

Blackrock College Newsletter



Special points of interest:

- Addiction Awareness Day
- Pastoral Care Programme
- Commerce & Economics Society
- Halls of Residence
- Careers and Counselling
- Leman XXVI

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February 2012

Dear Parents

The Lenten season is upon us, a time for spiritual renewal and refreshment. Are these just words or is there a felt need, a hunger? If our need is real, how might it be satisfied? Do we retire into an isolated place and seek a merely private fulfilment? Or has our Church still got something real to offer? Maybe we can use this Lent to look again at our Church and to reassess our relationship with it.

The International Eucharistic Congress (www.iec2012.ie) may be a place to foster our spiritual renewal and refreshment. Can Eucharist make an impact, bring refreshment to my life, to my family? The theme of the Congress is worth thinking about: "The Eucharist: Communion with Christ and with One Another."

Christ's call has always been an invitation. Maybe today we are freer than ever to consider that invitation and make our personal response in the full realisation that we are part of a flawed Church. Maybe now is the time to remember what is wonderful about the Catholic Church – how it has introduced us to Christ and urged us to care for each other and build real community.

The conventional wisdom that abounds in Ireland today is that God should have no place in the public arena; faith expression and practice of faith should be confined to churches and the privacy of our homes. God forbid. Society has never been in greater need of the moral and social ideals of faithful men and women.

Encourage your son to consider a Lenten commitment be it to a family member or neighbour who would welcome a visit or to a task in the home that would share the burden of household chores. Maybe it could be to a relationship in school, to reach out to someone in his year group; ask him how he can add value to someone else's life? Sometimes a gentle reminder is needed but I have no doubt that he is open to being nudged in the right direction. Remind him of the importance of prayer and that we pray, not that He may hear us but that we may hear Him. Prayer helps us to see Him in the people we meet, in the challenges we face. If we manage this, we can help shape our culture and strengthen our community.

During Catholic Schools' Week the reverence of the boys at the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the College Chapel was heart-warming. The silence was deafening, powerful. Faith in Action. Community strengthened.

There has been much evidence this term of community in action - the Leman Concert, Whole School Assembly, Bullying Awareness Day, Career Talks, Mock Interviews and Blizzard Debate, Human Rights Week, Transition Year Mass and Parents' Social, Pastoral Placements, as well as the extensive range of sporting and academic activity.

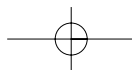
The defeat of the S.C.T. by Terenure was a disappointment for Killian O'Leary (6th Year), his Squad, their parents, coaches and the school community. But Friday, 3rd February was in many ways a great Blackrock day. The team was fully committed. The cheerleaders and the support in the Stand was the best I have seen for many years. The reception for the boys on their return to the College was marvellous. Each squad member spoke eloquently with dignity and with heartfelt appreciation for the experience they had shared with one another. A test of any community is how it responds to setback. Our boys passed with flying colours. Faith, tough-mindedness, commitment, it is here in abundance. Score lines do not change that. Eucharist invites us to recognise the deeper richness in all this – the presence of Christ in our successes and defeats.

Finally, on your behalf, I thank the Spiritan Community and my colleagues in education, administration, household, grounds and maintenance for providing the lead in difficult times.

Yours sincerely

ALAN MacGINTY
Principal





Second Year



Application Cards

Our Second Year boys continue to make good progress in the College. The weekly Application Cards are a good barometer of this, with half of the boys in the year group achieving the Principal's List on a regular basis. The Principal's List acknowledges those students whose card records seven or more top marks for that week. The list reinforces good practice amongst the boys and is a valuable opportunity for parents to praise their son's work rate. It also contributes to the possibility of nomination for an Honours Award at our Annual Prize Giving Ceremony in May.

House Competitions

The House Competitions continued with both the Chess and the Table Tennis finally coming to a conclusion! The House Captains are considering a Tennis Competition for after the mid-term break but are hesitant after the House Art Competition ended in a dead heat. Congratulations to Declan O'Sullivan and Brendan Kennan whose project on *The Betrayal of Irish Soccer* gained entry to the BT Young Scientist Competition. Second Year boys all benefited from having the opportunity to attend the exhibition at the RDS.

Leman Concert

The Leman Concert was a huge success, with one of the most memorable displays of classical talent. Well done to the Second

Year boys in the Boarders Choir, the Leman Choir and the College Orchestra who contributed to such a wonderful event.

Activities

This half term we commemorated the Feast of the Venerable Francis Libermann, Co-founder of the Holy Ghost Congregation, with Mass for this year group celebrated by Fr Tom McDonald CSSp. This contributed to our reflections for Catholic Schools Week. The College had a Human Rights Awareness Week as well, with Second Year boys having a talk from Trocaire on its work to promote human rights in the Developing World, prompted by the values of the Gospel. And finally as part of our Bullying Awareness Day, Second Year boys enjoyed a drama production by two actors, who played out a variety of confrontational situations, provoking some rethinking of behaviour and attitudes.

