



The Spectrum



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Academic Teams Head To The Corn Belt

Sweet Victory for the Science Team after 17 Years of Patient Progress

By RASHMI JASRASARIA
Spectrum Staff

On March 19, the AB Science Team won first place at the State Massachusetts Science Olympiads held at Framingham State College, securing its ticket to Urbana, Illinois for the National Science Olympiads on Saturday, May 21. Fifteen members and four alternates rounded out the final state team and led AB to its much-awaited victory.

The state competitors were seniors Katie Ames, Jonathan Eisenberg, Oliver Hong, James Richards, Annie Wang, and Haoshu Yang; juniors Samarth Bhargava, Jack Coldwell, Kostya Kashin, Alex Kazberouk, Lucy Li, Andrew Reiter, and Paul Suntsov; and sophomores Maya Khasin and Prabhat Putchkayala.



Mr. Dempsey answers a student's question during a meeting with the science team.
NATE FRANZI / *Spectrum Staff*

Alternates who attended the meet were sophomores Anna Tarkanova, Scott Chen, and Albert Chuang and freshman Yi Liu.

All the members and coach Brian Dempsey were very excited about their victory.

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Speechies Debate In the Land of Cheese

By SUE ZHANG
Spectrum Staff

"I am the BEST mother-pheasant plucker EVER to pluck a mother pheasant!" This tongue twister, along with many other favorites, was belted by a mass of 46 well-dressed high schoolers on the bright morning of February 12. And it was a Saturday that would prove quite successful for AB's Speech and Debaters.

In the qualifying tournament hosted by Shrewsbury High School, six students from AB were able to beat out tough contenders from Milton Academy, Newton South, and other high schools to receive a slot in the NCFL (National Catholic Forensics League) Nationals. Dave Estabrook, Mark Amoroso, Stephanie Li, Ian Keyworth, Wenxi Li and Susan Yao will be hopping on a plane bound for Milwaukee, Wisconsin to participate in the two-day competition this Memorial Day weekend.

The achievement is quite an incredible one. For each of the eight events (Extemporaneous Speaking, Declamation, Duo Interpretation, Congressional Debate, Dramatic Interpretation, Original Oratory, and Poetry/Prose), each school was allowed to send only six of its most qualified people. The competition was fierce as the best from each school battled it out. Each event was organized into three rounds of six contestants, so that each student had to prove his or her worth not once but three times in front of a variety of judges. For Congress, competitors from AB went against a chamber of fifteen other students in a furious debate that lasted five hours.

Due to the ferocity of the competition, there's little wonder that some participants are beginning to feel the stress of the looming Nationals. Mark Amoroso and Wenxi Li are both anxious about the amount of work required to

prepare for Congress at a National level, as participants qualified in this event may have to research as many as 100 bills. Admits Li, "I'm a bit stressed out - between all the AP's and testing in May, I'm terrified I won't have enough time [to research]."

Junior Ian Keyworth also has mixed feelings concerning Nationals. "One part of me is really psyched to go to Milwaukee, but another part of me is sad that among the 40 [contenders I beat] were some of my close friends. I eventually got over it, but it still feels like a burden to be representing the ENTIRE Interpretation portion of the team, because there is so much talent there that I feel I have to live up to."

Despite a few slight misgivings, the general attitude of the six qualified is still excitement. Steff Li, one of the AB qualifiers in Extemporaneous Speaking, states she's "pumped like gasoline." Looking forward to its four-day vacation to Milwaukee, the group quickly formed a to-do list to start carrying out upon their arrival. "There's an awesome restaurant next to the Milwaukee Children's Museum. I will make sure we go there," said Susan Yao, who qualified in Original Oratory. This light-hearted approach to the tournament is encouraged by coach Mr. Beck, whose own to-do list somewhat resembles that of his imaginative students. "The number one thing to do there is eat and have fun," he says. "Actually doing well at the tournament is #27 on the list," he continued. This jovial attitude towards Nationals is backed up by the surge of confidence felt by the group. In terms of succeeding at this tournament, the qualifiers don't seem too worried. "I'm going to drop a bomb on Milwaukee," confidently stated sophomore Dave Estabrook, who qualified in Extemporaneous Speaking.

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AcaDec Storms into the Windy City

By SRUTHI VALLURI
Correspondent

On Saturday, March 5 at the Massachusetts state meet, the AB Academic Decathlon continued

its trend of success. Last year's champion, AB emerged victorious once again this year and is on to its way to represent the Bay State in the Windy City.

A group of twelve students

from the junior and senior classes of AB trained, studied and labored for many weeks to finally reach the climax of success at the state meet. The group was comprised of three competitors, called scorers, and an alternate from each of three levels. If the alternate scored higher on a test than one of the official scorers, then the alternate's points would be counted.

"They worked hard and were well prepared," said coach Andrew Crick, an English teacher at AB.

AB's AcaDec powerhouse was pitted against sixteen other schools to advance to a regional tournament in November. Amidst all the competition, AB racked up a whopping 41,723 points, 5,681 points more than Wellesley, who took second place.

The overwhelming victory

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The Academic Decathlon Team, coached by Mr. Crick, proudly displays its state championship trophy.

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News

Drunk Driving Gets Real at AB

By HELEN ALESBURY
Spectrum Staff

On March 7, AB got a powerful reminder of how harmful drunk driving really can be, as juniors and seniors participated in the "Sean and Betsey" assembly



Students participated in an introductory statistics game at the student-run SADD assembly.
ALFRED DEGEMMIS / *Spectrum Staff*

organized by the ABRHS chapter of Students Against Drunk Driving. The assembly focused on a local tragedy. Six years ago, Sean and Betsey, high school sweethearts from North Middlesex High School, were killed in an accident with a drunk driver. The core of the assembly was a presentation by Betsey's mother explaining her own personal account of the disaster. Presenters highlighted the consequences of drunk driving with statistics and personal experiences presented in an engaging format.

The program began with an interactive activity. Approximately 20 students volunteered to come up to the stage where eleven podiums had percentages between

zero and 100 displayed. The players were told to guess certain statistics. One of the more startling statistics was the percentage of teenagers who said they would actually call their parents when they or their friends were drunk. There were almost 45% fewer kids who would call than their parents believed. This discrepancy shows the lack of communication between parents and their children. To curb drunk driving among teens, it seems imperative that parents promise to not punish their children if they call for help.

Also, about 30 percent of Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related car crash during their lives. Approximately 18 million Americans meet the criteria for alcohol abuse or alcoholism.

Sean and Betsey's fate is a stark reminder that these statistics represent real people. These students had a bright future and were great to friends and family. No one around them expected it to happen. Unfortunately, a drunk driver ran through a red light and hit their car from the side; the impact of the crash killed Sean instantly; Betsy was airlifted to the hospital, where she died later that night. Her friends have dealt with their loss by helping create

this program to raise awareness. Betsey's mother speaks at every assembly she can to inform students about the tragedy.

"I don't know how I do it each time, but it's those few kids that come down and talk to me, that make it worth it," says Betsey's mom.

Students found her presentation to be very powerful. "I thought it was really moving, especially how Betsey's mom talked to us. It made it more real," said Lauren Wolahan, a junior.

Unfortunately, many of Sean and Betsey's peers have again started to drink and drive despite the tragedy that befell this couple. The fact that their story hasn't seemed to have any lasting effect is something that needs to change; new statistics show that the (once falling) rate of teenagers killed in drunk driving accidents is now rising.

Many students shared their own stories during the assembly, taking the experience to heart. This was something the SADD members were glad to see. The purpose of the assembly was to remind students that this is a problem that does not easily go away and is very serious, affecting the lives of everyone involved. Although most students did not know Sean and Betsey, their story was very affecting. "I found it very powerful and emotional," said junior Nathan Franz.

who took bronze overall in the Honor level along with two other medals. "It's a group of really crazy people actually. Besides the tedious details, AcaDec is about learning: learning about the truth behind Mr. Crick's adventures, learning how to appreciate Italian opera, and learning how to wait forever for a meal in Chili's with a group of overly tired, brain-dead nerds."

So, it's on to Chicago for AB's nine members. For Crick, this will be his fifth national level competition. He has already been all over America with previous teams: Alaska, where they've watched icebergs cave in on the ocean; Arizona, where they toured the Grand Canyon; and most recently, Idaho, where the AcaDec team placed fourth at Nationals.

All of the AcaDec members agreed that they are looking forward to some out-of-Acton life experiences: going to downtown Chicago and absorbing some city nightlife, catching a theatre production, digging into some deep-dish pizza, finding a way to apply their knowledge of how long accretion powered pulsars work and in general, having fun. As Crick says, "With this year's enthusiastic group, it should be a blast."

said Crick, chuckling lightly. "All of them are new." And against all the odds, the team managed to carry the tournament, taking eight overall medals along with the Super Quiz trophy for the only team event.

"There's a legacy that we have to answer to," said Swetha Valluri, who took silver overall and ten other metals in the Scholastic level. "Newbie or not, we all did the best we could."

True to its word, the AcaDec team managed to carry on this legacy with dignity and grace. "We get two comments whenever we go to tournaments," said Coach Crick. "They say that we're the best dressed, and that we're the best behaved."

But AcaDec is far from a gathering of stone-faced intellectuals—it has its own fanfare. Students from the other school dressed in togas in honor of this year's social science subject Ancient Civilizations. The Weymouth team carried its contestants out onto the stage on a makeshift throne, and whenever a student got a right answer, teammates cheered, hooted and hollered as if they had won a fortune.

"The team is not all studying," said junior Rashmi Jasarasia,

Few Details about DeGraw Concert Emerge

By ESTHER PARK
Correspondent

Although many details have not yet been released, Gavin DeGraw is coming to Acton Boxborough in May as the grand prize award for the 2004 Song Lesson Contest by the Rock and Roll Library. We all have many questions about how the concert will be staged and who will be able to attend, and all of our questions will be answered within the following weeks. Ms. Buonopane, the English teacher whose winning lesson brought about the event, and Mr. Donovan were able to provide helpful information on this occasion that will certainly go down in ABRHS history.

Participants of the contest had to submit lesson plans that incorporated the hit song "I Don't Wanna Be" by Gavin DeGraw. The Rock and Roll Library chose this song because they felt it delivers an important lesson to today's young adults. Ms. Buonopane incorporated the contest into the curriculum of her sophomore English classes. She connected the song's message of individuality to her unit on Transcendentalism, a literary and philosophical movement of the late 1800's associated with people like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. Emerson's and Thoreau's messages of self-reliance, independence, and introspection translate to the lyrics of DeGraw's hit song.

DeGraw will be coming sometime in May, but there are no updates on a finalized date. During the school day there will be an awards ceremony, reception and discussion with Ms. Buonopane's students, Question and Answer Session with DeGraw and a panel from the Rock and Roll Library. Additionally, a concert will be held right after school, and all

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Yet Nationals is not the only thing that one lucky qualifier is excited about. Besides qualifying for Congress, Wenxi Li is also the lucky winner of a random hat draw that took place in a Sacred Heart tournament on February 26. She now has the opportunity to attend Sacred Heart's Summer Speech Camp, a two-week program intended to further improve speaking skills and delivery. A panel of twenty former national champions will evaluate and critique campers. "I've never won anything," attests Li, "so out of all the things to win, I'm really glad it was this."

Despite all the great individual achievements, however, the most impressive of AB's accomplishments for 2005 may be the growth of the team as a whole. Many of the qualifiers for Nationals place

students may attend. Recently, Mr. Donovan and Ms. DeRome met with the class presidents and school council members to figure out how to distribute tickets for the concert, as the auditorium has limited space. The students decided that the concert should be open to all grades. After setting aside about 100 seats for Ms. Buonopane's students, the rest of the seats will be given through a lottery of interested concert-goers and will be non-transferable.

So what is AB's response to all of this? Anishi Shah, one of Ms. Buonopane's freshmen students, says, "Ms. Buonopane was flipping out when she told us he was coming. The girls were really excited, but the guys were just like, 'Who's Gavin DeGraw?'" It seems that the girls are more enthusiastic about the event than the boys. As junior Bryan Shaffer puts it, "I guess it's good, but I really don't care about Gavin DeGraw."

