



FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Math Matters

In a fascinating book called *Mathematics: From the Birth of Numbers*, the late Jan Gullberg wrote something that has stuck with me.

“Unfortunately,” wrote Gullberg, “very few people have” an “appreciation of the true nature of mathematics. The most common fallacy, even



Mel MacKay

among otherwise well-informed people, is ... to confuse mathematics with elementary arithmetic, and thus to suppose that progress in mathematics consists of performing ever more complicated calculations with speed, dexterity, and accuracy.” Gullberg goes on to contrast famous examples of human calculators (from an 18th-century Derbyshire laborer to Dustin Hoffman’s character in *Rain Man*) with the German mathematician and scientist Karl Gauss, whose “powers of mental calculation declined as his genius grew.”

I was sorry to read this description of Gauss because I had thought I had a talent for mathematics. As a child, I enjoyed the multiplication table, and the faster the teacher wanted it on paper, the better. This kind of number-comfort later came in handy when I worked at Bailey’s ice cream shop for a boss who would not let us write down orders—not even to price them. I think I was one of the only employees whose numbers added up, including tax.

But this ability was of surprisingly limited value once I got past algebra. Gullberg makes the case that a true understanding of mathematics arises from exposure to and practice with what it is that mathematicians actually do—how they think, how mathematical systems are derived, how theory and application intersect.

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Students Recreate German Painting

Winter Art Show Scheduled for January 10

In an area as individualized as painting, students in one John Bapst painting class have been trying out a team approach to the creative process—all while exploring a variety of painting techniques in watercolors and acrylics.

Working with art teacher Melissa Burns, the students completed a collaborative art project, each reproducing a section of a painting by German artist Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528). Burns explained the technique they used: “The painting was divided into nine equal sections and each of the students worked independently to reproduce their section, then collaborated to make sure their piece matched with the surrounding pieces through object drawing and color matching. The result is breathtaking.”

The finished piece will be on display at the school’s Winter Art Show on Thursday, January 10, 2008, from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. in the John Bapst Auditorium. The show will also feature the work of student artists in the John Bapst Drawing, Advanced Art, and Advanced Placement Studio Art classes. The public is invited to attend, and admission is free.



Students with their reproduction of Dürer’s painting (pictured from left to right) are Molly Soneson '08 of Orrington, Lauren Dooman '09 of Glenburn, Shannon O’Connor '09 of Old Town, Katelyn Gerow '10 of Glenburn, Megan Stewart '08 of Veazie, Kristyn Murphy '08 of Orrington, Kristen Thibodeau '08 of Milford, and Ginny Marston '08 of Orland. Missing from photo: Alexandria Scheidt '08 of Veazie.

Dan O'Connell Named Coach of the Year



Dan O'Connell

John Bapst head football coach Dan O'Connell has been named the Little Ten Conference (LTC) Coach of the Year.

O'Connell, a long-term substitute teacher at John Bapst, is the son of Richard '64 and Barbara O'Connell of Bangor. He and his family, including siblings, sister Darrian and brother Matt, grew up in Bangor Gardens. He attended Bangor schools, playing football and basketball at Bangor High School where he served as the school's varsity football captain in his senior year. At Bates College, he studied Political Science and played football, again serving as a captain in his senior year.

Coach O'Connell reflected recently on the growth of the John Bapst football program, noting that five years ago the team had not won a game in more than four seasons.

In considering the team's progress over the last five years, O'Connell credited his coaching staff and the players, saying, "I knew it would take a lot of work, among other things, to be successful, but I believed it could be done. During my first year at Bapst, the team snapped the streak, and in the next three years won three games per season. In 2006, the team progressed even further, advancing to the playoffs. This past season, we finished 8-1 in the regular season, hosted a playoff game, and went on to a gripping 14-7 loss in the Eastern Maine and LTC Championship game."

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Over the years I've heard so many adults say that the only math they've ever had to use was to balance the checkbook. Not true. Gullberg reminds us that in mentally associating, distributing, transposing, and extrapolating, we are using the thought processes of math.

And increasingly, it is not only the thought processes of mathematics but math itself that must be reckoned with—in science, medicine, engineering, architecture, economics, finance, psychology, and so many other realms of human activity. John Bapst's four-year math requirement is one thing we have exactly right. An intellectually empowered student body is one that goes off to college able to study and enter a wide range of fields.

