

BB&N: The Link Newsletter

May 2010

Feature Stories

Spotlight Article: Ocean Becomes Classroom with Project Oceanology

Lower School science teacher Caitlin Drechsler's students always bring their book bags to class, but last month they toted beach pails and sleeping bags as well—that's what happens when a beach in Groton, Connecticut is your classroom for two days.

This April, BB&N's fifth graders traveled to Project Oceanology, a full-fledged marine science and environmental education program on the University of Connecticut campus, for an overnight trip of ocean exploration.

"The focus of the 5th grade ocean unit is understanding the abiotic factors that affect habitats, and how different organisms are adapted for these different habitats," says Drechsler. "We addressed a few different habitats and groups of organisms over the course of the unit. At Project O, we observed the habitats and organisms that were most accessible—which in this case were crabs and plankton."

Split up into two days, the students spent the first day on the water aboard Project O's 65-foot-long "Enviro-Lab II", a refurbished coastguard boat which has been transformed into a floating science lab. Using a drag net and water collecting capsules, the students took water samples to study later, and became acquainted with numerous types of marine life pulled up in the net.

"This is our third year doing Project O, and it's working out really well," notes grade five teacher Jack Denny-Brown. "The kids on the boat get so immersed in what they're doing—it's a fun activity but it really focuses them as well."

This year students came face-to-face with flounders, lobsters, various types of crabs, and many small fish species—but it's one thing to touch crabs or take a plankton sample, it's a whole other thing to understand the habitats and importance of these organisms. To that end, day two gets students off the boat and into the Project O lab for some science.

A visit to the rocky beach on the shores of Project O finds Drechsler and Denny-Brown leading half of the class on a crab hunting expedition. Students scurry from rock to rock with pails of water containing their catch.

"We are attempting to catch crabs along the shore here, Asian shore crabs, European green crabs, and native crabs," says Drechsler. "We studied different sorts of crabs, particularly the Asian shore crabs, and students learned that they are not native to New England, and that they came to the U.S. from Asia in the mid-1800s."

"They hopped onto ships like stowaways!" interjects Sophie Wang.

“Yesterday we studied the habitat that crabs like so we would know where to look and how to find them,” Drechsler says. “This morning we are trying to catch them, measure them, and classify them. Then we’ll see how many of each kind we catch and learn about populations.”

Their studying from the previous day has paid off; each group of students has multiple crabs after an hour or so, and they begin the process of measuring and identifying them.

“I’m going to name that one Sally and that one Tally” says Josie Fitzgerald, looking into the plastic bucket in her hand containing two crabs. Denny-Brown is tasked with convincing her that crabs do not make the best pets!

Meanwhile, the other half of the class is busy in the Project O laboratory using Leica EZ4 microscopes to examine the water samples they collected on the boat.

“Oh my gosh, there’s a giant shrimp thing eating another!” exclaims Max Wiegand. What he’s looking at is a type of plankton, one of the most important creatures in the ocean.

Project O employee Kirsten Tomlinson oversees the students as they search for plankton types and draw what they see. Once they have sketched all of the different plankton on their slides, she will help them to identify and classify their findings.

This scientific method is interesting, but it can be a lot of work, so Project O has found a way to add an element of fun to it. Students pair up and using coffee filters, yarn, feathers, glue, and other materials, build models of the plankton they discovered under the microscopes. These giant “plankton” are then dropped from a balcony and the slowest plankton to the ground wins.

“It’s apropos to real life in a way because plankton in the ocean are ‘floaters’, they have to stay close to the surface to get enough sunlight and CO₂ to live,” says Tomlinson. “So the lighter they are the better.”

Tomlinson has been working at Project O for ten years, collaborating with school groups that visit the facility. It’s a busy job—Project O hosts students all year long with the exception of January and February, and can accommodate up to three school groups at the same time.

“We work with each school to tailor the program during their stay to match their curriculum, so students can have a firsthand experience to match what they are learning in the classroom,” says Tomlinson. And according to her, the program has been an unmitigated success.

“Often we get kids who think science is boring, but then they get out on the boat, or they catch a crab and get to examine it in a lab...then all of sudden we hear, ‘Wow, this is fun!’”

“So yes, the actual science part is great, but that students are enjoying the science is sort of the point in a larger sense.”

Inside The Classroom: Minding Your “Business” with Tim Kendrick

BB&N seniors in Tim Kendrick’s AP Macro Economics class aren’t students today, they’re CEOs, CFOs, VPs, and Presidents of treadmill companies. As part of an exercise to understand competitive pricing in action, Kendrick’s students have been split into six fictional companies, each vying for a share of the treadmill market.

“Each treadmill costs \$300 to produce; I will give you \$1,500 of start-up money and the projected demand for treadmills in each round. No company can talk to another company, and you may assume that all treadmills produced will be sold.” Kendrick announces to the room. “The goal is for your company to make at least \$3,000.”

