

THE MLWGS Jabberwock

Volume XII, Issue 5

www.mlwgsjabberwock.org

Friday, December 5, 2014

Budget Battle Rages at Town Hall Meeting

By Tyler Walker and Ellie Palazzolo

Concerned students, parents, teachers, alumni, and school board representatives gathered in the auditorium on Wednesday to participate in the Town Hall Budget Meeting on the operating budget for Maggie Walker in the upcoming fiscal years. Assorted speakers from all of these groups offered suggestions, concerns, and questions to the Administrators present, Dr. McGee, Dr. Ellis, and Mr. Tharp, as well as the School Board members and Superintendent also in attendance: Mr. Kevin Hazzard (Goochland School Board), Mr. John Axelle (Hanover School Board), and Dr. James Lane (Goochland Superintendent).

While she would have liked to have seen more members of the Regional School Board, Reed Canaan ('15), President of EduPAC, thought "the administration facilitated a healthy dialogue about the budget and the future of our school," and was impressed with the student turnout.

The event began with a brief overview of the current budget. Key points included that the major sources of income are from the flat rate tuition each county pays per student (approx. \$7,372 per year) and fluid state contributions set by the General Assembly and/or Governor each year for public education.



There was plenty of student interest at the Town Hall Budget Meeting held in the MLWGS auditorium this past Wednesday. Photo Courtesy of Reed Canaan ('15).

ing of the track. Mrs. Hayes, a PTA representative brought attention to the lack of a stable capital reserve fund.

Student representatives expressed dissent over a variety of funding problems in the school. Samantha Schwartzkopf ('15) expressed frustration over limited spots in the mentorship program, a tenant of Maggie Walker experiential learning and overly large seminars as a less-than-favorable alternative. Zoe Nelson ('16) testified that her 2008 AP Government textbook, the most recent version the school owns, does not mention President Obama. Jordyn Kent ('15) also pointed out that department chairs have been required to take on an extra class with no additional pay.

Dr. McGee, upon hearing the assortment of speakers, responded "we can do anything we want, we just can't do everything we want."

Students have taken action through the creation of the EduPAC club and countless phone calls and meetings. Parents advocate and donate to the Foundation to fund many of the school's unique study and travel opportunities. Teachers are working harder to provide feedback and personal interactions with students

despite larger classes.

But, as Mrs. Macon of the PTA Advocacy Committee stated towards the conclusion of the event, "School budgets cannot be viewed in a vacuum." The school cannot predict what the budget might be until Governor McAuliffe presents his amendments to the biennial state budget later this month.

Following the Town Hall Meeting, student activists continue to encourage their peers to contact local officials and representatives. As Devon Bortz ('16) straightforwardly said, "we can do better."

"We can do anything we want, we just can't do everything we want."

Although Maggie Walker did see a 3% increase in the annual budget last year, some expressed concern over future school expenses. Dr. McGee recognized that, over the next 5 years, the school will need \$650,000 for roof replacement and repairs. Mrs. Feldman, President of Athletic Boosters, addressed the need for \$228,000 for the refurbish-

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A Testing Schedule That Makes Sense

By Pranay Vissa

Maggie Walker students all have schedules to follow, frequently following a cyclical pattern but do you ever wonder if our teachers, too, have a greater, more important schedule that they must follow?

Perhaps merely coincidental, but do you ever get the feeling that tests and quizzes inevitably tend to fall around the same time (and sometimes even on the same day) during each academic marking period?

It is a difficult monthly structure for the student no doubt; three weeks of classroom lecture followed by a week of rapid and never-ending examinations. We could advocate for an elimination of tests and quizzes altogether; in fact, a few schools in the country have already done so, instead producing written student performance reports at the end of each semester. But that's an unrealistic expectation at best, a system that neither quantifies achievement nor induces stress in the student body. A small dose of both are conducive for a high-performing student body.

But for as much as we crib about the process, there is surely something to be gained from the product.

We must begin by looking beyond high school. For the most part, collegiate academic calendars follow the exact same semester-based schedule. And across the universities, midterms and finals – or to us end-of-marking-period tests and semester exams respectively – fall within the same week. And professors are under no obligation to reschedule their exams because of workload concerns.