DeGraw grew up around music. The 26-year-old New York native started playing the piano at age 8 and also plays the guitar in addition to singing and songwriting. Hits like "I Don't Wanna Be" and "Follow Through" which feature his gentle, soothing voice and lyrics on love and life have brought DeGraw success. But the singer is level-headed about his success. He looks past the fame to his true passion, music. His J Records debut album "Chariot" was released in July of 2003, and his "Chariot-Stripped" was released in July of 2004. About his career, he says, "I'm more concerned with just getting something positive out there...writing and playing songs and making a connection with people. Those things make a lot more sense to me than trying to be the Next Big Thing."

heavy emphasis on the fact that of the six qualified, only one, Susan Yao, is a senior. Three—Amoroso, Steff Li, and Estabrook—are sophomores, while Keyworth and Wenxi Li are juniors. This variety is a stark contrast to last year, when the seniors dominated the Nationals scene. The age difference between the qualifiers this year testifies to the development of AB Speech and Debate. As Amoroso said, "[it] really is a statement about how diverse the talent is on this team. And it shows that there'll be more talent in years to come."

Mr. Beck agrees. In spite of all the team and individual winnings, the Speech and Debate coach is most pleased with this year's team unity. "It's nice to win too, but at the end of the day, [the unity is] what I'm most proud of."

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can be attributed, in part, to their rigorous training. The team includes competitors Alex Kazberouk, Lucy Li, Rashmi Jasarasia, Andrew Dai, Blaise Nothorn, Swetha Valluri, Linda Yan, Gautam Bhatnagar, and Ankit Chandra; and alternates Andrew Kuo, Kevin Liou, and Mike Kukuliyev. The team started preparing for the state competition immediately after study guides were sent out early in the school year. Soon after, they started taking practice tests in seven academic subjects: Super Quiz, a series of five difficult questions regarding astronomy (this year's theme); art; economics; literature; math; music; and social sciences. Once they had mastered these, the team members prepared for written essay, speech, and interview events.

"It's stressful, but in the end, you get a sense of accomplishment," said junior Alex Kazberouk who took gold overall in the Honor level, along with seven other medals. *Accomplishment* seems to be an understated description for the AcaDec team of 2005; the creation of this year's team was a feat in itself.

"The team was put together from scratch, at the last minute,"

News

From Books to Bills: Harvard Model Congress

By NICOLA RENTSCHLER
& ANDREA BAUM
Correspondents

From March 3 to 6, ten AB juniors attended the annual Harvard Model Congress at the Sheraton Hotel in Boston. HMC is an annual mock-Congress event coordinated by Harvard University students, and it is open to all high school students in the US. In order to participate, students applied by stating why they were interested in participating in this program. During the selection process, in addition to reading these paragraphs, “a group of Social Studies teachers, most of whom have taught the applicants, try to ascertain who has a sincere passion and can be part of a cohesive group,” said Ms. Lynn, Social Studies department chair. Another consideration was the willingness of the candidates’ parents to aid in the development of the program. In the end, ten students were selected from the applicant pool of about thirty juniors.

Once the selection process was complete and before the Congress began, the chosen students, along with the 1,300 other students, were assigned a representative or senator to represent over the four days that “Congress” was in session. Students had to research the viewpoints of their congressmen and then take these positions when discussing issues at the event.

One of the attendees, Danielle Raad, was on the Senate Committees of Finance and Intelligence, representing Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa. The issues presented to her dealt with the outsourcing and congressional oversight of the CIA. Another student,

Samarth Bhargava, was assigned to the Armed Service Committee, which covered the military draft and civil defense. Marty Benson, who played the role of Representative Dave Camp (R-Michigan), worked on passing a law for mandatory high school drug testing. Benson commented that part of the fun of politics is “getting really into the passing of something. Writing a bill is like raising a child. You will do whatever it takes for it to succeed.” Also in attendance were juniors Maureen Dane, Robert Duggan, Julia Rey, Sarah Linet, Kathy Ward, Hilary Burgin, and Ariel Klein. Everyone enjoyed the experience.

“AB kids owned!” exclaimed Raad, “5 out of 10 of us won awards for outstanding performance in a committee.” Overall, AB won 7% of the House of Representatives and Senate awards, an impressive feat, considering that only ten AB students were competing with over 1000 other high school students.

According to those who chose to participate in HMC, it was an unforgettable experience that they would willingly repeat if given the chance. “I give HMC two thumbs up!” said Bhargava.

Summing up his experience, Benson declared, “I was blown away by the atmosphere of the place. The political rallies, the large party caucuses, with music blasting and Republican cheers being screamed, being approached by lobbyists, being recorded for the nightly news show, reading about my work in the daily newspapers, and working with kids from all over the country. The experience was like no other that I have ever been a part of.”

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“The victory was sweeter because we didn’t expect to win. We expected to get our butts kicked!” said an excited Eisenberg. “We haven’t gone to Nationals since 1988, and beating Lexington was also nice,” said Bhargava. The Lexington High School team had won States several years in a row, finally to be beaten by last year’s victors Newton North, who came in fourth at the state competition this year. “It’s amusing when you win,” remarked Kazberouk. Alternate Liu is excited “to continue the dynasty we’re starting now.”

Coach Dempsey credits the victory to the “bright, interested, and motivated” students on the team. “All of the students take such a leadership role,” commented Dempsey. The student leadership sets Science Team apart from other groups in the school.

The unique organization of the team into two separate groups, Regionals and States, has also been important to the Science Team’s

success. Regional competitors meet Tuesdays after school and are led by officers Wang, Putchkayala, and Kazberouk, while State competitors meet Wednesdays and are led by officers Ames, Bhargava, and Richards. There are five Regional meets, with one every month from October through February. Three or four events are held at each meet, and prepping for these events helps students prepare for the States as well. “The regional group is very important,” said Coach Dempsey. Recently, Lexington stopped competing in the regional competitions, and Dempsey believes this led to their demise as the state champions. “They lost their feeding, their JV. You can’t have a varsity team without JV.” To be a state competitor, a student must take practice tests created by the officers. The final fifteen selected to compete at the state Olympiads then work specifically toward the March meet and focus a lot on building events. They are the var-

By JARED EISENBERG
Spectrum Staff

On March 29, Acton held its annual town elections, and this year the town once again voted to override Proposition 2 1/2, the law stating the town’s property tax cannot increase by more than 2.5% each year. The override vote included a pyramidal design, providing voters the options to vote for a \$3.8 million override, a \$4.5 million override, or none at all. The \$3.8 million override passed 56% to 43%, with 1% of the populace abstaining. The larger override failed to pass by 6%, failing 46% to 52%.

Had both overrides been rejected, \$821,500 would have been cut from the high school budget alone, equivalent to the salaries of 23 full time staff members. Included in these layoffs would have been six monitors, meaning the library capacity would have been reduced from 160 students to a mere 50 students at a time, with the additional possibility of having to restrict access to other areas of the school, such as one of the student unions.

Many, including Principal Steve Donovan, argue that for the situation to be rectified, Proposition 2 1/2 needs to be abolished entirely. “You can’t raise the property tax by 2.5% when you’re raising salaries by 3.5%. It doesn’t fit,” he remarked on the current paradigm. Expressing his

city competitors.

At the March state meet, students competed in an average of three events each out of a total of twenty events belonging to three categories. There were several academic events such as “Fossils,” where competitors had to identify the structure, age, and function of certain fossils and “Forestry.” The academic events were the more knowledge-rich events and are usually set up in stations like the Honors Biology lab practicals. Other events were more application based, such as “Designer Genes,” which involved students interpreting fingerprints, and “Chem ID,” where students had to identify unknown powders. Finally, there were the engineering events, or “building” events, as the team fondly calls them. These “take a lot more preparation and testing—designing, building, testing, and redesigning,” says Coach Dempsey. “They are a good example of how engineering works, and they are probably the most

support for modifying the law, Mr. Donovan added, “It’s a ridiculous law. It’s not workable.” In an effort to pass the override, many top school administrators talked to various groups around town to

still has good cause to be so adamantly in favor of the override. If it had failed to pass, one vice-principal and a counselor would have been laid off, causing our counselor-to-student ratio to suf-

fer more than it already has: AB’s current ratio is about 1:240, almost 70 more than at some other Middlesex County schools, such as Concord-Carlisle and Lincoln-Sudbury. Teacher-to-student ratios would have been harmed as well. Some teachers are already trying to handle 140 students, and as Mr. Donovan observed, if this figure had become any higher, hiring new teachers would have been as difficult as holding on to current ones. In attracting new teachers, Mr. Donovan says, “School climate, collegiality, and health insurance are my three selling points.” If the school had been forced to lay off monitors, teachers would have had to act as campus monitors. This, coupled with the fact that class sizes continue to grow, would have made it easier for other schools to

draw away the creative, talented teachers Mr. Donovan is trying to attract.

Overall, AB would have been a very different next school year if the override hadn’t passed, but as Mr. Donovan proudly pointed out, “We don’t have to spend 12 grand [per pupil] to have one of the finest systems in the Commonwealth.”



Senior David Emer and junior Marty Benson hold up signs to promote the Override at Kelly’s Corner.

NILADRI SINHA / *Spectrum Staff*

rally support for their cause.

The principal is sympathetic to the hard economic times many citizens are going through, but he advocated, “People who can vote [for the override], should.” Economic hardship is what caused 43% of the town to vote against an override of any kind, and the additional tax burden that did pass will be a strain on some Acton citizens’ budgets.

However, the administration

difficult events.”

AB took first place in “Storm the Castle,” a building event that involved building a trebuchet (a type of catapult). “Paul did an outstanding job all year working on the catapult,” said Coach Dempsey. While most other teams used the same basic design for their trebuchets, Suntsov came up with something very different and original. “People usually stick to the old designs to win, and we proved that wrong.” Suntsov was proud to see other teams come and admire the winning trebuchet from AB, and he is excited to showcase the new design at Nationals.

Aside from the “Storm the Castle” medal, AB also placed first in “Designer Genes” and “Physics Lab.” However, the team didn’t necessarily medal in that much. “This year showed that a focus on the team rather than on individual medals won in competitions. We had fewer medals than some other schools, but had solid scores

across the line,” said Kazberouk.

Most of the events will be carried over to Nationals, but the team will have to meet some new challenges. “Wright Stuff” is a new event that calls for the team members to build an airplane that has to fly a certain distance, and they are certainly ready to meet that challenge.

Mr. Dempsey commended this year’s Science Team members. “I’m really proud of them because I try to give them as much support as possible.” He praises them for taking initiative and encourages students “who liked to make model robots, build bottle rockets, or even just play around with chemistry sets when they were kids” to think about joining Science Team.

“There’s a trend that once you win states, there’s a good chance you’ll do it again,” said Mr. Dempsey, already looking forward to next year.

How Much Do You Know About The New SAT?

New SAT Spells Few Changes For AB Courses

By MATT KAGAN
Spectrum Staff

Studying for the SAT always means different things to different people. For some it means having to practice many math problems, for others it means studying hundreds of vocabulary words, and for a few select students, it simply means taking hours of practice tests.

With the new SATs already underway, however, the concept of studying for the SAT has changed radically for all. How exactly is the school preparing the students for the new SAT? How should the curriculum change to accommodate the changes that have been made? These questions were on the minds of many teachers at AB when the news about the new SAT first came in. For some, the questions still remain.

Three departments of the AB faculty are particularly concerned with the changes to the SAT. In this writer's opinion, the math department ought to be gearing up to

account for the addition of harder problems, such as math from Algebra II and Trigonometry. The English department should ad-

dress the new essay and grammar sections. In addition, the counseling center needs to provide teach-

ers with more in-depth information about the new SAT. Surprisingly enough, the math department is making few

nothing" different, for "the new material that is added, that the SAT called 'Algebra II' [is what] most of the students do in Algebra I, or at least at the beginning of Algebra II." Therefore, approximately 90% of the students at AB who take the SAT will know the tested material. Noeth also points out that the primary reason for the math department to not take that much action is because the math level at AB is so much higher than that of the average American high school. He points out that "some time ago there was a big hype about the fact that fifty percent of high school graduates have taken Algebra II. [Here] at AB, it is considered the norm."

The English department has also taken little action in fundamentally changing its curriculum. Because English department head Ms. Telicki is now on maternity leave, few official decisions are being made about the change of curriculum. Many teachers are beginning to prepare students for the upcoming SAT, however, fo-

cusings especially on the new essay portion. Some teachers have given their students 25-minute essays to write in class, while others have them examine other people's essays to improve editing skills.