It’s an atypical exercise for an economics class, but no so unusual for Kendrick who delights in keeping his class loose with interesting real world applications—and a little humor, too.

“One more thing!” cracks Kendrick. “I am not only the facilitator here, I am also the IRS, so at some point I will come around to make certain you aren’t cooking your books.”

The room is quickly abuzz with strategizing students as the different companies try to determine the most profitable number of treadmills to produce. Once they have decided, Kendrick announces what the actual demand and sale price for treadmills was in that round, and the groups scramble to adjust for the next round.

But as round two begins, Kendrick throws the students a curveball.

“Each company may elect one person to go on a business trip with one member of every other group; these are the only company members who may speak to each other.”

What was initially a lesson in competitive pricing has morphed into a lesson in collusion, as the different members of each company feel each other out. It is agreed that if they all agree to only produce three treadmills, each company will turn a profit—but can they all be trusted to follow through?

“Or if we all agree to bankrupt one of the other companies the rest of us are on easy street,” adds one particularly Machiavellian student. This elicits nervous laughter from the room and a knowing nod from Kendrick.

“The goal of this little experiment is to show students firsthand how competitive pricing is established, and to a lesser extent how an equilibrium price is achieved,” he says. “However the added prospect of collusion and agreeing to set manufacturing numbers adds a real life wrinkle...it’s illegal, but it’s always happening on some level.”

Ultimately the last round is reached and as the final profits are announced, different companies burst into applause based on their success. All companies have achieved the \$3,000 goal, some have gone over, and everyone is captivated by the competition. Clearly the exercise has been a success, and a fun one.

As the class wraps up, Kendrick asks his students what they have learned and how it relates to the global economy. OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Companies) is mentioned as an example of collusion, which leads to questions about the ethics involved in OPEC and how they can get away with insider price setting—this sort of discussion is what Kendrick strives to stimulate.

“Part of the point of this was to see if people will agree to collusion, and how that affects the market,” says Kendrick. “Economics is about numbers, but it’s also about business practices, and current events—I want them talking about all of this.”

True to that last statement, Kendrick is a big believer in bringing real world examples into his classroom. “The extra step I take is to build in time to apply concepts we are studying to what’s going on in the greater world.”

He makes students bring in articles that correspond to what they are studying every other week, and although he is preparing them for the AP exam, he has built the curriculum to allow for exploration of these topics.

“Tim brings a lot of inventiveness and humor to the classroom, and has an incredible rapport with his students,” says colleague and math teacher Chip Rollinson. “And beyond teaching, he cares about their lives—the kids know that and they respond to him.”

Now in his fourth year at BB&N’s Upper School, Kendrick also teaches algebra II, statistics, and coaches the golf team—a busy but rewarding schedule, and quite a change from his previous job in Los Angeles where he worked in entertainment finance. He returned to the Northeast where he grew up seeking “greater fulfillment in his career” and has certainly found it at BB&N.

“These kids are really interested in the material and bring new perspectives to it all the time,” says Kendrick. “Ideally I’m as much of a facilitator as I am a teacher, and with a lot of these students, that’s exactly the case.”

Whether discussing competitive pricing, life, or even treadmills, it’s the students that make the difference.

“I love that kids stop me all the time out of class to discuss things, often it’s economics or math related, but sometimes it’s just something on their mind—that they are figuring things out, if I can see that light bulb moment, that’s the best part.”

Freshmen Break the Mold Learning the Art of Dance

Most of the boys in Jenny Lifson's ninth grade class have danced around plenty of defenders on the court and the field. But when it comes to perfecting the famous, dazzling *Prologue* from *West Side Story*—calling for them to break into a highly stylized dance and then burst into a daring, high-stepping sequence to ready themselves for a gang brawl—they are definitely treading into uncharted territory.

"I'm not sure I remember the *Chicago* routine," one boy wearing a baseball cap says, moving to stand at the back of the room.

But as soon as Lifson runs them through a quick warm-up and breaks down the moves in the bluesy *All That Jazz* number from the award-winning musical *Chicago*, the entire class breaks into a routine that would give FOX's *Glee* kids a run for their money.

"This is the most fabulous group of kids ever, and they work so unbelievably well together," Lifson says. "I have boys in the class who are on varsity sports teams. For the most part it's a beginner level, but they've gotten to the point now where they're doing intermediate movements. And even the girls who have taken dance in the past are so supportive of everyone and really cooperate with each other."

Splitting the semester up into thirds, the 17 students (split just about 50/50 between boys and girls) go through a section of Hip Hop and Jazz, a Swing unit, and end with learning all about different genres of musical theater choreography. Each class starts out with a warm-up of proper isolation movements, followed by standard leaps, turns, and kicks. Lifson also notes the importance of working on overall strength and flexibility.

"We do some very basic hip hop dancing, but I also expose them to ballet...we even do pirouettes!" Lifson says, laughing. "It's definitely a jazzier class. I find that it's really important for them to get the technique of all the different dances. I also find that a lot of times the boys in the class are less inhibited than the girls."

