

Headmaster's Column

Fall is my favorite time of the year at BFA. Our students are starting another school year with renewed hope and improved focus. It is a wonderful process for adolescents to see the fruit of all their years of education and to recognize the promise of the future.



Associate Dean Peter Birdsey in an English Seminar.

Few kids are really aware of how much promise they actually have. When we first talk to them about their future, the issue is often clouded by their self-doubt and lack of confidence. Over time, we observe a change as they grow more self-assured, and as they hear their friends talking about colleges and future plans.

We are all excited about the new school year. We have a number of new courses and activities. We will offer several new Advanced Placement courses including AP Physics. We'll continue to offer our usual AP Art (2D and 3D), AP Biology, AP English Literature and Composition, and other AP courses. We have four new teachers who are featured on page 3.

The fall semester promises to be a busy one. The Cross Country and tennis teams have begun practice. The Ben Franklin Academy Players are working on their fall drama production, *Last Tuesday*. Class pictures will be made and class rings ordered. SAT and PSAT tests are scheduled. Parent-Grandparent Night will be held October 27 at the Silverbell Pavilion of the Emory Conference Center. We look for many family members to attend and meet their teen's teachers.



Assistant Dean Rand Wise teaching Will Thigpen.

We are offering four after school activities this year: the Green Club, the Junior Classical League, Quiz Bowl and Jazz Ensemble.

Dr. Luckie will be teaching several study skills and SAT prep courses this year during the day and in the Clinic after school at 4 P.M. He has been teaching these courses for the past twenty-five years. The study skills course is based on Dr. Luckie's and my book, Study Power. The Clinic courses are open to all high school students in the Atlanta area. If you know of someone from another school who would like to register for the next course in the Clinic, please call the school at 404-633-7404 for details.

Wood Smethurst, Ed.D.
Headmaster



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Fall semester activities in clubs and sports are well underway. As always, we have our Drama Ensemble, Quiz Bowl Team, and the return of Junior Classical League/Latin Club. We've started a Green Club and Jazz Ensemble, which have been hits with students and faculty!

Jazz Ensemble

New to BFA this year, the Jazz Ensemble, directed by James Watson, has been meeting every Tuesday afternoon. They play everything from Jazz, to Latin, and even to Rock, so we are excited to hear their performance at Parent/Grandparent Night on October 27. With a full ensemble including drums, bass, keys, guitar, saxophone, and singers, the group can really strike up a tune!

Junior Classical League

JCL is affiliated with the National Junior Classical League, an organization of junior and senior high school students interested in antiquity. Membership is open to all current and former Latin students at Ben Franklin, and Kate Gilbert is the Club's advisor. Meetings feature informal presentations and discussions on such topics as Roman clothing, Classical monsters and heroes in the movies, and the destruction of Pompeii. Twice a year there are Roman festivals, with an emphasis on Mediterranean-type food — both familiar (olives, grapes, cheese) and less-familiar (pomegranates, figs, stuffed dates).



Green Club



Making BFA eco-friendly, the Green Club members and advisors, Susie Duncan and James Watson, have been recycling paper, plastics, and metals throughout the school on a daily basis. The Club has already made arrangements with a recycling company to service BFA. The club has generated strong interest among the student body with members filling the room during lunchtime meetings. With goals of reducing energy use, planting a garden, and maintaining the grounds, we are excited to see how the Green Club will grow! Dameron Black IV, one of the BFA Board of Overseers, is the outside advisor for the Club.

Quiz Bowl

Quiz Bowl, also known as Academic Bowl, lead by Rand Wise and Peter Birdsey, is a team activity in which students compete by answering questions from history, geography, literature, current events, science, mathematics, philosophy, art history, music history, foreign language and other disciplines. Similar to the television show "Jeopardy," students race to the buzzer to answer a question for points. This year we are expecting to play in some GATA (Georgia Academic Team Association) tournaments and participate in some local tournaments.

Drama



The Franklin Players are clearing off the Carriage House stage and getting ready for a new and ambitious season. Some long term ensemble members have graduated, and we miss them greatly. The good news is that we have a strong core of talented folks to take over leadership of the group. With all this creative energy, we are confident about tackling three very rich and complex productions.

