

THE COLLEGIAN

VOLUME LXXX ISSUE NO. 3 SERVING THE BALTIMORE CITY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNITY SINCE 1929 WINTER 2008

Tashjian Travels To Galapagos Islands

Shira Stearns

On Monday, December 8th, Ms. Tashjian, the 9th and 11th grade English teacher, returned from a two-week trip to the Galapagos Islands. This trip was a Toyota International teacher's program created to promote awareness about the loss of natural resources. Ms. Tashjian learned about this trip via e-mail, and was one of approximately one thousand teachers to apply. Only thirty teachers were chosen to go to the Galapagos, and she was one of the only English teachers there.

Few of the Galapagos Islands are inhabited by humans. The Galapagos are home to many different islands, with only a few inhabited. Most islands consist of endemic animals (animals native to only one specific area) and thriving vegetation. Of all the islands, the teachers visited four, two of which

were inhabited and two of which were not. Ms. Tashjian says that Espanola was her favorite. Its vegetation was flourishing, and its animal life was more diverse.

The Galapagos Islands are especially known for the large amount of endemic animals. These animals cannot be found in the United States, although there are small similarities. Some examples of the rare animals found in the Galapagos are the blue-footed boobies and the giant tortoises. Ms. Tashjian says, "We have turtles, but they're not giant."

Of all the endemic animals, she says that Lonesome George is her favorite. Lonesome George is a giant turtle who is the last survivor of his species. Giant turtles will likely become extinct in our lifetime. Ms. Tashjian says, "I did expect to see different types of animals, but I didn't expect to have the reaction I had." Ms. Tashjian



Lonesome George is the last giant turtle in the world. All Photos Courtesy of Lena Tashjian

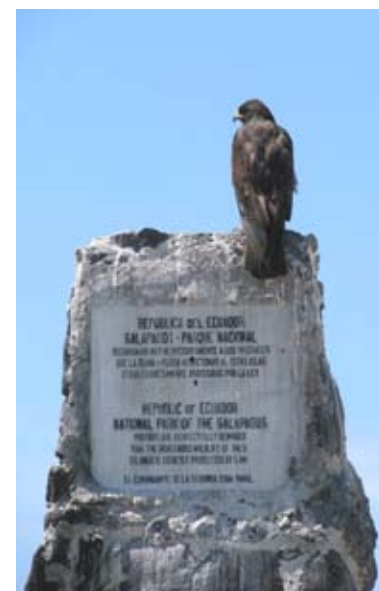
adds that there is a "melancholy" nature to Lonesome George, who is over 100 years old.

During her trip to the Galapagos, Ms. Tashjian, along with a native Galapagueño teacher, created a lessons plans for a unit called "Paradox of Paradise" Ms. Tashjian plans to teach this unit on the Middle Years Program Theme Day in springtime, which will revolve around the Galapagos Islands. Ms. Tashjian hopes to hold a naturalistic poetry event during this theme day.

The trip to the Galapagos Islands had a significant impact on Ms. Tashjian. Because of the strict waste standards on the Islands, she has become more mindful of her own waste in terms of water and energy consumption. To this end, Ms. Tashjian recently became the

supervisor of the Environmental Club, which aims to inform and have an impact on the local ecosystem. Ms. Tashjian notes that people in the United States take things for granted and do not realize how in other places such as the Galapagos, even basic necessities, such as water, are scarce.

The effects of this trip are apparent in minimal ways as well. She says that after the program had ended, she had with her an empty plastic water bottle, and while she no longer had any use for it, she knew that throwing it into the nearest trashcan was not an option; "I just couldn't bring myself to throw it away," Ms. Tashjian reminisces. This has certainly been a life-altering experience.



A bird perches on the Galapagos National Park monument, reinforcing the message of conservation



A sign welcoming visitors to the Charles Darwin Research Station

Inside:

An Atheist's View of the Holidays.....pg 2

New Years Resolutions.....pg 3

Four Christmases Review.....pg 3

Sports Round-up....pg 4

Holiday Festivals Abound In Charm City

Anias Stambolis-D'Agostino

Snow is falling; lights are being strung to rooftops; days are getting shorter. It's that time of the year again, and all throughout Baltimore, people are celebrating the festivities. They are taking place from November to January, and bring the holiday spirit to Baltimore.

The Monument lighting in Mt. Vernon marks the beginning of the holiday season for many Baltimoreans. An annual event, the monument lighting takes place on the first Thursday of December (December 6th this year), and features local performers, holiday

activities, food and vendors, as well as a grand finale of fire works.

