Hip, Hip, Hooray for *The Hobbit*

by Andrew Cho

*The Hobbit* proved to be another marvelous Junior School production and truly enjoyable entertainment for the MBA community. While *The Hobbit* was very different from the last year’s play, *The Sword in the Stone*, in terms of the setting, storyline, and overall mood, the students of MBA, Harpeth Hall, Overbrook, and St. Bernard made spectacular performances on stage (not to mention *Top of the Hill* photographer Aaron Ardisson and sports editor Joe Barry’s terrific performances as Bilbo and Dwalin!). Reaction to the play from students, faculty, and parents was extremely positive; all enjoyed the story and special effects. Many people have also commented on Mr. Thurmond’s vocal appearance as Smaug the dragon and the realistic costumes of the characters. In addition, the familiarity of the story, based on J.R.R. Tolkien’s novel, added to the richness of the production.

I personally liked the play because I am a big fan of Tolkien’s novels, and it was a lot of fun to watch my friends act out the book with great passion. Behind the success of this year’s play was the hard work of all the students who participated; as many of you know, the actors and the members of the tech crew rehearsed daily for countless hours, staying late after school. Hopefully, the junior school will continue its tradition of having wonderful play productions every year.

“Help! Let Go!!”

“You’re going on a dangerous venture!”

Thorin is large and in charge.
“It’s all about ME!”

“Sssssssss........”

“Run, dwarves, run!”

Matt is one wicked troll!

“A pot of gold is nice, but is there anything to eat in the cave?”

Ring on. . .ring off.
“I like my dwarf with ketchup.”

“We’ll kill you quicker than boiled asparagus.”

“Hip, hip, hooray for Bilbo!!”

“Strike a blow, Bilbo!”
Dr. Seay’s caveat: Quit touching your beards!!

“How should they be cooked?”

“At your service, Elfrida!”

Bilbo slays Smaug.

The dwarves escape the frozen trolls.

Dwarf nap time
The Hobbit, directed by Dr. Seay, was a resounding success this year! According to Dr. Seay, the third annual junior play raised more money than high school plays usually do! It was a rewarding experience, and I enjoyed the opportunity to perform. I think that I can speak on behalf of everyone when I say that the cast and crew formed solid friendships with people we really didn’t know very well before.

I asked several people to give me a reaction to their stage experience. Bilbo, played by Aaron Ardisson, said, “I believe I speak for all of us when I say that we have mixed emotions about it being over.”

Anna Nelson, one of the trolls, responded: “I am going to miss everyone so much! And it was my last Junior School play! I will treasure these fond memories of two years of plays at the Junior School. I have made many new friends this year, too!”

Lizzie Harless, an elf, told me: “I liked the part when John Elam says, ‘I found a ruby necklace!!!’ because after that line I always whispered to Margee, ‘John found a ruby necklace! Dibbs!’ I loved that play so much. I’m depressed it’s over.”

Margee Lopez, who played Elfrida, the elf queen, said that she liked it when all the dwarves said, “We thank you, your majesty.” I think it’s pretty obvious why she liked that line. She also said, “I miss it all. I didn’t like my dress that much, but I loved just being an elf and being on stage.”

When I asked John Elam, Gloin, what his favorite part was, he responded, “Hmm...I don’t know. Ummm... ‘baganses have never been afraid of dragonses,’ I guess.”

For everyone who attended the play, I hope that you enjoyed it as much as the participants.

The goblins surround the dwarves in the cave.

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MEDIA DAY

Movie, Girls, Pizza: A FUN Day!

by Hayden Holliman

On January 25, the eighth graders from Harpeth Hall and MBA gathered together at the privately owned Belcourt Theater for Media Day. Harpeth Hall film and English teacher, Mr. Adam Ross, told us to watch for varying camera angles, scene transitions, and lines that influence the direction of the plot and the significance of characters. The movie North by Northwest, by Alfred Hitchcock, the legendary director, had an action-packed plot along with a love story between Roger Thornhill, played by Cary Grant, and Eve Kendall, played by Eva Marie Saint.

After the movie, we had pizza before heading off to Harpeth Hall to have group discussions about the movie. Gathering in the theater, we had a good time listening to a special movie critic, who has been writing reviews for 30 years; he had some interesting remarks on some of the latest movies. Hopefully, this day sparked interest for film in some students. It was definitely nice to have a break from school with girls.
Augie! What are you thinking?!!

Chilling out at the Belcourt

Oh yeah, it was a COLD day!