At the end of each class, the entire group does a combination based on the unit they are studying. For the swing section, the moves are primarily partner-based, and they mainly learn intricate footwork, lifts, and the importance of partner support. For the musical theater unit, the class focuses on different choreographers and styles that go into Broadway musicals. They recently learned *All That Jazz* from *Chicago*, and were split up into Jets and Sharks for the *Prologue* from *West Side Story*.

"I don't grade them on ability, I grade them solely based on participation and effort," Lifson said. "Most of these kids have never been in a play, and they're not self-conscious at all."

Currently, the class is watching the movie version of *West Side Story*, and working on a one-page paper about a dance movie chosen from a list Lifson created (many of the boys have chosen to watch Gene Kelly's classic *Singin' In the Rain*). For their final project,

students will work in partners and research a choreographer of their choice—they've picked people such as Alvin Ailey and Michael Jackson—and give an oral presentation to the class.

Lifson, who is in her first year of teaching at the Upper School but has been on BB&N's Lower School campus teaching drama since 2005, says this class is definitely "her favorite part of the week."

"There are not too many areas where a lot of boys, and a lot of teenagers in general, get exposed to dance at this age unless their parents are really making an effort to take them to shows," she says. "It's amazing to be able to show them not only dance techniques, but to expose them to musicals, real choreographers, and actual steps where they don't have to worry the pressure of costumes and getting up in front of the audience. They can actually just learn the art of dance."

First Arts Festival at Middle School a Huge Success

The hallways and classrooms of 80 Sparks Street were abuzz with creative, artistic energy this spring as the Middle School celebrated its inaugural Arts Festival. For an entire afternoon, students put away their notebooks and textbooks and channeled their inner right-brained artists and performers.

"It was a FANTASTIC event," said music teacher Kathi Gellar. "And a great inauguration for what we hope may become an annual event!"

The entire Middle School, faculty and all, participated in about a dozen different artistic endeavors: from caricature, zulu beading, a *Glee*-inspired mash-up (singing and dancing), African dancing and drumming, salsa dancing, silk screening, photography, two film classes, decorating a skateboard, and making bubble magnets.

MS faculty, US art teacher John Norton, several guest artists, and even an MS student (7th grader Shay Hayden), led the workshops.

"It was an amazing afternoon of creativity and fun," Gellar said. "The Festival culminated in a brief assembly where there were performances and showings of the art made during the afternoon."

Middle School Arts Department Chair and event organizer Chris Dwyer floated through the various groups and noted how much fun both students and faculty were having during their well deserved creative break.

"It was great fun and we all enjoyed it," Dwyer said.

Over at the Upper School, the Arts Department hosted the annual Arts Bash this year in Renaissance Hall, with the theme this year being body art. Students enjoyed Henna tattoos and many created "Hand Monster" designs. The afternoon included fantastic

musical performances from The Knightingales and Voices of the Knight, the ninth grade jazz ensemble, the Thursday evening Jazz ensemble, and the cast of *Bye Bye Birdie*. Faculty members also drew one-stroke paintings throughout the afternoon.

Keeping You Up to Date

Young Artists Provide Inspiration at Annual MFA Day

Approximately 450 students, faculty, parents, and newly accepted families gathered at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts on Sunday, April 20 to celebrate more than 400 pieces of BB&N student art as well as enjoy guided tours of the museum courtesy of Upper School students. This year marked the 17th anniversary of BB&N's collaboration with the MFA and produced the largest turnout in the history of this all-school event.

Parent Volunteers, headed by Kay Kane P'14, '17, worked tirelessly on Friday and Sunday, installing work, hosting, and providing helpful information to the large crowd. Sixth graders wowed the audience with their ACTion Project featuring multimedia presentations on iPods complete with Spanish or French information on their artists as well as music and images of the paintings. Senior Jessica Brodsky, one of many skilled US tour guides, showcased the conservation work that she has been doing this year at the MFA, and Michaela Kane '14 provided a large Chinese Dragon collage project for interested children. MFA Day coordinator Sharen Bowden also highlighted the many musical performances, with 15 students performing keyboard, guitar, violin, cello, flute, jazz, classical, and folk music. "The talents and efforts of this day were truly inspiring," said Bowden.

"Green Scene" Benefit on Tap for Middle Schoolers

The Middle School Community Service Club will be hosting a benefit called "Green Scene" on Friday, May 7th, from 7-9PM. It will feature Preface—an MS band which has been playing together to great acclaim for several years—as well as a lip synch contest and improv comedy. The \$5 suggested donation will go to a local environmental group.