I still enjoy the fact that the squares of the numbers from 20 to 30 are symmetrical. Arithmetic is pretty, but to an extent I did not understand, mathematics is the language of innovation and opportunity. It might be good for our culture and our economy if the math-haters could take a vow of silence!

Do you know someone who would thrive at John Bapst? If you do, spread the word about Step-up Day, February 5, 2008.

Art Students Attend National Portfolio Day

On November 4, five John Bapst art students and their chaperones, Melissa and Craig Burns, attended the National Portfolio Day at the Massachusetts College of Art in Boston.

This is the twelfth consecutive year that the John Bapst Art Department has taken students to this event, which gives students the opportunity to meet with representatives from a number of art schools and university art departments as well as have their art work critiqued by professional artists and teachers from many of the post-secondary institutions. Burns noted that some of her students also took advantage of the opportunity to participate in college admission interviews.



Attending the 2007 National Portfolio Day event were (pictured from left to right) Shannon O'Connor '09 of Old Town, Kristen Thibodeau '08 of Milford, Katy Hein '10 of Holden, Molly Soneson '08 of Orrington, and Mariah Kopec-Belliveau '08 of Old Town.

National Honor Society Welcomes New Members

John Bapst's Harlow "Joe" Floyd Chapter of the National Honor Society welcomed a number of new members in its annual induction ceremony on November 26. Chapter President Alex Settele '08 and faculty adviser Beth Campbell presided over an event that included music by the Chamber Ensemble and an inspiring talk by featured speaker Dr. Charles Hewett, the COO of Jackson Laboratory, a member of the Bapst Board of Trustees, and a past parent. Dr. Hewett encouraged the students to learn to write, to take as much math as possible, and to be sure to meet the world beyond Maine and bring their experiences and learning back to this state.

New NHS members for 2007-08 are Alexandra Drummond, Owen Firestone, Erin Flynn, Margaret Kane, Jamie LaPierre, Hillary Parent, and Kristen Willard, all of the Class of 2008; and Ryan Casey, Amy Cheetham, Kathleen Clark, Andrew Desrosiers, Kelsey Fahey, Charlotte Firestone, Christopher Fogler, Lauren Freeman, Alex Gale, Ian Grover, Lydia Horne, Justin Jordan, Margaret Lammert, Nathan Lesser, Jordon Meyers, Lauren Peavey, Phoebe Peckenham, Abigail Perkins, Olivia Simone, and Alexandria Wright, all of the Class of 2009.

For the first time this year and inspired by John Bapst's focus on modeling ethical behavior, the school has instituted a formal appeal process for students not selected. More information about the process is available to students and parents from Head of School Mel MacKay.

Key Club Sponsors Angel Tree

This year, the John Bapst Key Club is sponsoring an Angel Tree for the Hands of Hope Program. The Angel Tree, one of many located in the Greater Bangor area, is covered with paper ornaments giving a child's name, age, and special wish for the coming holiday. Anyone can take an ornament and fulfill the wish of a child.

Key Club President Alessandra Gormley '08 of Levant spoke recently about the project. "The Angel Tree has been a great project for the Bapst community. Around the holidays, when we have delicious food, our loved ones around us, and presents under the tree, it is not always easy to remember that there are those not as fortunate. As teenagers, we can be pretty selfish and often our thoughts revolve only around ourselves. The Angel Tree gives us a chance to step back from our busy lives and see the greater world around us. It gives us an opportunity to give back, and that is an opportunity we should never pass up."

The John Bapst Key Club, a leadership organization that operates under school regulations and draws its membership from the student body, has been in existence for over 40 years. It is jointly sponsored by the school and the Bangor Noontime Kiwanis Club. Membership is open to any student willing to provide a minimum of 50 hours of service annually, and almost 100 students participate each year, contributing their time and fundraising efforts to help support charitable organizations in the area. The John Bapst Key Club traditionally raises nearly \$8,000 a year for local charities and dedicates over 4,000 combined hours of service in their school and community.