Which girls should we sit with?

One group discusses camera angle--NOT!

Jack enjoys the company of ladies.
ELECTION

Decision ‘08: The Democratic Frontrunners

As you may well know, there are two frontrunners in the democratic primary, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama. Obviously, Hillary Clinton is a woman, and Barack Obama is black, making this primary a momentous occasion. Some of you might not like Obama, or might dislike Hillary Clinton, but sifting through the rumors and finding what each candidate actually stands for takes time. So, here are the views of the two candidates on education, energy, the economy, and Iraq as taken from their own official websites.

First up is Barack Obama. A large section of his plan is devoted to education. Under his administration, he would make math and science a national priority. To achieve this goal, he would “recruit math and science degree graduates” and give them incentives to teach so that students have a strong science curriculum at all levels of school. He would also reduce the drop-out rate by using strategies such as personal academic plans, mentoring, teaching teams, and parent involvement. In Obama’s plan for academics, he would recruit teachers by creating new Teacher Service Scholarships, prepare them by creating Teacher Residency Programs, and reward them by offering bonuses and pay raises for teachers who serve as mentors. Finally, Obama would “simplify the application process for financial aid” by eliminating the current federal financial aid application to cut down on the number of forms needed to be filled out. Next, Obama has a plan on energy and conservation. He will reduce carbon emissions 80% by 2050. He will also confront deforestation, rewarding farm and ranch owners for every carbon-reducing plant that is grown. He will invest 150 billion dollars over ten years in clean and renewable energy, require 25% of all electricity consumed by the US to come from renewable energy sources, and increase fuel efficiency of cars by 50%. Finally, Obama will create a forum of the world’s largest greenhouse gas emitters to talk about climate control and energy sources. Obama’s next big issue is the economy. He says he will provide a $1000 tax cut for working families. This plan will completely eliminate income taxes for over 10 million Americans. He will invest in U.S. manufacturing and give assistance to American car manufacturers so they can make fuel efficient vehicles to compete with overseas companies. He will raise the minimum wage and regulate it to current inflation rates. Finally, Barack Obama says he will create a law stating that if you can prove you must file bankruptcy because of medical expenses, you will not have to file. Last but not least, Obama’s stance on Iraq: He says that he will withdraw almost all troops within sixteen months after his inauguration. He will leave a few special operations units to protect the embassy and carry out strategic hits on Al Qaeda safe-houses.

Senator Hillary Clinton’s plan is based on the same issues. For education, she will end “No Child Left Behind,” recruit thousands of more teaching jobs, identify at-risk children, and give one billion dollars for intensive interventions, and challenge selective colleges to expand access for students from low-income houses. On energy, Clinton will create a National Energy Council to make energy and conservation an executive issue. She will require that all buildings built after January of 2009 be zero-emission buildings. She will also create a new Connie Mae program to make green products for houses more available to lower income families. Finally, she will increase MPG standards in cars to 55 miles per gallon. With respect to the economy, Clinton says that she will...
lower taxes for middle class families, strengthen unions, and ensure that trade laws “work” for all Americans. Finally, she plans to harness innovation to create the necessary high wage jobs of the 21st century. For Iraq, the Senator’s plan is to pull out all troops immediately and appoint a UN supervisor to that area, as is currently being done in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan. Finally, she will tell bordering countries to have a non-interference plan with Iraq, but she will also begin negotiations to meet the needs of both sides in the civil war.

Now that you have the candidates’ stance on a few issues, make your choice on who you want to win.

Mrs. Bakken and Jack, Tom Bu, Robert Papel, John Mellow, Trip Adams, Chris Duffey, Parrish Preston, and Andrew Scott celebrate MLK Day.
Rob Edwards sees a similarity in these 8th grade faces and certain animals!

Do you agree?
On February 1st, Mr. McMurray’s homeroom had a bake sale, complete with three Xboxes with Madden ’08, over one hundred Krystal chicks, drinks, and tons more food. The bake sale brought in a total amount of $672 for the charity, Island Dolphin Care, a non-profit organization that provides dolphin-assisted therapy to critically ill, disabled, and special needs children from all over the world. Voluntary therapists work with children with a variety of medical problems and diagnoses, including hemophilia, cancer, cystic fibrosis, congenital heart disorders, cerebral palsy.