Another seasonal event is the Mayor's Annual Christmas Parade in Hampden on Sunday December 7th. The parade features floats, marching bands, motorcycles, and it begins at the Polytechnic/Western complex and ends on the corner of Chestnut Ave. and West 37th.

Also in Hampden are the lights of 34th street, famed for its holiday spirit. Christmas Street, as it is known, (between Chestnut and Keswick) is decorated all season long, with elaborate lights and

extensive holiday decorations.

For those looking for a family excursion, look no further than the B&O Railroad Museum. There will be numerous ways to celebrate the holidays, including holiday stories, videos, and crafts, as well as something new – a train ride with Santa Claus. In addition, elves will distribute free candy canes. This Festival of Trains is happening from November 28th to December 30th at the B&O Railroad Museum.

One of the most deservedly celebrated traditional seasonal events is The Nutcracker, a well-known dance performance

that celebrates the holiday spirit. The show is performed at many locations in Baltimore, including The Lyric Opera House (December 19th through 21st), the Baltimore School for the Arts (December 12th through 14th) and The Meyerhoff Symphony Hall.

To mark the final day of 2008, enjoy live music and activities at the Inner Harbor, followed by a countdown led by Mayor Sheila Dixon as well as a musically choreographed fireworks show. The event begins at 9pm and ends at 12:30am on New Year's Day.

Baltimore City College
3220 The Alameda
Baltimore, MD 21218
410.396.6557
bcc.collegian@gmail.com



An Atheist's View of the Holidays

Peter Merritt

I am an atheist. Unfortunately, there are many misconceptions about atheists during the holidays. The biggest of these misconceptions is that atheists have no appreciation for, and do not enjoy, the holidays. The mere fact that someone doesn't believe in a God does not mean they don't enjoy celebration. Atheists just celebrate for different reasons. For instance, being an atheist, many people would assume that I don't like Christmas. This is actually far from the truth. I don't celebrate Christmas because I think it is the day Jesus Christ was born, but because I enjoy the "holiday spirit", hanging out with my family, and getting presents.

(Of course I like giving them, too...)

I was brought up in a very religious family. I went to church every Sunday from the time I was born until about the age of 13, when I decided that I no longer wanted to attend. My parents told me they wanted me to get confirmed, and the last thing I wanted to confirm was my faith in the Catholic Church. So, I stopped going. But I still go to church with my parents twice a year, on Easter and Christmas Eve, to make them happy. Although I don't enjoy going to church, these holidays are not a burden for me, because I get to spend them with my family.

Basically, atheists are not all hardened awful people that don't get a single bit of joy out of the holidays. Holiday traditions are fun for everyone, whether they are religious or not. Christmas trees and menorahs aren't just for people for who believe in God!

The Question of the Season: What is Your New Year's Resolution?

New Year's Resolutions are made every year, in an effort to shift towards a more positive lifestyle. Although the effort is not always successful, we applaud those who make the effort and have showcased a the silly and serious resolutions from the students and staff of Baltimore City College.



"To show that I appreciate my family and friends and better balance my responsibilities." Arielle Taft '09



"To brush up on my geography." Mr. Smith



"To get taller." Blair Davis '10



"To be more focused on my class work." Christianne Dillard '12



"To survive the graduate classes I'm taking." Ms. Sampson



"To wear more earth tones." Bryan McKnight '09



"To pass Mr. Morrow's class." Leland Shelton '09



"To get my car and not get hit." Brooke Shird '10

THE COLLEGIAN Editor in Chief Maia Gottlieb

Section Editors

News: Zoe Rammelkamp
Opinion: John David Merrill
Features: Eliana Fabiyi
Clubs: Kaitlin Meissinger
Sports: Henry Waldron
Photography: Andrew Nagl

Staff Writers: Joshua Beckett, Kate Bouth, Debra Brown, Simone Davis, Casey Durkin, Kenesha Gray, Briana Haley, Shakira Hamilton, Nia Hampton, Daisy Hart, Tanasia Hazelton, Sakiera Malone, Julien Pol-lilo, Julia Queale, Sierra Richmond, Lanee Rudolph, Joshua Russakis, Nhandi Singleton, Anias Stambolis-D'Agostino, Arielle Taft, Sparkle Taylor

Staff Photographers: Auriel Carter, Nekia Hampton, Nicholas Hill Nancy Morales
Copy Editor: Agata Nowosadko
Cartoonist: Christopher Clemens

Publisher: T Dawson
Advisor: V Valcik
Printer: Homestead Publishers

EDITORIAL POLICY

The Collegian, Baltimore City College's student newspaper, provides for communication among all citizens of the Baltimore City College community. The Collegian exists as an open forum to reflect student opinions, report student issues, and entertain.

