

# THE MLWGS *Jabberwock*

Volume XII, Issue 4

www.mlwgsjabberwock.org

Friday, November 14, 2014

## Junior Wins \$10,000 Scholarship

By Radhika Srivastava

Ethan Cruikshank ('16) is one of the five winners in the Montage Hotel Memory Maker Scholarship program. The scholarship program aims to recognize exceptional students between the ages of 13 and 17 who have made positive contributions to their community through youth-led organizations.

Cruikshank was recognized on October 22 as one of ten finalists from 85 total entries for his service organization Music to My Ears. The five Montage Memory Makers were announced on November 12 after several days of online voting. The five winners selected as Montage Memory Makers will receive \$10,000 in the form of college scholarships.

Numerous students and teachers came together to vote for Cruikshank in the online polls.

Cruikshank created Music to My Ears during the fall of 2009, after learning that Orchestra classes were to be eliminated from elementary school curriculums in Hanover County due to budget cuts.

"I knew that knowing how to play a musical instrument is not only fun, but also improves your math skills, teaches discipline, and instills perseverance and work ethic," said Cruikshank. "However, in some parts of our country, as many as 50 percent fewer children have access to music programs than they did five years ago. I wanted to do something that would help keep music education alive for some of them."

Music to My Ears is a program in which musicians in middle and high school provide weekly instruction for free to children in elementary school. Cruikshank teaches 4 guitar students during each session. Over the past six years, 104 students have benefitted from Music to My Ears and the musicians have volunteered for over 1600 combined hours. The program has even grown past Virginia, and is now available in Maryland, New



Ethan Cruikshank helps a student improve her guitar skills during a lesson. Photo Courtesy of Ethan Cruikshank ('16).

York, and Texas.

"So many of our students here do incredible work in the community," said Ms. Parker. "This underscores the importance of meaningful community service which enhances not only a student's education, but also personal growth and development."

Cruikshank met his first student, a young girl named Ruby, at the start of the first session of Music to My Ears. Ruby's family could not afford to pay for her guitar lessons, so she studied with Cruikshank for a year. Though Ruby later moved to Germany with her family, she continued her music education in Dresden, inspired by Cruikshank to develop music skills.

"While she lived in Germany, Ruby and I kept in touch, and she always shared with me what she was learning and playing on her guitar," says Cruikshank. "Now living back in the state of New York, we still stay in touch, and she continues her lessons and regularly competes in local competitions. I gave Ruby her first music composition book and encourage her to write her own songs. Ruby and I have formed a friendship that

I hope will last forever."

Cruikshank holds that music has healing power and hopes to impart his love for music to all his students. He is driven by his love for music and willingness to help others.

"One of my favorite quotes by Jan Davidson is, 'If you have the ability to help others, you have the responsibility to do so,'" says Cruikshank. "I try to live by that quote. It's satisfying to know the time you have spent and the choices you have made have affected others' lives in a positive way."

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# Preparing for College as a Freshman

**M**LWGS does an excellent job of providing our prospective students with the information they need to apply to the school as eighth graders. I have heard many parents and students alike praise the information sessions and open houses we hold.

However, as a senior who attended that open house four years ago and who is currently applying to colleges, I wish certain issues about the college application process had been clarified for me at key moments throughout my time at the school.

I appreciate what MLWGS does already to help us apply to college, such as providing the Senior Newsletter and holding mandatory college meetings, because many schools do not even have that. Every counselor I have met with during my time at MLWGS has been understanding, kind, and accommodating. However, taking the college application preparation a step further to every grade level will ameliorate the process for seniors.

First, as a freshman, I had no notion of applying to college, at all. It was not something I considered when making academic decisions; but now, looking back, if I had been told as a freshman that all high school grades and extra-curricular activities, regardless of year, matter when applying to college, I would have made some different choices about the classes I took or the clubs I participated in.

As another example, it would have been immensely helpful if I had known as a sophomore that many colleges either require or "strongly recommend" taking SAT Subject Tests. I would

then have signed up to take the tests in classes I took sophomore year at the end of that year, so all the material would have been clear in my mind. I know many of my friends are just now finding out that the colleges they are applying to request Subject Test scores, and knowing this earlier, or even just being encouraged to take them in case, would make the college process less stressful now.

While these are just two examples, I can think of numerous other little things that would make my, and many of my fellow seniors,' lives less difficult. It would be extremely beneficial and reassuring if counselors began meeting annually with students starting freshman year to explain to them what the goal for high school is, what steps they should be taking now to help them in the future, and what colleges are looking for, as well as debunking any myths middle schoolers come in with about the college process.