Parents' Seminars

Just a reminder that there are two dates in the College Calendar for seminars for Second Year parents. On Wednesday 29th February, Owen Connolly will give a talk for FATHERS ONLY, entitled *On the Shoulders of Giants*. Then on 7th March Caroline Murphy will give a talk for all parents entitled *Did You Not Hear What I Said?* Each will take place in the College Lecture Hall, beginning at 7.30 pm.

Third Year



On our return after Christmas the boys attended their annual Day of Reflection. The format of two Houses a day attending thereby giving responsibility to the House Representatives of checking-in the boys and giving feedback on their return worked very well. This feedback was universally very positive and extremely appreciative of the facilitator Mr Gerry Keegan and Mr. Myles Ryan for organising the opportunity. Other comments included "it was very kind of Jerry to dedicate his time to really teach us a valuable lesson on addiction to drugs and alcohol"; "I found the stories about his own life particularly enlightening"; "it had a great spiritual meaning that we will all take forward in our lives"; "We felt Gerry was able to connect with us through his previous experiences and through the mediums of music and song".

There are a great number of boys benefiting from the extra curricular programme, it was good to see seven third year boys in the Orchestra for the Leman Concert, namely Austin Dodd, Greg Crowley, Richard Grainger, Antoine Murphy, Ross O'Mahony, Neil Quinlan & Andrew M Ryan. The Water Polo Team won the Junior Cup and was captained by Ben Lawlor, other Third Years on the team were Seamus Duff, Stephen O'Hurley, Matthew Sheedy & Andrew R Ryan. Cillian Bourke was a member of the winning East Leinster Cross Country Team. In Rugby the J2, J3, J4 & J5 have all started their League campaigns & the JCT are looking forward to their clash with Belvedere as we go to print. Tennis Players should be getting out on the courts after mid-term, queries to Ms. Dillon. Parents concerned about their son's lack of involvement should contact the Dean.

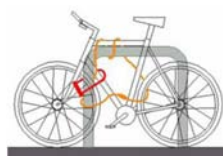
There was a good turnout of parents recently for the talk by Dr. Mary Sugrue & Gerard Kelly from Cross Care dealing with

alcohol & drug abuse. We all came away mindful of the need for great vigilance as we help navigate our children through the next few years, our own example being paramount. Gerard Kelly will meet each class group after mid-term, we are confident that he will be able to connect with the boys in a meaningful way.

The State Examination Commission has set March 31st as the last day for notification of Subjects & Levels for Junior Certificate. To facilitate the processing of this each boy will be asked to get his parents to sign a form that will have his teachers' recommendations on the appropriate level, this will then need to be returned to the Dean early in March.

Before the end of February a pre printed Giro form for payment of the Junior certificate fee of €109 will be taken home by each boy. When payment is made please have your son return the form to the Dean.

If your Son cycles to School please insist that he wears a helmet, otherwise we would ask that he leaves his bicycle at home, likewise if he has NO LOCK as quite a number of bicycles have been stolen recently. The Quality of the lock is something that might be worth looking at too, as some have been cut, it would appear with ease.



Progress Cards due home on Monday evening February 20th



Transition Year

TRIP TO YOUNG SCIENTIST COMPETITION

On Thursday, January 13th all the Transition Year students visited the Young Scientist Exhibition in the R.D.S.As in the past, the boys thoroughly enjoyed the experience of visiting this extraordinary showcase of scientific and creative achievement.

LEMAN CONCERT

Once again, the Leman Concert was a resounding success. Transition Year was well represented in the choir, orchestra and several of the bands. Well done to everyone involved.

TRANSITION YEAR LECTURE SERIES

There have been four lectures so far this term. On 7th and 31st January respectively, Lisa O'Shea from GOAL and Anne Cleary from Aidlink spoke to the boys about the very important work done by both organisations in The Developing World. It is hoped that their lectures will motivate the students to work really hard on the forthcoming St Patrick's Day badge project. On 23rd January, Eamon Kelly spoke to the boys about motivation and self-belief. In the fourth lecture, on February 7th, John Wills spoke to the students about the very important work of the children's charity Barnardos. The lecture series will continue after mid-term.

FAMILY MASS

The Transition Year Family Mass on 29th January was very well attended. The timing of the mass coincided with the beginning of Catholic Schools' Week. I would like to make special mention of Mr Myles Ryan who put a great deal of time and effort into preparing the boys who participated extensively in the liturgy.

TRANSITION YEAR PARENTS' SOCIAL

The Transition Year Parents' Dinner on 3rd February was a most enjoyable occasion. It is the only Parents' Dinner which is held in the College and thus holds a very special place in people's hearts. The dining area was beautifully decorated and there was a great atmosphere in the dining room. A raffle for a fantastic selection of prizes resulted in over €1,000 being raised for the 6th Year Kenya project. Congratulations are due to The Transition Year Parents' Committee who put so much work into organising a truly great night out. Many thanks also to the catering staff who produced a magnificent meal.