The season opener is *Last Tuesday*, a short "simultaneity" at BFA on October 21 and 22 at 7:30 and again at the Georgia High School One-Act Play Competition on November 8th. It will also be toured to another locale in late October. Other productions in The Franklin Player's 2008/2009 Season include Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice* running February 24, 25, and 26, at 7 pm, and Caryl Churchill's *Far Away*, showing on April 14 and 15 at 7:30. The Director of the Theatre Program is Dr. Pamela Turner. Associate Dean Jeff Guthrie is the Technical Director, and teacher Wright Howell is the Line Coach.



Our fall sports season is sure to be eventful with Tennis, Cross Country, and the introduction of Ultimate Disc.

Cross Country

The Cross Country Running Team began its season the first week in September. Coached by Nisa Sommers and Rand Wise, this year's team has many talented runners, and BFA is looking forward to a promising season. Practices are held Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, and races are held on Friday afternoons and/or Saturday/Sunday mornings. This year's schedule consists of Georgia High School Association Region 7A, Division B races; Atlanta area 5K/10K road races; and several challenging trial-running races. Sunday, September 21, marked the team's first big race as our runners competed in the Atlanta Ekiden Team Relay. The Ekiden is an annual long distance road race in which team members run 3.4 miles.



Tennis

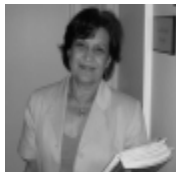
Returning for the fall season, our school's tennis team began practice on September 24 with Coaches Olga Inozemsteva and Jack Miller. Practices are held on Wednesday afternoons at the Dekalb Tennis Center from 3:30 to 5:00 P.M. The tennis team will compete in Georgia High School Association Region 7A in Division B tournaments. With an eager group of students, the team has an exciting season ahead!

Ultimate Disc

BFA is proud and excited to add a new sport, Ultimate Disc. The team, lead by Athletic Director Peter Birdsey, met in mid-September. The enthusiastic players will begin practice September 24 and is excited about upcoming competitions.

New Teachers

This year we welcome several new teachers in foreign language, music, and art. They are very gifted educators, and we are delighted to have them join our talented faculty.



Nidhal Asker, a native speaker of Arabic, holds a B.A. in Philosophy and Psychology from Beirut Arab Univeristy. Ms. Asker taught Arabic at the Ras Al Khaimah English Speaking School, The Cambridge School, and the Ibn Sina English High School in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. A teacher and the head of the Arabic Department for Ibn Sina High School for many years, Nidhal brings almost thirty years of teaching Arabic to our school.

Olga Navakhatko, originally from the Ukraine, was educated to teach Russian and French at the Rostov-na-Donu Pedagogical Institute. She has taught both languages to children and adults of all ages for many years and plans to excite more BFA students about studying those languages at our school.



Jena Sibille, joining BFA's Art Department this year, holds a B.A. in Fine Arts and a M.A. in Education (Visual Arts) from the University of Georgia. Jena is teaching drawing and painting courses and AP Art 2D. Jena is a teaching artist active in the Atlanta art community, providing workshops for the High Museum of Art and other organizations.

Marena Vittorio is a graduate student in Sacred Music at Emory University where she received her B.A. in Musical Arts and Anthropology from DePauw University School of Music. She interned with Tamara Albrecht in Chorus at BFA last spring. Marena is teaching voice at BFA this year.

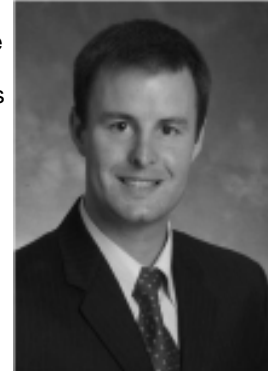


Richard Johnson

Upon graduating from Ben Franklin Academy in 1998, Richard attended Georgia State University, where he majored in Biology and minored in Chemistry. He realized that his passion was to work in medicine. During his undergraduate years, he worked at Grady Hospital as a duty clerk. The physicians and other professionals at Grady inspired him to attend Emory's Medical School.