Island Dolphin Care allows children and their families to forget their problems during their stay and open up for a relaxing experience. Families are assisted by resource centers in the facility to learn about their children’s disabilities. Children are not limited to dolphin play, for there are also touch tanks, building stations, aquariums, and other technology. For paralyzed children, there is a computer that they can control with their eyes, allowing some of them to talk for the first time in their lives. My stay there was inspiring, and Mr. McMurray’s homeroom donation will be a huge help. Perhaps YOU would consider giving to this charity!
CONGRATS

Tom Kaiser will represent MBA at the Geography Bee in April.

Mrs. Dyer congratulates runner-up Will Stewart and winner Robert Papel for their advancement to the city-wide spelling bee.

Spelling Bee

By Robert Papel

The Junior School Spelling Bee took place on January 15th, 16th, and 17th. On the first day, there were one hundred people standing up in the front of Massey Commons. Mrs. Dyer, the proctor of the spelling bee, asked words ranging from the Hawaiian language to the French language. There were words like “muu muu” and “ascertain.” Harder and harder words came around, knocking off about twenty people, bringing the count down to eighty students.

To be in front of a room filled with people staring at you, can make you pretty nervous. Also, the fear of messing up in front of all those people can be pretty nerve-wracking. For some, though, it can be a breeze.

On the second day, eighty students showed up to compete. Before long, there were only sixty people, then fifty, then forty, and then, finally there were only eight people left. Mrs. Dyer then asked a couple of more words, and finally only two were still standing: Will Stewart, 8th grade, and Robert Papel, 7th grade.

The third and final day, Will and Robert faced off in a classic 7th vs. 8th grade showdown. The pair went through several rounds of intense spelling. Will stumbled first, misspelling a word, and then Robert tried to win, but also misspelled the next word, evening the tables. Will then stumbled again, leaving the bee wide open for Robert to win when he spelled “gargantuan” correctly.

Overall, the Bee was a great success.

Junior Honor Society Inductees

Holt Akers-Campbell
Myles Anderson
David Arteaga
Palmer Campbell
Zachery Chen
Andrew Cho
Austin Doebler
Rob Edwards
Kyle Gray
Alex Hagar
Kelly Haselton
Rett Hooper
Augie Houghton
Daniel Mace
Ross Martin
Bryan Oslin
Wilson Patton
Henry Richardson
Joe Scherrer
Will Stewart
Baker Swain
Jack Whitson
Edward Wilson
Mathcounts

by Tom Bu

Mathcounts is a national competition where the coach picks eight students who are best suited to compete in the city competition. The competition levels go from school to city to state to nation. The problems for each competition include sprint round, which is thirty problems in forty minutes; target round, which is four pairs of problems that are harder than the sprint round, each six minutes long; and team round, where the team does ten problems together in twenty minutes. The team is composed of four people that the coach picks out of the eight. The scoring for the sprint round is one problem a point. The target round is two points for each problem. The team round is also two points a problem.

The students representing MBA were Andrew Cho, Zach Chen, Joe Scherrer, Hunter Tidwell, Tom Bu, Kevin Wang, George Swenson, and John Mellow and were led by Mrs. Qian. The team for this year is Andrew Cho, the team captain, Zach Chen, Hunter Tidwell, and Tom Bu. Since summer 2007, the Mathcounts participants have been preparing for the difficult competition. On February 2, 2008, their hard work paid off. It was a tough battle against twelve other schools and eighty other students, but MBA pulled through and won the Nashville competition, which is the school’s seventh consecutive win in the city competition. Good luck to the team in the state competition.

The Mathcounts Team won the city championship for the seventh straight year. Congratulations to Mrs. Qian and her talented students. Individual awards went to Hunter Tidwell, 4th place; Tom Bu, 5th place; Andrew Cho, 6th place; and Zachery Chen, 12th place.

Aaron Ardisson, Greylon Gawaluck, Hunter Tidwell, and Christian Sargent meditate on their Scholastic Art Awards.
The Children of Hurin: A Tolkien Classic

By Matt Anderson

After the Junior School performance of The Hobbit, I feel it is only fair to recognize the creator of this classic story, J.R.R. Tolkien. Tolkien’s novels have made him undoubtedly one of the most famous writers of the twentieth century. There is probably no one in this school that has not heard his name. His imagination and creativity have captivated young readers.

But there is something you perhaps don’t know. A recent Tolkien book was released in 2007 called The Children of Hurin. You are probably wondering how that is even possible, because he died in 1973. The truth is that Tolkien had made plans and manuscripts for this novel as early as the end of World War II, in which Tolkien fought as a soldier. In fact, he used to write plans for his later novels in his tents on the battlefield. Unfortunately, Tolkien died before he could finish the novel, but his son, Christopher, organized his manuscripts into a final form. Now, you will be able to judge for yourself whether this novel compares to the true classics he made in his lifetime.

