

Blake Welcomes New Assistant Head of School

On July 1, Lucretia “Lukie” Wells joined the Blake community as the new assistant head of school, bringing with her a multitude of talents and experience across a variety of programs. Coming to Blake from Milton Academy, a co-educational day and boarding school outside Boston, Wells most recently served as the dean of students, overseeing the upper school experience for 684 students in grades nine through twelve. Prior to Milton, she served in a variety of capacities at Darrow School, George School, Oregon Episcopal and Groton School.

In addition to her varied educational experience, Wells’ strengths and passions directly fulfill the needs of the Blake community, and she is eager to provide leadership and join in the work of aligning and strengthening Blake’s Pre-K–12 curriculum. Wells is also looking forward to taking up Lisa Lyle’s work around faculty professional development and the Effective Teaching Initiative. She enjoys working with faculty who love their craft and looks forward to building relationships and providing support throughout the School.

While Wells has strong East Coast roots, she and her husband of 16 years, Jonathon, have taught and worked throughout the country. Though their shift to the Midwest is a big one, Wells says Blake had many draws for her, including the warm and caring School community and the opportunity to partner with faculty and administrators in aligning Blake’s curriculum.

Please join us in welcoming Lukie and Jonathon into our community! 🐾



Blake’s new Assistant Head of School Lukie Wells and her husband, Jonathon

Lisa Lyle: In thanks and celebration

With the happy introduction of Lukie Wells comes an emotional goodbye to outgoing Assistant Head of School Lisa Lyle and her family — Lupe ’06, Willy ’07, Tucker ’11 and (faculty member) David Sanders. In mid-June, Lyle moved to St. Louis, Mo., to become the new head of school at Mary Institute St. Louis Country Day School, where she is sure to provide her own brand of intelligent and compassionate leadership.

Lyle came to Blake five years ago from The Lawrenceville School in New Jersey, where she taught for 11 years. While she will be greatly missed, Lyle has created a legacy at Blake that will live on and thrive long after her departure. For all her many contributions, the School thanks Lisa and wishes her and her family all the best in their new endeavors.

Faculty Applause

Congratulations to Middle School social studies teacher **Muhammad Ramadan**, who has received a Lyon History Fund Award to study the native peoples of Oceania. Ramadan, who has been developing his seventh grade social studies curriculum to include some lesser-known civilizations, will travel down under to explore Oceania’s Aboriginal history and customs.

This June, Director of College Counseling **Frank Sachs** traveled to Washington, D.C. to receive a Presidential Scholars Teacher Recognition Award. He accompanied recent Blake graduate Heidi Liu and her family to the ceremony, where Liu was presented as a 2007 Presidential Scholar.

Farewell and Good Luck

The following is a list of Blake faculty members who left either during or at the end of the 2006–07 school year. Thank you for your service and keep in touch!

Rod Anderson
Janey Christoffersen
Erin Connors ’95
Lea Favor
Matt Filner
Kathy Grundei
Rick Johns
Hichem Laredj
Lisa Lyle

John McKeand
Cris Petersen
Doug Petrie
David Sanders
Kevin Schniepp
Robert Sohovich
Sara Stephenson
Debra Wood
Norman YanSheng

Grants and Sabbaticals 2007

Donaldson Sabbatical

The Frank Donaldson Faculty Development Sabbatical Program provides support for Blake faculty members who wish to undertake and present significant sabbatical projects. Recipients are selected by the Blake Sabbatical Review Committee based on seniority, past achievements and potential benefit to the School, the community and the applicant. Each sabbatical concludes with a presentation of the recipient's project. This year's recipients are:

- **Mike Bazzett**, Upper School English, who plans to compose poetry, complete a novel and spend time on day-to-day journal reflection;
- **Dan LeJeune**, Middle School choral music, who this spring will be studying world music for the emerging adolescent voice as well as attending the International Choir Directors meeting in Copenhagen; and
- **Randy Roberts**, Upper School social studies, who will travel to China and Japan this fall to reinforce and update his East Asian curriculum.

Hersey Summer Sabbatical

Blake's Board of Trustees established the Hersey Summer Sabbatical Program in honor of former president of The Blake Schools David Hersey, who felt that teachers were often limited by finances during their summers from pursuing major academic or intellectual growth. Each year three summer sabbaticals are awarded to faculty members who represent the high level of teaching effectiveness at Blake. The hope is that these sabbaticals will allow the recipient to develop an interest that without the award would be difficult to pursue. The term "sabbatical" is used here in the broadest sense and includes, but is not limited to, academic work, curriculum study and travel. This year's recipients include:

- **Lynn Baete**, Middle School Spanish, who plans to travel to and attend the University of Costa Rica's Modern Language Studies Abroad program;
- **Judy-Ann Ehrlich**, Middle School math, who will volunteer with Global Volunteers teaching English to students in Greece;

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Johns Accepts USM's Athletic Director Position

After 27 years of providing leadership, encouragement and support to the Blake community, teacher and administrator Rick Johns is saying goodbye to embark on his life's next big adventure. Johns, his wife and three of their four children will soon be moving to River Hills, Wisc., where he will take on a new role as athletic director at the University School of Milwaukee (USM).