New Information Technology Director Hired

Demetri Orlando has been hired as BB&N's new Information Technology Director, effective July 1, 2010. Orlando comes to BB&N with 15 years of experience and a national reputation for innovation in technology. He has served since 2007 as Director of Information Technology at Battle Ground Academy, a K-12 school of 975 students in Franklin, Tennessee. At BGA he implemented the school's nationally recognized one-to-one laptop program. Orlando also currently serves as a technology consultant for NAIS and serves as chair of the NAIS 21st Century Curriculum & Technology Task Force. He is well known coast to coast as a speaker on topics related to classrooms of the future and the uses of technology in curriculum design. He has taught graduate courses at Johns Hopkins University (from which he received his M.S. in Educational Technology) and was the creator of the Independent School Educators Network.

“I became a teacher because of my love of working with children,” says Orlando. “I moved to technology administration because I wanted to improve educational practice using technology tools for hands-on, differentiated, and engaging learning.”

“BB&N will be well served by this approach,” says Head of School Rebecca T. Upham. “We look forward to welcoming Demetri and his family to the BB&N community this summer.”

Sixth Graders Impress with *Alice in Wonderland Jr.*

Ten months ago, Lower School teachers Debbie Slade, Ada Snider, and Jenny Lifson set out to create a way for sixth graders to be exposed to drama, music, and dance in one production. The result was the larger-than-life musical *Alice in Wonderland Jr.*, complete with fantastic acting, singing, dancing and spectacular moving scenery. “I was so unbelievably proud of the 56 sixth graders who sang, danced, and acted their way through a production more successful than we ever could have imagined,” Lifson said. “They are truly the pioneers of a tradition we hope will continue for years and years.”

Zack McLeod Tournament a Resounding Success

For the second straight year, the annual 3-on-3 basketball tournament to raise funds to benefit Zack McLeod '10 was a resounding success. The March 6th tournament, which was attended by 130 friends and supporters of Zack, raised more than \$14,000 to help with medical and rehabilitation bills. “I am just so proud of the BB&N community and the way they support each other during tough times,” said tournament organizer Ed Bourget '96. “It was great to see all of the happy faces at the tournament. You can bet Zack was the happiest of all.”

Maypole Tradition Sparkles

Lower School students celebrated the rites of spring with Maypole, a tradition that dates back to The Buckingham School. The annual event featured two ribbon dances by the fifth grade, a Cambodian coconut dance by the third grade, and an Indian Stick dance by the fourth grade. In BB&N tradition, the ceremony closed with the entire audience joining hands in a giant line dance, *The Galopede*.

Geoff Theobald Introduced as New Upper School Director

The School is enormously pleased to announce that Geoff Theobald has agreed to become BB&N's new Upper School Director, starting next academic year. “We were blessed to have a truly exceptional group of candidates vying to succeed Mr. Jack Knapp as director,” said Head of School Rebecca T. Upham, “and for Mr. Theobald to stand out among them really points to the extraordinary leadership skills, temperament, and connection with students that he possesses.”

Theobald has worked the past five years with high-school students and teachers as head of the Senior Program at Yale University for the Exploration School, a highly regarded non-profit summer enrichment program. Prior to that, he had served in a variety of leadership roles—Academic Dean of the Upper School, Admissions Director, Financial Aid Director, Mathematics Teacher, Coach, Assistant Dean of Students, and Director of Community Service—during 13 years of working and teaching at his alma mater, Milton Academy.

“I am simply thrilled to be joining the BB&N community,” said Theobald. “I have been so impressed with the level of care, respect, and commitment all of its members consistently show for the process of learning, and I eagerly anticipate partnering with adults and students alike in helping the School continue to function at the forefront of educational excellence.”

Families Enjoy La Soirée Française

Well over 100 students, parents, and faculty members from all three campuses turned out for La Soirée Française, which was held at the Upper School on Friday, April 23. The annual event is a celebration of French language and culture with delicious food (of course), games, and a special guest. A big crowd, including many enthusiastic student volunteers, flocked to the onsite crepe-making station (*see photo above*) for extra fun, and the student-recited poems and skits were well received by the audience. A highlight of the evening was a visit by renowned storyteller Dr. Raouf Mama, who enraptured the crowd with colorful tales from his native Benin.

Fifth Grade Fun and Learning at State Fair

Nevada is home to beautiful Lake Tahoe, breathtaking Anasazi cave drawings, and tennis star Andre Agassi, but as Ross Harrison '17 (*pictured above*) can tell you, “Nevada is also home to Las Vegas!” And after building a working roulette wheel out of a bicycle tire, Harrison was more than willing to show off the allure of Nevada’s major industry, gambling. It’s all part of the annual Fifth Grade State Fair.

Culminating their colonial studies curriculum, fifth graders chose a U.S. state or territory and created informative and interactive projects to show off their knowledge. Each display included a fun interactive game relating to the state, and in most cases, prizes indigenous to the state were handed out.

The State Fair tradition was begun in 1989 by former fifth grade teacher Lynda Dugas, P’17, as a take-off on the World’s Fair. Fifth grade teacher Jack Denny-Brown inherited the reins years ago and crafted the current beloved incarnation.

The Russians Are Coming!