Our test and quiz schedule is simply a product of a universal method of academic planning, a common procedure across departments within the first month of school. Nobody can give a test after only a week of classroom instruction. Thus, it takes a few weeks to have covered enough material to provide students with the resources to think critically on that subject. And that is true across the departments, which is why it seems that tests and quizzes all fall on the same day.

I'm not advocating that we wholeheartedly embrace the system. Rather, let's not place the expectations on teachers to reschedule assessments for us. Let us accept the testing system for what it is, knowing that it will be the cornerstone of our collegiate experience.

Have an opinion?

WRITE A LETTER TO
THE EDITOR

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THE MLWGS *Jabberwock*

Editorial Policy:

The MLWGS Jabberwock covers news events related to the school community and provides a forum for students to share their ideas. Statements expressed by columnists or in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the staff. However, all editorials are the combined work of both the Editor-in-Chief and her staff.

All members of the MLWGS community are invited to submit letters to the editor on any topic, although the publication of all letters is not guaranteed. The newspaper reserves the right to edit letters for grammar, language and length. Please e-mail letters to themlwgsjabberwock@gmail.com.

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Child's Play No Childish Venture

Dear Editor:

Walk past the Low-End Senior Commons on any given day and you'll likely see (and hear) a throng of students crowded around one of two outdated box TVs. Buttons click feverishly as Super Smash Brothers players jockey for victory over their opponents, to the cheers and jeers of their companions. These students gather here in the mornings, at lunch, in study hall, and even after school to play a game they love.

Madison Tang, a senior, thought that he'd found a way to harness this energy into creating something more productive than simple bragging rights. Inspired by the success of other charity events, Madison worked to found a chapter of Child's Play, a charity that donates supplies to terminally ill children, at Maggie Walker. By organizing tournaments for popular video games, the Child's Play Club could raise money for charity and encourage an interest shared by many in the school community.

“Is the Dodgeball Club's approval by administration somehow endorsing hurling balls at other students? By rejecting Child's Play, the Maggie Walker administration has unnecessarily restricted students while also impeding charitable donations.”

Recognizing the potential for a “gaming club” to turn into an excuse to cut class and claim leadership on college applications, Madison drafted a multi-page club constitution laid out the club's organization and purpose,

including officerships dedicated to organizing events and tracking club funds.

“Walk past the Low-End Senior Commons on any given day and you'll likely see (and hear) a throng of students crowded around one of two outdated box TVs.”

With a club sponsor (Dr. Broeniman), constitution, and over 100 members on a preliminary Facebook page, Madison was sure that Child's Play would soon become the newest addition to Maggie Walker's club roster.

Maggie Walker's long and storied history of encouraging students to pursue their own interests is exemplified not only in the school's diverse variety of course offerings but also in the plethora of clubs run by the student body. Clubs catering to every conceivable interest can be found in the halls of Maggie Walker, be they the B-Movie Club, Robotics, the now-defunct Backgammon Club, or the Russian Club.

On my first informational visit to Maggie Walker, volunteers distributed a handout listing the over 80 clubs operating at the school as Mr. Tharp informed us that Maggie Walker students can start a club with only “two students and a constitution.” All this made it only more shocking when, after weeks of stalling and changing deadlines, administration rejected the application of Child's Play Club due to unease at “legitimizing the playing of games...as a club activity.”

I understand the administration's

concern over approving a club that solely gathers to play video games, but what the school's directors seem to have missed several crucial points in the 4 page constitution and the 4 page essay Madison created in defense of his proposal.

The primary purpose of Child's Play would be to raise money, and playing games is only the means by which charitable funds will be raised. Is the Dodgeball Club's approval by administration somehow endorsing hurling balls at other students?