Although current Blake students know Johns as Blake's assistant athletic director and Lower School Highcroft campus computer/technology specialist, Johns also has an extensive coaching career in baseball, softball, basketball and football. At Blake and other Twin Cities schools, he coached varsity baseball for 19 years and football for 12 years. Johns says he is proud to have been a part of Blake's strong athletic department, which now features 28 varsity sports.

Johns deems athletics an important aspect of every student's experience. "I believe in deep, rich programs that provide opportunities for all to participate, compete, excel and enhance the students' skills, knowledge and joy of movement," Johns says. He notes that throughout his many interactions with Blake's students, parents, faculty and administration, his number one goal was "to provide the same encouragement and support that was given to me

so many times throughout my life."

As athletic director for USM, Johns will be responsible for supervising coaches, communicating with parents and overseeing the organizational, scheduling and operational aspects of the athletic department. A Pre-K-12, co-educational, non-sectarian day school of 1,100 students, USM boasts 22 varsity sports teams and, in the last three years, has won three state championships.

Johns and his family (wife, Patti, and children Laura, 23, Patrick, 16, Katie, 14, and Charlie, 11) will leave Minnesota knowing that it will be difficult to say goodbye to their Blake family. Johns says, "Former Gopher football coach Jim Wacker may have described my feelings best when he said, 'My heart's a pumpin', and my corpuscles are jumpin'!" 🐾



Assistant Athletic Director Rick Johns accepts the Haven Lucas Award at the Booster Club meeting in June. Johns was the first recipient of the new award, named for Blake's longtime assistant football coach.

Blake Salutes This Year's Distinguished Retirees

Greg Bartel

What would you call someone who has taught science to more than 2,500 students over the past 34 years? Well, you'd call him a teacher, of course. And to Greg Bartel's colleagues at Blake, the word "teacher" suits him to a T. When announcing Bartel's departure, Upper School Director Marc Bogursky noted, "Retirement is probably not the right word to associate with this decision, since Greg has always been, and always will be, a teacher." A fellow science teacher affirmed the sentiment saying, "Greg is a teacher. I can offer no higher praise than what that has meant to his many students and to me as his colleague."

Known as a deeply knowledgeable educator as well as a genuine and caring teacher and colleague, Bartel has been an active member of the School community since his tenure began in 1974. For 20 years he supervised the former medical biology program, through which students volunteered as nursing assistants in the Hennepin County Medical Center emergency room. He also served as the Upper School science department chair for five years, coached track for 11 years, and was a senior advisor during the '80s, organizing and leading the senior weekends at Camp Warren.

Among his favorite Blake memories he includes the outstanding student speeches he has heard throughout the years and coping with the many Northrop renovations. Bartel says, "I have enjoyed my years at Blake because the students were motivated and cooperative, my colleagues were stimulating and caring, and the administrators were supportive and professional."

Though retiring from the classroom, the chances are slim that Bartel's pursuit of education will wane. Recently, he has dedicated his time to a coastal reforestation program along the North Shore of Lake Superior, and he plans to continue his efforts on this front. Bartel also foresees getting more exercise, working on home projects, volunteering and traveling, undoubtedly appreciating life's lessons as only a teacher can.

Diana Bell

If her second shot at retirement takes, Middle School math and science teacher Diana Bell plans to be saying a lot less "four" and a lot more "FORE!" Twelve years ago, Blake was lucky enough to hire Bell, who had retired from full-time teaching in Anchorage, Alaska, in 1990. She spent her first couple of years at Blake as a long-term math substitute before becoming a part-time faculty



Greg Bartel enjoys a retirement party held this spring in his honor.

member in both the math and science departments.

In addition to serving two departments, Bell, along with her son Andrew, has coached the Middle School math team, and she has also run what Middle School Director Joe Seivold calls "an orderly, productive sixth grade study hall," which, he adds, is no small feat. Seivold also notes, "Diana has a knack for helping quiet, low-confidence kids gain skills and voice. Watching her work with these students has been inspiring."

Inspiring and inspired, Bell says that she has continued to work at Blake because of the students and that she will miss them most of all. "One of my favorite memories is of the eighth grade lock-ins that we did in the past," Bell says. "Those were really great kids, and we had a really good time."