Spring at BB&N brings flowers, flip flops, and...Russians? As part of BB&N's continuing collaboration with Moscow School 1232, Russian students once again joined the BB&N community for two weeks in April.

"The Exchange students spent two weeks in Boston...staying with BB&N families for the entire two weeks, with the exception of one night which the Russian students spend in New York City," explains Russian teacher Willa Chamberlain. Later on in the year, the exchange students will return the favor by hosting BB&N students in Moscow.

During their stay the Russians took in the local sights, sat in on classes, and shared in local customs (*pictured above, Russian students sing a folk song about teaching grammar*). Now in its 21st year, the exchange program continues to be a mutually beneficial experience for both BB&N students and their Russian counterparts.

Book Buyback to Take Place on June 8th

Please note that the annual Book Buyback program will take place at the Stonestreet Lounge (within the Nicholas Athletic Center) on Tuesday, June 8, from 2-7 pm.

Chess Success Continues Unabated

BB&N youngsters have enjoyed another wildly successful year for participation in chess. Highlights this year include 11 BB&Ners competing in the MACA Tournament hosted at BB&N (Eliza Sternlicht '17 winning the U400 section and Jeremy Tang '18 medaling in the U400 section); the 5th grade team placing ninth in the National Scholastic K-12 Championships in Dallas, Texas; several BB&N teams and players medaling in the Holiday Team Challenge; the K-3 Knights team placing third and the 6-9 Knights team placing third in the Hurvitz Cup State Scholastic Team Championship; and Max Wiegand '17 posting a 2-2 score in the ten-player 11&U section of the elite Spiegel Cup Invitational Championships.

Shown above is the K-3 team that placed 3rd in the Hurvitz Cup State Team Championships (from left, Andrew Keating, Aurash Vatan, Siddharth Simon, and Ben Wiegand).

PIN Bestows Five Awards to BB&N Community Service Projects

The Parents' Independent School Network (PIN) has awarded BB&N Special Recognition and/or monetary grants for five different community service projects that take place on all three campuses. The awards reflect PIN's appreciation for BB&N's "contribution to the greater good and...dedicated service to the community," and are a great credit to the ongoing commitment of numerous BB&N students, faculty members, and parents who put in tremendous amounts of hard work toward these initiatives.

The five specific community service projects which were honored this year are:

1) *Boston Medical Food Drive (AS)*;

- 2) *Tobin AfterSchool Science Club (US);*
- 3) *Community Service Afternoon (US);*
- 4) *Knit Baby Blankets for Hildebrand Family Center (LS 2nd grade) -- students holding award in top photo above*
- 5) *The Sustainability Project (LS Beginners) -- students holding award in 2nd photo above.*

And congratulations to the many members of the BB&N community who helped make these awards a reality!

Jamie Baker '78 Receives Distinguished Alumnus Award

The Honorable James E. Baker '78 (*above, right*) returned to BB&N's Upper School this April as the recipient of the School's Distinguished Alumnus Award. Judge Baker, who sits on the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, accepted the honor at an Upper School assembly where he inspired students not with tales of his own storied career, but with a talk about role models.

Citing several former BB&N teachers as people who have endured as role models, Baker also spoke of Jack Downey, a Superior Court Judge in Connecticut whose forgiveness and grace shaped Baker's life. Despite being held captive in a Chinese prison from age 22 to 44, and being considered dead by his country, Downey held no resentment upon his eventual release, and proceeded to enter law school and become a judge so he could "help society." Baker stressed that greatness in people assumes unlikely forms, and urged students to consider carefully whom they choose to emulate.

College Counseling Staffers Walking for a Cure

Keep an eye out during the Avon Two-Day Walk for Breast Cancer on May 15th and 16th—you may see BB&N College Counseling Office colleagues Amy Selinger and Sarah McDonald (*pictured above*), members of Team Nananan, pounding the pavement to help find a cure for the horrible disease which afflicts another woman in the United States every three minutes.

The six members of Team Nananan, which was named for the mother of Amy's friend, who passed away last year after being diagnosed with breast cancer, will journey 39 miles over two days throughout the neighborhoods of Boston and the nearby towns of Milton and Canton. On Saturday evening, the walkers will camp out on the Reebok World Headquarters campus in Canton.

If you'd like to support one or both of the BB&N walkers in their mission, enter the below urls into your web browser:

[Amy Selinger's page:](#)

http://info.avonfoundation.org/site/TR/Walk/Boston?px=5292664&pg=personal&fr_id=1920

[Sarah McDonald's page:](#)

http://info.avonfoundation.org/site/TR/Walk/Boston?px=5310782&pg=personal&fr_id=1920

Good luck, Amy, Sarah, and Team Nananan!