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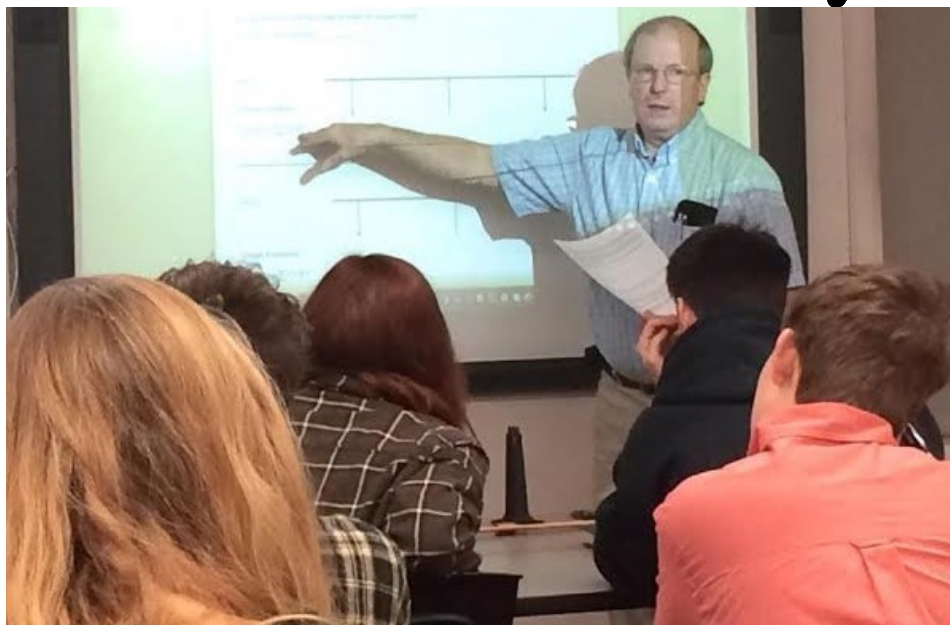
By rejecting Child's Play, the Maggie Walker administration has unnecessarily restricted students while also impeding charitable donations. The administration still has time to reverse their decision and permit the founding of an institution overflowing with potential.

— Ciaran Lowell ('15)

Teacher Feature: Mr. Tom Boyle

By Helen Li

Writer's note: Each person has their own story. When Mr. O'Bryan passed away a few weeks ago, many students were shocked and sad. Although I was never taught by him, I heard many great stories about how he influenced this school. High school only lasts four years and sometimes we only know our teachers through a classroom perspective. Seeing the surprise of the students at learning the details of Mr. O'Bryan's personal life inspired me to start this project. Each biweekly issue will include an interview with a Maggie Walker staff member about their personal lives. I hope that it helps us get to know our teachers a little bit better.



Mr. Boyle teaches his 2nd-period physics class; he says his favorite part of teaching is “seeing the development of his students.” Photo by Srishti Sanya.

HL: Where were you born and how has that influenced you?

TB: I was born in New Jersey. I was only two when we moved from New Jersey. I've lived in central New York, Michigan and Indiana, the Midwest for a couple of years, then the Deep South, in Louisiana. It was when I got to the Deep South, after having moved from there from Northeast, there was quite a cultural difference there.

Although I was still a young boy at that time, I vividly remember the Civil Rights workers that went missing in Mississippi and were executed and found buried in these mounds along the highways. And I also lived in an area where the Ku Klux Klan was very active. I grew up with that history and because I came from the Northeast, I was different myself from the people I lived with. That I think greatly influenced my ability to understand and tolerate differences among people and to feel empathy towards different cultures, races, [and people].

HL: What's your favorite thing about teaching?

TB: Well, for me, it's really to see the development of my students over the course of a period of time. Since I teach primarily juniors, some seniors, there's such a distinct change in that individual

from when you first see them in September to when they leave your doors in June that is hard to describe. It's a wonderful thing to see that mature; they perform better academically and socially.

HL: What are your hobbies?

TB: Well, my greatest hobby is bicycling. Back in 1990, I did a cross country bicycling road trip [in a group]. It was all self-contained, meaning that you take your equipment with you, you camp on the road, and we went from Yorktown, Virginia, to Astoria, Oregon. We were on the road for what was like a period of 80, almost 90 days with like 10 days off. It teaches you a lot about yourself and to get along with people under the most trying conditions imaginable. You drive across the country by car? I don't think you are going to get the experience of doing it on the back of a bike for a lot of different reasons.

HL: What is on your bucket list?