Beginning high school with the end in mind will make it easier for students and counselors alike to dive into college applications in senior year, as students will come in to senior-year meetings with any pre-prep already done and a clear image of their college goals in mind.

-SM

Have an opinion?

WRITE A LETTER TO  
THE EDITOR

[themlwgsjabberwock@gmail.com](mailto:themlwgsjabberwock@gmail.com)



## 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](mailto:themlwgsjabberwock@gmail.com).

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# Students Plan a Memorial Quilt

By Sophia McCrimmon

After the passing of English teacher Bear O'Bryan on October 11, many members of the Maggie Walker community took time to remember all that was distinctive about his class. At the forefront of many memories was Mr. O'Bryan's legendary quilt project, in which students created hand-sewn pieces, each symbolic of a literary work, that were then added to a unique class quilt.

In the wake of such a devastating loss, many students decided that the best way to remember Mr. O'Bryan's legacy was by carrying on one of his beloved traditions. With his unique spirit in mind, a few students are coordinating the construction of a school-wide memorial quilt, made up of squares that students, teachers, and alumni create in remembrance of all Mr. O'Bryan gave to this community.

**“We lost someone from our community, but now we'll come together and show how much he meant to us as a school.”**

“The one thing that encompassed him, that everybody knew about him, was these quilts. The project seemed to be a great way to memorialize Mr. O'Bryan at this school in a way that words can't,” said Emily Martin ('17), who helped organize the project and is contributing to its construction.

After gauging interest through a survey, student coordinators were surprised by an overwhelmingly positive response from the community. Over 100 people, many of them alumni, indicated interest in making a piece.

With the large number of contributors in mind, Robert Morris ('16) considers that logistically, the best shape



Mr O'Bryan was known for the creative quilts he made with his classes; pictured here is one from 2012. Photo by Srishti Sanya.

for the project would be simply a collection of squares.

“There have been many designs that have been mulled over but I think the only way to do this is to have a uniform square pattern and just lay the pieces out,” said Morris, one of the students who is coordinating the project.

Despite having such an overwhelming task ahead of them, student coordinators are still motivated to work to make this project a reality.

“This project is lasting and it means a lot to a lot of people, so I think it's worth the time and effort it's going to take,” Martin said.

Morris is driven by an obligation to his fellow students who were affected by their tremendous loss.

“On the Monday after his passing I saw a lot of people who were just devastated,” Morris recalled, “My motivation is those people who were just really upset by this. With all the people that Mr. O'Bryan influenced, just to give up is not an option.”

Students hope that their final product will represent all that Mr. O'Bryan

meant to the MLWGS community.

“What I've envisioned is a representation of the Maggie Walker Family. We lost someone from our community but now we'll come together and show how much he meant to us as a school,” Morris said.

**“With all the people that Mr. O'Bryan influenced, just to give up is not an option.”**

“This quilt will definitely preserve Mr. O'Bryan's legacy because future students aren't going to have him,” Martin said, “I think this is important because it keeps his voice alive in this school.”

The leaders welcome any others who would like to contribute. If you wish to get involved, please contact Morris (robertdmorris3@gmail.com) or Martin (emilybakes13@gmail.com) over email or Facebook. The project is set to begin in early December.

# Letter from Mr. O'Bryan's Sister

To the Students of Maggie L. Walker Governor's School:

Saturday night left me in awe. The depth of your feeling showed very clearly. Each detail, picture, and story evoked a smile or tear. I can now add your memories to my own. The time and emotion invested by you to organize such an incredible display is an honor few receive.