WILLOW PARK SHOW

In the past month, a dedicated group of Transition Year students have put their hearts and souls into set and costume design for the Willow Park show *Aladdin* which was staged from 7th - 9th February. Gavin Beale, Kieran Brennan, Jeff Burke, Niall Byrne, George Brassil, Will Doherty, Conor Farrell, Oisín Flynn, James Grogan, Cian O'Dwyer and Johnny O'Leary devoted countless hours to designing, building and painting a most artistic set. They also helped out as stage hands during the production.

The costume design team of Dan Thomas and Michael Feely produced breathtakingly original, imaginative and beautiful costumes. Well done to all involved. It is wonderful to see such creativity in the year group. Many thanks to Ms Valerie Coyle and Mary Rose (Willow Park) for their support and encouragement of the boys.

GUYS AND DOLLS

A group of twenty of our TY students were involved in a production of *Guys and Dolls* with the girls from Transition Year in Jesus and Mary College (formerly Our Lady's Grove) from 6th - 8th February. Kieran Brennan, Jack Brophy, Adam Donnelly, Dane

Fitzpatrick, Luke Fitzpatrick, Eoin Galligan, Charlie Gleeson, Jack Hanrahan, Evan Holland, Oliver Kilmartin, Ian Kinsley, Sebastian McKimm, Jonathan Ng, Conor Nolan, Ross O'Leary, Oisín O'Reilly, David Roper-Nolan and Geoffrey Wheeler all performed brilliantly and repaid all the hours of hard work and rehearsals which preceded the show. Performed in the school hall, the show was a resounding success with Evan Holland, Jack Hanrahan, David Roper-Nolan and Jack Brophy singing out of their skins!

Many thanks to Daniel Campion (Show Coordinator) and Susan Connolly (Transition Year Coordinator) from Jesus and Mary College, for inviting our students to be a part of this most enjoyable collaboration.

GREENWATCH

Under the guidance of their teacher Mr James Campbell, 41 Geography class has just published the latest edition of *Greenwatch*. This is the nineteenth edition of this very important College environmental magazine. Edited by Conn McCarrick, the magazine reflects the passion and enthusiasm of all the students involved in the project. The magazine retails at €3.00.

DRAGONS' DEN

The boys are currently organising their business plans and ideas for the forthcoming *Dragons' Den* competition. Mr Cathal Copeland and Mr Frank O'Sullivan organised a special workshop for the boys on 19th January. The closing date for the submission of business plans for the competition is Monday 20th February at 3.45 p.m. (first day back after mid-term). There is a great sense of anticipation amongst the boys about *Dragons' Den* and I hope that the current Transition Year group will embrace the project and truly develop an entrepreneurial spirit. Special thanks to Mr Copeland and Mr O'Sullivan for their enthusiastic support of this very important business initiative.

GOAL/AIDLINK ST.PATRICK'S DAY BADGE PROJECT

The largest school fundraiser in the country has just got underway. Last year, the project raised a considerable amount of money for the Developing World. This year, approximately 170 students are involved. They will visit national schools and secondary schools, approach businesses for support and distribute over 280,000 badges nationwide. We hope to have an official launch of the badge early in March and look forward to this year's Transition Year students running a really successful campaign.

TRIP TO CHINA

The China trip offered to Transition Year students will take place from April 9th to 17th inclusive.

The trip is limited to 30 students. The expected cost is approximately €1350. Letters outlining relevant information about the trip have been distributed to all students studying Chinese this year.





Fifth Year



Careers

Ms Gallagher of the Career Department and Justin Lennon of the Past Pupils union organised career seminars over two Saturdays in January. Over 160 students availed of this fantastic opportunity to hear speakers share their experiences and insights into the worlds of Information Technology, Law, Engineering, Medicine, Accounting, Marketing, Media, and Entrepreneurship.

Fifth Year students have been asked to submit a career portfolio to Mr. O'Nuallain before mid-term. This is seen as a most valuable exercise in planning and goal setting as the Easter exams draw nearer.

Bullying Awareness Day

Fifth Years attended a play in the Jubilee Hall, organised by Ms Gallagher, as part of Bullying Awareness Day. The performance by Blue Rose Theatre explored the complex nature of bullying in schools today and the impact it can have on young people's lives. Students were urged to be inclusive, understand how others feel, stop their friends from bullying and to treat others as they would like to be treated.

Human Rights Week

Human Rights Week took place from 23 Jan – 27 Jan. The week of events reminded us of our duty to respect the dignity and worth of every person in society. Highlights included a lecture by Senator Maurice Hayes on 'Conflict and Reconciliation' to the 5th and 6th Years; a debate, and a lunchtime Concert on Friday; Many thanks to Ms Harlowe and her colleagues in the History Department for helping to make the week a success.

