruses, is constantly evolving through both natural and artificial selection as we humans attempt to kill it. The viruses genetically resistant to our efforts continue to infect the population and thrive because they are harder to kill.

Recently the avian influenza (“Bird flu”) has been receiving quite a lot of attention. This virus is deadly to birds and can spread both quickly and spreading to humans. The World Health Organization reports that 63% of humans infected with Bird flu strain H5N1 since 2003 have died.

But will Bird flu be the next pandemic? According to a recent MBA Science Department poll, two-thirds of our own experts believe that some type of influenza virus could be the next great pandemic, with Bird flu being a very likely strain to infect millions. Africa, Asia, China, and, perhaps surprisingly, Russia were cited as likely places for an epidemic to start. But if diseases are rampant on the other side of the world, are we safe?

With the transportation systems of the modern world, highly virulent diseases can spread from remote provinces in China to the United States in a few hours. Modern technological and scientific advances have allowed for the fast prevention of outbreaks, as evidenced by the tuberculosis scare last year, when an Atlanta lawyer flew around Europe for two weeks to get married before finally being quarantined in the United States, keeping the increasingly antibiotic-resistant bacterial disease from spreading. Because of this and other lucky escapes from pandemics, modern countries with modern science seem to be safer, yet antibiotic resistant microorganisms are making gains. Half of the MBA science teachers polled were confident that humans would be able to effectively control diseases, despite their frequent mutations and high reproduction rates. Yet the other half believed that diseases would eventually win out because of their evolutionary advantage.

So, will disease conquer us? The MBA Science Department is evenly split on the final outcome of this battle, yet warns that the influenza virus is humanity’s most dangerous opponent, with antibiotic-resistant bacteria coming in as the second greatest threat. Biology and Environmental Science AP teacher Mr. Pruitt argues, however, that the current major diseases no longer have a chance of blowing into a full pandemic because they have been known for such a long time now. He says to watch for the sudden appearance of disease in a 3rd- world environment where a new disease or strain could infect millions of people. It seems likely then that a new threat may appear for the next generation of MBA scientists to overcome.

Mr. Caldwell
Leaves A Few Words
by Campbell Haynes
Staff Writer

Veteran MBA faculty member Michael Caldwell is retiring from teaching after this school year. Mr. Caldwell has coached football at the freshman and 8th-grade levels, he has been the varsity golf coach, he has taught all levels of math, and he has been chairman of the math department. He loves to chat, but, as you will see, he does not waste words. Through all his years at MBA, he never lost his irascibility nor his remarkable memory. Mr. Caldwell can, with only an occasional miss, tell you the name of a long-gone teacher who taught for only a year and when that year was, and he can tell you the graduating class of almost any student. Having graduated from Vanderbilt, he came to MBA in 1973, back when telephones still had a dial, back when tests were printed on the mimeograph machine (situated roughly where the west side of the faculty room is now located), long before computers invaded all aspects of life, and when Brett Favre was just a baby.

The Bell Ringer’s Campbell Haynes asked Mr. Caldwell a few questions, just enough to pique our interest and desire to probe deeper.

Bell Ringer: How long have you been a teacher at MBA?
Mr. Caldwell: 35 years.

Bell Ringer: What are some of your most memorable experiences while at MBA?

Mr. Caldwell: The 1994 MBA vs. Franklin substate basketball game, Brandt Snedeker’s first state golf championship (’97), MBA vs. Bolles football game (’99), and Dr. Paschall’s announcement that he had pancreatic cancer (11/5/93).

Bell Ringer: Do you have any hobbies?
Mr. Caldwell: Golf, movies, reading mystery/detective fiction.

Bell Ringer: What is your favorite movie?
Mr. Caldwell: The Godfather.

Bell Ringer: T.V. show?
Mr. Caldwell: Law and Order.

Bell Ringer: Sports team?
Mr. Caldwell: NY Yankees.

Bell Ringer: Why do you plan on retiring after the end of this year?
Mr. Caldwell: 35 years is a long time…plus I’m a little bit lazy.

Bell Ringer: Do you plan on doing after you retire?
Mr. Caldwell: No definite plans, except to relax, get better at golf, … perhaps travel.

The Bell Ringer wants to be among the first to thank Mr. Caldwell for his thirty-five years of service to the students of MBA and to express our regret that his intellectual inspiration will be unknown to young minds of the future.

