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**Four Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Students Place First in State
Convention of Maryland Junior Classical League**

Silver Spring, MD—Two pairs of Montgomery Blair High School Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program students each placed first at the annual State Convention of the Maryland Junior Classical League (MJCL) in Easton, MD. Seniors Shira Gorin of Olney and Andrew Simler of Takoma Park earned first place in (Advanced) Latin Level 4. Juniors Kevin Ho and William Lu, both of Bethesda, captured first place in (Intermediate) Latin Level 3. The MJCL was created for Maryland middle and high school students and teachers interested in the classics—Greek, Latin, Rome, mythology, etc.

For the MJCL, during the school year students participate in periodic quiz bowl-type competitions, calls Certamen, with the final one held at the state convention. The questions are wide-ranging and pertain to Latin and all things classical. Three years ago, the first year that Blair participated in the MJCL, the same pair of Gorin and Simler also earned first place. In addition, at this year’s state convention, their classmate Ho was elected as president of the MJCL for next year. Blair Latin teacher Mr. Robert Johnson, III serves as their team sponsor.

Gorin expresses her gratitude and graciously acknowledges the contributions of Mr. Johnson and Blair Latin Club members before her, “Latin has been a huge part of my life the last few years, and I don’t really know where to start or how to sum up how much Blair and the MDJCL have done for me. There I found teammates who respect me and whom I respect. I’m proud of our school’s Latin teams, and with good reason. Finally, I am indebted to Mr. Johnson and last year’s seniors who pioneered the Latin Club—Peter Adler Asch, Adam Kadir, and Ian Teixeira [of Silver Spring]; Vincent Ly [of Rockville]; Sean Maguire [of Potomac]; and Jinhie Skarda [of Kensington].”

Simler comments on the competition and thanks Mr. Johnson, “State Convention is a great chance to have a friendly academic contest with students from other schools on a topic of shared interest. I’m very grateful to Mr. Johnson for the support and encouragement he’s provided over our three years of competition.”

Ho shares his enthusiasm, “I guess the most special thing about winning this year is the fact that we had two person teams, when most schools had four-

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person teams. Also, William Lu is not a Latin student but is definitely a history expert. This Blair team has not given up first place for two years, and we definitely won't let go of it easily next year!"

Mr. Johnson praises the teams, "Shira Gorin and Andy Simler have been instrumental in establishing new milestones for the Blair Latin program, starting a winning tradition with our Latin Certamen Teams three years ago when we first competed. Furthermore, Kevin Ho and William Lu won every event on the Certamen circuit this year except for one."



Two teams of two Blair Magnet students each earned first place in their respective level of Latin competition at the State Convention of the Maryland Junior Classical League. Latin Level 3 winners are (from left) Kevin Ho and William Lu. Latin Level 4 victors are (third and fourth from left, respectively) Andrew Simler and Shira Gorin. (Photo courtesy of Ms. Nina Uzick)

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Blair Magnet seniors (from left) Andrew Simler and Shira Gorin compete in the final round. Upon entering this round, only five points separated the teams, which consisted almost entirely of seniors who had been in close competition with each other for the last three years. (Photo courtesy of Ms. Nina Uzick)

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Blair Magnet juniors (from left) Kevin Ho and William Lu proudly display their first place certificate and trophy. (Photo courtesy of Ms. Nina Uzick)

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 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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