

Jib Sheet

Volume II, Issue 1

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August 15, 2003

Nota Bene:

- 2003-2004 school year begins August 25th
- Teachers report on August 21st
- First EESAC meeting is Sept. 9th, 3:30 PM, Boardroom
- MAST applications for 2004-2005 will be available September 15th
- Back-To-School Night is October 14th



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From the Pilothouse



We begin the 2003-2004 school year welcoming **new and returning students—and a dynamic group of new faculty members.** (See the story on p. 2 for information on “swabs.”) Because we are in so many ways like a big family, new students and staff will, I am confident, quickly learn to navigate MAST.

Elsewhere in this publication you will find a story on MAST’s **accreditation review.** Indeed, a visiting team from the Southern

Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) will be with us in the spring to view school operations first-hand. I have every confidence that we will do extraordinarily well during the SACS visit. I encourage parents who would like to do so to be part of the process. (See the SACS story for details.)

The story below describes some of the issues involved in the **new options for high school graduation.** We have already met with the parents of eligible 11th and 12th graders. The date for a 9th and 10th grade meeting is pending additional clarification from MDCPS. To date, we have had very few students choose an early graduation option. When

you receive our packet on the new options, please review the information carefully and choose the option you think best meets the needs of your child. You may find it helpful to review your child’s Academic Evaluation as you consider this issue. You can now obtain this information online at www.FACTS.org. Click on *High School Academic Evaluations* and follow directions. Of course, our guidance counselors are ready to assist you as well.

My hope for all of us is a safe and rewarding school year.

Smooth sailing—and a following sea.

Consuelo V. Domínguez, Ed.D.

New Graduation Options

As of July 1, 2003, Florida high school students have three options for high school graduation: the traditional 24-credit model (historically, 28 at MAST), a college preparatory 18-credit option, and a career prep 18-credit model.

Students will make their initial choice of a graduation path in the eighth

grade. Students who are already in high school will make the choice when they return to school in the fall. Students and parents will be apprised of the graduation options again during spring enrollment for 2004-2005—and during every spring enrollment period that follows.

MDCPS district and school

personnel are making every effort to answer a wide range of questions about the changes. In advance of receiving information packets from the school, parents and students can obtain information online at dadeschools.net.

Families should consider the

cont’d. on p. 2

Graduation Options, cont'd.

options in light of college and career plans.

Many parents have asked how out-of-state colleges and universities will respond to the reduced number of courses on a student's transcript. "At this point," says guidance chair Ana Maria Posse, "that remains to be seen. The options just became law last month. We are still in a fact-finding mode as part of a larger effort to gather as much information as possible for our students."

Principal Consuelo V. Domínguez encourages students to contact the admissions offices of the colleges to which they plan to apply. "Schools develop unique admissions criteria," Domínguez observed at a recent parent meeting. "What FSU deems important in the evaluation of a student's application might be less so at the University of Miami."

The district's *Questions & Answers* document on the graduation options addresses a range of topics—from what happens if no choice is made to NCAA eligibility considerations. The document is available at dadeschools.net.

PARENT PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITY!

Are you a parent interested in serving on MAST's Educational Excellence School Advisory Council?

EESAC makes recommendations to the principal on a range of issues, from curriculum to dress code and budget. Call Lisa Fischer before Aug. 25th to ensure that your name will be on the ballot for a parent vote in September!

305-365-6278

Ahoy . . . Swabs*!!

There will be several new people on deck in the new school year.

The departure of Activities Director Linda Wright sent us in search of a high-caliber replacement—and we have found just that in **Ileana Rodriguez**, who comes to MAST from South Miami Senior High where she taught Italian. Ms. Rodriguez has done a yeoman's job this summer in preparation for the new school year. Working closely with Dr. Domínguez and Student Government Association President Monica Simo, Rodriguez is prepared for the arrival of both staff and students later this month. "I am thrilled to be at MAST and look forward to meeting the challenges that will come with my new position," she says.