Students write all articles and editorials. On occasion The Collegian prints individual writing as signed articles on the editorial page. The byline shows that the opinions are those of the writers. The staff examines articles for fairness and accuracy; the advisor assists with mechanics, structure, and legal issues.

A decision by The Collegian Editorial Board, composed of the Editors-in-Chief, the business managers, and other section editors, determines the content of all unsigned editorials. Unsigned editorials are allowed at the discretion of The Collegian Editorial Board, as are anonymous sources.

The Collegian reserves the right to edit letters that it considers libelous, obscene, or too lengthy. Only signed letters are accepted, however, names may be withheld upon the request of the writer.

The First Amendment to the Constitution grants the student press rights and privileges as long as the reporter or the paper does not abuse the guaranteed rights of any citizen. Abuse may be in the form of libel, obscenity, invasion of privacy, or material interference and physical disruption of the educational process. The Collegian will not intentionally commit any of the above abuses, and if accidental abuse occurs, will rectify it immediately.

The Collegian will do its utmost to retain an independent point of view and be free of any biases. According to the law, the principal, as publisher of the paper, may censor the paper if necessary.

The Collegian is the newspaper of the Baltimore City College community. If any member of the community sees errors, it is that person's duty to inform the staff.

The Collegian welcomes letters from all readers. To send us letters, or to access our Editorial Policy, simply email us at bcccollegian@gmail.com.

City Students Celebrate Holidays with Family, Friends, and Food

Maia Gottlieb
Sierra Richmond
Arielle Taft

Although the holidays always seem to include family, friends, and food, every family has a unique aspect to its celebration. In a brief survey of City students, *The Collegian* found people who value all three aspects.

For senior Evangeline Cheatham, presents have more than just material value; they allow her to connect with her family. "I hang out with my family and, traditionally, my older sister, and I wrap the gifts for my younger sister and act surprised on Christmas Day when she opens all of the gifts. And then I go to my grandmother's house for a big feast."

Another senior, Caira Artis, believes giving is all the more important since life is all too short. She says, "I enjoy spending time with my family, collecting gifts and money, and giving gifts to all my younger family members. I think the holidays are a

time to appreciate family, because you never know when they won't be there anymore." Although we have plenty of givers here at City, Junior Dominique Woods sees herself as more of a receiver. She's not afraid to admit, "I free-load at my friends' houses and go to work; the usual."

Senior John David Merrill included travel in his holiday plans. John David, does not, however, forget his homework obligations. "For Christmas, I fly down to Atlanta where my family lives, and we all celebrate Christmas together by exchanging gifts and all twenty two of us sit down to dinner at the dining room table, and then I lock myself up in my room and do homework for the rest of the break."

Freshman Shakira Hamilton has the final word on the subject, sharing that. "I party with my friends and family all day, because after all, that's what the holidays are all about!" *The Collegian* couldn't agree more. Happy Holidays!

A Jaunty Holiday Frolic

Zoe Rammelkamp

I generally find Christmas movies to be lame, sappy, and completely unrealistic. However, after laughing out loud during the previews for "Four Christmases," I decided I would give it a chance. I am pleased to say that "Four Christmases" didn't disappoint. Was it sappy and unrealistic? Absolutely. But was it lame? No.

From the first scene, "Four Christmases" shows both its potential and limitations. Kate (Reese Witherspoon) is sitting alone at a bar when a tall man with glasses approaches her and begins flirting with her. Kate quickly stops this man, telling him that she wants a real man. She storms off, and the man follows her, showering her with insults. This change in attitude attracts Kate, and immediately, the two begin to passionately kiss. We later learn that Kate is in a relationship with this man, Brad (Vince Vaughn), and the entire scene was an act.

Kate and Brad both scorn the idea of marriage, children, and family. In fact, for the three years that the two have been dating, they have escaped celebrating the holidays with their parents by taking exotic vacations instead.

Kate and Brad avoid seeing their families because they both come from dysfunctional, split households. However, when the couple's vacation to Fiji is delayed due to massive fog, they are left with no other option than to celebrate Christmas four times: once with each parent.

The encounters with the different family members are highly entertaining. Brad's brothers are trained fighters who taunt him non-stop; Kate's mother volunteers Kate and Brad to perform in the Christmas production at her church, despite Kate's stage fright; Brad's mother disgusts her son because of her cradle-robbing relationship with Brad's childhood best friend; and Kate realizes that maybe family isn't such a bad thing.