Richard was accepted into his first choice of schools, Emory University's Medical School, in the fall of 2005. Currently in his fourth year at Emory, Richard is busily applying for residencies in internal medicine. Richards intends to follow his internal medicine residency with a fellowship in cardiology and hopes to practice interventional cardiology.

Richard is serving as the President of the Medical Student Senate this academic term and previously held the office of Vice-President. He has remained a true Atlantan and resides in the Emory area. In addition to his great success in his academic and professional life, he is engaged to marry Lauren Jones, who is completing a postgraduate degree in nursing at the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga. A spring/summer wedding is being planned for 2009.



Christina Hoff

Christina Hoff graduated from BFA just two years ago but has already built quite an impressive resume. As a rising junior at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, Christina has continued to expand her passion and talent for Theatre. For the past two years, she has studied acting at the Atlantic Theater Company through the Tisch School of the Arts, and will continue to study technical theatre as part of NYU's Technical Theatre Production Track.



Christina's proudest accomplishment is the establishment of the Fabrefaction Theatre Company, in Atlanta, Georgia, where she is the Artistic Director. Christina founded the Fabrefaction Theatre Company in 2007 to provide young Atlanta artists with professional performance opportunities. She said that Fabrefaction actually began while attending BFA. During her time at Ben Franklin, and as part of her work-study requirement, Christina directed two shows and has never stopped. With the encouragement and support from the Atlantic and Tisch faculty, Christina decided to create her own theatre. The theatre was named Fabrefaction and is now a registered 501(c)3 organization.

So far, Christina has directed 12 shows and has costumed even more. Upon graduation Christina wants to run Fabrefaction year round and maintain a Broadway or off-Broadway standard of production. Ultimately, she hopes that Fabrefaction will be in both New York and Atlanta, with the Atlanta location continuing to be "home base." She said, "Ben Franklin helped me to achieve my dreams. My hope with Fabrefaction is that the actors we work with, no matter the age or experience, will be able to walk away from our shows feeling proud and as though they can go out and achieve their dreams, too." More information about Fabrefaction can be found at www.fabrefaction.org.

Alumni News

Meghan Grist (1996) received her Master's Degree in Social Work from the University of New England in Portland, Maine, in June. She resides in Atlanta and is training to become a LPC (Licensed Professional Counselor) to work with teenagers in private practice.

David Grist (2000) graduated from Emory University in 2005 with a degree in African Studies. He received a fellowship to study at The School for Oriental and African Studies at the University of London. After graduation, he moved to Capetown, South Africa, and hosted a human rights talk show. He returned to Atlanta to work as an Americorps teacher for a refugee organization while awaiting his Peace Corps assignment. In July, 2008, David left to work with the Peace Corps in Matagalpa, Nicaragua.

Sam Candler (2004) received his B.A. from St. John's College in May, 2008.

Audrey Biggerstaff (2006) is beginning her junior year at The University of Southern California, where she is majoring in Communications with a minor in French. She is on the Executive Board of her sorority, Alpha Phi.

Chris Guest (2006) graduated from North Georgia College in May, 2007, with an Associate Degree in Criminal Justice. He is currently employed with Dekalb County Fire and Rescue.

Andrew Parker, a former BFA Clinic student, graduated in May, 2008, from The Medical School of The University of North Carolina. He is currently completing his residency at Duke University's School of Medicine.

Many students choose Ben Franklin Academy so that they can pursue their dreams to improve their skills in athletics, art, music, and drama, among other passions. They are able to use their training or internships to satisfy their work-study commitment. This fall we feature outstanding achievements by two such students who use their work-study commitment to develop their considerable athletic skills.

Alexa Marie Pitt

Alexa Marie Pitt, a star tennis player and sophomore at Ben Franklin, had a busy summer competing in 19 tennis matches. Winning 17 of those matches, Alexa proved herself on the courts yet again and maintained a 17-2 record. Highlighting Alexa's 2008 season was the Pepsi Junior Open Championship held in Charleston, South Carolina, May 16-20. The tournament was for 16-year-old girls in the Southern Region. Alexa won the tournament and the Championship title.