Our students will be very pleased to see **Dr. Tamara Alvarez-Detrell** return to fill in for Joaquin Martinez who is on leave for 2003-2004. After spending the previous school year at Carver Middle and the summer in Paris, Dr. Alvarez-Detrell plans a seamless transition into her French classes at MAST. Her colleagues in the Humanities Department look forward welcoming Dr. Alvarez-Detrell back into the fold—and everyone eagerly awaits the return of the late afternoon "espresso wagon." (*Hear that, Tamara?*)

Veteran college advisor **June Jacobs**

will take over for Betty Hach who retired in June. Ms. Jacobs is eager to work with our students as they make their college plans. Like Ms. Hach, June Jacobs is a student-focused team player. Students will quickly discover what a treasure we have in this terrific "find."

Three "rookie" teachers will be among us when the first bell rings on August 25th: **Josue Cruz**, **Alejandro Gonzalez**, and **Madhu Tolani** (Class of '99). A more passionate, talented, and eager group of new teachers would be hard to find anywhere in the district. Cruz will teach English, Gonzalez mathematics, and Tolani government and economics (filling in for Tanya Hanson who is on leave for 2003-2004). All three of these young professionals come to MAST with extraordinary recommendations.

We are still interviewing for a one-semester Spanish and yearbook teacher to fill in for Lynn Paisley who is on a short medical leave. ESE instructor Janet Marti is on leave for the first semester and we will be hiring to replace her as well.

Many changes. . . and just as many opportunities.

*A "swab" is a freshman at the US Coast Guard Academy.

EESAC: At Work for MAST Students

The Educational Excellence School Advisory Council (EESAC) identifies annual targets for school improvement, generates the School Performance Excellence Plan (SPEP), and functions as the chief school-site advisory group to the principal.

Comprised of the principal, UTD steward, students, teachers, support staff, parents, and community part-

ners, the EESAC meets ten times a year, the second Tuesday of each month, from 3:30 to 4:30 PM in the school's Boardroom.

EESAC agenda items have one thing in common: All topics address student achievement and the school's learning environment.

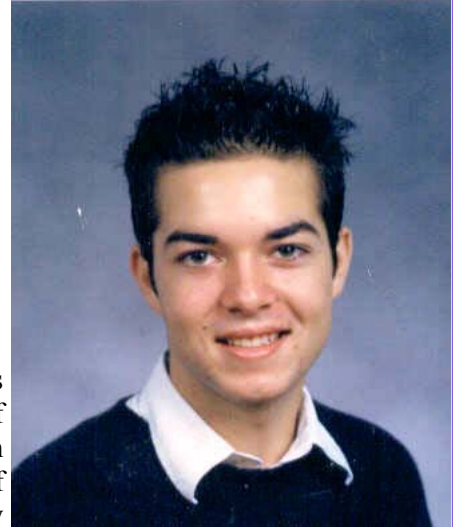
The group regularly reviews testing

and student achievement data, attendance reports, and school climate survey results. The findings of those reviews assist EESAC members in generating targets for school improvement.

Elections for groups represented on EESAC will take place in the fall. Call Margaret Haun at 305-365-6278 for information.

A College Essay to Remember

by Sebastian M. Duncan, Class of 2004



With stippled sunlight shining on the deck, orchids blanketing the walls, trees forming caves in which to hide ourselves and the sound and occasional flash of peacocks on the rooftops, my best-friend's backyard, nestled in an urban Eden called Coconut Grove, proved to be the optimum place to forge a world of childhood fantasy. Inspired by Katherine Paterson's *Bridge to Terabithia*, my best friend, a handsome sapphire-eyed girl named Morgan, and I took the tale of this rural pair of children who changed their lives through a tight bond of friendship and boundless imagination, and made it our own. A toss of red and white sand while passing through Morgan's sliding glass doors would transport us into a world where ladies, knights and archers reigned, while incense created an archaic and ethereal ambience. We dedicated this land to raising money to help animals and swore the world to secrecy, a vow broken only once when we admitted my brother into this society. We named our childhood Shangri-La *The Land of Carebithia*.