Cast and Crew Shine in US Musical

This year, BB&N thespians took the stage to perform the acclaimed musical *Bye Bye Birdie*, one of the most popular high school musicals in the country. The story follows aspiring chemist and song writer Albert who is convinced he can make his fortune and marry his girlfriend Rosie if he gets '60s rock star Conrad Birdie on *The Ed Sullivan Show* to kiss a high school girl goodbye. Albert's mother will do anything to break him up with Rosie. Kim and Hugo, the high school steadies, live in Sweet Apple, Ohio where most of the action takes place. Songs include *What's the Matter with Kids Today*, *Bye Bye Birdie*, the hit *Telephone Song (Going Steady)*, and *We Love You, Conrad*.

Senior Prank Underscores Class Unity

Imagine the surprise of BB&N students and teachers who arrived on campus on the day before Spring Break to find every window facing the Renaissance Hall courtyard covered in graffiti. This was no ordinary graffiti though. As part of a senior prank, students had covered the windows in erasable marker, listing all of the graduating students and what each will be remembered and missed for. Lines such as the examples below reminded the community of the contributions and spirit of the soon to be departing class of 2010:

YOU WILL BE MISSED FOR:

Borreliz: Somersaulting through life;

Bradlee: Always saying 'hi';

Burstein: Having a different view on the world....

Campus Voices

All School

Rebecca T. Upham

Head of School

I'm thrilled to share with the full BB&N community the news that Geoffrey S. Theobald has agreed to become our new Upper School Director, starting the next academic year. We were blessed to have a truly exceptional group of candidates vying to succeed Mr. Jack Knapp as director, and for Mr. Theobald to stand out among them really points to the extraordinary leadership skills, temperament, and connection with students that he possesses.

Mr. Theobald has worked the past five years with high-school students and teachers as head of the Senior Program at Yale University for the Exploration School, a highly regarded non-profit summer enrichment program. (Proving that many great things have BB&N roots, it's interesting to note that Exploration School was founded by alumnus Arnie Singal '54!) Mr. Theobald oversaw a faculty of 80 teachers and 40 staff members, was responsible for all academic and extracurricular programming, and built and maintained very successful relationships with students and parents originating from 40 different countries and 40 different states. He mentioned that perhaps his favorite aspect of his role at Explo was the headway he made in his focus on training teachers.

Prior to his tenure at Explo, Mr. Theobald served in a variety of leadership roles during 13 years of working and teaching at his alma mater, Milton Academy. During his last four years there, Mr. Theobald was Academic Dean of the Upper School, directing a robust academic program and ensuring a "high quality of academic life" for 680 students. Leading up to that, he had worked several years as Admissions Director and Financial Aid Director, an experience that played an important part in shaping his perspective of seeing independent schools through the most important lens of all—that of the students who sit in its classrooms. Among the other hats worn by Mr. Theobald were those of Mathematics Teacher, Assistant Dean of Students, and Director of Community Service. He built a formidable and honorable reputation over the course of 10 years as Head Coach of the girls' soccer team (ISL champions three consecutive years in the late '90s) and Assistant Coach of the golf team. As a former colleague notes, "Geoff was always the kind of coach who thought first about getting his players to work well together."

Mr. Theobald holds a Master's of Social Work degree from the University of North Carolina. He also received his Bachelor of Arts degree in History from UNC, where he was a Morehead Scholar.

As he noted during his visit here, "Independent schools are in my DNA." True as that is, many people who met Mr. Theobald have remarked that while his talents and his educational philosophy have clearly been influenced in significant ways by his extensive independent school background, he is also not constrained by that experience. A good example of this would be the progressive educational approaches he has helped spearhead in the Explorations program: what one of our faculty members described as his willingness to explore and embrace "new areas of inquiry and engagement for young men and women."

In his personal statement, Mr. Theobald wrote that "I see my responsibility as working to foster wide bands of excellence that permeate and radiate throughout a community." What I see in him is a leader who not only understands and respects the myriad factors that make our School so special, but also possesses the vision and expertise that will guide a terrific faculty and student body assuredly into the future.

Of all the qualities demonstrated by Mr. Theobald during his visits and multiple interviews with many members of the BB&N community, we felt the one that most distinguished him was his interaction with our Upper School students. Mr. Theobald

showed a rapport with our students, an understanding, that was simply remarkable. One of our students praised “Mr. Theobald’s air of confidence and likability, which is essential to an Upper School Director. Dr. Knapp’s best quality has been that he is accessible and friendly with the students, and I think Mr. Theobald would be a great candidate to fill those shoes.” As a former colleague said of Mr. Theobald, “Geoff is so good with kids and has a way of really bringing out their best and challenging them in ways they might not even know.”

I know that some of you had the chance to meet and talk with Mr. Theobald during his visit here. Your feedback was enormously helpful and, I should note, extremely enthusiastic about how outstanding a fit he is for the Upper School Director position. I’d like to take a moment to cite just a few of the comments we received: “has a deep understanding of the way schools work,” “brings a wonderful mix of ideas and pragmatism,” “very tuned-in to the affective side of students’ growth and education,” and “strikes a nice balance between being comfortable in his decisions but also being very willing to listen.”

I agree!