TB: One main thing on my bucket list is to spend time in a land down under, like New Zealand to Australia. And actually to spend a significant amount of time there. And on the way, do some island-hopping in the South Pacific. Catch Ha-

waii, Fiji, and all those Polynesian Islands, you know, that are scattered amongst the ocean. I'd just like to immerse myself in their culture.

You don't really get to understand the people and the culture until you spend a good deal of time with them. The longer you can stay, the better. Because my other thing is, to combine that with cycling. I've looked for cycling tours across Australia; I don't think there are any specifically. But there might be in the future.

Another thing that I'd like to do is get to Alaska and have the opportunity to see the Northern Lights. And maybe visit Antarctica before it melts into the sea. And also some of the islands that are off the coast of South America are unique, like Easter Island and the Galapagos. Those would be further down the list but I'd like the opportunity to go to those places as well

HL: Thank you Mr. Boyle for sharing your past and your future with us. I hope that you eventually get to go on that trip and cycle across Australia.

TB: Well, as Hank Williams said, “If the good Lord's willing and a creek don't rise!” I'll be there. [Chuckles]

Quizbowl's GSAC Takes the Stage

By Reshini Premaratne

Undoubtedly, if you have walked across the third floor during lunch any day this year, you have noticed a curious gathering in the small room wedged in between the forum and Mr. Wilkes' classroom. Some have walked past unperturbed, some have even dared to surreptitiously glance in, but, to the Quizbowl club's discontent, unfortunately not nearly as many have actually entered the room – perhaps because it was previously unbeknownst or was a source of intimidation.

However, the club does much more than most students think. Maggie Walker's Quizbowl club creates and writes its very own tournament, the Governor's School Academic Competition (GSAC), which is not only one of the most renowned tournaments, but is also the longest-running high-school-written competition in all of the United States.

Connor Wood ('15), Tournament Director and Head Editor for GSAC, emphasizes the scrupulous work and long-term commitment necessary to conduct such a tournament, especially considering that Maggie Walker's Quizbowl club is one of the very few teams in the nation that writes its own packet of 588 questions in 20 different subject areas for the tournament.

As Wood describes the packet, its "questions range from American Literature and World History to Chemistry and Mythology" and everything in between.

Completing this packet for the tournament is no easy task. In fact, Wood, like graduate of MLWGS Quizbowl before him, spent hours on end over the recent Thanksgiving break editing questions. While it takes a full year to finish, the results validate those efforts.

Ten other sites paying to use these prepared questions, from cities like San Diego and St. Louis, accrues about \$2,000, and then another \$1,000 is aggregated by the original GSAC home site. The money goes towards growing the club's activities and providing more than adequate funding for the team's trip



Members of Maggie Walker's Quizbowl team, here with sponsor Ms. Hana Reed, prepare for upcoming competitions. *Photo courtesy of Alix Elizabeth ('16).*

to nationals each year.

Quizbowl club's unique structure is unlike that of any other club at Maggie Walker due to the generous support and dedication of club sponsor, Ms. Hana Reed, and a welcome frequenter, Ms. Juanita Lasswell, who has followed the team for over a decade.

Aside from the club sponsor structure, the Quizbowl club organization is rather flexible, with no president or any other leadership positions. The lenient arrangement allows the club members to meet every day during lunch but does not require such attendance.

As Wood, a member since the very first practice of his freshman year, says, Quizbowl is "a club that's devoted to the encouragement of really deep learning, and enjoying what you learn." Weekly meetings are also held on Fridays after-school, during which members practice the Quizbowl format and trial questions.

Because of the members' diligent work, Maggie Walker is known to have one of the best Quizbowl teams in the nation, winning two national tournaments in different circuits in 2007 and consistently placing top eight at any national competition.

The competition season is in full

swing during the later months of winter, namely February and March, with tournaments almost every, if not every, Saturday. Quizbowl club members prepare year-round for these tournaments through practice questions, study techniques, and peer learning; thus, they are well prepared and never disappoint.

Next time you catch a glimpse of the Quizbowl team interacting freely and learning contentedly during lunch, take Wood's advice and just "try it."