This fantasy is the first event in my life that reveals some part of the person I am today. First, it tells of my social nature, which I believe is one of the most important aspects of my character. I have always found great comfort in the company of my peers and have confided in them without restraint. Furthermore, many of my relationships involve a great deal of literary exchange. Though Morgan's and my involvement with literature has gone past the childish adaptation of books into covert wonderlands, we have exchanged an exorbitant amount of literature and have hardly gone a meeting without mention of some recent trip we had taken, whether it is to Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County, Mississippi or Fitzgerald's West Egg, New York.

Additionally, this account reveals my concern for helping others. I believe that to be a person worth the gift of life, one has to leave the world at least slightly enhanced. My earlier mission to help animals in need has become a commitment to the welfare of the human community. Though I do not yet know where life will carry me, I plan to spend time in the Peace Corps, where I will serve those less fortunate than I—and indulge my love of travel.

Throughout, this narrative draws upon the western culture in which I was raised. Because the stories I heard and most greatly idolized were those of valiant knights and heroic princesses, our roles in our land were manifest through a lady and an archer. Strong family ties also play a role in this story. The fact that I was willing to break our vow for the admittance of my brother is a clue to the fact that my brother and I have always been very close, whether as partners in crime or brotherly confidants. Though this story is a good introduction to the person I am, there is much beyond these splashes of ink that makes up the real Sebastian Maxwell Duncan.

Editor's Note: Sebastian wrote this essay in response to an assignment in the summer internship course. He was asked to describe those events, circumstances and/or people who played some role in making him the person he is today. Personal experience topics such as this are frequently required by colleges and universities. With Melissa Jacobs, Sebastian is co-editor of *The Beacon*, MAST's award-winning student newspaper.



MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MIAMI, FLORIDA

2003 - 2004 SCHOOL CALENDAR

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY

AUGUST 2003				
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DECEMBER 2003				
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AUGUST 2004				
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-  NEW TEACHERS REPORT
 -  TEACHER PLANNING DAY
 -  PAID LEGAL HOLIDAY
 -  RECESS
 -  BEGINNING/ENDING GRADING PERIOD
 -  SECONDARY EARLY RELEASE DAY
- DAYS IN GRADING PERIOD
- 1 - 46
 - 2 - 45
 - 3 - 43
 - 4 - 46

Under the SACS Microscope

The 2003-2004 school year will see the MAST Academy faculty and staff bring the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accreditation review process to closure.

The SACS review requires teachers and administrators to examine every aspect of the school—from demographics and test scores to facility condition, learning environment, and school beliefs. The culmination of the process is a two-day school review in April 2004 conducted by a visiting team.

The accreditation review is critical for a few reasons: 1) SACS accredi-

tation tells colleges and universities that an applicant will graduate from an accredited high school; 2) the process provides faculty and staff an opportunity to identify school strengths and weaknesses and to make recommendations for improvement; and 3) the visiting committee will look at our study and observe school operations during their two-day visit as a prelude to making their own assessment of school strengths and weaknesses.

The faculty's self study and the visiting team's report will guide MAST's school improvement efforts over the next five years. While the SACS review process requires an extra effort on everyone's part, we

all understand the value of a close examination of our everyday practices. The result of this year's SACS effort will be an even better MAST Academy.

We look forward to involving parents and partners in this process. If you are interested in participating, please contact Dr. Margaret Haun, SACS Steering Committee Chair, at Haun@mast.dade.k12.fl.us or at 305-365-6278.



CG JROTC Online at mast.dade.k12.fl.us

by CPO (H) Robert F. Lasseter

MAST Academy's Coast Guard JROTC maintains a fully functional, interactive, and informative website. The site provides cadets with information on curriculum, organizational skills, CG JROTC instructions, as well as special notices, and Standard Operating Procedures. By clicking on the hyperlink "*INSTRUCTION/NOTICES*," cadets have instant access to Battalion Policies & Procedures.

An important feature is the *JROTC*



Handbook where online guests can access information on a range of evaluation components: aptitude, academics, physical training, and uniforms.

Surf further into this manual to find information on scholarships, field trips, battalion job descriptions, and responsibilities. From the JROTC main page, click on "*Calendar of Events*" to find information on field trips, including Color Guard presentations, Drill Team performances, teacher planning days, Early Release Days, and holidays.