Extra Curricular

On Sunday 22 Jan, the talents of over fifty students from this year group shone brightly at the Leman Concert in the National Concert Hall. The diverse range of musical talent and ability among the fifth years is astonishing, from solo performances such as Mark Twomey's guitar solo, to the lively entertainment in part two by bands including "Loitering with Intent" and "Agile Beasts". I thank all the choir members, musicians and stage hands for their contribution.

The involvement of fifth year students in College life extends to the sports field. Oliver Jager, Gavin Tynan, Dermot O'Flynn, Raef Tyrell, David Murphy and Sean Coughlan were part of the SCT squad that lost narrowly to Terenure in the cup. We commiserate with them. The behaviour of the year group in the run up to the match, and at the game was exemplary. Well Done Fifth Years!

The House Teams have had a number of wins in the current term, with successes against Sligo Grammar School, Clongowes Wood, Wallace and Roscrea. The House Teams are heading into their leagues at present and we wish them well.

The soccer team are training hard in preparation for the Millennium Cup that will be up and running after the midterm break. The introduction of 4th years to the panel has been a great asset to the team and they hope to do well under the watchful eye of Mr. O'Nuallain.

Blackrock College rowers have been very fortunate to be able to train uninterrupted and the result of this training was seen in the clubs performance at the recently held St Michael's Head of the river race at O'Brien's Bridge Limerick. This event saw a record entry of over 600 boats racing and Blackrock College made up 4 of these boats with two eights and two fours taking part. Some rowers raced only once over the 3200m course while other rowers raced twice in different combinations. Rowing is going from strength to strength in the College and preparations for the next race of the year in

Belfast are well underway and Blackrock hope to have a full complement of rowers who were unable to race in Limerick. We wish them all the best.

The Senior Golf Team has had a very busy start to 2012. On the 12th of January they played a play-off with St. Gerard's in the Leinster Fourball competition. They prevailed with a narrow victory to qualify for the Last 16 on the back of a great performance by Daniel O'Byrne who played very consistently throughout the round. A week later the team found themselves in a cold windy Naas Golf Club to play in the Leinster 5 Man Matchplay Semi-Final. Despite a fantastic display from Alex Campbell the boys couldn't beat an impressive Malahide side who boasted 2 Irish Under 18 Internationals. The Rock team put up a great challenge before eventually falling to a 3-1 defeat. 5th Year was well represented with 4 of the 5 players: Dylan O'Reilly, Daniel O'Byrne, Alex Campbell and Ray Crotty.

In basketball, the senior squad was defeated by St Vincent's of Glasnevin in the Semi-Final of the All-Ireland Schools Cup at the Tallaght Leisure Centre. The boys showed great determination and focus throughout the game. It was only during the final quarter that St Vincent's managed to widen the points difference enough to ensure their victory. Fifth year players include David Lynch, Dylan Murphy, David Somers, David Twomey and Ali and Youssef Al Mukhaizeem.

Andrew Cullen and Vinog Leavy took part in the East Leinster Cross-country Championships in Avondale, Co Wicklow. The Senior, Inter-and Junior Squads won their respective team events and have qualified for the Leinster Championships which will be held in Santry on February 8.

In the Young Scientist Exhibition, Mark Twomey and Andrew Hanley (both 5th Year), had an excellent project on "INVESTIGATING THE INFLUENCE ON PEOPLE'S CHOICES WHEN VOTING". This was Mark and Andrew's second time to qualify for the Young Scientist.

Spirasi Fast

A number of fifth year students signed up to participate in a day long fast, held on 9th and 10th Feb. This event is organised by the House Representatives and is in aid of SPIRASI, The Spiritan Asylum Services Initiative. SPIRASI is a humanitarian, intercultural, non-governmental organisation that works with asylum seekers, refugees and other disadvantaged migrant groups, with special concern for survivors of torture. In partnership with others, SPIRASI enables access to specialist services to promote the well-being of the human person, and encourages self-reliance and integration into Ireland.



On Sunday 11 March the **5th Year Family** Mass will be celebrated in the College Chapel at 11.00 am. It is hoped that as many parents and sons as possible will be in attendance where the proceeds of fast will be presented to the representatives from SPIRASI.

The following took place for Catholic School's week.

Thurs - Feast of Francis Libermann. Mass was celebrated for the year group, during RE period.

Fri - Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. This took place between 9am and 11.45am, when students were allowed go to the chapel for some silent prayer.



Sixth Year



Parent-Teacher Meeting

There was a very large attendance at the 6th Year Parent-Teacher Meeting on Thursday January 12th. All present felt it was most beneficial to have this meeting immediately on our return to school when feedback from Christmas examinations could be shared and plans of work for terms 2 and 3 could be outlined. The feedback from this evening was extremely positive.

Career Interviews

79 sixth year students availed of the Career Mock interviews opportunity organised by the Careers Department in association with the Past Pupils Union on Wednesday 25th January. Formal interviews by experienced professionals took place across 16 different careers, from Defence Forces to Politics, Hotel Management to Medicine, and Actuary to Physiotherapy. Many thanks in particular to Mrs. Lucy Gallagher and Justin Lennon (Class of 1987) for their organisation of the evening.