Thank you, Mr. Caldwell.

MBA Math League
Team Wins
by Will Henry
Staff Writer

For some, the big game comes on Friday nights; for others, it’s Sunday afternoons. But, for a select group of MBA students, come one Thursday every week, a math guru based in Ravenwood High, MBA, can be counted on to top off a great season with some top finishes.

In Algebra I, Hunter Tidwell placed 5th and Thom Bu placed 3rd.

In Algebra II division were 3rd-place Carter Callaway, 2nd-place Michal Zienkiewicz, and 1st-place Jichao Deng.

In Pre-Calculus, Rahul Sastry pulled off a 3rd-place finish.

In Statistics, Will Henry finished 5th, Michael Seitz placed 3rd, and Fitz Lassing took 1st.

At each of the four matches, the top two scores from a team comprised the team score. At the final competition, the graders added all four team scores to determine the season winners. MBA placed 5th in Geometry, 3rd in Algebra I, 2nd in Pre-Calculus and Calculus, and 1st in Algebra II and Statistics.

In other math-related news, the junior-school Mathcounts team once again won the city Mathcounts tournament and qualified for the state competition for the 7th straight year.

In the AMC 10 test, Pat Killian and Andrew Powell tied for 1st place in the school. In the AMC 12, Karl Mecklenborg and Rahul Sastry both qualified for the next round of testing.

In the second year that MBA participated in the Interscholastic Math League, the hard work that the MBA students put into the competitions was indeed reflected by their high finishes. Essentially summing up the season, first-timer to the competitions sophomore Pat Killian says: “This was awesome!”
Science Olympiad Wins Region
by Chunbum Park
Staff Writer

The Big Red Army succeeded in Operation Scientific Freedom at MTSU’s A couple of weeks ago, when the Division C squad claimed the top spot, and the junior schoolers won 4th place, qualifying for the state competition.

The high school team received the regional 1st place trophy and a wooden plaque, thanks to its 16 medal wins out of 23 events (5 gold, 6 silver, 4 bronze, and 1 zinc). The next two in the competition were MLK (94 points) and Franklin Road Academy (96 points), while MBA had an uncontestable score of 78 points (smaller is better: 1st place is one point better than the two a team receives for 2nd place).

The junior school placed in 12 events, with 5 gold, 3 silver, 2 bronze, and 2 zinc medals. This squad trailed closely behind MLK’s 92 points, with a total of 104 points. The 1st and 2nd places were Harpeth Hall (73 points) and St. Rose of Lima Elementary School (85 points).

Teenagers teams were in Division C and twelve teams were in Division B (some schools had two teams – A & B; if both teams place, only 1 team advances to the state). The MTSU competition is one of the largest regional meets in the country, and for this reason 4th placers also receive medals. Despite its size, the MTSU meet may not be a very competitive tournament, if one considers that other regional meets in states such as California boasted 2nd and 5th places in the Division C of the 2007 National Tournament.

I interviewed Will Hannon and Daniel Arteaga about their regional experience. Here are Will’s responses:

Chunbum: What did you do in Disease Detective?
Will: We used a volt meter to measure and read blood level, analyzed graphs, etc.
C: You won 3rd place in disease detective. What prevented you from getting 1st or 2nd place?
W: We were careless in defining the terms – the other teams must have been more specific with their definitions.
C: How did the event Circuit Lab go?
W: We won 1st place, which was actually surprising because we went in there without knowing what to expect. We basically analyze circuits and answer hypothetical questions about them.
C: The other events?
W: We didn’t get a medal on ecology – which was unexpected. In Electric Vehicle, we won 2nd place, barely. Basically, you build a vehicle before the competition and program it to travel a certain distance that we don’t know about beforehand. At the event, you predict the time it takes to travel. We had to count in binary because our robot’s vex computer can be programmed only in the binary code. The 1st placer went very straight because of balance – the structure was more square and sound, and so they won by a few more points.

Now, a word or two from Daniel:

Chunbum: How did you do in Forensics?
Daniel: We won first place – thanks to Krzysztof. It consisted of different chemistry tests, flame tests, fiber tests, DNA sampling, fingerprint matching, etc. It’s like what the FBI does.
C: What did you do in Food Science?
D: We won 2nd place there, which was a surprise because we didn’t feel so confident. We tested mystery samples for the presence of some basic food ingredients like starch, glucose, proteins, carbohydrates, etc., and solved math questions having to do with calories.