The main job of the counseling center, in terms of the SAT changes, is not much different than it was before the new SAT was installed. According to counseling department head Susan Serino, "teachers come down here to pick up booklets on the new SAT and other resources produced by the College Board [and] students continue to come and talk to their counselors about the new SAT." The counseling center also has other resources, such as several books from many different sources, that hold information about the new SAT. Serino adds that "the counseling center is not involved in any curriculum changes that the English or Math departments might consider, but instead provides the teachers with the information needed for them to make the decisions about those possible changes."



Math Department Chair Mr. Noeth said that "absolutely nothing" will be changed about the math curriculum as a result of the new SAT.
NEETHU YÄRABOLU/ *Spectrum Staff*

ing them as an admission factor. The reasoning behind this is that the SAT essays are all written in a controlled environment for applicants. Therefore, using the essay as an admissions test

changes for the new SAT; in fact, department head Bill Noeth says that they are doing "absolutely

Juniors Speak Out About New SAT

By KOSTYA KASHIN
Correspondent

The SAT made its debut on March 12 after undergoing a tremendous makeover. The new SAT now has a Writing section, involves Algebra II problems, and is longer than its predecessor. Both analogies—which many students thought were a pointless memorization of words—and quantitative analysis problems in the Math section have been completely removed from the new SAT. The Writing section that has been added to the test will require students to write an essay in 25 minutes, as well as answer PSAT-like questions about grammar and sentence correction. Despite its lengthiness, the test will not be "necessarily harder," says the College Board. Ms. Murphy, a counselor at AB, declares that the test will "not be harder for [AB] students" because the students here are better prepared for the essay, the harder math, the grammar, and other parts of the revised test.

The new test, according to its founders The College Board, is "a measure of the critical thinking skills you'll need for academic success in college." English teacher Ms. Anthony believes that the new test, specifically the essay, is "a better assessment of [students'] writing skills...[and is] an opportunity to show knowledge, not to show what you don't know." After the University of California schools refused to accept the old SAT as a true measure of success in high school or as an indicator of future performance in

college, the College Board decided to change the test. The College Board claims that the new test is significantly better, and Ms. Anthony believes that "[there] will never be a perfect system...this is the best that the [College Board] can do." Kent Owen, a junior who took the SAT recently, maintains that the test is better because of the essay portion; he feels, however, its length is still a problem.

The essay on the new test is the part that has many students worried. Students are now uncertain whether their illegible handwriting will lead to a lower score, or whether they can finish writing the whole essay in the short time allotted. Kent Owen asserts that "[you] have to keep writing the whole time to complete it." The essay prompts are similar to those encountered on the MCAS and will involve the use of supporting evidence from literature, everyday life, and personal experiences. A sample prompt from the College Board website reads, "Are people motivated to achieve by personal satisfaction rather than by money or fame?"

Junior Sophie Sikina, however, claims that the essay is not the hardest part of the test; in fact, she prefers it because it is the first section. The essay, she says, is unproblematic as long as you come prepared with a few novels fresh in your mind on which you can write the essay.

In addition, the essay also ushers in the problem of college admissions. Schools to which applicants release their SAT scores will have access to the essays, and some of them are contemplating

using them as an admission factor. The reasoning behind this is that the SAT essays are all written in a controlled environment for applicants. Therefore, using the essay as an admissions test

for now because "many colleges are still going to require their own application essay, at least in this transition phase," says Ms. Murphy.

The format of the test has

passage-based reading analysis. The Math format is mostly multiple-choice questions, but it also contains student-produced "grid in" questions. Junior Danielle Raad contends that the Critical Reading section was quite hard, while the other sections were relatively easy. In addition, there will be a section of either Critical Reading, Math, or Writing that will not be scored. Beth Morris, a junior, says that "Everyone hates the experimental section because it just makes the test longer...[it's] too long as it is."

The SAT has also undergone a scoring change. With the addition of a new section, the total score will now be out of 2400 instead of the traditional 1600. (Each of the three sections will be given a score out of 800.) The essay will be graded by two different readers who will each assign it a grade out of 6. The essay, while intimidating, will only account for about one third of the Writing section.

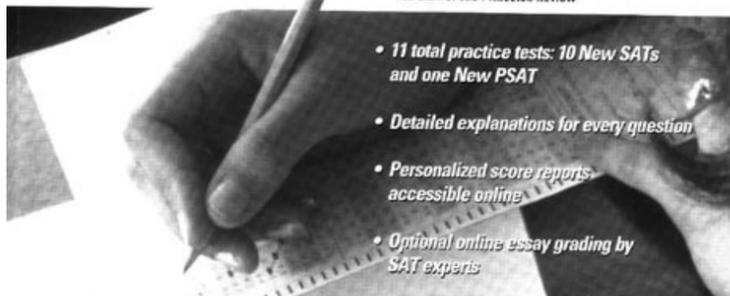
Despite the ongoing controversy over the SAT and ways to improve standardized testing for high school students, this test appears to be here to stay. With the class of 2006 being the first class to experience this test, the new SAT has now completely replaced the old one. The new SAT will now be used for admissions decisions for college for this year's juniors. There are two test dates remaining for this year, May 7 and June 4, and if you're planning to take the SAT before next year, sign up soon or you may have to drive to the Cape for your test location!

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The
Princeton
Review

11 Practice Tests for the NEW SAT & PSAT

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The new SAT, which tests "the critical thinking skills you'll need for academic success in college," has caused a mixed reaction among AB students.

could further even out the playing field for admissions. Often, student essays are heavily helped by teachers or mentors, and therefore, the essay may not reflect the student's ability and work. However, there is little to worry about

changed as well. Three sections each of Critical Reading, Writing, and Math questions are scheduled to take three hours and 45 minutes to complete. The Critical Reading sections will have a mix of sentence completion questions and

Local Politics

In Come the Incumbents

By EVAN BROWN
Spectrum Staff

Tuesday, March 29 saw yet another exciting local election for the town of Acton. With several positions being contested for and a highly debated override being put to vote, the registered masses came out in great numbers. In fact, of the 12,507 registered voters in the Acton community, 55% voted on the last Tuesday of March.

The uncontested elections held no surprises, as several incumbent candidates ran without opposition. The reelections of this nature included Donald Mackenzie as Town Moderator, Robert Surdel to the Memorial Library Board of Trustees, Dennis Sullivan and Kenneth Sghia-Hughes to the Acton Housing Authority, Charles Orcutt III as Water Supply District Clerk, and Stephen Stuntz as Water Supply District Commissioner.

Not all of the positions were filled without opposition on Election Day, however. With Regional School Committee mem-

bers Jeff Vandegrift and Mary Ann Ashton stepping down after years of service to the school and the community, two spots on this crucial committee were open. A competitive race ensued between



Lauren Rosenzweig, who was elected as a selectman on March 29, speaks at a meeting of the Acton-Boxborough Democrats.

NILADRI SINHA / *Spectrum Staff*

three candidates. Sharon Smith-McManus and John Ryder won seats on the committee with 26% and 21% of the vote, respectively. Allen Nitschelm, the only other candidate, was unsuccessful in his bid with only 17% of the vote.

Interestingly, the predominant winner was the "Blank" category, which captured 34% of the town's vote.

In another important race, F. Doré Hunter, the incumbent chairman of the town Board of Selectmen, ran against Lauren Rosenzweig and Alexander Horovitz for two open selectman positions. Rosenzweig, the current chairman of the planning board, was the leading vote getter with 33%; she was followed closely by Hunter's 27%. Both were sworn into the Board of Selectmen at Town Meeting. Horovitz garnered only 15% of the vote and did not win a position. Finance Committee member Herman Kabakoff, who was not on the ballot, won approximately 1% of the vote through

write-ins.

Voters chose to raise their own real estate and property taxes to fund a \$3.8 million override to fund school and municipal projects, but rejected the \$4.5 million override for the same purpose.

Editorial: Don't Vote Blank

By EVAN BROWN
Spectrum Staff

Looking at the results from the March 29 town election, you might notice that several races went uncontested. Even closer inspection reveals that in many of these races, the only person running did not win 100% of the vote. In fact, not a single one got 90%, and only one, Donald Mackenzie, as moderator, received at least 80% of the vote. In most cases, about one in four voters chose not to vote for the only possible candidate. This is not particularly alarming, as in many cases the voter may not know anything about the candidate, and thus he or she may choose to simply leave the space blank. Much more alarming, however, is the presence of this phenomenon even in contested races.

The battle for the two open seats on the town Board of Selectmen was not kept secret. Forums were held for the public so that the candidates could voice their opinions, and the local television station carried some of the forums for those who were unable to attend. Local newspapers wrote articles on the candidates, detailing the qualifications of each. In addition, it's not as though F. Doré Hunter, Lauren Rosenzweig, and Alexander Horovitz have been hiding for the past three months; while we haven't seen an intensely cutthroat race, the three have been available on many occasions for questioning and discussion. However, the blanks still managed to capture 23% of the vote. Looking at the School Committee election, we see the same thing, only to an even greater degree. The media reports that Nitschelm and Smith-McManus garnered the most votes, but blanks beat them both by a hefty margin with over

a third of the vote. In the election for people who will sit on the committee that helps to determine how our money is spent and who our superintendent is, the voters made their voices heard: "We don't care," they seemed to be saying. "Or at least not enough to fill in an arrow."

Perhaps I am being overly critical. Granted, many of those voters were there primarily for the override vote, and the results for that topic showed much less apathy on the part of the voters. Of the 6800 plus voters on the \$3.8 million question, only 55 left the question blank, or less than 1%. However, if these people care so much about how much money our school gets, should not they also care about the people who help to decide how it's spent?

Fellow ABRHS students, almost all of you will be able to vote within the next four years. Many of us will be on college campuses for the 2006 mid-term elections and the 2008 presidential elections, while others will be out in the working world. During this time, there will be numerous local elections on the state and town level, and all of them will have an impact on our lives. No matter where you are, you can get an absentee ballot. Many experts believe not enough people are going out to vote on Election Day, but apparently even some of those who do turn out do not even bother to vote. We live in a world that, for better or worse, offers us more information about national and global politics than we could ever want. Please, the next time there's an election, do a little research and go out to vote for somebody. And if someday Tae Bo expert Billy Blanks runs for public office, vote for him, and laugh at the irony of the situation.

School Committee Discusses Online Courses at AB and Bids Adieu to Departing Members

By IVAN ZLATAR
Spectrum Staff

The March 31 joint meeting of the Acton and Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committees, with two members attending their last meeting as representatives and the discussion of online courses on the agenda, was sure to be an important one.

The topic of online courses at the high school was heavily discussed. Committee member Michael Coppolino began the discussion by asking the Student Representatives in attendance what they thought about the idea of taking a high school course over the internet. Senior Evan Brown noted that he thought it was possible, but he worried about the performance of unmotivated students in such a course. "If students aren't meeting with a teacher every day, I would imagine some students would fall behind," he said. Junior Kara Lafferty agreed. "I think most students could handle it," she said, "but there are always some who wouldn't be motivated enough." Acton resident Mike Scanlon commented that he liked the idea, and voiced the opinion that such courses should not count toward the GPA, but rather should

go on the transcript as enrichment courses. Brown agreed, noting that "students may be hesitant to participate in such an unconventional course if they thought it could hurt their record." Mr. Fred Hohn's Environmental Science course was mentioned as one class that incorporated an online component into the classroom in a very effective way. The possibil-

"I may not always have agreed with you, but I knew that your opinions and beliefs were founded in a good place."

—School Committee member Terry Lindgren speaking to departing member Mary Ann Ashton

ity of an even greater role for the internet in Hohn's courses in the future was mentioned, but nothing has been solidified as of yet. The committee agreed to investigate the matter further and continue to discuss it at future meetings. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 5, with the location yet to be determined.

There was a brief performance by the ABRHS madrigal singers, and the meeting continued with recognition of Jeff Vandegrift and

Mary Ann Ashton, both of whom were stepping down from their positions after successful careers of service to the committee. Vandegrift had been the committee's representative on matters concerning the Citizens Technology Advisory Committee (CTAC). Ashton was responsible for reporting on the activities of the Acton Leadership Group (ALG).

