

BMA Alumni News

Serving Lake Ariel, Philadelphia and Blue Mountain Academies



In Recognition of the Class of 1956!

The Alumni Association would like to recognize the class of 1956 – the *first* graduating class of Blue Mountain Academy – celebrating 65 years as an alumnus. As the class' flower, white gardenia, is not the type of flower that survives the climate of BMA, the Alumni Association has dedicated an oak tree honoring the class of 1956. Stan Grube, class agent, accepted the gift during the Sabbath School services held at BMA Alumni Weekend 2021. Stan was a panelist for the Sabbath School panel discussion. The pin oak was selected not only for its hardiness, but as an oak tree representing the Class of 1956's strength and endurance, referencing Biblical strength and endurance as expressed in Jeremiah 2. The class motto, "His will, our way," and the class aim, "Faithful until death," will be placed on a plaque at the site of the tree commemorating the 28 graduates of the class of 1956.



Ever De Araujo of the 65th graduating class meets Stan Grube of the 1st graduating class, celebrating 65 years as an alumnus. Ever was also a panelist. Below Stan Grube marches with his class' banner in celebration of the 1956 class.



Alumni Weekend 2021 – 65 Years and Counting!

Due to COVID-19, Blue Mountain Academy held a virtual Alumni Weekend 2021, April 23 - 25. With over 800 combined views, Burney Culpepper, Principal, announced future in-person alumni weekends will also serve its constituents virtually, accommodating those who are unable to attend in person. Leading up to the weekend, BMA sponsored "reunion meetings" (03/22 – 04/16/21) for each of the honor classes and their friends, enabling them to visit with one another via chat rooms. Each honor class was afforded the availability of two sessions of reunion meetings. Highlights of the weekend were our guest speakers, Mark Heisey (1972), Orlan Johnson (1983), and Jim Slater (1985). Having Sabbath School as a panel discussion is new this year, and was dedicated to the class of 1956, celebrating its 65th alumni anniversary. A special "then and now" video of the 1956 class was also presented. Dave Weigley (1970) moderated a hybrid Sabbath School panel discussion on the topic of "Celebrating Covenants and Community." Some panelists participated virtually and some were in person. A special "banner march" was provided by the 2021 graduating class, recognizing the creativity of each class and their class mottos. Represented in the banner march were Lake Ariel Academy, Philadelphia Academy and the honor classes of 2019 and 2020. Alumni weekends are never without music. Integrated throughout the weekend were beautiful music videos presented by a host of alumni, and a former faculty member. A collaborative music program was held in the afternoon encompassing alumni and current students of BMA's La Sonnet and Bel Canto directed by Eric Engen and Flora Rivera. Former music director Mr. John Edison, and alumni musicians Boyd Gibson (1971); Pamela Yingst Griffin (1964) and husband, Darrell Griffin; Kathy Lichtenwalter (1970); Julie Karpenko Reid (1992) and husband, Charles Reid; Zina Thomas Johnson (1982); Dorothy Porawski-Orzechowska (2000); Camme Carlson Watkins (1986), Barbara Galambos Carlson (1960), Jeannie Daugharthy Harris (1985) are amongst those who presented music videos. If you missed this year's virtual Alumni Weekend 2021, you may still view the services and enjoy the beautiful music via <https://www.bma.us/alumni-weekend>.



A hybrid Sabbath School class. Panelists participated both virtual and in-person. On left, participants Stan Grube (1956), Ron Reading (1972), Dave Weigley (1972) and Ever De Araujo (2021). On right, participants, Bernie Albright (1958), Celeste Ryan-Blyten (1988), Geoff Isaak (1983) and Brittany Doyle (2011).



"BMA's Heart" *

In Memoriam

During the past year we have lost several of our alumni and former staff members. Let us remember their families in prayer with the loss of their loved ones. The list below may not encompass everyone, as we can only report on those we have been notified of.

- Barkman, George (1957)
- Beyer, JoAnne "Granny" (1970)
- Farver, Irene (school nurse)
- Grey, Terry (1971)
- Hallman, Wesley (1965)
- Heisey, Darwin (faculty, English)
- Johnson, Lonnie (1971)
- Landis, Joyce (Garrison) (1956)
- Norris, Terry (1977)
- Palmer, Cheryl (1983)
- Price, Don (1972)
- Runyan, Donald (faculty, Music)
- Smith, Mike (1983)
- Stivers, Dale (1977)
- Wuchenich, Nanette (1965)

*Photo entitled, "BMA's Heart."
 Photo taken by Autumn Revels when on campus during Camp Meeting, summer of 2012. It is of the mountains to the left of the Ad Building when facing the ad building from the cafeteria. The opening of the clouds appears to be in a heart shape, reminding us of God's reassuring, everlasting love for BMA, the students & staff, and for each of us as alumni. A sign of hope.