"Four Christmases" is a light, enjoyable movie, but there is a deeper message to the film; "Four Christmases" proves that family is not something we can disregard and ignore, no matter how annoying and problematic the members may be. This movie is one of the cutest movies I have seen all season, and I highly recommend it.



Left: the LG Dare, is one of the top holiday gifts of 2008. Photo courtesy of lgmobilephones.com
Top: Chocolate is an always effective crowd pleaser.

Easy Stocking Stuffers

Katlin Meissinger

Chocolate

If you're down to the wire with no time and no other ideas, chocolate or anything sweet is a great default gift for the holidays. Godiva or Ghiradelli are quick and available at most stores and are usually wrapped and decorated beforehand. If you have extra time, opting for homemade treats is another great idea which you can also personalize.

Magazine Subscription

They're great because it's something you know the person will actually use and appreciate. Not only do subscription come at a discounted price around the holidays

but they often include a complementary gift.

MP3 Accessories

iPod and Zune are becoming increasingly popular in today's society so getting extra gadgets for the music lovers in your life will be a thoughtful nod towards their handy dandy devices. Transportable speakers, alarm systems, and colorful skins are all easy, quick, and relatively cheap but definitely worth it in the long run.

Splurge: Technology Gifts

If you have extra money, go for the Nintendo Wii, The iHome, or the LG Dare, which are the most popular technology gifts of the year.

Music Review: Killers, Ludacris Disappoint

Joshua Russakis

The Killers: *Day & Age*



It's always sad to see a band you enjoy put out a bad album. Sadly, this is the case with The Killers' newest album. They have managed to take all of that raw guitar sound that grabs you and apparently traded it in for a cheap synthesizer. What happened to Brandon Flower's voice? The lead singer has realized that instead of putting some time and emotion into the songs he can simply breathily whine it out. Although "Joy Ride" is a nice ode to The Clash, this one redeeming track is too little too late.

Ludacris: *Theater of the Mind*



I always look forward to a Ludacris CD but I think I could have done without this one. The repetitive drum loops, synthesized horn hooks, and the "sinister" symphony samples do nothing to show Ludacris' fans that he has done anything new with his music. It seems like he has just phoned it in on this album and called a bunch of friends to rap for him. Almost every track features another artist and only two of those, "One More Drink" and "What Them Girls Like", turn out to be decent. Not even Jay-Z and Nas can save this album.

Christmas Concert Entertains and Affects

Julia Ann Queale

On Saturday, December 13, 2008, the Baltimore City College Choir held their annual Christmas Concert, "In Silent Knight" at Concord Baptist Church. Although a tight squeeze, the choir pushed the audience to move; standing, singing, and dancing along, as though they had known each other for years.

The concert began with the men's choir singing "Masters in

This Hall" as they took to the stage in a uniformed, angelic procession. Following the procession were songs including "Ave Maria," "Emmanuel," "Fum Fum Fum," "Betelehemu," and many more songs in the holiday spirit. As the talented Singing Knights sang "The Night that Christ Was Born," it moved the audience to tears as they raised their hands with emotion.

Any one person who came

Cafeteria Overhaul in the Works

Maia Gottlieb

In addition to the new tables and chairs, Head of School Dawson is promising much more change to come to City's cafeteria.

Some of his ambitious programs include the installation of televisions, packaged salads, and even a cook-to-order chef. This would increase the quality of the lunches and add a healthier component.

The current cafeteria food has few proponents, and lacks nutritional value. Junior Nicholas Vail complains of the cafeteria food, "It smells and tastes really awful."

One program that seems to be in the works is a healthy vending machine program. In this program, students would select a variety of health foods to stock the vending machines from a "food fair". Students would be responsible for vending machine upkeep, but would also receive the profits from the machines.

Dawson doesn't intend to be extravagant in his spending. Indeed, the new coat of paint on the cafeteria walls was simply leftover paint.

Music Review: Killers, Ludacris Disappoint

Swim Team Leaves Competition to Trail in Wake

Julien Polillo

The hard work and pre-season training has finally paid off for City swimmer John David Merrill. John David, who has swam five days a week since early September, placed first in both the 500 and 50 meter freestyle in City's first meet, against Patterson. City's coed swim team is led by senior captains Henry Waldron, John David, and Emily Swartz. Other seniors on the team include Kevin Gamble and Jacob Agus-Kleinman. City started the season strong with a dominating victory over Patterson, taking first place in every race.

John David grins when asked about last year's season and his impression of this year. He says, "It couldn't have been better, we won the city championships for the first time in three years" and his expectations are very high for this year. In the past, John Da-



New regulations force the City swim team to find other practice spaces

vid notes that City has had trouble with a lack of female competitors. However, this has changed and the team has "several freshmen that will contribute greatly."