Both had also been vocal members of the committee, often offering opinions during crucial discussions. As School Committee member Terry Lindgren noted to Ashton, "I may not always have agreed with you, but I knew that your opinions and beliefs were founded in a good place." According to agenda, Ashton gave her final ALG report to the committee, and Vandegrift spoke about the activities of CTAC for the last time.

The mood of the evening was somewhat celebratory, and not only because of the retirement of two members and the arrival of two new ones. Two days prior, the \$3.8 million override had passed in a town election, which meant that the committee would not have to vote on a budget that could have potentially cut scores of teachers and other staff members from the school system.

Calendar

April	
26	NHS Induction, 7:30 PM
28	Senior Internship Luncheon
29	Senior Community Service Day
May	
3	ABRHS Spring Concert, 7:30 PM
4	Awards Night, 7 PM
5	Regional School Committee Meeting, 7:30 PM
11	College Athlete Night, 7 PM
20	Last day for seniors
24	Senior Internship Breakfast
25	Class Plays
26	Music Department Banquet

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Hey Look! I'm On Film!

By SUE ZHANG
Spectrum Staff

Lined with Macs and other funky gadgets, the studio room in our school has played a fundamental role in aiding many of AB's budding musicians and artists. And for two periods each day for the past few months, the studio room has played host to the makings of AB's own documentary. A quick peek into said room during third or fourth period will reveal Senior Susan Yao sitting amid a clutter of papers, diligently editing her personal self-filmed project. By sitting down with her while she was clicking and dragging the various film clips, I was able to obtain an in-depth look concerning her documentary: what motivated her, how she did it, and what her hopes for her film are.

The very first inspiration for her project came during the summer of 2004, right after her junior year at AB. While many were worrying about colleges and jobs, Yao absorbed herself in a variety of political activities. Attending such leadership conferences in Boston such as the OCA (Organization of Chinese Americans) and the Asian Pacific Association (APA) for Progress, she was able to meet a stream of motivational

speakers. One such speaker was Suchin Pak, a Korean-American MTV VJ, whose personal stories on the subject of prejudice resonated with her. "The general activism [during these meetings] inspired me," says Yao. As a result, she decided to carry this activism to a more local level – Acton-Boxborough.

Acknowledging the fact that busy AB students rarely take the time to notice the subtle prejudices floating around them, Yao resolved that more could be done to raise the level of awareness in the community. For this purpose, Voice Day, she believed, was just not enough. "We need something more than just that one Epcot Day."

Wanting to provide more insight into the problems that occur under AB's polished surface, and considering that "film is a really good medium to reach students," the idea of a documentary was formed in Yao's mind. Notes upon notes were compiled late at night, outlining her idea. However, Yao soon realized that she couldn't fo-

cus on all the problems going on at AB – it would just be too much. Narrowing her scope, she decided to mainly address the issue of racial prejudice, for "it's the one I know most personally."

Thus, the project to "foster

the final list consisted of a diverse group of people. And in the end, it did: the participants included 60 students and 12 teachers, ranging from all ages, ethnic backgrounds, and personalities.

In a conference room in the school building, the interviewees engaged in a filmed one-on-one discussion with Yao on multiracial issues. The discussions started out with the interviewee's opinion on a few basic questions: How do you feel about racial diversity? Racial prejudice? Do you think the school is doing enough on these issues? However, Yao admits that

tary, currently four hours long, to only an hour, choosing only the most effective and touching of stories to share with the public. Now, after countless periods toiling on a Mac, the project is nearing completion; Yao's goal is to have it done by the end of the school year.

After finishing, Yao hopes that the documentary could be used as a class discussion tool, incorporated into a History or English curriculum concerning a unit on prejudices in society. She has already started talking to teachers and administrators from R.J Grey and ABRHS about integrating the video into the classroom. Afterwards, Yao is contemplating sending it to neighboring districts, and perhaps bringing it with her to the college scene upon graduation. For now though, the future of the documentary is still uncertain. "I'm just going with the flow," she says.

Though the road ahead is blurry, Yao's documentary on racial issues seems sure of success. Opening it in a humorous tone, the film soon becomes serious and focused, an eye-opener to the fact that "this does go on." Hopefully, Yao's commitment to this issue will cause the raised awareness that she's been striving to achieve.



Susan Yao films footage for her self-made documentary.
NEETHU YARABOLU / *Spectrum Staff*

an understanding between races" started. As early as September, Yao began amassing a list of possible interviewees for her documentary. She began with student leaders, as they would be the most outspoken, down to acquaintances interested in the project. Wanting to ensure that different view points and opinions would be presented, Yao made certain that

the "good stuff" was divulged mostly when the discussions went off topic. It was then that the conversations would transcend to a deeper level, and the more personal stories concerning racial prejudice would be shared.

Around March, the interview process ceased, and the editing of hours of footage commenced. Yao hopes to trim the documen-

AB Struggles to Attract Diverse Faculty

By OLGA GUZOVSKY
Spectrum Staff

Acton-Boxborough Regional High School is a place where students come in all varieties and encompass an array of interests, talents, and backgrounds. Ideally, the teachers would reflect our students and share a wide range of traits. Unfortunately, Acton-Boxborough suffers from a lack of diversity in its staff.

According to Mr. Donovan, diversity, or lack thereof, is one of the greatest shortcomings in our school. Despite the administration's wish to see a more diverse staff, this wish remains unfulfilled due to the lack of applicants from various backgrounds. Diversity is currently one of the top priorities in terms of faculty recruitment according to Mr. Donovan. "We need to have more role models that students can look up to. We're all too much alike as a faculty," he emphasized. Many counselors fear that some minority students have difficulty opening up to their teachers and coun-

selors, feeling that no connection can be established between themselves and a staff member. During teenage years, students need more guidance from trusted adults than at any other point in their lives. Moreover, many teenagers don't confide in their parents during these years, making it difficult for parents to support their children. Counselors and teachers play a very significant role in a teenager's life, guiding them through the stresses of high school to start on the right path. It is important for all students to be able to connect with their counselors and teachers; a faculty of various backgrounds will enforce such connections.

Ms. Serino, the head of the counseling department says, "We want students to be able to speak to an adult of the same background that has had similar experiences."

Some students feel no tension whatsoever as a result of the homogeneity of the staff. "It doesn't bother me at all," said sophomore Lydia George. "I want my teach-

ers and counselors to be qualified for the job – that's what's important." Unfortunately, not all students feel as comfortable as Lydia with the lack of diversity of our faculty. Last year, Mr. Donovan responded to concerns regarding racial tension by forming the Principal's Advisory Group on Diversity. This group, consisting of administration and three African American students, met regularly to battle against the discrimination in our school. During their interaction with other students, it was remarked upon that a more diverse environment among the faculty would certainly make the school a more comforting place.

The lack of diversity in our faculty is largely due to the lack of applicants of other backgrounds. "It's frustrating that applicants prefer other schools in the Boston area to Acton-Boxborough," commented Mr. Donovan. Schools such as Lincoln-Sudbury and Wellesley tend to be more popular choices both financially and emotionally. Acton-Boxbor-

See DIVERSITY / page 7

From One Francophone Community to Another

By CHARLOTTE BIGFORD
Spectrum Staff

When Madame Arnoldy began brainstorming possible service projects for her French classes, she had to keep two ideas in mind. "First, we want to make a real and meaningful connection to the French-speaking world. Second, as a world language teacher, I believe that my greatest responsibility is to teach my students to reflect upon and actively participate in the world beyond our borders." Acknowledging the French-speaking nation of Haiti as the poorest in our hemisphere, Arnoldy decided to focus the service project on the PAZAPA Center, one of many charitable organizations located in Haiti.

Founded in 1987, the PAZAPA Center is appropriately named, for it means "step by step" in Haitian Creole. The focus of the Center, as stated on its official website, is "to support the treatment, education, and development of children with handicaps, and to integrate them into the community at

large."

The Center's founder, Peter Cunningham, had traveled to Haiti from San Francisco with a band of volunteers. The volunteers worked diligently with Mother Theresa's hospice in Port au Prince and later helped rebuild a Baptist clinic that had been destroyed by a hurricane. Cunningham raised money to support charity projects in Haiti, and he later used the funds to establish the PAZAPA Center. The facility has thrived since its formation with the help of American, Haitian, and others' donations as well as that of charitable organizations.

The clinic and school offer a variety of aid to the poorest communities. The PAZAPA Center's orthopedic surgeons have performed over 700 corrective surgeries on handicapped children. In addition, the Center offers health care, special education for kids suffering from developmental or mental disabilities, and outreach programs working to create vol-

See FRANCOPHONE / page 7



Acton Chinese Language School

By ROSANNA XIA
Spectrum Staff

The Acton Chinese Language School (ACLS) provides education in Chinese language and culture for children. Lessons take place every Sunday afternoon at the RJ Grey Junior High School. A typical Chinese school day consists of two periods, and it helps students kindergarten to grade 8. Mandarin, the official language of China, which is based on the principal dialect spoken in and around Beijing, is taught during the first period. The second period is comprised of a variety of culture classes such as brush painting, martial arts, and folk dancing, as well as supplementary math classes and CSL (Chinese as a Second Language) courses. The Acton Chinese Language School also serves to bring together the Chinese community in the Acton area. Perhaps most importantly, however, the ACLS gives people with a Chinese background, especially Chinese-American children and adopted Chinese children, an opportunity to learn about their culture.

Many AB students are actively involved with the Acton Chinese Language School. Whether it is presenting at seminars, teaching, or doing other forms of volunteer work, having high school students involved with the Acton Chinese Language School helps achieve the ACLS administration's goal "to promote mutual understanding and trust among the Chinese community" (www.acls-ma.org) and to provide a place where people of all ages can learn while having fun. "I think the ACLS definitely brings the Asian community together," said Michelle Zhang, a senior at AB who teaches arts and crafts at the ACLS. "It's basically a place to meet new people. I've met a lot of students from AB in different grades than me that I didn't talk to before, but we got to know each

other through Chinese School." Lucy Li, the teacher's assistant for the brush painting class, commented on how she enjoys teaching every Sunday partly because she is able to have fun and "see all her friends."

"Every Sunday at the ACLS, I see everyone interacting with each other – talking, laughing, reading the Chinese newspaper, and discussing world issues... and it makes me think about how the ACLS has brought a community together," reflects one sophomore. "The ACLS has really



AB students help teach elementary-school-aged children at the Acton Chinese Language School.
MARY LI / Spectrum Staff

created a comfortable, friendly environment where people can come together as a Chinese community and learn the language and culture. And it's not just Chinese people – I see American adults who have adopted Chinese children as well as parents of half-Asian children take the CSL classes, and many Chinese children adopted into American families and half-Chinese children take classes and fit right in among their classmates. I have many of these kids in my class." Lucy Li talks about "a cute little half-Chinese girl that does not speak Chinese" in her brush painting class, and how she "enjoys talking to [the little girl], helping her and translating for her."

The ACLS creates an opportunity for Chinese-American children, Chinese adopted children, and half-Chinese children to interact with other Chinese children and to learn about their roots. "[ACLS] is a great place to learn

about your culture," said Michelle Zhang. "For almost all the kids at the Chinese school, they know nothing about China and it's sad, because it is part of their culture and so it is nice that their parents are sending them to Chinese school." What the children learn in class and from interacting with the other students and being part of the Chinese community will "definitely come in handy later on in life," commented Zhang.

The ACLS also continues Chinese traditions and celebrations that many Chinese-Americans families no longer celebrate because they live in America. For example, the ACLS hosts a Chinese New Year ceremony and performance every year and gives a red money envelope (a very old Chinese tradition on Chinese New Year) to every student in the school. "It's nice that you can celebrate a day that is only being celebrated in China. Being in America, if you don't know any other Chinese families [with whom you can celebrate the holiday], you might just simply skip that holiday. I think that's a shame, because it is part of your culture," asserts Zhang, who hosted this year's ACLS Chinese New Year celebration.

The Acton Chinese Language School has been quite a success since it opened in the spring of 2003. It strengthens the Chinese community, it continues Chinese traditions, and most of all, it provides a friendly environment and opportunity to all who are interested in learning the Chinese language and culture.