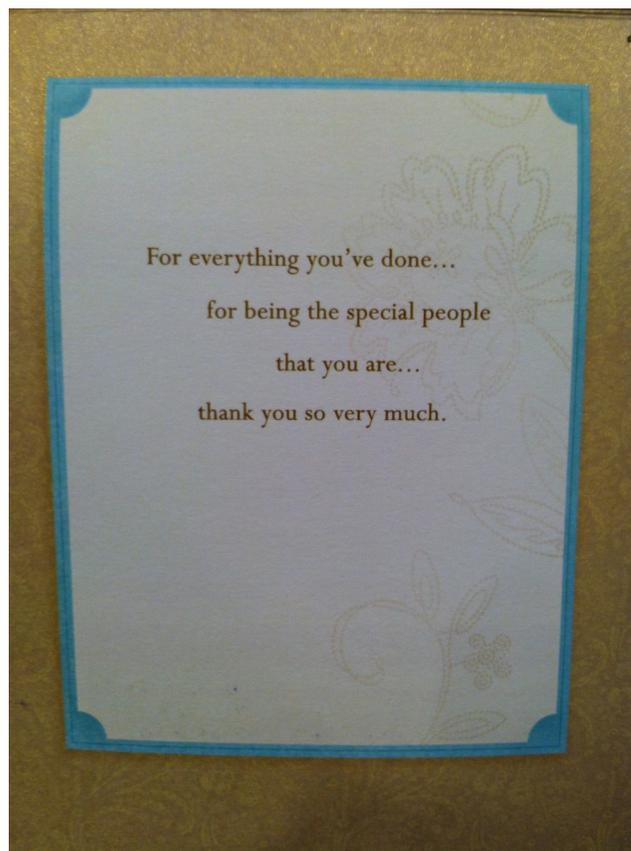
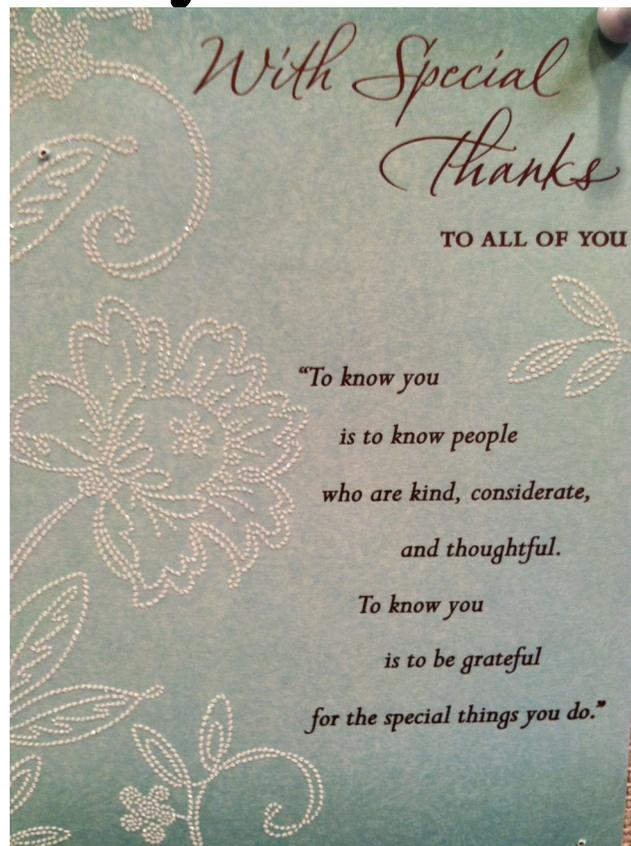
Bear spoke of each of you often and felt pride in each accomplishment you experienced. Many times we discussed your amazing abilities and intellect. He knew he was privileged to be a part of your life. And Saturday night, you once again proved what exceptional individuals you are.

Because of you, he looked forward to every work day. Because of you, he kept his youth. Because of you, he had a purpose. In many ways, you introduced me to my brother. You gave Bear the greatest gift any person can receive – your trust.

Thank you for allowing us to share this night with his other family.

Bear's Sister – Jeanie Clinger

*Editor's note: This message is posted on the bulletin board near the faculty mailboxes in the low-end 2nd floor office, in a card (pictured on the right). Ms. Clinger asked for this to be published in the Jabberwock so it could reach more students. Thank you, Mrs. Clinger!*



# Praise for the Four-Day Weekend

## Opinion

By Pranay Vissa

It is often easy to lambast a certain group or criticize a certain action such as in my last article, The Denouncement of the Announcement. But when the administration takes positive and constructive action that benefits everyone involved, credit must be given where credit is due. Last week, the student body received a four day hiatus from classes, an administrative decision that must be praised.

**“Students have not received a single holiday or day off during the entire first quarter.”**

It is never easy transitioning back into the hustle and bustle of MLWGS student life, after an often quiet and relaxing summer. If we take a look at the student calendar, students have not received a single holiday or day off during the entire first quarter. While holidays such as thanksgiving, winter break, and spring break are built into the rest of the year, the first quarter is often devoid of such brief periods of respite, a situation that administration duly recognized.

The success of this four-day weekend boiled down to two things: the end of the marking period and the early action/early decision college deadline for most schools.

Time and time again we see teach-



ers scrambling to get grades in for their classes at the last minute. And not every single teacher can be expected to tear through the numerous assignments.

In spite of the fact that many students complain of excessive workloads from some teachers, those teachers are also obligated to grade those assignment, often requiring hours of labor outside of school. The four-day weekend presented administration and faculty alike the opportunity to tidy up on last minute paperwork that is very common in all school systems. There should be an expectation that teachers, just like students, are allowed to push

**“There should be an expectation that teachers, just like students, are allowed to push off some of their own deadlines to prioritize their workloads.”**

off some of their own deadlines to prioritize their workloads, not just in school, but out of school as well.