Many fear that they do not know enough to fit in the echelons of the club or that they wouldn't enjoy the time spent learning a wide variety of facts, but that is simply not true. Wood says many members admit to knowing very little when joining the team, but learning so much in such a short period after doing so.

Reflecting on his time on the Quizbowl team, Wood assures that they love what they do and garner some of their closest friends from the club. So instead of just walking past that room on the third floor during lunch, open the door and await an immersion into trivia from worlds past, present, and unimaginable.

Winter Sports Season Preview

By Preston Hausser
and Claire Mendelson

Indoor Track

A powerful and record-setting cross country season has built the momentum for this year's indoor track team. Maggie Walker was the only school to win both the boys' and girls' team titles in cross country, and defended their 2013 double championships. Coaches Holdren, Snagg, and Webb will continue their dynasty of running championships with this year's indoor track team.

Boys' Basketball

The 2014-15 Maggie Walker boys season should prove to be an exciting, if not thought-provoking, ordeal. With the loss of team leader and head scorer Will Greer ('14) as well as budding young star Stenzler Green ('17) to graduation and transfer, respectively, Coaches Griggs and Kirwan will look to try and fill the holes left by the departure of these players.

Despite these losses, there are still many bright spots in the program. Players will look to 6'7" junior Zach Jacobs ('16) to lead the team in points as well as rebounds. Supporting Jacobs in the paint will be Ben Bowers ('15), the other big man on the team. Starting around the perimeter this year will be three seniors, Shalin Shah ('15), Michael Thompson ('15) and Kyle Trapp ('15). Other key players this year include John Blue ('17), Jack McGrath ('17), Thomas Sneed ('16) and Jake Morris ('16).

With a new, updated schedule for this season, the varsity team will look to gain big victories over Appomattox on January 5th and February 2nd, Nandua on December 13th, and in the Goochland Invitational on December 19th and 20th. The Green Dragons will improve upon last year's record and gain a higher seed come the conference tournament in February.

Girls' Basketball

The girls started their season off strong, with wins over Windsor and King William. On Tuesday the Lady Dragons fell to Patrick Henry, a disappointing early-season loss. The Dragons will face off again against Patrick Henry on January 23rd, and with a focus on ball-handling and rebounds, they should be able to avenge their loss.

The JV program continues to expand, strengthening the Varsity team. Key players on Varsity this year include Natalie Weinberg ('16), Mariko Lewis ('17), and Mariah Macon ('15).



Natalie Weinberg ('16) attacks the ball in the opening half of the game against King William. Photo courtesy of Sherry Wortman.

Swimming

Both the boys' and girls' swim teams are looking to have another successful season this year. Last year the girls claimed the Virginia state championships and the boys were the state runners-up. Although there were many seniors on the team last year who have graduated, captains Galen Green ('14), Anna

Kuno ('14), and Geoffrey Gill ('14) have stepped up to provide leadership to the growing and expanding team. New head coach Deanna Gulick, a 2012 MLWGS alumnae, pushes the team in dry land strength and conditioning and the training will pay off. Additionally, practices are now held at the JCC, which has better facilities than Swansboro Elementary, where the team has practiced in previous years. With all of these new changes, the swim team will have a strong season.

Wrestling

With the entrance of a large amount of interest from a younger population at the school, the Maggie Walker wrestling team should look to have a year for the ages in 2014-15. Led by state placers in 2014, Chris Soldan ('15) and Frankie Celentano ('16), the wrestling team should have another strong season. Other key players include Nate Ashburn ('15), Joe Paul ('18) and Julian Vaughn ('17). The wrestling team has multiple important invitational tournaments and matches before postseason play begins, particularly against John Marshall, J.R. Tucker and Douglas Freeman. Although there will only be one home match for this season, the team will continue to represent Maggie Walker athletics while on the road.

Coming up in Dragon Athletics

- December 9: The boys varsity basketball team will play Colonial Heights away at 5:30; the girls will face off against Colonial Heights at home at 7:00
- December 11: Both the boys and girls varsity basketball teams will play Lee Davis at home at 5:30 and 7:00, respectively
- December 12: Varsity boys swim meet at Patrick Henry