The medalists and their events:
Gold: 5 events
Circuit Lab – Will Hannon, Robert McNeilly
Forensics – Daniel Arteaga, Krzysztof Zienkiewicz
Remote Sensing – Robert McNeilly, Mitchell Lukens
Chemistry Lab – Rahul Sastry, Andrew Powell
Electric Vehicle – Krzysztof Zienkiewicz, Will Hannon

Silver: 6 events
Cell Biology – Rahul Sastry, Chunbum Park
Chemistry Lab – Krzysztof Zienkiewicz, Kevin Carr
Physics Lab – Rahul Sastry, Andrew Powell
Electric Vehicle – Krzysztof Zienkiewicz, Will Hannon
Food Science – Daniel Arteaga, Kevin Carr

Bronze: 4 events
Circuit Lab – Will Hannon, Kevin Carr
Physics Lab – Krzysztof Zienkiewicz, Rahul Sastry
Five-Star Science – Rahul Sastry, Seth Akers-Campbell
Remote Sensing – Robert McNeilly, Mitchell Lukens

Zinc: 1 event
Astronomy – Andrew Powell, Richard Wall

A Note From The Spanish Department
by Alvin Kim

This summer Mr. Gray would like to take a group of Spanish students to Guadalajara, Mexico. Exact dates have not been decided due to a lack of student-based support. This city is one of the most culturally immersed locations throughout Mexico and is an ideal destination for young Spanish speakers at MBA.

Students would spend one week there getting to know its people, the dialect, and culture. With its many picturesque survivals of the Spanish colonial era, this modern, commercial metropolis has become the Perla del Occidente or Pearl of the West. More information to come if more students show interest and support. Contact Mr. Gray if interested.

Michael and Alan Go to The Movies: Spring Break Edition
by Michael Downing and Alan Schulman
Entertainment Editors

Vantage Point - The overall concept of Vantage Point was successful. Each new perspective added another element to the story. However, the rewind sequences when transitioning between vantage points were annoying, and laughably ridiculous at times. And the biggest disappointment of all was the ending. It was perhaps the most anticlimactic, out-of-place outcome we have ever seen. Only see this movie if you are prepared to be frustrated.

Semi-Pro – Will Ferrell has proven once again that even the most stupid of comedies can be hilarious with the right cast. Though the movie lacks any serious theme or plot (like most Will Ferrell movies), it redeems itself with essentially non-stop humor. If you’re a 1970’s music and basketball fan looking for some good times, Semi-Pro is the movie for you.

10000 B.C. - This movie was an amalgamation of the most predictable, and forgettable, elements of the recent war films set in antiquity. With such an intriguing premise, such as mammoths and saber-tooth tigers, this movie should have had at least a few redeeming qualities, but it didn’t. The fight sequences had a level of violence that would have felt at home with a G-rating. Don’t see this movie unless you’re obsessed with ancient history, or have nothing to do.

Be Kind Rewind – Yet another Jack Black movie requiring little thought to enjoy, Be Kind Rewind follows two young men desperately trying to refilm movies at their video store to avoid being fired. Now, the concept sounds hilarious (especially if Jack Black is in on it), but the movie was somewhat disappointing as a comedy, and seemingly worthless from any other perspective. Still… there were some laughs.

Jumper: This movie was suspenseful and intriguing from the beginning to the end. Yet, it lacks any elements which might distinguish it from a typical action film. You will see a repeated action sequence that’s really cool to watch (the jumps), fight scenes intertwined with scenes of a predictable romantic pursuit, and a twist in the last third. Definitely it is worth seeing, but don’t expect your life to change, despite the fact that it stars Samuel L. Jackson.

The Bank Job – Finally, an unpredictable heist movie. The Bank Job, though slow at times, is an extremely entertaining and well thought-out film. Tension is relatively high at all times, though the conflict gets to be a bit repetitive. Still, this movie lived up to and exceeded our expectations.

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GREAT WALL OF CHINA: SEPARATED CHINESE FROM MONGOLS

BERLIN WALL: SEPARATED COMMUNISM AND DEMOCRACY

BIG RED WALL: SEPARATING TABLES AND TRASHCANS SINCE MARCH '08