Leman Concert

The 26th Leman festival Concert was held on Sunday January 22nd in the National Concert Hall. 54 of the Class of 2012 were involved in this wonderful celebration of musical talent in the College. The standard of performance on the night was outstanding and congratulations to all involved. In particular, it is worth noting the contribution of MCs Ciaran Fenner and John Godfrey; Stage Manager Conor Deegan; Soloists Billy Griffin, Cillian Copeland, Peter Ryan and Joe O'Sullivan; Leader of the Orchestra, Daniel Bickers; Rockapella and the 6th Year Bands.

Lectures

On January 24th, the 6th Year students attended a lecture by Senator Maurice Hayes on 'Conflict and Reconciliation' in Northern Ireland. This talk which formed part of Human Rights Week in the College provided plenty of food for thought. Many thanks to Ms Harlowe and the History Department for their organisation of this event.

The 6th Year Committee of the Commerce and Economics Society organised a lecture by Bobby Kerr, CEO of Insomnia on the theme of 'Winning in the Tough Times' for Leaving Certificate Business and Economics students on February 6th. We wish the Committee of Robert Burke, Daniel Curran, Charlie O'Donoghue, David Lunn, Jack Devine and Will Gallagher well for the rest of the academic year.

On February 9th, the 6th Year Parents Committee organised a talk for parents by Judge Catherine Murphy on the topic of "Social Responsibility – Young People and the Law". This most informative talk, which was of huge benefit and importance to our students, will be given to the Class of 2012 after mid-term.

Extra Curricular Programme

A very high level of sixth year participation in College activities has been seen in a wide variety of disciplines this half-term...

Firstly we commiserate with Killian O'Leary and the rest of the SCT squad who were narrowly beaten 15-17 by Terenure College in Donnybrook on Friday 3rd February. All can be proud of their performance and they fought with great courage right up to the final whistle. We commend Killian, Gavin Thornbury and Jack O'Carroll for the outstanding manner in which they undertook their SCT leadership roles this season.

We thank also the Cheerleading Team under the leadership of Robert Walsh, Jack Dempsey and Joseph Scott-Lennon for the excellent Whole School Assembly on January 26th and their unstinting support of the SCT both in Donnybrook and in the Jubilee Hall afterwards. We wish the cheerleaders well for the JCT campaign and as the rugby season continues after mid-term we also wish success to the four Castle Rugby teams competing in Leinster Branch Rugby Leagues.

Unfortunately the Senior Soccer Team under the captaincy of Mark Stephens was defeated by Clonkeen College in the semi-final of the League. Despite two goals by Harry Crowe we fell just short at the final whistle in what was a most skilful and exciting five goal encounter. We wish the squad well for the game with St. Bede's of Manchester on March 10th.

Despite losing to St. Vincent's of Glasnevin in the semi-final, our Senior Basketball Team returned from the National Basketball Arena on January 10th with bronze All-Ireland Schools Cup medals. Congratulations to Denis Kelleher, Sean Roper-Nolan, Caolán Brady and David Woods on this achievement.

Our Senior Cross-Country team, under the captaincy of Ronan Walsh were crowned East-Leinster Champions at Avondale in Wicklow on January 26th. Gavin Murray, Eoin Hinkson and Conor Vaughan were other 6th Year members of the squad. We wish them well in the Leinster Championships.

Our Maths team of Robert Cronin, Mark Hall, Joe O'Sullivan and Jamie Murphy finished 3rd out of 32 teams in the Annual School Maths Quiz organised by the Dublin Branch of the IMTA. Many thanks to Mr. Costello for facilitating this opportunity.

Pastoral

As part of Catholic Schools Week and on the Feast of Francis Libermann on February 2nd, Fr. O'Brolchain celebrated the Eucharist with the Sixth Year students. In his homily, he linked the theme of the Whole School Assembly to the life of Francis Libermann in urging the students to 'Never, Never Give up' no matter what challenges they face in life.

The Parents' Committee and House Representatives work on behalf of the Class of 2012 is ongoing with sub-committees planning all aspects of both the Graduation in May and the Summer Project in Kenya next July. We wish them continued success with their planning.



Addiction Awareness Day

Addiction Awareness Day will take place in the College on Thursday February 23rd.

A presentation covering an overview of addictions (alcohol, drugs, gaming, gambling) will be given to each year group during RE time that day. The speaker(s) are from Toranfield House, an Addiction Centre in Enniskerry and come highly recommended.

www.toranfieldhouse.com

They say they will target areas that are more relevant to the different age groups, e.g. the issues around online gambling to 6th years, gaming to 2nd years etc

It may be the case that some students will be affected by what they hear and wish to discuss it further.