This year, in addition to the Angel Tree Project, Key Club efforts include running in or volunteering for Race-for-the-Cure; collecting canned goods for the Manna Agency and donations for Unicef; preparing monthly meals at the Ronald McDonald House; holiday gift wrapping for the Red Cross at the Bangor Mall; providing scorers for the Special Olympics Bowl-a-thon; and working at the Foster and Adoptive Family Event. Key Club students also contribute services to the annual auction, provide assistance and refreshments for parent nights, and help the Parents' Association with sponsored events. In addition to Ali, the 2007-08 officers are vice-president Catherine Lammert '08 of Glenburn, secretaries Molly Lammert '09 of Glenburn and Jordon Meyers '09 of Eddington, treasurer Anna Carmack '10 of Veazie, sergeant at arms Alex Gale '09 of Glenburn, publicity chair Abby Tormey '10 of Orrington, and board members Amy Cheetham '09 of Monroe and Omar Khan '10 of Glenburn. The John Bapst Key Club faculty advisor is science teacher Mary Lammert.

SEAC Members Participate in Pink Tulip Project

In October, about two-dozen members of the John Bapst Student Environmental Action Committee (SEAC) helped plant 1,200 tulip bulbs in gardens along the Bangor waterfront. The students were volunteers for the Pink Tulip Project, a breast cancer awareness effort sponsored by the Maine Cancer Foundation, a nonprofit agency supporting cancer research and prevention.

Beginning its third year at John Bapst, SEAC (pronounced SEEK) is a student-led environmental and social action group that encourages its members to become effective leaders and group collaborators. SEAC members work to raise awareness, change policy, and enact solutions regarding environmental issues currently facing our community and planet.

Last year, among other efforts, the John Bapst SEAC participated in a citywide effort to clean up Bangor's neighborhoods. This year, in addition to the Pink Tulip Project, SEAC members have volunteered to maintain the John Bapst gardens, organize Earth Day activities at the school, and help plant irises on State Street in a city-sponsored effort. SEAC members are also fundraising to replace all conventional incandescent light bulbs at John Bapst with compact florescent lights (CFLs). SEAC co-advisor Christopher Packard explained: "CFLs are three times more efficient; last up to 10 times as long; and will reduce energy consumption, pollution, and CO2 emissions as well as save money. We have already surveyed the school and determined that there are 200+ traditional light bulbs in the building."

Packard noted that, although they are seeking community partnerships for the CFL project, SEAC students are also recycling the school's cans and bottles as well as conducting other fundraising activities for this cause. The group is also considering two long-term projects at John Bapst: to make the school a carbon neutral environment and to install solar panels on the school's roof. In addition to Packard, the John Bapst SEAC is co-advised by teachers Fred Jones and Sarah Wilder. Members meet weekly with their advisors. SEAC officers are elected annually to serve one-year terms. This year's SEAC officers are co-presidents Sasha Brouillard '08 of Castine and Ryan Lad '09 of Glenburn and secretary Alexandria Scheidt '08 of Veazie.

Brendan Murphy Nominated for National Award



Brendan Murphy

Brendan Murphy is one of two Maine teachers nominated for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics, sponsored by the Maine Coalition for Excellence in Education (MCEE). The nation's highest honor for mathematics teachers, the award recognizes highly qualified K-12 teachers for their contributions in the classroom and to their profession. The award winner will be announced in April 2008.

This year, under an AP4ALL Program grant, Murphy has been using technology to teach an AP Calculus class at John Bapst that is accessible to other students across the state. He recently participated in a video chat session with educators from Washington who were interested in hearing about the Maine Distance Learning Project, specifically how AP classes are being brought to the state's most rural areas. Murphy's article in the College Board's AP Calculus Special Focus Topic booklet, "An Introduction to Slope Fields and Euler's Method," was one of 10 articles published recently by the College Board.

**CALENDAR OF
EVENTS**

December 24-January 4
Holiday Break - No School

January 10
Winter Art Show (6:30-8 p.m.)

January 17 & 18
Exam Review Days

January 21
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day -
No School

January 22-25
Semester Exams

January 25
2nd Quarter Ends

Bapst on BROADWAY

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

6TH ANNUAL JOHN BAPST AUCTION

SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 2008
Sponsored by the John Bapst Parents' Association

WATCH FOR MORE DETAILS ABOUT:

50/50 RAFFLE
GREAT AUCTION ITEMS
STUDENT ART

John Bapst Memorial High School
100 Broadway
Bangor, ME 04401-5299

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