As you might imagine, Mr. Theobald shares our excitement: “I am simply thrilled to be joining the BB&N community,” he said. “I have been so impressed with the level of care, respect, and commitment all of its members consistently show for the process of learning, and I eagerly anticipate partnering with adults and students alike in helping the School continue to function at the forefront of educational excellence.”

I would like to thank the many people who dedicated their time and care to this important search. These include a host of teachers, staff members, students, trustees, and parents, with special thanks going to the Faculty Advisory Group and our “Blue” and “Gold” parent interview teams.

To sum it up, I am confident that what we have at the happy conclusion to our national search is a leader and a school meeting each other at the ideal time in their respective journeys. I’m quite sure I have a lot of company when I say that I look forward to introducing Mr. Theobald to the BB&N community.

Lower School
Sue Scarborough
Director, Lower School

There is not a day that goes by on the Lower School Campus when I don’t learn something new or see something from a totally different perspective. The days of this year are no exception. Since I now spend part of the week in the Brick Building experiencing student life with the New Wing and Brick Building children and teachers, this view has given me a fresh perspective on the journey our students take as they move through each grade level cluster on our campus. Now that we are close to the end of the

year, I would like to share some of my observations and experiences from the past nine months.

From my Morse Building office, I have always enjoyed seeing first hand how the B, K, and I teachers embrace the “sponge-like” qualities of four, five, and six year olds. At this age, teachers open children’s eyes to all the world tools at their fingertips, and let them explore their environment with them. Daily, I see children using blocks, art materials, playground equipment, and many manipulatives to solve the questions in their minds.

While being on the other side of our campus this year, I have marveled how the New Wing teachers guide students to understand which of those tools (from their Morse Building days) are valuable to them, and help them practice using those tools when learning academic subjects and building relationships with each other and the adults in their world.

Now that I have reacquainted myself with the fifth and sixth graders in the Brick Building, I see how the teachers there empower students to use these tools they have carried since Beginners to construct and build essays, community service projects, and math problems so that they become independent thinkers who begin to take responsibility for their own learning. The metamorphosis from Beginners to Sixth Grade is amazing!

It has been a wonderful gift for me to grow and expand my own toolbox this year by observing the innovative and challenging learning process for our Lower School Students. Isn’t it incredible how just changing your location for two days of the week can achieve that?! The journey I took this year has solidified for me what I have always known and now by “being there” have experienced—BB&N is a fabulous place for children of all ages to blossom and flourish.

Middle School

Mary Dolbear

Director, Middle School

When I smell the musky scent of the annual mulch delivery on our Sparks Street campus, it’s a gentle, and somehow unbelievable, reminder that the end of the year is suddenly upon us. I always treasure the much anticipated arrival of the tulips and lilacs bursting from the thawing earth below, but it somehow always feels like a jolt. I am immediately transported and reminded of the careful plantings back in the fall. *Where has all the time gone? Will all the bulbs pop? Did we plant them well? Will they all blossom on time?*

Who would have ever predicted the strong connection between the annual Burpee direct mail catalogue and the life cycle of a Middle School student on Sparks Street?

Burpee was founded back in 1876, and they have come to be one of the “leading and most progressive” garden companies. These retail marketers pride themselves on providing support and education; they strive to empower the aspiring gardener to be bold and dream up a vision for their new garden. They encourage diversity of colors, heights,

and textures. They answer questions from budding gardeners in the summer and fall as preparation and plans are made for the much anticipated varied plantings. There are questions about design, blooming cycles, depth and mixture of the best potting soil. Decisions are made and the process begins. There are check-ins. There are inquiries about observations and/or concerns about whether the roots are taking take hold. We watch the weather predictions. Too many unknowns—it is clear that we must wait...

We try to trust and wait—and wait.

And finally, the fruit of our work.

Spring has sprung.

The patient gardeners are rewarded with results.

With each passing day, the sunshine brings more visible growth. The roots have taken hold and the flowers are blooming. *Who would have known that these students would have achieved the enormous growth, both individually and collectively, that they have?* Challenges have been met and overcome and the connections are deeper and stronger.

How can we not appreciate the remarkable beauty in these impressive gardens? We are reaping the benefits of the creative, diverse, and thoughtful plantings. Throughout the community, we can't help but notice, enjoy, and celebrate the bursts of color, energy, and pride.

So now, as I enter my campus, the scent of mulch and lilacs take me quickly back to the fall. As a community, we have come a long way from our opening days. There has been tremendous growth intellectually, emotionally, and socially within these two classes. They have come together in wonderful ways and I am confident that there is more to come.

As I look out, the dynamic and impressive blooms arrange themselves in their own way. I take in the vibrant colors, the movement, the array of textures and sizes around me. I breathe deeply and smile.

Where has all the time gone?