It is believed that cultivating Chinese culture and heritage into the young and curious minds of American Chinese children will not only help them better understand and appreciate their origins but also arm them with a better view of the world, a more well-rounded personality, and most important of all: a mind that tolerates and flourishes on differences.
~The ACLS Administration

among other topics, the lack of diversity at AB. They made a commitment to try and reestablish the METCO program, as well as recruit more staff members of different backgrounds by reaching out to minorities and spreading word in minority communities. George Frost, the Deputy Superintendent, has been taking Acton-Boxborough staff members along with him to minority job fairs to recruit diverse candidates willing to teach at a school.

It may take a while for Acton-Boxborough to gain a completely diverse staff. However, the administration is certainly taking a step in the right direction.

Italy Trip

By RUMYA RAGHUNATH
Spectrum Staff

From eating gelato (Italian ice cream) to avoiding a collision with motorinos (scooters) to visiting the medieval Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi, the Italy trip is bound to be eventful. Planned for ten days over this April vacation, the trip encompasses visiting many historic and modern sites including viewing Roman ruins in Pompeii and stopping by St. Mark's Square in Venice, the elaborate Dome, the Uffizi Gallery, and the Accademia. Numerous cathedrals, like the Sistine Chapel and the Vatican Museum, are also included in the itinerary. Furthermore, the trip will also visit Siena, Montecatini, Florence, Sorrento, and Capri. 18 students from various grades, including advisors Ms. Blauch, Ms. Drowne, and Ms. Debs, will be taking part in this exciting excursion.

Junior Leah Wibecan commented that the trip will be "an exciting visit to learn about the art and history of Italy." From

Friday, April 15, to Sunday, April 24, the Italy trip will be a journey filled with art – such as viewing the Giotto frescoes at Assisi – history, and culture. The trip focuses on the main idea of understanding medieval, Renaissance, and modern Italy. Ms. Drowne has been planning this trip for quite a while, while Ms. Blauch, Ms. Debs, and others have hosted Italian dinners and taught several Italian phrases to better acclimate themselves with the atmosphere of Italy. The Italy trip's itinerary has been set, but there is one interesting exception: the previously planned stop at the Vatican may be altered because of the Pope John Paul II's recent death. This may add yet another interesting twist to the already fascinating trip. Ms. Blauch remarked, "We are especially interested in how the recent passing of the Pope will affect our visit to Rome. It is particularly exciting for us to be in Italy during this pivotal time for the Catholic Church." The Italy trip is sure to be an exciting and knowledgeable experience.

Hope for Haiti

FRANCOPHONE / from page 6
un-
teer opportunities and establish local clinics. Beyond providing care for handicapped and neglected children, the Center additionally offers the majority of its job openings to Haitians who are in need of an income, and it has created family support programs that create jobs and hold seminars pertaining to such topics as literacy and women's rights.

The main fundraising event of the service project at AB, affectionately called "Hope in Haiti," is a bingo night set for April 26 in the high school cafeteria. The \$5 entrance fee will allow students and community members to play as many bingo games as time allows. There will also be donation pots located throughout the cafeteria. All winners will randomly draw prizes from a sack; prizes include donated merchandise and gift certificates from various local shops and organizations. All remaining prizes at the end of the night will be raffled off using tickets distributed upon arrival. In addition, baked goods and refreshments will be served, along with a performance by a local high school band, Marmalading.

Arnoldy is involving her French III Honors and French IV AE classes by making her students the prime event planners and dividing them into committees. Each committee is in charge of a different aspect of the bingo night and the project as a whole,

including bingo logistics, bake sale organization, gathering information about Haiti, letter communication with the PAZAPA Center, presentation of Haitian culture and economics, prize donations, and publicity.

On April 5, two Peace Corps volunteers who have served in Haiti (one at the PAZAPA Center) spoke to Arnoldy's classes. By sharing their experiences with Haitian culture and with the extremities of poverty, the speakers offered insight into the Haitian way of life. Working hard to understand Haitian life from another point-of-view, students have sent drawings, photos, and letters to children being treated at the PAZAPA Center. Even further, penpal-like correspondence has started between AB French students and three teen girls who are being treated for polio at the PAZAPA Center.

All said and done, Arnoldy and her French classes will have a huge community service experience behind them. Arnoldy says that "we will have gained a greater understanding of Haitian culture, established meaningful connections to children at the PAZAPA Center, raised needed funds for a worthy cause, and linked the Acton and Boxborough communities to the French-speaking world."

For more information on the PAZAPA Center, please visit their official website at <http://www.siloe.org/index.html>

DIVERSITY / from page 6
ough is not as competitive salary-wise as other districts, especially considering the recent budget cuts. The teaching assignments in other schools are also less demanding. Additionally, schools like Lincoln-Sudbury and Wellesley are members of the METCO program, a minority program that allows minority students from different districts to attend schools. This program is funded by the state and is not offered at Acton-Boxborough because of the cuts being made. Furthermore, these schools have a more diverse staff to begin with, making it easier for newcomers of different cul-

tures to join. "It's not easy to be the first to step into a school where there is no diversity in the cultures whatsoever," explained Mr. Donovan. "Naturally, when given the choice, minority applicants choose the job where they will not be the only staff member of a certain background." All of these factors together make Acton-Boxborough less appealing for minorities searching for a job. Nevertheless, the administration has been taking necessary steps to recruit more teachers of different backgrounds. Last summer, a Leadership Conference was held where the administrators and central-office staff met to discuss,

Forum

Does AB Need a High School Level Sex-Ed Class?

Sex-Ed is Needed at AB Comm. Ed, Driver's Ed ... Sex-Ed?

By WENDY SHUNG
Correspondent

"John and Mary had sex this weekend!" I hear as I walk down the halls at Acton-Boxborough Regional High School. Rumors spreading around high schools are almost as inevitable as teens having sex. Although it is difficult to educate teens to not have sex, sex-ed can teach students ways to prevent them from getting pregnant and getting STD's. No, I don't mean those boring junior high sex-ed classes where kids sit at desks, listening to teachers repeat over and over to practice abstinence. I mean classes where you listen to teachers lecture about responsible sexual behavior.

Teaching abstinence is a bad idea because teens nowadays aren't going to heed teachers' and parents' threats about the dangers of having sex. According to the researchers at Texas A&M University, "Despite taking courses emphasizing abstinence-only themes, teenagers in 29 high schools became increasingly sexually active, mirroring the overall state trends."

About "23% of ninth-grade girls, typically 13 to 14 years old, had sex before receiving abstinence education. After taking the course, 29% of the girls in the same group said they had had sex." Furthermore, tenth grade boys showed an increase in sexual activity of 24% to 39% after receiving abstinence education.

Clearly, many people have sex whether or not they're taught about it in the high school. "We didn't see any strong indications that these programs were having an impact in the direction desired," said Dr. Buzz Pruitt, who directed the study on the effect of sexual abstinence education on teenagers.

So how does all this fit into ABRHS? Many would agree with me in saying that they do not even remember what they learned in ninth grade about sexually trans-

mitted diseases and possible pregnancy. Therefore, high school students ought to be taught another sexual education course, one that does not include the useless basics that we learned in our freshman year about avoiding sex.

Despite the teachers' continuous threats about having sex in high school, many still do it. The solution? If you can't prevent teenagers from getting involved in sexual intercourse, use protection. The problem is that students often lack practical knowledge, such as which condoms and pills are the most fail-safe.

Now, you may be thinking, learning about protection is useless and time consuming. But

By SUE ZHANG
Spectrum Staff

I remember my first sexual education "course." It was during fifth grade at Woburn Elementary. There had been a lot of hassle in the preparation — every student was required to have a permission form, and teachers spent days with their classes, trying to "prepare" them for the content. Then the day came. The whole grade was crammed into a tiny classroom, and a general feeling of anxiety prevailed. *Omgmyfirstsexedmovieomg*. After much light-flickering and hush-hushing, the school nurse finally popped in the video.

That was five years ago, and yet I can still clearly remember

partment of my brain, not the "learning experiences" section.

So when the issue of sex-ed as a required course in high school comes up, I don't waste much time saying, "Hell no!" And though my opinion may have been initially generated during fifth grade, it's not merely my elementary school experiences that lead me to believe sex-ed is unnecessary, fussy, and incompatible with AB's high school system.

Sex-ed in the 21st century seems surely a pointless thing. Many teens these days already know enough about sex so as not to need a whole class based upon it. As high schoolers range from the age of 13 to 19, that's 13 to 19 years that a student has been exposed to media, gossip, and the class sex fanatic. Since the purpose of a sexual education class would be to educate the class about sex, sex-ed can thus be deemed unnecessary, as too many already know the basics surrounding the subject. And wouldn't it be embarrassing if a student actually knew more than the teacher?

For those who've lived a more sheltered life and may not have picked up as much knowledge in their pre-adolescent days, sexual education may seem more beneficial. However, considering all the new books, TV shows, and web sites dedicated to the subject, do we really need it to be taught in a classroom? Just look around, and you'll see that sex facts are around in enough places so as to make the existence of a whole course dedicated to it unnecessary. Don't know which condom to use? Turn on Kiss 108 and hear about the durable Trojan Man. Have questions about pregnancy or your body? Google it; that way, not only do you receive an answer, you also maintain an anonymous identity. Don't know what an orgasm is? Ask a friend. Chances are it'll be less awkward than approaching your gym teacher. Clearly, the alternatives to a teacher-taught sex-ed course are many. Who needs a class when there's the Dummies book series?

Furthermore, a sex-ed course would cause an unwanted stir in the AB community. With the question of sex-ed comes the other question, how detailed will the course be? Right now, ABRHS has a very old-fashioned, politically correct type of sex-ed in place. All AB freshmen are forced to learn about the consequences of sex as they're taught again and again about the symptoms of Chlamydia and the death rates

of AIDS. Granted, it's currently not really *sex-ed* so much as it is abstinence-ed. However, if a new sex-ed class were to emerge, what would the course entail? Learning how to place condoms on bananas? Reading about the Morning After Pill? Instruction on foreplay? Where's the school administration going to draw the line? How will they distinguish between what's deemed necessary information from what's frivolous? Without a definitive answer, the question of sexual education may just place more stress on the school administration. Also, without a definitive curriculum standard, a sex-ed course may incur the wrath of many parents who deem it inappropriate for such subjects to be brought to the school. Since ABRHS is diverse in terms of ethnic culture and religion, many parents may find the new course addition insulting or threatening. Thus, the incorporation of sex-ed here may just become another source of agitation within the community.

Finally, the last thing to consider concerning a sex-ed course at AB is time. A great number of the student body here are hard working, diligent, even a little overachieving. With the hordes of students already trying to overrun their lunch period with an extra Math course, where are AB'ers going to find the time in their schedule to squeeze in sex-ed? For the academically motivated, sex-ed will prove to be just another stress factor. (Years later, when thinking back upon high school days, they'll remember sex-ed only as the stupid class that prevented them from doubling up in Chem and Bio AP.) Due to the competitive atmosphere of AB, sex-ed just wouldn't be compatible in this school system.

Though I acknowledge the fact that many teens these days are having premarital sex without knowing all the facts and dangers, that still doesn't mean that sexual education in the formal setting of a school is needed. My fifth grade experience gave me the impression that sex-ed was frivolous and unnecessary — even a bit traumatic. Though people and circumstances have changed drastically since fifth grade, my view on sex-ed certainly hasn't. The availability of information elsewhere and the way of life here at AB all seem to testify to the fact that sexual education is unessential. And until proven otherwise, I'll just keep reading those pamphlets in the nurse's office bathroom as my own source of sexual education.



Knowing which condoms are fail-safe is one of the many practical skills that students could learn in sex-ed classes.
MARK KAGANI/Spectrum Staff

have you ever gone to any drug-store, such as CVS or Walgreen's, and seen the condoms they sell? There are so many rows of different types of condoms that teens may not know which ones they should choose for better protection. Hopefully, if Acton-Boxborough High School educated students about the types of condoms to choose, they would know which condoms are best suited for them. By giving students the knowledge to help them choose the better type of condom, the school would also encourage them to be more responsible in sexual behavior.

It is clear that many students do not practice abstinence. Therefore, instead of preaching only abstinence in the Junior High, the administration ought to add another high school course that teaches about pregnancy-prevention.

every detail concerning the setting of the memory. However, if asked what I remember about the video itself, I would describe only two scenes that seem to have engraved themselves permanently inside my head. One of the scenes depicts the mother of a family attempting to explain something sexual to her daughters. Her lesson technique? Drawing certain organs using pancake batter. Yum. The second scene that holds an honorary position in my cerebellum includes a bunch of young girls holding up lingerie and giggling. And that about sums up my fifth grade sex education.