Pastoral Care Programme



The first week back after Christmas signals the annual Third Year Days of Reflection. As in previous years these took place in facilities provided by the Disciples of the Divine Master. Mr. Gerry Keegan was Retreat Master and the boys were enthusiastic in their appreciation of his words of encouragement and hope. Mr. Keegan had only words of praise for the maturity and respect shown by the lads, especially for the reverence shown in their meditation before the Blessed Sacrament.

As Third Years made their Retreats the Fourth Year Pastoral Placements continued apace. 4 IRE, after a week of preparation, were the fourth group to take on this very worthwhile project, offering companionship to service users in a variety of Centres catering for the needs of people with disability and using their initiative to help out over-pressed staff in these places. Once again the current TYs should take a bow as many compliments flowed back to the school in commendation of their efforts.

On the 19th of January the chaplain and a number of the RE teachers attended an In-service organised by the DEA in their offices in Kimmage.

Speakers included Eoin Carroll of the Jesuit Centre for Faith & Justice; Greg. Straton of Spirasi; Andrew O'Connell & Claire Carmichael, Communications Directors for the Presentation Brothers and the Redemptorists respectively and Gary Carley of the Professional Development Services for Teachers. One of the additional benefits of such a day is the opportunity to meet and share with teachers from our sister Spiritan schools.

The Leman Concert provides an annual opportunity, not only to provide platform for the wonderful talents of performers but also to highlight the continuing outreach by the College community to the Spiritan Mission abroad. This year's programme celebrated in word and picture the remarkable contribution made by our twenty eight volunteers in Sultan Hamud and Kwakakula. It was very appropriate that the College Hymn, "Go Ye Afar" should have opened the National Concert Hall evening. It is very encouraging to see how enthusiastically the current 6th Years are taking up the baton.

The TY Family Mass was celebrated, with Community celebrants, by Fr. Tony Coote. Fr. Tony is Administrator of the parishes of Kilmacud and Mount Merrion. One of Fr. Tony's first appointments after ordination was to Ballymun Comprehensive. His experience in dealing with young people was evident in his easy manner and effective homily. He has also been chaplain to the

students in UCD and while there set up UCD Volunteers Overseas which continues to work with local communities, notably in Africa, India and Haiti. This Family Mass marked the beginning of Catholic Schools Week which was celebrated throughout the school with Year Masses and an opportunity for Adoration on a morning of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

At every Family Mass celebrated in the College we are very appreciative of the presence of the President of the Union, Mr. David Harvey and his wife Siobhan. In such a busy year for them we do not take their continuing this tradition for granted. Their celebrating with us (often accompanied by their children) enhances the occasion for everybody.

And as we go to press may we offer hearty congratulations to another loyal past student, J.P. Tanner and his wife Nicola on the birth of their daughter. Not many people are aware that J.P. continues to donate the beautiful flowers that adorn the sanctuary for every Family Mass, as he has done for more years than I care to remember! Continued success to his 'Arbour Blooms' in Skerries, Balbriggan and Drogheda. But especially we pray God's blessing on nurturing this latest 'bloom'. His not inconsiderable but quiet contribution is typical of so much good work done by so many past students of the College. Our prayer is that we all continue to make a difference in small and great ways.

An annual 'difference' is made by our Fifth Year students who once again this year have undertaken to run a sponsored fast in aid of Spirasi.

This Spiritan agency offers support to Asylum Seekers and victims of torture who have escaped many perils in diverse countries. Some of them told something of their harrowing stories to the 5th Years on their 'Welcoming the Stranger' Day last October. Our 5th Years now call on family and friends of the Blackrock College Community to support them in their generous fundraising effort.

Our Camino Group continue their preparations. Many thanks to Cillian Duff, John Sills, Chris Redahan and Michael Lockhart of the Class of 2011 who met the prospective 20 TY pilgrims and offered practical advice but even more worthwhile shared their enthusiasm about this valuable spiritual journey. The team spirit characteristic of Spiritan education was present in spades and we have every confidence that this will be the spirit pervading the group who set out to the shrine of St. James next May.

Commerce & Economics Society



On Mon 6 Feb, The Blackrock College Commerce & Economics Society was delighted to welcome Mr. Bobby Kerr into the College to share some of his experiences with 5th and 6th year students. Bobby is an Irish entrepreneur and businessman. He presents 'Down to Business' a Sunday Business Breakfast show on Newstalk and is a 'Dragon' on RTE's Dragons' Den. He is the Chairman of Insomnia Coffee and one of the owners of Bang Restaurant. He has a variety of business interests in food & hospitality, technology, manufacturing and retail. Bobby is also a popular public speaker and business mentor.

Bobby recalled key turning points in his career to date and outlined the importance of goal setting, positivity and a "can do" attitude in the world of business and beyond. Bobby emphasised the importance of integrity when dealing with people and the importance of delivering on promises.

There was a question and answer session afterwards and the C&E Society is most grateful to Bobby for giving up his time to be with us.