Although their first meet set the bar high for the rest of the season, problems with City's pool could interfere with their success.

Due to new regulations the pool requires a replacement drain. IN the meantime, the team remains pool-side. Captain Henry Waldron says it has an enormous impact on the team, "It really lowers the team's morale if you have to walk down to Mervo or the YMCA just for practice."

Even with the "construction obstruction" there seems to be enough positive energy to fill the pool. City's swim team looks to be in good shape for the upcoming season.

Wrestling Team Creates Legacy of Success

Michelle Zei

Leland Shelton and Darrell Gray, both seniors, are co-captains of the wrestling team this year. Last year, the team won the Baltimore City Championships and the District Championships. This year, they hope to win the regional championship. The team has both veterans and rookies. Shelton recalls the influence that older wrestlers had on him when he was a freshman and he hopes to teach new wrestlers all he has learned, leaving a legacy behind

after graduation. He explains that, "Wrestling is a sport that's made for everyone, but everyone is not made for wrestling," meaning that the sport is for people of all shapes and sizes, but you must work hard, be dedicated, eat right, and be willing to learn in order to be a successful wrestler. Shelton says this team has the hardest workers in the City. Thus far, this has proved to be true as the team is off to a great start, winning their first three matches of the season, including those against Edmonson and Mt. Carmel.

College Application Tips

Nia Hampton

Seniors, it's time to stop procrastinating, and prepare to apply to college. By now you should have at least taken the SATs and have an idea of what college you'd like to attend in the fall of 2009. (If not put this paper down immediately and head for the college advising office, because you have work to do). But for all my other fellow Knights headed to college, we here at *The Collegian* have some handy suggestions and a couple of tips to help you along the way.

December

- Work on your grades, essays, and service learning hours
- Request that the college guidance

office send your transcript to the college of your choice

December Dates to Remember:

December 26: Registration deadline for January SAT (Register online at www.collegeboard.com)

January :

- Make sure that your teacher recommendations are sent in
- Don't forget to give the person who writes your letter of recommendation a thank you note
- Work hard to make your mid-year report as good as possible

January Dates to Remember:

January 24: The SAT (it is a graduation requirement to take the SAT at least once)

Indoor Track Stretches New Muscle



The track team stretches in the the third floor hallway after running laps, overseen by Coach Hamilton

Zoe Rammelkamp

After several of Baltimore City College's star runners from the 2007-2008 school year graduated, it appears that City's indoor track team will have a difficult start to its indoor season. Nevertheless, there are several promising run-

ners on the team: sprinters Adrian Coxson '10 and Michael Lampkin '09 have both been valuable assets to the men's 4x 200 m relay, and Brittany Murray '09 came in second in the 1600 m run on Thursday, December 11. The team is bound to improve as the season progresses.



City players practice daily for the citywide competition

Men's Basketball Shoots for State Finals

Michelle Zei

Beginning the season with a 2-1 record, the boy's basketball team has a long season ahead of them and plenty of opportunities to shine. The team is practicing hard and working on their chemistry, as there are two new transfer students: Tandario Bogues and Tore Turner. One major obstacle is the loss of C.J. Fair, one of their key players, who is currently sidelined with a

knee injury. With the exception of Bogues and Turner, the team is very experienced, with many seniors bringing talent to the table. Maurice Johnson, senior captain, says this year's team has an advantage because they are "very fast." The team aims to win the city title and go to the state finals. Hard work and unity will pave their way to success in the 2008-09 season.

Women's Basketball Is Back

Michelle Zei

Seniors Carissa Williams and senior captain Breaira Barksdale have a strong sense of determination. Last year, the women's basketball team lost the regional championships and now they're back with a vengeance. Williams and Barksdale think the team is more mature and motivated this year. Breaira is a veteran player on the team and has seen several players grow over the past few years. In particular, she mentioned junior, La'Shay Taft. "She has mentally matured and knows how to not just play well, but win. She is a great asset." The team has one common goal: to go to the University of Maryland Baltimore County for the State Championships. They plan to achieve their goal by staying together, being consistent, and going hard. They have won their first three games, including a victory over Lake Clifton, and are working hard towards more success in the future.

On December 26 and 27, the team will participate in the Lady Miller's holiday tournament in New Town, Owings Mills.

February Dates to Remember:
February 3 – Individual FAFSA workshop. You must pre-register to attend. Registration will begin in January!

February 8 + 15: College Goal Sunday – see OCA for more details