**BMA Alumnus, Jim Slater,
 an Ironman Triathlon,
 and YOU!
 September 26, 2021**

Alumnus, Jim Slater (1985), is scheduled to participate in an Ironman Triathlon, September 26, 2021. Some of you from the 80's era may remember Jim walking across campus with a halo collar due to an injury sustained while in attendance at BMA. Although Jim experienced quite an ordeal, he is thankful for the lessons learned and the opportunity to see first hand how the staff of BMA care about their students. Jim in his desire to "give back" has presented the Blue Mountain Academy administration and the BMA Alumni Association Executive Committee with an exciting fundraising idea benefitting the students of Blue Mountain Academy, and maintaining the Academy's and the Alumni Association's motto, *"They shall be all taught of God"* *John 6:45*. Jim will be participating in an Ironman Triathlon this September with proceeds donated to BMA in support of providing students with a sustainable Christian education. However, the success of this campaign depends on Y-O-U – we need your help to be effective with this campaign. Jim has set the goal at \$200,000 and to date in just the short time since the campaign launched BMA has received \$7,175. A great start, but far from the goal of \$200,000. In order to support this wonderful opportunity in giving, please go to:

<https://ironmanfoundation.donordrive.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=donorDrive.Participant&participantID=2496#donate>

To watch Jim's powerful video regarding the campaign and his reasons for creating this opportunity, please go to:

<https://youtu.be/IL6QtyMMaz4> or
<https://www.bma.us/race-for-eternity>

The graphic includes a thermometer on the right with a scale from \$17,450 to \$200,000. The current goal is \$200,000. A QR code is labeled 'SCAN ME' and 'www.bma.us/race-for-eternity'. A triathlete is shown in a blue jersey with 'RACE + ETERNITY' on it.

News You Can Use!

bma

scholars

Scholarship Recipients: Each year Blue Mt. Academy provides scholarships to worthy students. The various scholarships or endowments have been created throughout the years honoring various alumni and/or faculty members who have passed. The students are selected based on their academic and/or music achievements, combined with their citizenship towards others.

These funds are provided thru your donations and we **thank you** for your support of BMA's students.

BMA Endowment – Anastasia Masiuk

Diller Endowment - Stephany Weberling and Miriam Rodas

Gray Endowment – Joyce Mogire

Ingergard Endowment – Catarina Falcao

Kiessling Endowment – Lourdes Garcia

Sorensen Endowment - Matheus Gaulia

Orndorff Endowment - Gracelyn Culpepper

Unruh Endowment - Kyle Williams

Wetzel Endowment - Elismary Perez

Karpenko Memorial Scholarship -

Joohyn Kim and Anna Bondarchuk

Anna and Joohyn receive their scholarships during Alumni Weekend 2021 services.



At this year's annual business meeting, the following officers for the BMA Alumni Association Executive Committee were voted in:

President, Dwight Salkey (1983) – [dwightsalkey@gmail.com](mailto:dwrightsalkey@gmail.com)

1st Vice President *

2nd Vice President, James Slater (1985) – james@abbit.biz

Secretary/Treasurer, Patricia Revels (1971) – tar291@outlook.com

*As the person(s) voted upon for the position of 1st Vice President have declined, we are looking for an alumnus who might be interested in filling this position. If you are a motivated person, looking to help the Alumni Association grow in a more active and positive direction, please submit a letter of interest to Dwight Salkey at [dwightsalkey@gmail.com](mailto:dwrightsalkey@gmail.com) .

We **WELCOME!** three new class agents to the BMA Alumni Association:

Class of 1976, Kathy Mulholland Jorgensen – bmaalumni1976@gmail.com

Class of 1992, Elizabeth Shniper – eshniper@gmail.com

Class of 2021 class agent, Jared Piliero – jaraedpiliero21@gmail.com .

Please be supportive of our new class agents and watch for their communications to you regarding alumni activities and alumni weekends. It is important for all class agents to communicate to their former fellow classmates regarding Alumni Weekend 2022, especially for alumni of Lake Ariel, Philadelphia Academy, and the upcoming honor years 1957, 1962, 1967, 1972, 1977, 1982, 1987, 1992, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2012 and 2017 to stay in touch with your class agents as we look forward to Alumni Weekend 2022! And while it may not be the class of 2021's honor year, it is important to come back and visit with friends!

We Need Your Help!