According to Tolkien’s timeline of Middle Earth, the story takes place in the First Age of Middle Earth, long before the War of the Ring. The region where the story takes place is Beleriand, a land that was swallowed by the Great Sea at the end of the First Age. The land is being threatened by the First Dark Lord, Morgoth. Morgoth dwelt in the great fortress of Angband, and he used his armies of orcs to wage war against the forces of men and elves. After a large army of men and elves is defeated by Morgoth’s forces, the only prisoner is a man, Hurin, who is the lord of Dori-Lomin. Hurin defied Morgoth to the face and had the courage to scorn his name. Therefore, Morgoth cursed his kin and all that he loved, that they may be constantly plagued by his eternal hate.

As a child, the son of Hurin, Turin, is forced to flee from his own lands as the servants of the Dark Lord spread into the lands of men and elves. Vowing to avenge his father’s fate of eternal torment, Turin hunts down the hordes of Morgoth as the forces of good continue to resist his evil. But the weight of Morgoth’s curse weighs heavy upon him wherever he goes and Turin is forced to be an idle wanderer. Where he goes, the forces of Morgoth begin to consume all that is good. Filled with epic battles and tribulations, long journeys and the fall of kingdoms, and even a dragon, The Children of Hurin will make it hard for you to close the book. I strongly recommend this novel.
About 18,000 years ago, the earth started to warm up after 100,000 years of an Ice Age. The earth has been heating up since. But, the main cause of global warming is orbital oddities of the earth and changes of the sun’s output, not pollution or the Greenhouse Effect. Believe it or not, the Greenhouse Effect is mostly caused by water vapor (95% is caused by water vapor). In the United States, the temperature has only increased by one degree in the past 100 years. If you think that carbon dioxide is a big part of global warming because there is so much of it, then you’re wrong. There is only 0.04% carbon dioxide in the earth’s atmosphere. People think that pollution from factories and fossil fuels is destroying plants. But, the factories and fossil fuels give out carbon dioxide which plants take in. Then, the plants give out oxygen which is taken in by animals and humans. This just makes a cycle between industries, plants, and animals.

If you look at the diagram to the right, you can tell that the temperature seems to have a cycle. That is because the climate changes every 500 years. You shouldn’t be worried about global warming and the effects it will have on the environment, but start looking at the ice age in 500 years and see how to help everyone to stay warm.

Information from: www.geocraft.com
First student to see Joe with a correct puzzle wins the prize!
A Super SuperBowl
by Anderson Rader

Pre-game stakes were high for SuperBowl XLII. The Giants were thirsty for revenge after their 38-35 loss to the Patriots in the final seconds of week seventeen. The Patriots wanted to be the first team since the 1972 Dolphins to complete an undefeated season, already setting the record for single season wins (18).

On the opening drive, the Giants steadily drove down the field, consuming 8:32 of the clock. However, the Giants were unable to score and had to settle for a 32-yard field goal, giving the Giants a 3-point lead. The Patriots got the ball back, down by 3 with 11:03 left. The Pats went 3-and-out because of the outstanding job of the Giants’ D-Line, led by Umenyiora and Strahan, and had to punt to the Giants. The Giants then went 3-and-out and gave the ball right back to the Patriots. Brady drove steadily down the field and hooked up with Moss for a 6-yard TD reception. That touchdown put the Patriots up 14-10 with 2:45 remaining.

However, the Giant’s were not done. Eli Manning commanded a nail-biting, 130-second long drive that contained two 4th down conversions, and a nearly intercepted pass. One of the best plays of the drive was a 3rd-and-long conversion. As soon as the ball was snapped, the Patriots brought a 5-man rush. Two D-Linemen got hold of Eli’s jersey, almost bringing him to the ground. Manning somehow scrambled free, and, taking one glance downfield, bombed a 32-yarder to David Tyree, who caught the ball as much with his helmet as with his hands. That set up a Manning connection with Plaxico Burress for a thirteen yard TD, putting the Giants up 17-14 with 35 seconds remaining. With so much pressure, the Patriots went 4-and-out, capped off with a 3rd-and-long sack of Tom Brady by Justin Tuck. On the next play, the Patriots bombed it downfield, and the ball fell incomplete with one second remaining. The media, teams, and staff stormed the field, thinking the game was over, but NFL rules say that the clock must run out. Security got everyone off the field, and Manning took a knee to win the Super Bowl. The major story of the game was how incredibly the Giant’s D-Line played, getting five sacks and sixteen knockdowns on Brady.