From the student body perspective, the four-day weekend helped in a multitude of ways.

From the freshman perspective, this holiday gave them a well-deserved break after their first MLWGS marking period, something that is difficult to adjust to for any student.

**“But the built in two-day buffer gave seniors the ability to proudly procrastinate on school work to devote time on their already-procrastinated-upon college essays.”**

But for the seniors, who often scrambled to turn in college applications by the 11:59:59 PM deadline, this four-day weekend provided them a fleeting opportunity to push off a rigorous homework demand to prioritize their college essays. In most circumstances, sacrificing a Saturday can have disastrous repercussions, often producing a loss of multiple hours of sleep during the week. But the built in two-day buffer gave seniors the ability to proudly procrastinate on school work to devote time on their already-procrastinated-upon college essays.

The school made a brilliant decision to include this four-day weekend, a win-win for all parties involved. Let's hope that pivotal holiday becomes a mainstay for years to come.

# Fall Sports Seasons Summary

By Claire Mendelson and Preston Hausser ('17)

## Boys' Cross Country

The 2014 Boys Cross Country team made Maggie Walker history. Led by captains Patrick Wachter ('15), Matthew Rucker ('15), and Joseph Boyle ('15), the boys' team won every meet and invitational they competed in, including the esteemed MileStat.com Invitational. Rounding out the top 7 runners for the team were Ryan Buscaglia ('17), Evan Fisher ('16), Justin Wilck ('15), and Eric Kim ('15). After posting a perfect score of 15 and sweeping the Conference 33 Meet, they defeated all competition in the Region 2A East meet the next week. The MLWGS boys' cross country team is looking to win the 2A state title at Great Meadows, the Plains on Friday, November 14, and continue their dynasty of running championships.



Members of the Boys' Cross Country team celebrate their regional win.  
Photo courtesy of Katy Webb.

## Girls' Cross Country

The girls' cross country team had a strong season as well, boasting multiple meet wins and strong showings at every invitational. Although plagued by the injuries of some of their top runners, the Supergals persevered through these obstacles and continued to achieve victories throughout the regular season. The top runners responsible for leading the Dragons to victory include Khloe Pointer ('17), Emma Call ('16), Archana Shekharan ('17), Willa King ('16), Celia Wilson ('16), Josie Martin ('18) and Lucy Grinnan ('15). The girls defeated all of their competitors at the Conference 33 Tournament, advancing to the Region 2A East tournament where they beat northern rival George Mason by three points. The girls' cross country team will also be competing at the 2A State tournament at Great Meadows, the Plains on Friday, November 14.

## Boys' Volleyball

The MLWGS boys' volleyball team lost several important starters from last year, but with leadership from captains Josh Barlow ('15) and Michael Thompson ('15), the team was able to claim victories over strong teams such as Hermitage, in addition to defeating J.R. Tucker twice during the regular season.

This season was defined by the introduction of many new players to the program, and the Varsity team finished their season with a 6-12 overall record. The boys placed second in their conference and qualified for the 4A Western Sectional tournament, where they completed their season against Hanover.

## Girls' Volleyball

The MLWGS girls' volleyball team had many successes this season, with wins over strong teams around the Central Region, including Colonial Heights. Led by captains Galen Green ('15), Cynthia Ong ('15) and Carley Leckie ('15), the team had an overall record of 11-12. The girls defeated Nanudua in the Con-

ference semifinals and qualified for the 2A East Regional tournament with a second place finish in their conference.

## Field Hockey

The MLWGS field hockey team dominated in the regular season with leadership from captains Eliza Bellamy ('15), Laura Fuhr ('15) and Catherine Leahy ('15). For the second year in a row the team went undefeated, outscoring their opponents 85-3 over the course of 16 games.

With momentum from the regular season, the Dragons started the postseason off strong. With wins over Caroline High School, Tucker, and Midlothian, the team was able to claim the district title.

The MLWGS field hockey team was the highest ranking team in the regional tournament, and beat Lakeland 3-0 in the first round. The Dragons faced off against Grafton in the semi-finals and won 1-0. Ultimately the team fell 3-0 to Tabb in the regional final with a second place finish in the regional tournament.

The Dragons will play in the state tournament at Virginia Beach on Friday and Saturday. This is the first time the field hockey team has qualified for the state tournament since 2011.



The team confers with Coach Hawkins during halftime in the district semifinals. Photo courtesy of Ed Fuhr.