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**Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Students Excel in
Regional and National Competitions**

Silver Spring, MD—Students of the Montgomery Blair High School Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program distinguished themselves in a number of national competitions this spring.

International Biology Olympiad—Jonathan Gootenberg of Rockville will represent the United States as a member of the four-person national team at the International Biology Olympiad in Tsukuba, Japan on July 12-19. Several Blair Magnet students qualified for the semifinal round of testing (top 500 nationally) in the spring under the supervision of Angeliqe Bosse. Gootenberg qualified for the Olympic training camp (top 20 nationally), held at George Mason University in June, when his performance won him a spot on the four-person United States team. Gootenberg is a veteran of this event, having represented the United States at last year's International Biology Olympiad in Mumbai, India, where he and his teammates earned gold medals.

USA Invitational Computing Olympiad—The Central European Olympiad in Informatics will be held in Târgu-Mureș, Romania on July 8-14. Michael Cohen of Chevy Chase will represent the United States at this competition as a member of the four-student national team. Cohen earned this honor through his performance at the USA Invitational Computing Olympiad, which was held at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside on May 27-June 4. Invitation to the latter competition was extended to the top sixteen scorers on a series of six exams during the school year. Cohen scored third nationally on the final of these six exams. Karen Collins serves as the team sponsor.

Teragrid Conference—Andrew Das Sarma of Potomac, Anand Oza of North Potomac, and Rohan Puttagunta of Gaithersburg competed against eight other teams in a parallel computing contest hosted by the Teragrid '09 Conference on June 22-25 in Arlington, VA. Each team

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had nine hours to solve eight problems ranging from the benchmarking of scientific software packages to the design and implementation of models using NetLogo to the design and coding of parallel algorithms to solve complex problems. Unlike most competitions, Teragrid is not restricted to a particular age group or institutional affiliation.

Therefore, the teams of up to five students each were composed of students representing levels from high school to graduate school. The Blair Magnet team was the youngest and fewest in number, yet they out-scored all other teams except a team of graduate students from Carnegie Mellon University and a team of undergraduates from Earlham College. Susan Ragan serves as the coach of this team.

Scholars—Sahar Shahamatdar of Rockville was named a Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholar on June 18. On May 28, Christopher Bodine of Chevy Chase was named a Northrop Grumman Engineering Scholar.

American Regions Mathematics League—At the American Regions Mathematics League competition in State College, PA, on May 30, the Montgomery County A team, coached by Eric Walstein, finished in fifth place in the nation and only a single point behind the third-place team. Over one hundred teams from around the country met at one of four regional sites and competed in events that tested both individual skill and effective teamwork in this national math competition. None of the questions required calculus but emphasized use of basic concepts in unconventional and creative ways. For months before the actual contest, Mr. Walstein and Dr. Brian Hunt, a mathematics professor at the University of Maryland, College Park, organized weekly team practices. These meetings provided students with the opportunity to meet other students from different grades and schools, to tackle problems that lie outside the curriculum, and to cultivate a common love for mathematics. The Blair Magnet members on the fifteen-member team were Eric An and Anand Oza of North Potomac, Charles Argue, Mario Choi, and Daniel Stiles of Silver Spring, Edward Gan and Rohan Puttagunta of Gaithersburg, Akimitsu Hogge and Jacob Hurwitz of Rockville, Devin Zhang of Potomac, and Tommy Zhang of Sandy Spring. Rounding out the team were Richard Montgomery's Geoffrey Ji of Gaithersburg, Eleanor Roosevelt's Holden Lee of College Park, and Thomas Wooten's Qinxuan Pan of North Potomac and Suyan She of Gaithersburg.

United States Physics Olympiad—Edward Gan of Gaithersburg earned a seat at the United States Physics Olympiad Training Camp held at the University of Maryland, College Park, on May 16-27. His invitation was based on his scores on a preliminary exam, quarterfinal exam, and semifinal exam administered in spring under the supervision of James Schafer. Approximately 2,000 students nationwide took the

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preliminary test, and only 20 were invited to the training camp. Unfortunately, due to scheduling conflicts, Gan was unable to accept the invitation. Over a dozen Blair Magnet students qualified for the quarterfinal round, and five qualified for the semifinal round with Gan.

American Computer Science League—Blair's team of Purnima Balakrishnan, Jacob Hurwitz, and Sang Tian of Rockville, Mario Choi of Silver Spring, and Chiranjith Das of Gaithersburg won first place with a score of 117 out of 120, 21 points over the second-place team, at the American Computer Science League All-Star Competition. This international computer science contest for middle and high school students culminated on May 24 in Huntsville, Alabama. The team received a perfect score on the programming section of the competition, and Choi and Das earned perfect scores on the short answer test. In the Intermediate Division, David and Lori Kaufman of Bethesda, Frederic Koehler and Benjamin Lowenstein of Silver Spring, and Andrew Lu of Rockville took third place. Both teams qualified for the special "All-Star" contest through their participation in four contests at school during the year. Four Blair students received recognition for earning a perfect score on all four of these contests. Both teams were coached by Mary Ann Dvorsky and Tran Pham.

It's Academic—On May 16, students Jeremy Fallick of Bethesda, Elizabeth So of Gaithersburg, and Yichen Wang of Germantown earned First Place in the *It's Academic* Regional Final under the direction of their coach, James Schafer.

About The Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Foundation

The American Computer Science League, American Regions Mathematics League, and USA Physics Olympiad competition teams from Blair received funding from 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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