Upper School

Jack Knapp

Director, Upper School

When I spoke in early April to the accepted members of next year's Upper School class, I shared with them the following document. I am certain you will agree that its contents present persuasive evidence of what makes BB&N Upper School the special place that it is—a school offering a full-service program of excellence that has a serious commitment to diversity, takes advantage of the geographical advantages that accrue from its location, and is mindful of the changing nature of the knowledge base that will be necessary in the world of tomorrow.

LIFE AT BB&N UPPER SCHOOL SINCE SEPTEMBER 2009

Ten of 117 seniors (8.5% of the Class of 2010) were named as National Merit Finalist.

61% of the Class of 2010 who applied to a college or university on an Early Decision basis were accepted; 64% were accepted on an Early Action basis.

Three student-athletes were given Letters of Intent by Virginia, Penn State, and Boston College; an additional six student-athletes were sent “likely” letters from Harvard, Cornell, Middlebury, Colby, Dartmouth, and Bowdoin.

A new center for tutors and our learning specialists is under construction and scheduled to open in September.

Our Arabic class Skyped with friends in Cairo and Damascus over the celebration of Ramadan.

BB&N hosted students from School 1232 in Moscow, one of the longest-enduring exchange programs with a Russian school in the country.

At the end of the school year, BB&N students will travel to Beijing to establish the first exchange link with the High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China.

A student group toured Turkey during Spring Break.

The BB&N choral group will tour Slovenia and Italy at the end of the school year with concerts scheduled in Ljubljana, Trieste, and Rome.

Four students, representing Pakistan and Bolivia, won best delegate awards at the Model UN conference at Duke University.

The theater department staged *Execution of Justice* (about the assassination of Harvey Milk in San Francisco) and *Bye Bye Birdie* to standing-room-only crowds. The production for the spring is *Animal Farm*.

The “Arts Bash,” held the Wednesday before Spring Break, was a great success featuring student recitals, a one-stroke painting competition, and cake decorating.

Six students, the maximum allowed, attended the People of Color Conference in Denver.

BB&N has developed “All School Characteristics of Success” as a result of our achievement study. Accompanying this is a commitment to support “students in the development of these qualities and skills.”

Three BB&N community service projects won excellent awards from the Parents Independent School network. Included was a cash award to support the Tobin After School Science Club.

During the Green Cup National Challenge competition in February, BB&N reduced energy consumption by 7% compared to last year, with student leadership directed at turning off lights and computers, the elimination of trays at lunch, and the purchase of local foods. The “Trashion Show,” with students wearing clothing made of recycled materials, was a success at assembly.

Twenty-eight BB&N students won Massachusetts Writing Awards; three went on to win gold and silver prizes in the national competition.

The Vanguard, the school newspaper, was awarded the Gold Medal for Overall Excellence by the Columbia Scholastic Press Association.

The varsity football team completed a 17-game winning streak and compiled a record that included only three losses in four years.

The varsity soccer team played through to the New England semifinals.

The girls varsity ice hockey team played an exhibition match at Fenway Park against Thayer Academy.

A BB&N varsity wrestler placed fourth in the national competition.

A BB&N senior is a semifinalist in both the Siemens and Intel competitions based on her research at Mass General on the ways in which blood flow to the brain affects memory.

This list is not intended to be at all inclusive. It is only a representative sample of what an academic year at BB&N may entail.

Giving Update

The BB&N Annual Fund is pleased to announce that we have reached 92% of the goal of \$2,250,000 to date and ask for your help to reach 100%. Our team of Parent Fund Solicitors, led by our Parent Fund Executive Committee, is to be commended for their work and the dedication they have displayed throughout the year with outreach efforts by phone, email, and in person. We are extraordinarily grateful to each of them and celebrate what they have accomplished on behalf of BB&N.

As the school year begins to come to a close, we wish to thank all families for their continued support of the Annual Fund and acknowledge all of our new families this year who have elected to make BB&N one of their philanthropic priorities. We invite all families who have not yet participated in the 2009-2010 Annual Fund to consider doing so at this time. It is easier than ever to support BB&N by visiting our website at www.bbns.org/donate.

Given the current economic landscape, the Annual Fund has grown in its relevance as a critical component designated to fill the “GAP” between tuition and the actual cost of a BB&N education. Your gift today will help to fill the “GAP” which supports the academic program, arts, athletics, faculty compensation and development, and financial aid.

The graph below represents parent participation of the Annual Fund by grade. Families with multiple BB&N students are solicited in the grade of their oldest student, but their PARTICIPATION is counted in the grades of each of their students which are reflected in the graph below.

We are grateful to all who have supported the BB&N Annual Fund and invite all families to make a defining difference with a gift of participation.

Gifts to the BB&N Annual Fund may be made online at www.bbns.org/donate, or mailed directly to: Buckingham Browne & Nichols School, 80 Gerry’s Landing Road, Cambridge, MA 02138.

If you have any questions regarding the BB&N Annual Fund or wish to make a gift of securities, kindly contact Jo-Ann Lovejoy, Director of Annual Giving: 617-800-2723 or jo-ann_lovejoy@bbns.org