This unique webpage provides access to a range of related sites: the USCG Academy, U.S. Coast Guard, Recruiting, Dept. of Education, Dept. of Homeland Security, and Coast Guard Scholarships. Click on "*FAVORITE LINKS*" and you're flying through hyperspace.

The JROTC website provides information to assist cadets in developing the motivation, self-discipline, organizational skills necessary for team work. All this is accomplished through the supervision of both the military advisors and the cadets themselves.

Advanced Placement Scores Float Our Boat

MAST Academy students did extremely well on the range of Advanced Placement (AP) exams administered in May 2003.

Calculus BC, English Literature and Composition, Physics C, and Spanish Language had pass rates over 90%. Students in Biology, Calculus AB, English Language and Composition, Physics, Statistics, and US History scored well above the 2002 national

averages. (National averages for 2003 have not yet been released.)

We are pleased to report that the number of test-takers increased this year, with 144 students taking 303 exams. Environmental Science was the largest of the AP courses—with 53 students.

We are not at all surprised by the strong showing of our students on these rigorous

exams. In 2002-2003, thirty-two MAST Academy students were named AP Scholars, AP Scholars with Honors, or AP Scholars with Distinction. Two students were named AP National Scholars and five were AP Diploma Award Recipients.

In 2003-2004, there are more students in AP courses than ever before. We look forward to reporting terrific news again next year!

**MAST ACADEMY—A NATIONALLY
RECOGNIZED SCHOOL OF
EXCELLENCE**

**3979 Rickenbacker Causeway
Miami, FL 33149**

MAST Academy Philosophy

For any institution to be successful, everyone involved must subscribe to clearly articulated core values. The MAST Academy's pragmatic approach to education emphasizes sound work ethics, parent and community involvement, a respect for the culture of the sea and the environment, self-esteem, civic responsibility, and job preparedness in an atmosphere conducive to learning and work.

MAST reinforces the fundamental concept that education is business. One of our primary tasks, therefore, is to encourage the creativity, flexibility, and responsibility our students will need in the work place. Thus, the curricular and extracurricular emphases on the problem-solving skills and team work essential to a productive life in business, government, science education, and community service.

MAST's philosophy points beyond intellectual development and career preparedness. The school seeks to develop the total student. Faculty, staff, parents, and the community work together to foster student initiative, integrity, honor, and leadership.

Staff Update

Congratulations to Janet Marti on the birth of her son, Ian Nicholas, on July 16th.

Karen Sutton's daughter Maggie was married this summer. Congratulations to Mr. And Mrs. Izquierdo.

Lynn Paisley is recovering from surgery and will undergo additional treatment in the next few months.

Joe Zawodny will undergo heart surgery on August 19th. Our thoughts and prayers are with both Lynn and Joe.

We want to express our sympathy to Ken McDonald on the passing of his mother, Marva, and to Latosha Jackson whose sister, Angie Parrish, passed away in July after an extended illness.

PTSA Greetings

Dear Friends:

I want to welcome our new freshman class, all returning MAST students, and the scores of dedicated parents.

It is difficult to predict what the school year will bring. We can, however, look at the history of our school and be assured that this year will be another exciting experience full of success and accomplishments, and yes, we will also have lots of fun.

Our school will have many challenges and opportunities, including its accreditation review by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Your PTSA Board, working with our school administration and support team, will focus on expanding our Dade Partners program. We are also planning a number of other activities including monthly recognition of students and staff for their hard work and effort, fund raising activities to benefit the school, and academic programs to assist our students achieve the highest possible results in standardized testing.

Our goals cannot be achieved without the help of our great parents. **We meet the first Monday of every month at 7:00 P.M. in the Board Room on the second floor of our school.** Please join us and provide us with your thoughts and ideas.

We need to elect the 2003-04 parent representatives to the EESAC by September 5th, 2003. **If you are interested in serving as an ESSAC member or would like to nominate another parent, please contact Lisa Fischer at (305) 365-7268 prior to August 25th, 2003.**

I wish you all a successful and rewarding school year.

Maria E. Fernandez
PTSA President