After the game, Eli Manning won MVP, driving off in a 2008 Cadillac Escalade Hybrid.

As usual, the SuperBowl had the best commercials of the year, and many new movies had their TV commercial debuts. To watch the commercials again and again, go to www.myspace.com/superads.
The MBA eighth grade basketball team ended the regular season with a winning record of 9-7 and an HVAC district record of 4-3. In our opening game at FRA, we were down five points at half and came back to win 44-32. After beating USN, we dropped our next two games to very talented Smyrna and Sunset teams. We went into Christmas break with a big win at BGA, 48-40, improving to 3-2. In our first game back from the holidays, we led at BA at the half and went into the 4th quarter tied, before losing 44-41. From there, we won six of our next seven games, including a sweep of Ensworth in one week and beating CPA on a last second shot by Alex Kohls. We closed out the regular season with tough losses to BGA, BA, and DCA.

The team was led in scoring this year by Alex Kohls and Conry Miler, who scored 27 and 29 points in wins against Ensworth and FRA. Jack Beckner led the team in assists and 3-point shooting. Jamie Bradshaw led the team in rebounding. Warren Lipscomb was the team’s defensive leader. Alex Kohls, Hugh Wells, and Henry Beveridge were elected team captains. Barton Davies, Will Narramore, and Jason Katseff came off the bench to give us valuable minutes when needed. Chris Norman started the season at point guard before sustaining season-ending injuries after Christmas. Newcomers to the team at post were Ross Martin and James Kay, who made the team after a productive summer and continued to improve steadily throughout the year with very hard work every day in practice. Taylor Shelley and Joe Barry served as our managers for the season. Coach Gary Waller’s goal of daily improvement to attain team excellence was met by this team’s dedication to hard work and unselfish spirit. We will conclude our season in the TNT tournament in Springfield and the HVAC tournament at MBA.
Jamie Bradshaw heads toward the basket.

Alex Kohls: “Somebody get open!”

Jack is ready for Andrew Bowers’ moves.

Alex shoots against Ensworth’s Will Downey.
An Awesome Season for the 7th Grade

by Coach Todd Moran

The MBA seventh grade basketball team enjoyed one of the most successful seasons in recent history by posting a season record of 16-1. Eighteen boys came together over the months of November, December, and January to learn about teamwork and selflessness and were able to have a lot of fun along the way.

The team played six games before the Winter Break as they posted wins over Franklin Road Academy, USN, St. Edwards, Sunset Middle, and Division II rival BGA. The Big Red advanced to the quarterfinals of the Overbrook Classic, which is one of the top eighth-grade tournaments in the midstate before they fell to the eventual tournament champion, Mt. Juliet.

MBA came back from the break on a mission to become better every day and to improve their play in each game. They accomplished these goals to the best of their abilities as they finished the season with eleven straight wins in the 2008 portion of the season. The highlights of that stretch were two wins over Ensworth, two wins over CPA, a gutty win over David Lipscomb, another victory over BGA, and two classic showdowns with rival Brentwood Academy. The ultimate highlight of the season was a dramatic and gut-wrenching double overtime home victory over Brentwood Academy 44-37.

Throughout the season Anthony Birdsong, Benjamin Haynes, Furman Haynes, and Jackson Flora provided leadership and toughness from the point guard position. John Bachmann, Will Campbell, Wilson Johnson, and Dylan Hall each had great moments of success from their wing positions. JeTarri Donald, Kamani Hodges, Mark Lowe, Quint Robinson, and Jonathan Sitkberg provided great depth that allowed MBA to wear down opponents over four quarters. The Big Red “Big Men,” Tom “Tree” Kaiser, Andrew Einstman, Brady McDonald, Alex Smith, and James Sharp, served as a great defensive presence in the paint as well as providing inside scoring throughout the year.

The future of MBA basketball looks promising as these young men will continue to improve as basketball players and most importantly as teammates over the next five years.
Jackson, JeTarri, and James are ready to play some “D”!

Coach Moran lays out his strategy for the Big Red.
One hobbit, one wizard, thirteen dwarves, five trolls, four goblins, four elves, one gollum, and one dragon--a fantastic ensemble!

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