After that initial introduction to the subject, it is no wonder that I'm now a little wary of sex ed courses. Not only do I doubt teens' ability to take the course seriously, but I also highly question the effectiveness of sex education. After all, my own fifth grade memory is now stored in the "traumatizing events" com-

Forum

Snack Price Inflation

By SARAH ZHANG
& JITA RAY
Spectrum Staff

One bright, chipper afternoon, fresh back from February break, I was on a trek to the cafeteria in an attempt to satisfy an unhealthy craving for sour cream and onion flavored chips. As I approached the vending machines, while rubbing together two shiny new quarters, I was pleasantly surprised to see that our old, chewed-gum-infested vending machines had been replaced by bright spanking new ones. A reverberating "Yes!" rang through my mind at the thought of no more broken toes from desperately kicking the machine to dislodge a stuck snack. Alas, my temporary state of elation was not to last long.

Once I looked at the prices, my positive thoughts came to a crashing halt. Chips: 85 cents? One cookie: 85 cents? Crackers: 65 cents?!? What was going on? My two shiny quarters might as well have been two crusty old pennies!

A quick survey of other vending machines only confirmed that this particular vending machine wasn't the only one infected by overgreedy-itis. Ice cream that previously topped off at \$1.50 now cost an outrageous \$2.00. (You can buy lunch with that much money!) Combos that cost 50 cents at the school store cost 85 cents in the vending machines.

So why did vending machine prices suddenly increase? Is the school going bankrupt and thus desperate for every cent it can get? Has our cafeteria been taken over by those self-set Fenway ticket prices? Or is it because they just don't like us?

Unfortunately, or actually fortunately, the truth is not nearly as dramatic. According to Heidi Conley, head of the Cafeteria Staff, the school cafeteria has simply decided to switch vending machine companies. Before, the

vending machines were owned by outside companies who sent 25% of profits from the machines to the school cafeteria. However, these companies required the school to fill the machines themselves. Now, the machines are owned by two different companies, Eastern Vend Source, Inc. and Chaff Vending Machines, who come in to fill the machines every other day. All the school cafeteria has to do is wait and collect 20-25% of the vending machine profits.

The cafeteria changed vending machine companies because the cost of labor (to the fill the machines) was becoming prohibitive. Also, the program offered by Eastern Vend Source has been implemented with great success in other schools, such as Leominster and Worcester, where profits reportedly increased by 95%. Despite the lack of hard numbers, I seriously doubt prof-

chines as those from Leominster, the gap in profit probably results from an erroneous overly-aggressive pricing strategy at AB. Because each school has a different system, what works in places like Leominster and Worcester does not necessarily work here.

The real kicker in this situation is that since the school no longer fills the machines itself, the school has absolutely no control over either the prices or the selection in the vending machines. It's true that there is a larger variety of snacks, but the trade-off is much higher prices. The machines have been well stocked (I have yet to see the once oh-so-common empty vending machine during seventh period lunch), but what's the point if you can't afford anything with fifty cents?

So what can we do to change things? The school could offer vending machine items at the



Despite higher prices, students continue to purchase snacks from the new and fully stocked vending machines.
MARK KAGAN / *Spectrum Staff*

its increased by anything near 95% at AB. One reason might be that AB eats a greater amount of food from the vending machines; thus a 95% increase and a 20% increase, in Leominster and AB respectively, might arise from the same increase in number of products sold. However, since it is unlikely that AB students eat three times, or even twice, as much food from the vending ma-

school store at a cheaper price like they do with Combos. Or perhaps it could retain one old machine, so that labor would not be overburdening for the school. Unfortunately, since neither the school nor the cafeteria controls the prices, changes may be difficult to implement. As for me, other than the complaining, laying off those sour cream and onion chips is probably a better idea.

Should Everyone Take Calculus?

By JI XIAO
Spectrum Staff

Sam was a new student at AB, and his first day was overwhelming. Being a senior, he thought it was time to relax and take the easy road. However, comparing his schedule with his fellow buddies at AB, he was astonished. To his surprise, most of his new friends were taking at least one AP course, and some taking more than a few. When he signed up for his classes, he was surprised to see BC and AB Calculus, along with AP Psychology and AP English, among the most

popular courses in the curriculum. Feeling curious, he asked and found out that over 100 AB Seniors take Calculus. This news was difficult for him to process. In his mind, he recalled what his old counselors told his class back in Oklahoma about taking Calculus: "You should only take it if you love math and want to make it your major, because it is a very advanced course, and very difficult." Sam knew that not that many students love math. Then why, he wondered, do so many students at AB take BC Calculus or AB Calculus?

One reason may be that stu-

dents assume that all seniors take Calculus, and therefore, they pressure themselves into doing the same. Most freshmen take Algebra their freshman year. However, due to the peer pressure, many decide to double up in math their sophomore or junior year, just so they can "catch up" and take Calculus their senior year. Doubling up is extremely challenging, especially for math, because math teachers often have tests on the same day. Imagine taking Geometry with Mr. Mutschler first period and then Algebra II with Mrs. Veley second period; the workload would be unbelievable.

The Honor Roll Needs Reform

By STEPHANIE LI
Spectrum Staff

Democracy. Aristocracy. Meritocracy. Almost all students learn about the first two terms at some point during their educational experience, and though they may not be aware of it, students also learn about "meritocracy" at school through direct experience with the term. What exactly is a meritocracy? Webster's Dictionary defines meritocracy as "a system in which able and talented persons are rewarded and advanced." In essence, it is the Horatio Alger philosophy that we have all grown up with: the idea that a strong work ethic, along with persistence through challenges, garners reward. Implicit is the conviction that such reward will be proportional to the amount of effort invested. That is, the harder one works, the more one's work pays off. This is an ideology essential for schools to function, particularly for high-performing schools such as AB. Clearly, to motivate students and to foster a strong work ethic, the school must institute policies that encourage meritocracy. Unfortunately, AB has not been consistent in this endeavor, especially when it comes to the honor roll system.

AB's honor roll system blatantly defies meritocratic ideals. According to the student handbook, a student must receive a B- or above in every course in order to achieve honor roll status, and a student must achieve all A-s or higher to make the high honor roll. At the start of a fresh term, to obtain high honor roll status when long lines of students await their report cards in the cafeteria, many students are eager to discover whether they have achieved honor roll or high honor roll status. However, students who enroll in higher-level courses and who fare considerably well in those courses nevertheless suffer a significant disadvantage compared

to others who fare well in lower level courses. Unmistakably, to achieve either status is an appreciably greater feat for one taking a course one or two levels higher than that of another student's. Sophomore Olga Gusovsky expresses the frustration that many students feel towards this policy when she vehemently declares, "It isn't fair. Why should you be punished for trying to challenge yourself?"

Indeed, the school is well aware of the steep differences in the amount of work and ability needed to succeed at various levels, but no one has taken action to reform the honor roll system. The school's calculation of weighted grade point average, a GPA which addresses the student's course level as well as how many credits the course is worth, demonstrates the knowledge of the discrepancies between levels. Also, the school clearly recognizes the problem when it adjusts a student's grade through the addition or deduction of seven points when that student changes to a different level. Someone receiving an 84 in Honors Geometry would have his or her grade increased to a 91 if he or she switches to AE Geometry. The student's grade receives a comparable addition when he or she switches to a CP course. Though the change in grade is already dramatic, many nevertheless feel that it isn't enough for some courses. The number that takes into account the difference between the levels of difficulty can be considerably greater. Logically, the amount of effort invested into attaining the grades required by the honor roll standards is also considerably greater. If a student falls only one point short of the standard, that student will still not be listed on the honor roll or high honor roll, despite the fact that he or she may have demonstrated a higher ability than someone who was allowed on the roll.

In addition, some students do not understand the difference between AB Calculus and BC Calculus. In the AB curriculum, Calculus is labeled as an AE course. This might lead to the illusion that this class is not challenging, considering Honors is "better." Mr. Noeth says, however, that "AB Calculus is just as challenging as any other honors class in AB, even though it is in the AE level. It is for students with the potential to do well in an AP course, yet not considering math as their future major. BC calculus is a serious course for students determined to pick math as a ma-

nor part of their future. If you are thinking about going into science or liberal arts, taking BC calculus is really a waste of your time, and it really does add pressure to your senior year." Even with that said, students continue to take the course, even though they really don't need it.

Students are becoming accustomed to the idea of taking Calculus their senior year; they don't stop and think whether or not it's necessary. Very few of us know that only two years of math classes are required in order to graduate from high school. This

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Forum

Kagan's Komments: Language is Math

By MARK KAGAN
Spectrum Staff

Si no _____(ir) a la clase no sacaba una buena nota. It is 6 p.m. I have returned from ski practice, and I am trying to figure out what form of the verb goes in the blank of the first question of my Spanish homework. Of the many rules for verb conjugations in the "if" clauses that the class has learned this week, I must figure out which I need to use. I could find it in the pages of the textbook or the endless paquets with long tables and endless examples. However, the idea of using that procedure for every homework problem doesn't seem too great. Even if I do put in the effort, I have no way of knowing whether the answer is correct. Nor am I able to analyze the error of my logic if I am wrong. I scribble "fuera," an answer that sounds correct, and move on to the next problem, with no way of checking if my answer is right or wrong.

All students who take World Language have been in similar situations. Despite learning the countless grammar rules, the answer just doesn't jump out at you. It is no surprise. Very few people are born with a feel for a language that they haven't started learning until the age of twelve or thirteen. How can they remember all those rules that they have just learned that day before facing the question on the assignment? Furthermore, even if they take the time, they have no way to check if their answer is right.

A simple solution to this problem would be to provide some sort of answer book or packet for students' reference. Students need some way to measure their progress and check if they are doing things right. Also, if students are stuck, an answer will help them to realize what rule should be applied in that type of situation, and they will know what to do when they encounter that kind of question on the test. Surely there will be some students who will just copy the answers onto the paper instead of doing their homework. However, those would be the students who would normally not even touch the homework. This way the students will at least look at it and take away something from the world language course.

I am not trying to say that the teachers are not taking time to get the answers across to students. In fact, I must commend our world language department on the time that they spend going over homework. During my high school experience in

World Language, fifteen minutes per class, on average, was spent on homework. Nevertheless, it is simply impossible to cover all that is needed. Each student has to look at the homework individually, compare it with the answers and figure out what he or she did wrong.

Also, students could benefit from going over homework right after they did it. With their thoughts still fresh in their minds, the students could see more clearly where they made the mistakes. Furthermore, if answers were provided, the amount of time dedicated to homework in class could be reduced. That time could then be used to reinforce the grammar or for enhancing students' understanding of foreign culture.

Providing answers for students to take home is not new in this high school. Almost every math course and some science courses implement a similar policy. One can easily find answers in the back of the books. So why not do the same for our World Language courses? One might argue that World Language is different from Math and the sciences. It is true that there are some major differences. However, if we look at the homework assignments, there are a lot of similarities. There are a lot of grammar and syntax rules; one can almost call them formulas. These rules are applied based on the situation described in the sentence. A student must learn how and when to apply each rule, and then show that on a test.

There may be some situations, of course, when there is more than one right answer for a question. However, putting those on a test would be of great inconvenience to the teacher. I am not saying that those ambiguous situations shouldn't be discussed. Every language has its own specifics that by no means should be ignored. Nevertheless, that does not qualify as a reason for not providing answer books or packets to students because of all the benefits that could be drawn from such a system.

I am not trying to badmouth our World Language department. It is as good, if not better, than the rest of the departments in the school. Many people every year place among the top ten on the National Exams and get into the National French and Spanish Honor Societies. However, even among the greatest institutions there is always room for improvement. Giving answer books or answer packets to world language students would benefit everyone. For the sake of people like me, who sit late into the night trying to figure out if they are ready for that next Spanish test, or who have no idea what they are doing, consider this idea, por favor.

AB Gets an Early Start Next Year

By AMY DU
Spectrum Staff

Summer. It's one of the rare times when students at Acton-Boxborough can really relax, get away from the stressful environment and regain their sanity. But for every single student, the end of the happy days is heralded when Labor Day rears its head. It's the disappointing day that marks the end of the happiness of summer and the beginning of another school year.