Savannah Bleakley

BFA student, Savannah Bleakley, and her horse, Scorched Sky, had quite an exciting summer as they trained and won more ribbons to add to their collection. Savannah, a junior at Ben Franklin Academy, has been riding since she was six years old. She has competed in multiple competitions and is ranked first in Georgia among Children's Hunter Riders. In addition, she is ranked first in the Southeast for USEF (United States Equestrian Federation, Inc.).

The start of the school year has not slowed down Savannah and Scorched Sky as they proved at the Rush Management Series at Chateau Elan on August 22-24. Despite a rigorous schedule, the duo came out on top! The



weekend began with a ticketed warm-up with her trainer on Friday. On Saturday, she showed in Children's Hunter Riders 15 to 17-



year-olds. She won first place in both Over Fences Rounds. She still had more to go as she continued to perform in her Under Saddle Class and won second. This particular round was judged only on the horse on the flat; it did not include any jumping. Later that same

day, she went on to compete in the Child/Adult Classic, which included children and adult riders. The Classic Competition is a double jumping round judged by a combined score of both rounds. Savannah scored an overall 159, earning her third place and a \$100.00 prize! Savannah's winning streak continued on through Sunday, when she competed in two Over Fences, winning first place in both. Savannah earned a score of 205 out of a possible 210 points and was named Champion in her division. Savannah has been invited to compete in the World Championship Hunter Rider Children's Finals Class on October 5th.

Ben Franklin Academy is pleased to recognize the following donors and appreciates the gifts and pledges received from June 1, 2007, to May 31, 2008. May 31, 2008, was the end of our 2007-2008 fiscal year. Unrestricted gifts have been directed for curricular and facilities enhancements, including technology upgrades.

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When Wood Smethurst co-founded BFA in 1987, he envisioned a community of learners where everyone could find his or her own path to academic success. He works hard to bring this vision to life, believing that every student who wants to learn can be taught at BFA. The Wood Smethurst Scholarship Fund has been established to pay tribute to Doc's continued leadership and to honor his legacy for generations to come.

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Philanthropy Workshop

This year we will be offering several workshops on philanthropy for our students. Our first workshop was on Tuesday, August 26, when Board of Overseers member Richard DuBose visited our school and spoke to students about the importance of volunteerism and philanthropy. Through an engaging workshop, he reminded our students that no one is too young to help others. Richard is the Vice President for Development and Seminary Relations at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, GA. Richard has been involved with the Ben Franklin Academy for over 14 years and continues to share his time and wisdom with our school. Students are still talking to their teachers about Richard's provocative presentation and are looking forward to the next presentation on how to help their community.



Richard DuBose, BFA Overseer.

Upcoming Events

- The Ben Franklin Academy Players will be performing in their first play of the year *Last Tuesday* on **October 21st and 22nd** at 7:30 P.M. The play will be hosted at BFA in the Carriage House. If you would like to attend, please call the school office between October 13 and October 21 to make reservations. Seating is limited.
- Our annual Parent/Grandparent Night will be on **October 27th** at the Emory Conference Center in the Silverbell Pavilion at 6:30 P.M. We will display student artwork, and the music teachers and their students will perform. There will be refreshments and opportunities to meet with teachers.
- BFA's doors will be open on **December 7th** from 2 P.M. – 4 P.M. for Open House. We will hold another Open House on **February 1st**. The program will begin with refreshments in the Junior House, followed by an informal meeting in the Carriage House. Visitors interested in the school will have the opportunity to visit classrooms and meet teachers and administrators.
- Study Skills workshops will also be offered during the Spring Semester. Study Skills will take place from 4 P.M. – 5 P.M. on **February 3, 4, 10, 11** at the school.

SAT/ACT Prep workshops will be offered from 4 P.M. – 5 P.M. on **February 24, 25, March 3, 4**. For registration information, please contact the school office.

The Ben Franklin Academy admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school.