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**Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Teams Earn  
First and Third Places at Maryland Science Bowl Competition**

**Silver Spring, MD**—Two teams of Montgomery Blair High School Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program students earned first and third places at the 2014 Maryland High School Science Bowl Competition last month, which was held at Montgomery College’s Rockville campus. The first-place team members are Eric Lu, Bendeguz Offertaler, Michael Winer, and Victor Xu of Rockville and Arnold Mong of Potomac. Members of the third-place team include Alexander Bourzutschky, Matthew Das Sarma, Avikar Periwal and Catherine Xue of Potomac and Alan Du of Gaithersburg. A third Blair Magnet team of all freshmen also participated in this competition and lost only one of its games (to the third-place Blair team), with team members Alex Miao of Potomac; David Miller of Bethesda; Pratik Rathore of Rockville; Lara Shonkwiler of Takoma Park; and James Vinson of Kensington.

The U.S. Department of Energy sponsors the National Science Bowl and state Science Bowls to encourage high school students to excel in science and math and to pursue careers in those fields. These academic competitions involve more than 14,000 students nationwide and test students’ knowledge in all areas of science and mathematics. This year 47 teams representing 25 Maryland high schools participated in the Maryland Science Bowl, the largest number in the last eight years.

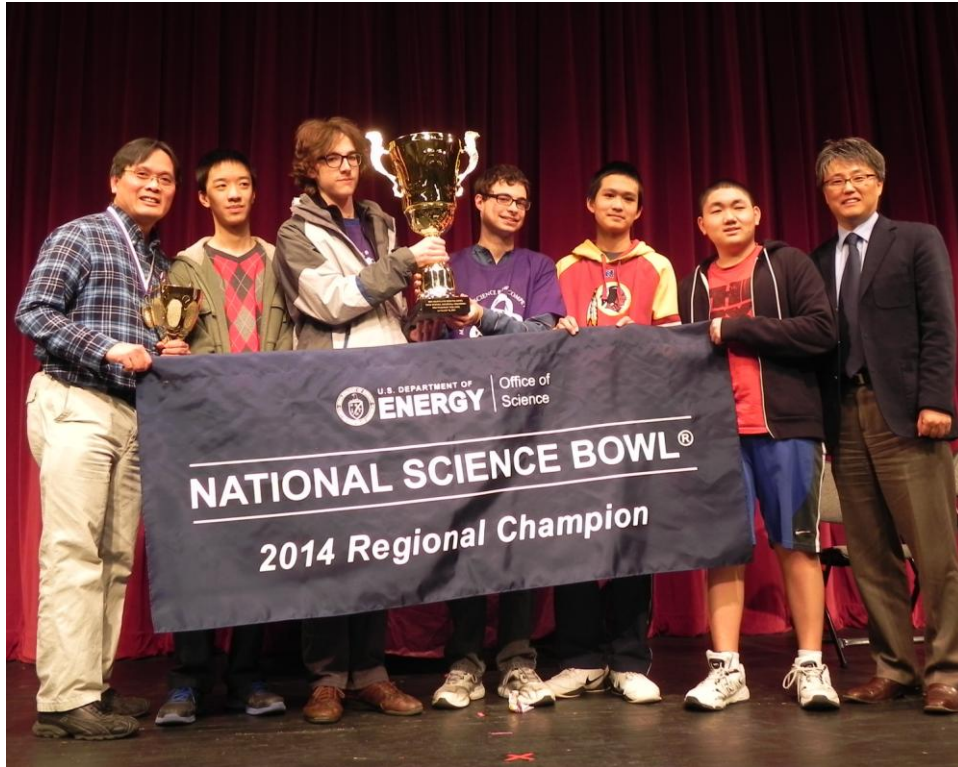
Montgomery Blair’s first-place team will receive an all-expense-paid trip to represent Maryland at the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual National Science Bowl competition, which will be held in Washington, D.C. on April 24-28. The team will compete there with more than 100 teams from across the country for the national title. Since the inception of the contest in 1991, Blair’s team has ranked in the top five teams multiple times and even won first place nationally in 1999 and second place as recently as in 2011. Blair Magnet math and science teacher Mr. Tran Pham has served as the team’s longtime coach.

First-place team member Victor Xu comments on the team’s win, “Science Bowl was fun, and doing well requires self-study skills that the Blair Magnet (especially our team sponsor Mr. Pham) encourages students to

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develop. While everyone on my team contributed to the win at Science Bowl, our team captain Michael Winer deserves special recognition for his excellent performance.”

Third-place team member Avikar Periwal also recognizes the Blair Magnet, “Science Bowl is basically a science and math trivia competition, where speed of recall and depth of knowledge are very important. I think being able to field three competitive teams each year goes to show how many great kids there are and how much we learn at the Blair Magnet.”



Maryland Science Bowl first-place team (from left): Team sponsor Mr. Tran Pham, Victor Xu, Bendeguz Offertaler, Michael Winer, Eric Lu, and Arnold Mong with a competition official. (Photo courtesy of Mr. Pham)

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Blair Magnet competitors at the 2014 Maryland Science Bowl, from left: (first row) Eric Lu, Arnold Mong, Catherine Xue, Alex Miao, Pratik Rathore, and Bendeguz Offertaler; (second row) James Vinson, Alexander Bourzutschky, Michael Winer, Victor Xu, Avikar Periwal, and Matthew Das Sarma; (not pictured) Alan Du, David Miller, and Lara Shonkwiler. (Photo courtesy of Jessica de Mouy)

### **About The Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Foundation**

This organization was founded by a group of concerned students, teachers, administrators, and alumni in 2008. Its purpose is to promote science, mathematics, and computer science education by supporting the Magnet Program at Montgomery Blair High School in its efforts to develop resources and refine practices needed to provide a rigorous and enriched

Keeping a Special Program Special  
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education for students, staff, and the community at large. The Foundation is incorporated in the state of Maryland and is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

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