However, this year the healing process will be cut even shorter. Not only will school start before Labor Day, it will start before September even begins. The school committee has arbitrarily decided to move the start of school next year to August 31.

Of course, this wouldn't be so bad if students could get out of school earlier this year to make up for lost summer time. But that scenario is not forthcoming. Summer will start for students at the usual time but end much sooner than normal, limiting the typical ten week summer to a mere nine weeks.

A short summer will take a negative toll on students in Acton-Boxborough where aggres-

sive learning during the school year is gospel. Due to the stress forced on them, AB students need their hard-earned time-off. By limiting the summer, the school is actually disabling students by not allowing them sufficient time to unwind. Also, as pointed



With summer ending a week earlier, students will be going to school when they should be going to the beach.

ALFRED DEGEMMIS / *Spectrum Staff*

sed by members of the Student Council, many students applying for summer jobs will not have many choices since many jobs only recruit on ten-week contracts and require employees to work through Labor Day. In addition, some volunteer jobs require that participants stick around for a longer amount of time than the miniscule summer affords.

Vacation plans may be thwarted as well. Many students who

travel to summer homes spend the Labor Day weekend celebrating their last hurrah and closing the house. This pleasure will be forgotten this summer. Likewise, families who rent houses during the same week every summer and those who consistently do so every last week of August will no longer have vacation plans.

Athletic tryouts start on fixed dates that have relatively nothing to do with the starting of school. Since the start of school arrives sooner this year and tryouts for the fall sessions have to end before then, double sessions will take place under the blazing heat of the sun. Double sessions are painfully demanding. By pushing student-athletes in such weather there is a danger that they might be worn out by the time the season starts and lose the upper hand from the very beginning.

What will happen to the comforting old-fashioned summer at this school? Apparently it is disappearing to be replaced by a more stress induced season by lack of time to heal, jobs lost, and health risks during tryouts. But fortunately the end is not near. Next year's summer will bring the old long summer back.

Need for Acceptance of Lesbians at AB

By BECKY NOURSE
VAN METER
Correspondent

From *Will and Grace*, to *Queer Eye For the Straight Guy*, American culture has, for the most part, embraced and accepted gay men as a quintessential part of life. The stereotypes promoted by television and other sources do have the ultimate detrimental effect of promoting bigotry and encouraging generalizations, particularly those portraying gay men as all fashion-crazed guys talking with lisps about their new conditioners. However, they have helped gay men achieve an elevated status over lesbian women. In mainstream culture, it is generally much more acceptable to be gay than lesbian. Whereas gay men in the media are shown as cute and funny, lesbians are often portrayed as unattractive and socially inept. Even the one TV show that portrays lesbian women as cool and attractive is called *The "L" Word*, as if there is something inherently shameful about being lesbian.

The portrayals of gays and lesbians in the media affect how we view and treat each other. At Acton-Boxborough, there does seem to be a larger number of "out" guys than girls. According to junior Ian Keyworth, "I think

out guys have an easier time expressing themselves than out girls." Some students feel that pornography is the only medium in which lesbians are positively portrayed.

These discrepancies are deeply rooted in our social structure. Gay guys are traditionally very much accepted by girls because they are seen as non-threatening. Girls do not have to worry about a gay friend making unwanted advances. On the contrary, many guys feel threatened by lesbians because they feel that the amount of available straight women will have decreased. This phenomenon is deeply rooted in the historical male dominance in social relationships. Moreover, friendships between girls are often more physical than friendships between guys, so girls might feel more apprehensive about coming out to their friends, fearing they would feel very uncomfortable. After finding out that a close friend is lesbian, many girls will react negatively, assuming that it means their friend is interested in them. In addition, the stereotypes surrounding gay men have increased their acceptance among girls. There is the image of the "gay best friend." As senior Eben Bein explains, "Girls are obsessed with gay guys." However, lesbian girls, in general, are not as

widely accepted by guys, because there is not a popular image that guys find attractive.

The lack of a general stereotype for lesbian women is, in some ways, a positive thing: there is no role that they are expected to fill. However, because society has no expectations of how a lesbian is "supposed" to be, people do not know how to accept them for who they are. We, at Acton-Boxborough, need to try and get beyond stereotypes for both gay and lesbian students. Students need to stop using "gay" as a common insult or a synonym for feminine guys. Furthermore, we must understand that gay jokes are not an acceptable form of humor. With the stereotypes erased, both lesbians and gays can feel equally accepted.

CALCULUS/ from page 9 means that after taking Algebra I and Geometry, we don't have to take Algebra II, Trigonometry or Calculus.

Although it is not wrong to take challenging courses, we still need to do it for the right reasons. Just because everyone you know is taking Calculus does not mean you have to. Follow your heart, and see if it is necessary to take Calculus for your major in College.

Features

AB's Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures

By RASHMI JASRASARIA
& DEBLEENA MITRA
Spectrum Staff

Sexual harassment has become a very serious and growing problem over the last decade. The public's fascination with such scandalous acts has caused the media to pay more and more attention to the issue. The ongoing Michael Jackson trial and the recent revelation of the priest abuse scandals are examples of some high-profile cases. However, sexual harassment can occur anywhere, even in schools. Many students are victims of this kind of harassment; unfortunately, most of these cases are never investigated because many victims do not know the official procedures for filing a report. Most workplaces and schools, including ABRHS, have specific procedures that guide people in filing their sexual harassment case.

If any member of the ABRHS community is ever the victim of sexual harassment, the first place he or she should look for guidance in filing a complaint is the Student Handbook, Appendix 4. According to this section, sexual harassment is defined as "leering, pinching, grabbing, suggestive verbal comments, off-color jokes, and pressure for sexual activity."

Appendix 4 outlines the exact steps a student should take to make sure his or her voice is heard. Harassment, as the AB handbook says, "is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated in any form in the school system." If one is harassed, he or she must report the assault as soon as possible; the handbook says the incident should be reported within six months of the occurrence. The very first step the student should take is to talk to a teacher, administrator or counselor with whom he or she feels comfortable. The trusted adult will then report it to another administrator, usually the student's vice principal, and make sure that a description of the whole incident is written down immediately.

The principals then proceed to conduct a very private inves-

tigation that is respectful of all parties involved. Mrs. Atwater-Rhodes says, "It's important to meet with the other party and hear both sides." After everything has been discussed, the administrator prepares a report that is shared only with the people involved, including the victim, the accused, the principal and the Title IX coordinator, Nancy Kolb. "Sexual harassment posing an emotional or physical risk is not common at this school," said Mrs. Atwater-Rhodes, commenting on sexual harassment at AB. Although complaints are chronic, they are usually quickly resolved. Common cases concern emotionally distraught couples who have recently broken up or students who show continued ignorance about social boundaries.

However, when a complaint involves an offense by a figure of authority in the school, students should respectfully address the issue with the faculty member before filing a case. "If a student feels comfortable, it is respectful to talk to the teacher first," said Mrs. Atwater-Rhodes. "Not in my tenure have I been aware of an incident where a teacher has been abusive or sexually harassing students." She stressed, though, that if such an incident does occur, students should immediately report it to the administration, as it is a serious issue. The administration's purpose is to protect the students, and the handbook adds that the "school district is committed to providing an educational environment that is free of sexual harassment."

Students or faculty who have committed an offense of sexual harassment will be "subject to disciplinary action," which would include "suspension and/or exclusion from school" for students and "suspension and/or dismissal" for an employee, reads the handbook. In addition, any retaliation from either party will not be tolerated. Once the complaint has been filed, students may receive counseling from the Title IX Coordinator, and the administrators will continue to make sure the safety and privacy of the students are preserved.

Boston Globe Writer Speaks at AB

By WENXI LI
Spectrum Staff

First period just wasn't the same that morning. Rather than rubbing their eyes in class, several students eagerly awaited the arrival of their career speaker with a cup of orange juice and a muffin in hand. They didn't have to wait long before Marcella Bombardieri, a 1995 ABRHS graduate and *Boston Globe* reporter, walked into the cafeteria. She wasted no time, immediately beginning to describe her own experiences as a reporter. With her many interesting stories, Bombardieri was able to provide students with an insider's view of the world of journalism.

During her years at AB, Bombardieri realized that she enjoyed writing. As a former section editor and Editor-in-Chief of *The Spectrum*, she was able to test her writing skills in the journalism field. However, Bombardieri explains that she "never really understood reporting" when she graduated from AB; all that she realized was that she "liked writing." While attending Brown University, she found herself turning towards the college newspaper as an extracurricular activity. Her moment of revelation during her work for the paper was when she was researching a story about a few hockey players getting preferential treatment in the housing system on campus. While writing the story, Bombardieri realized that she wanted to play a part in the world of news reporting. "It felt great when the hockey player I was interviewing hung up the phone on me," she explained during the career breakfast. "Now I knew that I was getting somewhere."

She spent her summers during college interning at different newspapers, such as *The Boston Globe* and *The Washington Post*. Bombardieri attributes a part of getting her job at *The Globe* to the fact that she got her "foot in the door" as an intern. As a writer at *The Boston Globe*, she has been able to experience the adventur-

ous side of journalism. The adventure began when the war in Afghanistan broke out. Bombardieri "begged [her] editors" to allow her to go overseas to fill the shortage of reporters covering the story from Afghanistan. Her editors finally gave in and sent her to Pakistan instead. From there, she traveled to Afghanistan for a two-month stay in 2002 and was then sent to Kuwait. Eventually, America's involvement in the Iraqi War led her to travel all around southern Iraq. Bombardieri's three-week stay in Baghdad allowed her to report the news

of crediting innate differences between men and women as a reason for less success among women in math and science careers. Bombardieri explained that the story was due in part to networking (having sources and people to contact for information.) She stressed the importance of networking, which includes reading college newspapers and inviting people out to breakfast to find out what's really going on.

Bombardieri also offered great advice for up-and-coming writers. While she stressed the importance of getting all the facts and perfecting the article, she advised students to "just let things go sometimes. You have to keep your deadline and move on." She warned students not to overlook little, interesting stories because, like her story on President Summers, they can often turn into larger issues. When asked about her life as a "real" reporter, she replied that her desk in the newsroom is "a desk in a room full of lots of other desks where you can



Marcella Bombardieri, a 1995 AB graduate, spoke to students about her time in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as about what it takes to be a *Globe* writer.

hear each other's conversation." Another important point that she emphasized was to tell the truth when writing instead of pleasing any particular group of people. It's important to keep the "loyalty to the story, [and] not to the people in the story." Bombardieri recognized the difficulty of keeping a bias from the article but told students to "focus on the goal and not get lost." She revealed that, "Like any human being, I do have opinions, but my goal is to get the best stories and tell them fairly — not to promote any particular point of view."

Before they knew it, first period had zoomed by. Many students were enlightened about the world of journalism and reporting by Marcella Bombardieri's presentation. Like the actor of *Big Bird*, another AB graduate has become renowned in the country. "As a writer myself, it was great hearing [Bombardieri] speak," said junior Tess O'Brien. "Not only is she a big-name newspaper reporter, she's also a semi-recent AB graduate; that made her job seem more attainable for us students to whom anything past college can seem completely alien."

Currently, Bombardieri is a reporter covering higher education. One of her most recent achievements was breaking the story on Harvard University President Lawrence Summers's statement

Breaking Down the College Process

By ANDREA BAUM
Correspondent

Every day you come home from school, open the fridge, turn the T.V. on and glance through the mail. And every day you find that colleges from all over are bombarding you with annoying brochures attempting to grab your attention and interest you in their school. Before long, the mail

piles up a foot high, still unopened because it is so overwhelming. What are you supposed to do? First of all, try not to worry and remember to breathe. The college process is one that seems never to end. Once you begin the search for that one college where you will continue your education, life becomes a bit easier.

One of the most important steps that should be taken in your

search takes five to ten minutes. Sit down with pen and paper and compose a list of everything you are seeking in a college. Some things to consider are the location of the school, whether in a city or in the country, what you want it to be near, and how far away from home you are willing to go. You should discuss with your parents how far they are willing to allow you to go. Money, of course,

comes into play and therefore is necessary to talk about. Also on your list should be your possible interests of study, and if you are thinking about playing any sports or getting involved in other extracurriculars. As soon as you have thought this all out, you have already narrowed down your search by hundreds.