Missing Members.... We have several alumni whose addresses are no longer current. In an effort to keep these alumni up to date with alumni activities, alumni weekend, etc. we are asking your help in locating the missing alumni. If you are in touch with any of the following persons, please ask them to provide us with their current mailing address and/or email address. They may reach us at bmaalumniassoc@gmail.com .

1973 Robinson, Gary

1988 **Class Agent**,

2007 Dawson, Steven

1973 Varmer, Candy

Detrich Dennis

2007 Reese, Nicole

Are you interested in becoming a class agent?

The following classes are in need of an agent - 1957, 1973, 1983, 1993, 1996, 2007, 2009, 2015 and 2017.

Class agents play an integral role in the operations of the BMA Alumni Association. Please contact us at bmaalumniassoc@gmail.com .

Alumni Spotlight

Harry Benson, class of 2013, is this issue's focus on alumni.



Blue Mountain Academy will host the Pennsylvania SDA Conference Camp Meeting Friday, June 11 thru Sabbath June 19, 2021. Please be sure to read BMA's website with regard to meal tickets – **cash or credit only**. **Meals for Sabbath must be paid in advance**. For detailed information concerning meal tickets and their particulars please go to: <https://bma.us/campmeeting-meal-tickets> or thru the Pennsylvania SDA Conference's website.

Guest speakers will include:

Dr. Carlton Byrd, Dr. Eddie Ramirez, Pastor Shawn Bonstra, Leona Bange and more! The PA SDA Conference will be following CDC guidelines. Please check the Conference's website for information and details regarding CDC guidelines, reservations, scheduling of seminar speakers and guest speakers, and scheduling of events for children, youth, young adults and adults at <https://paconference.org/camp-meeting/>. **If you are unable to attend you are able to view each service via the conference website.**

[Hope for Today](#)

"You will be secure, because there is hope; you will look about you and take your rest in safety." Job 11:18 NIV

What was your experience at BMA? If I were to pinpoint one event that really defined my experience at BMA, it would be a project I had to do my freshman year in Bible class. The project has stuck with me ever since I was assigned it. There were two parts of this assignment, one was to sing a hymn, by yourself, and in front of the whole class. The other was to write and preach a sermon in front of the whole class. I remember the fear of singing and preaching in front of my friends, I was what you would call a shy and quiet student. But I also remember how I felt afterwards. I felt inspired. Not to sing mind you, but to preach.

Throughout my BMA experience I grew spiritually, preaching small sermons at my local home church and I was eventually baptized during my graduation weekend in 2013. I remember all the staff members, who I would eventually work with, showed love and support through hard spiritual times, not just as a student, but as a staff member as well. I remember a former staff member talked with me about how I spoke during graduation weekend, they told me, "You must do something with your talent." That love, care, and the challenge to share my faith with others is what my experience at BMA was about.

Why did you decide to come back to BMA to work? Initially, I came back to finish paying my tuition that I owed after graduating. But after the first year I was offered a chance to stay as a full-time staff member. I do not think it was clear from the beginning what God had in store for me, but He surely was able to bring it to light as the years came and went. But I do remember a part of my agreement for working at BMA.



I made a promise to myself and to those who would come as students, that they would have an even better experience than I had. I wanted my experience to be built on and improved for those who seek a relationship with God. My full responsibility does not just involve the day-to-day agenda items to accomplish, it requires every decision made, be made with the student's future in mind. That future involves a close walk with God. Even if they had never thought about it before coming here, I wanted to provide a place that gives as much opportunity to see the character of Jesus through their experiences with friends, special guests, and especially staff.

What is your role at the school? So, I often joke, my job is whatever needs to be done, I will do it. We all wear different hats when it comes to our jobs. But my main responsibilities include being the Industry Supervisor and the Health Food Store Manager, while also coordinating the campus recycling. I am a part of the BMA Church's chaplain team, organizing our Sabbath School program. I also have a focus on further developing BMA's media ministry as well. This entails operating our streaming and training students in how to stream or record our church services and other events and be able share the content with their loved ones and friends. Being a part of so many ministries is truly a blessing. My work here, though sometimes exhausting, is a big part of my spiritual life. I honestly think, if I did not work here, I would not be a part of the church today. God had my spiritual life in mind when He brought me to not just work here, but to accept the challenge to share my experience and my faith with our students and staff members.

Last Spring and Summer, during a time when the academy was closed due to COVID, Mr. Harry Benson hosted virtual Sabbath School services for the students, staff and anyone who wanted to view / participate. Mr. Benson did this in collaboration with student, Ever De Araujo. Ever hosted from Brazil, and often Mr. Benson and Ever would invite other guest speakers to participate.