Daniel Collins of the C&E Society presenting 'Fearless and Bold' to Mr. Bobby Kerr.



Halls of Residence

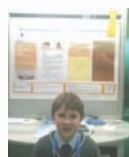
The boarders continue into 2012 with great spirit and enthusiasm, they had indeed had a very busy term, both in the day school and in the boarding school. All boarders are involved in so many various activities and the talents are developing at great speed.

They are focussed now on their next set of examinations and preparations for state exams have reignited as the exams approach rapidly. In addition to all this, the boarding school has undertaken a huge amount of activity over the last period.

During January we have held cooking class for 5th and 6th years, TEFL classes for foreign students who are now preparing for their Cambridge examinations, Public Speaking preparations continue for exams in early May, the book club continues to thrive under Ms. Canning's enthusiastic care.

The Boarders' choir entertained the large audience at the recent Leman Concert, whilst supported by a large number of boarders' parents who were in attendance. Thank you to our parents' committee for organising the second of our parent socials, the evening was enjoyed by all. The next social event to take place is the Sports and Family Day in May, followed shortly after by our wonderful annual barbeque.

We congratulate Lorcan Brophy (1st Year) on the tremendous achievement of being placed 3rd in his category in this year's Young Scientist Exhibition. It is great for him



Lorcan Brophy,
1st Year
Young Scientist

to have all his hard work recognised with this award. We all offered him support and encouragement at the Young Scientist during one of our outings.

Over 60 boys signed up for our recent IRFU Referee Course held in Willow Park. They enjoyed the course and are now certified to referee up to U-15's level. Mr. Fitzsimons is delighted he can now call on so many to referee. There may well be a future international referee in this group.

We congratulate all the boys who have partaken in recent school activities such as chess, water polo, cross country, rugby, soccer, tennis, table-tennis, Guys and Dolls, Aladdin and Amnesty International. These are all very well represented by our boarders, and all give 100% in each activity.

Finally, I would like to welcome Mr. O'Brien back from his convalescence and we are all delighted he has made a full recovery.

I am very thankful for everyone's support over the past number of months, whilst I covered Mr. O'Brien's absence. It was a delight.

Welcome back Mr. O'Brien!

Alan Rogan

Careers & Counselling



Applications to the CAO were submitted by Jan. 31st and applications to UCAS by 15th Jan. A number of students have already received offers from Cambridge University, University of Manchester and other applicants are awaiting their final offers. Some twenty six sixth years are preparing to take the HPAT-Ireland test on February 25th in various venues. Results of the HPAT will be available in late April. There is a lot of controversy about improved performance on the HPAT when students take it more than once. However ACER, the Australian company who is responsible for the test rejects the possibility of improved performance. They have promised us results of a research document of the HPAT Ireland in 2012.

Already open days have begun for Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses and a number of students have submitted applications for the PLC's. There is an ever increasing number of PLC courses, Level 5 and Level 6 FETAC on offer at present. Exciting opportunities are available to students when they do a Level 5/Level 6 FETAC course, which allows them the freedom to progress to Level 7 and Level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework. This progression can take place from one college to another or to a university. If a student receives a level 5/6 FETAC award he can use the result in place of his Leaving cert results. It is very important for all students to understand this progression and its implications. Further information is available from the career counsellors in the college.

Saturday morning career talks took place throughout January for 5th and 6th years. Ten different career disciplines and their numerous career paths were presented by

past students and associated professionals. The talks were very well attended by the students and they found them really informative and inspiring.

The career coaching interviews for 6th years took place on Wednesday the 25th of January. Those who participated in the programme submitted a CV and covering letter prior to the interview. Again this year a particular emphasis was placed on coaching the students. Consequently on the career evening, immediately following the formal interview each candidate was given useful feedback and coaching about his preparation for and performance at the interview. This proved to be a very valuable learning experience. Interviewers were well impressed by the students who participated.

A number of visiting lectures addressed the sixth years. Consequently some students are interested in applying for new courses such as Psychology in NCI and Business and Law in DIT. The message to all CAO applicants, even in challenging economic times is still to apply for third level courses which are of interest to them and consequently they will be motivated to engage with these courses and find satisfaction.

Academic attainment of all students in the college as well as their extracurricular involvement is constantly monitored by the counsellors in each year and appropriate advice given. Hopefully all students are happy with their involvement.

LEMAN FESTIVAL CONCERT XXVI



We had great fun!

The Leman Festival Concert, twenty six years young is a sight to behold and a sound to linger in the memory; a sound to cherish. If you have never been there make a note now to put it in your diary for 2013.

The College Orchestra, still vibrant since taking premier place in last year's Wesley Feis, wrought their magic once again. Four choirs, Leman, Libermann, Boarders' and Parents' delivered with a musicality and assuredness, now profound, now fun. Saxophone and piano, french horn and guitar, cello and flute held audience spellbound, hoping for more, delighted by talent beyond expectation.