While she will miss her students, Bell, who has previously lived in Alaska, Washington and Florida, says that she also misses the mountains and the oceans. So she and her husband are planning to buy an RV and travel as much as possible for the next couple of years while their children finish college. After that, she says, they'll likely make a more permanent move to warmer climes.

Bell says that this time around retirement (real retirement) is a good fit for her, and she is ready to enjoy her favorite pastimes: walking, biking, traveling and, of course, golf. FORE!

Ann Gibbon

In her 26 years at the Upper School, German teacher Ann Gibbon has not only taught students to say adventure (that's *abenteuer* in German), she's helped add it to their lives. She's traveled



Diana Bell (left), with Middle School colleague Maelene Krig, lines up for the last Commencement processional of her Blake career.



This spring, Ann Gibbon accompanied a group of Blake students to Guatemala, where they volunteered at a wildlife rescue center. Pictured, Gibbon (left) and Lower School Spanish teacher Andrea Sepúlveda carry 60-pound melons up a steep hill to feed to the animals in their care.

the globe with Blake students, taking in cultural experiences in Europe, Africa, Asia and, most recently, Central America. She's coached soccer and cross-country skiing and served as the faculty advisor of the Patagonia Club, leading thrill-seeking students on outings such as rock climbing, canoeing and portage clearing on the Granite River.

So it would seem fair to assume that in retirement, Gibbon will seek further adventure. Her many interests include yoga, painting, gardening, a variety of outdoor activities and berry picking at her cabin up North. But, she says, she's in no hurry to make definite plans. "There are some things I am exploring which are related to cultural things as well as to social causes. Best of all, I get to spend as much time as I wish reading *The New York Times* with my first cup of coffee in the morning."

Despite the luxury of extra time her retirement affords, there are things Gibbon says she will miss about working at Blake. And those are the very same things that attracted her to the School in the first place: the students, who Gibbon says are always willing to learn and tackle new challenges; the freedom to create a program that is tailored to her students' needs and talents; and the colleagues who "helped sustain me through the ebbs and flows of life on a daily basis." Gibbon adds, "If you think about it, we spend more time with our colleagues and students during the school year than with our own families."

Even as Gibbon's colleagues and students miss their daily interactions with this dynamic teacher, they will surely continue to admire both her spirit of adventure and her countless talents.

Jim Rien

For 34 years, scores of Blake Lower School students have learned how to hit baseballs, shoot basketballs, run races, swim laps and glide on the ice, thanks to physical education teacher Jim Rien. But beyond the fundamentals of sports, Rien has taught his students something even more important: that skill and competition aren't what it's all about. It's "what's inside" that really matters.

Lower School Director Beth Hower sees the kind of role model Rien has been for the School's youngest children and notes, "He encourages them to recognize, use and grow their natural talents, whether they be in the realm of physical skills, leadership or academics. Through Jim's specific and ongoing feedback, his students gain confidence and a strong sense of competency."

For Rien, one of the most powerful experiences of his career has been reconnecting with former students who are now Blake parents. The young students whom he taught to "work hard and have fun" are now parents of a new crop of students, and he marvels at the wonderful adults they have become.

Rien came to Blake in 1974, partially at the bequest of college roommate and former Blake Athletic Director Rollie Johnson. While he has been a mainstay in the Lower

School physical education department during his entire tenure, Rien also coached Blake's football team for 24 years and the track team for 17 years.

Now, he is eager for the next stage of his life to begin. With one grandchild, a daughter who just married in June, and a third daughter who is a senior at UMD, Rien plans to make family the centerpiece of the immediate future. Rien's wife, Jean, is also retiring from teaching. The two plan to move their home base north to Eveleth, Minn., and will most assuredly be focusing on what really matters.



Jim Rien helps kick off Olympic Day 2007.

Grants and Sabbaticals 2007

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- **Diane Landis**, Upper School drama, who will travel to Scotland to attend performances of international theater groups at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and will also explore the theater companies of Ireland.

Plank Fund for Teachers Grant

Established through a gift from former Blake Trustee Raymond Plank '40, the Plank Faculty Challenge Grants are intended to inspire and support teachers in their efforts to become better educators and people. This year's recipients are:

- **Lynn Ellingboe**, Middle School drama, who will participate in a weeklong Shakespeare in the Classroom course at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, Ore., as well as travel to Vancouver to catch a play or two at the Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival;

- **Martha Long and Pam Olds**, Lower School Blake campus, who will both be doing volunteer service in Cartago, Costa Rica; and

- **Karen Phillips**, Upper School science, who plans to travel to Oxford, England, to meet with physicists at Oxford University and Rutherford Appleton Laboratory.

Look for updates on these exciting teacher projects in future issues of the Bulletin.