The interval was upon us. Never once had time dragged. So much to praise and recall as the charm of each item was shared and remembered.

"Please return to your seats".

The fare in Part Two offered an eclectic menu. When last did you sample Toasters with Spaghetti but No More Bacons, washed down with Liquid Sunshine? And if that all was not to your fancy you might still, in General Terms, Loiter With Intent like Agile Beasts, seeking the Mikey Browne Experience from The K Machine. Before the night was through, two cocktails, both on the Rocks: one by now traditional, 'Rockapella'; the other traditional in the traditional sense, 'Ceoltoiri Carraige'. Where would you get the likes of the variety of it all?

The Finale came all too soon. Nobody budged. We all wanted more.

Well, there's always next year...not to mention Wesley, the Summer Concert etc. etc.

The secret of a good party is to finish when things are on a high!



Liquid Sunshine perform at Leman Concert

Sport



It's that part of the season where results count. Unfortunately the result did not go the way of the SCT in their postponed first round encounter with Terenure on Friday 3rd February. It was a fierce match where no quarter was asked or given: doggedness, determination, courage - on both sides - one ultimately vanquished, but importantly heads held high. Killian O'Leary (6th Year) and his team gave their all. We share in their disappointment but we congratulate them on a noble effort.

Last Thursday 9th February the JCT overcame a strong Belvedere side 3-0 in Donnybrook in the first round of the cup. In a closely fought contest some stellar defence from our boys kept Belvedere scoreless at crucial stages. We wish captain Roghan McMahon and his team the best of luck against Clongowes in the next round on Thursday 1st March in Donnybrook.



Killian O'Leary, Captain SCT v. Terenure

Other rugby squads including the Castle, House, Colts and Juniors are all progressing well in their Leinster leagues and we wish them well in the penultimate rounds of their competitions.



P. Robb, N. Timoney & H. Heavey

We commiserate with Mark Stephens (6th year) and his senior soccer squad on their defeat by Clonkeen in the Semi-Final of the League. In a tremendously exciting and skilful encounter, with the lead changing hands on 3 occasions and despite 2 goals by Harry Crowe (6th Year), we were left short at the final whistle. It was a great game and we are very proud of the efforts of our Squad who now look forward to the visit of St Bede's, Manchester on March 10th.

Our junior Water Polo squad led by Harry Lawlor (4th Year) brought home the Leinster Junior Cup with victory over St Peter's, Dunboyne in the Final by 6 goals to 4. We reached the final with victories over Marian College and St Joseph's School, Cabra. I congratulate the boys on a fantastic achievement and thank Coach Kevin Healy for his great work.

It was a clean sweep for our Cross Country runners at the East Leinster Cross-Country Championships held on Thursday 26th January 2012. Our Senior, Inter and Junior Squads won their respective team events. All teams went onto compete very well in the Leinster Championships in Santry Demesne last Wednesday. Our Minor (Willow Park) and Junior teams qualified for the All Irelands. Andrew Cullen (5th year) also qualified in the senior event as an individual runner. Well done to everyone involved.

The rowing season for 2012 began at the annual St Michael's Race which was held at O'Brien's Bridge in Limerick on Saturday January 28th 2012. The event had a record entry of over 600 boats and Blackrock College made up 4 of these boats with two eight-man boats and two 4-man boats. Both 8 men crews raced exceptionally well led by cox Frank Vaughan (4th year). The final race of the day was a coxed four which was made up of the stern four from the 1st VIII and coxed by Chris Butler (4th Year). We wish the boys well in their next race at Lagan Head of The River in Belfast on February 25th.

In basketball our Senior Squad led by Denis Kelleher (6th Year) was defeated by St Vincent's of Glasnevin on Tuesday 10th January in the Semi-Final of the All-Ireland Schools Section C Cup at the Tallaght Leisure Centre. Our boys showed great determination and focus throughout the game. It was only during the final quarter that St Vincent's managed to widen the points difference enough to ensure their victory.

Needless to say our Table Tennis squads are reaping the reward of their rigorous training schedule. In the senior cup our As and Bs have progressed through to the semi finals where they will meet each other. At junior level three of our four teams remain in contention. The Senior A team will be representing Ireland at the World Schools Games which will be held in Sardinia in March. We wish them the very best of luck.



Junior Cup Team v Belvedere

The squash team were in competitive action last Wednesday. The Under 17's defeated Belvedere 6-4 and St. Fintan's High School 8-4. They have two more games to play in their league. Well done to team members Harry Lloyd, Stephen O'Connor, Ross O'Mahony and Johnny O'Leary. Unfortunately our U19's were defeated by a strong Belvedere side.

Our senior and junior chess teams' fortunes have been revived under the guidance of new coach Karl Jackson. The juniors have shown particular signs of progress and this was seen in their recent victory over St. Benildus.

Finally thanks to all our coaches who give up their time to get the best out of our Blackrock boys.

All photos courtesy Rock Photography
www.rockphotography.ie