The next step is a little more time-consuming; however, it must

be done — research. Go online or find a book that details all the important aspects of a college so you can read up on your interests. Look for suggested SAT scores, how many SAT II's are required, the size of the school and the expense. Meet with your counselor and talk about the colleges you can definitely get accepted to, some reaches and some

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Features

Creative Writing Club

By ALICIA DONOVAN
Spectrum Staff

There are many clubs and activities to choose from here at AB. The sheer number of these clubs can be confusing, but being part of one can also be an exciting experience. For students who enjoy reading and writing compo-

fellows English teacher, she volunteered to take over supervision of the club because she wanted to continue to provide a place for students to share their writing, even if other teachers were not available to do so.

The club meets for one hour after school every Wednesday in an informal setting. It is a place

plans to uphold its informality and the comfort level that the club has created. Ms. Reynolds believes that the club is a great way for students who are wary of sharing personal works to become more open about the opinions of other students. Junior Rachel Hardy, a member of the club, said "I have more confidence in my work because I am able to share it with other student writers."

In its current state, the club is relatively small; it has only eight members. Ms. Reynolds hopes to expand the membership of the club and start to incorporate more structured methods. She would like to discuss different forms of writing along with the possibility of including sonnets and poetry. With these changes, the students would be able to try some short assignments together, and then apply what they learned to their independent projects in the future.

The club also hosts special events. Recently, local poet Robert Clawson came to a meeting to speak about his experience as a writer. He gave tips on how to become a successful poet, analyzed his poems, and answered their questions. Clawson ended his visit by reading a selection of his poems out loud.

The Creative Writing Club is more than just a writing club; it is a friendly atmosphere where students can share their work as well as learn more about the writing process. The club meets every Wednesday after school in room 204E. For more information, contact Ms. Reynolds in the English Department.

where students can receive feedback on their independent projects or read other students' compositions. For the students who are not working on a project, or who simply want to take a break from their current project, Ms. Reynolds provides them with writing prompts. One example is to choose a place and describe it using all senses but sight. This kind of writing exercise helps students explore a new and different kind of writing in which they can describe a place in ways that help the reader imagine the scene beyond physical characteristics.

As the current supervisor of the club, Ms. Reynolds is focused on keeping the club the same. She



The Creative Writing Club, advised by Ms. Reynolds, hosted local poet Robert Clawson during one of its meetings.
NATE FRANZI / Spectrum Staff

sitions, the Creative Writing Club is the place to be.

Three years ago, Creative Writing was offered as an elective course taught by Ms. Sorvari, but budget cuts forced the course to be cut in 2002. The Creative Writing curriculum was revived, however, as a club in the fall of 2003 by English teachers Ms. Neuburger and Ms. Blauch. Their vision for the club was to provide a friendly place for students to explore writing and to share their work with other members.

However, after a successful year of advising the club, Ms. Neuburger and Ms. Blauch passed on their supervision duties this January to Ms. Reynolds. A

Project Youth Gives AB Students a Glimpse of Prison Life

By CHARLOTTE BIGFORD
Spectrum Staff

Going to prison is a strange situation to find oneself in, but it is one that many Sociology, Psychology, and You and the Law students have experienced as part of the Project Youth program at the Massachusetts Correctional Institution in Shirley, MA. The field trip is one that puts many students out of their element.

This fish-out-of-water syndrome starts with a strict dress code that students must abide by in order to enter the visitor's center at MCI-Shirley. A long and detailed list of inappropriate apparel is circulated among participating students, listing jeans, t-shirts, clothing made of sweatshirt material, and hair accessories as

unsuitable. In addition, many students are not allowed to take part in the field trip due to piercings that cannot be removed, such as tongue, lip, or eyebrow rings or new piercings. Piercings are dangerous to visitors because inmates could rip them out and use them as weapons. When all is said and done, the best outfit to wear to prison is made up of khaki pants, a properly fitted collared shirt, and sneakers, or anything to the same degree of effectiveness.

On the day of the field trip, students meet in the high school's front lobby and board the school bus that transports them to the prison. They arrive at 7:30 in the morning, and students are either exhausted from the previous night's homework or caffeinated and therefore talkative and alert.

Either end of the energy spectrum aside, it is evident that everyone is anticipating the experience that awaits him or her.

Soon after exiting the highway, the bus makes a right turn and lurches down a long and windy wooded road. The isolation of MCI-Shirley is immediately apparent as the bus follows the road deeper and deeper into the forest. Passing the maximum-security prison, students get a preview of what to expect at the medium-security facility that hosts the Project Youth program.

Project Youth was founded in 1964 but the MCI-Shirley chapter began in 1993. Its coordinators, Marty Murphy and Ron Bruno, describe the presentation as an awareness program that shows teens "how poor decision mak-

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middle-grounds. Now you can throw out every pamphlet from the mail that does not pertain to

How are the students getting along with each other? Do they seem friendly? Are they having fun or studying? Next, observe what the weather is like. Find out



The board at the Counseling Center breaks down the complicated process of applying to college.
MARK KAGAN / Spectrum Staff

you. Browse through the ones you save and write down some of the facts that pop out at you. Also write down some questions you have pertaining to each college and make sure to place these questions in a safe spot.

April vacation is just around the corner, and it's the perfect time to plan a few tours. Some colleges require you to contact them to sign up for a tour so they can control how many people attend. If this is the case for the colleges you are interested in, call or email the school two to four weeks in advance. This way, you appear organized and eager to visit. When you go, be ready to ask questions and take some notes so you can answer some of the inquiries you wrote down earlier in the planning process. Write down your impression about the college during the tour or immediately after while things are still fresh in your mind. This way, you can easily review the positive and negative aspects after several weeks have gone by and you have visited a few other schools. Pay attention to the atmosphere.

what the teacher/student ratio is and in which division the school is if you're interested in playing sports. Be sure to evaluate the tour itself, for it is usually a reflection of the college. Since you will be spending four years there, scrutinize the dorm room by noting its condition, how many people are housed inside and where the dorms are on campus. Look at the bathrooms and decide if they are clean enough for you. Lastly, talk to one or two students in order to get their opinion of the place and their time there. Try not to have more than two tours a day — it may be overwhelming and you might not remember everything you see. Touring colleges can take a lot of time, but be sure to look at some before applying so you know what you are getting yourself into.

The college process is hard to jump into and stay afloat, but if you follow these guidelines, life will not be so hectic. Get ahead while you have the time and stay organized; if you can do this, everything will be all right. Good luck!

ing can turn into the stark reality of prison life." Project Youth is a safe program: no sexual offenders are allowed to participate and prison guards are present at all times during the visit.

The medium security prison appears relatively normal from the outside. It is a huge brick and cement encasement lined with electrified barbed wire, but it doesn't seem completely foreign considering the similar features at the familiar Concord prison. At first, the reception area has the air of a hospital waiting room: rows of upholstered chairs, vending machines, and ticket-booth-like windows line one wall. The only difference is the feeling of harshness. It is hard to escape awkward feelings as the students sit down and stare at the enormous variety

of vending machine options while being locked inside the room. Occasionally a prison guard walks through the room, careful to keep only one of the doors open at a time, decreasing the risk of a runaway inmate.

The first prison interaction comes with Bruno, a charismatic man who seems too cheery to be a prison employee. He breaks the students into shifts who are moved into a small room off the waiting room. Another guard awaits them and instructs the group to remove shoes and jackets. A "self pat-down" ensues as each student turns his or her pockets inside out, shows the guard the inside of his or her mouth, and walks through a set of metal detectors. Lastly, each person is stamped on

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Features

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the hand with special ink that can only be seen under a black light.

Once each shift of students has been properly checked for safe entry onto the main campus of the prison, everyone is escorted through a series of fenced enclosures that terminate at the front entrance to the visitor's center. Bruno introduces the students to a prisoner with a life sentence; he is known to the prison community as Boogie. He is the main presenter of the six or seven inmates taking part in Project Youth. After an introduction, Boogie takes over control of the presentation. Before other inmates arrive from breakfast, Boogie shows the students the visitor's booths, where inmates sit on one side of an inch-thick piece of glass and talk to family and friends who sit on the other. Bruno picks up the telephone on the visitor's side and Boogie hands the inmate's end of the line to a student. The quick conversation seems to affect Boogie, who explains that phone conversations at the visitor's booths are usually tearful and melancholy.

The group is ushered back to the visitor side of the booths and each student takes a seat in front of a line of chairs filled by the program's presenting inmates. One by one, the inmates recap their stories.

Jeff, a 22-year-old from Worcester, recounts his experiences as a seemingly wrongfully accused teenage convict. After a party he had been attending was broken up by the police, Jeff was driving home with a friend and three other classmates. The three drunken strangers in the back seat asked Jeff, the driver, to pull over at a gas station so they could use the restroom. Against his better judgment, Jeff did as he was told and waited in the car with his friend while the three boys took their time at the gas station. Suddenly, they came frantically running out of the station's mini-mart and begged Jeff to drive away. Jeff questioned their anxious desire to leave, but because he didn't understand the situation, he eventually pulled out of the parking lot and drove away.

Suddenly the boys started fighting about an incident that had apparently been the impetus behind their mini-mart flee. "Why did you shoot him?" one of them shouted. Shocked and wanting to escape a potentially dangerous situation, Jeff pulled over to the side of the road and forced the three boys to get out of the car. Scared of punishment, Jeff dropped his friend off at home and then drove to his own house, bypassing his own parents before worrying himself to sleep. When he woke up, Jeff caught a glimpse of the newspaper sitting on the kitchen table and noticed an article stating that a gas station

attendant had been shot and killed by three black males the night before. Recalling the night before, Jeff realized with a sinking feeling that the article was probably referring to the three boys he had driven the night before.

No one in Jeff's family knew of his involvement in the murder until several police officers arrived at his home the following morning, stating that Jeff had been an accomplice in the murder of the attendant. Jeff denied the accusations, but the police later found out that he had been driving the getaway car (although Jeff had already begun driving when he discovered that he was aiding the escape of the three murderers). In the end, Jeff was convicted of accessory to murder and was sentenced to ten years of prison, seven of which he has completed.

After several other inmates share their experiences with drugs, alcohol, murder, and gangs, a question-and-answer session commences. One student asks Jeff if he feels that he was given too harsh a sentence; Jeff, along with many other inmates, believes that his punishment is indeed too harsh. He agrees that he deserves punishment, but he thinks that a less severe conviction would have been more appropriate.

The question and answer session is the most interesting part of Project Youth. Despite their tough demeanors, the inmates are very open in their responses and explanations. While answering questions regarding daily life, activities, food, sexual conflict, and just about anything else that students are curious about, the inmates crack jokes and share small anecdotes with their fellow Project Youth members.

After a while, the awkwardness of the situation declines and the presentation seems like more of a conversation. At first it is difficult to accept the presence of murderers, but the students slowly begin to acknowledge that while those murderers are dangerous, they are also real people with families, friends, and opinions. The whole experience puts prison life into perspective.

In a daze, the students say goodbye to the inmates and exit through the waiting room, careful to keep only one door open at all times. In a short while, they will be back in the familiar confines of AB, but the day's events are still fresh in their minds. Although it would not be described as a "fun" field trip, it is truly a learning experience that everyone should have. Forget about appearances and trivial woes for several hours and allow yourself to see the ways in which your life could be ruined beyond receiving a bad grade or having an embarrassing moment. Put yourself in someone else's shoes for a change.

You said it The Spectrum Photo Poll

What do you like and/or dislike the most about AB?

Photos by Sneha Arjun



Anishi Shah (9) - "I like the frees, but I don't like that the vending machines open so late."



Amanda Dodge (10), Alicia Mueller (11), and Carla Ricci (10) - "TOTS!"



Brady Flood (9) - "Lots of freedom. School store."



Chris O'Brien and Ben Kamens (10) - "Mmmm...we love cheese burglars."



Josh Crofton-MacDonald (9) - "I like the chicks."



Laura Lee, Olga Burtseva, and Claire Buffel (10) - "We like Sra. Moe. And we don't like the water from the school toilet."



George Hong (10) - "I like Mr. McDonald."



Adam McCall (9) - "I like..desk... I like window...I like LAMP! Wait I'm just looking at things and saying I like them."



Greg Hart (10) and Matt Shimizu (12) - "We like the people and don't like APs."



Holly Richardson (10) - "I like the ice cream, but I don't like waking up really early."



Neethu Yarabolu (10) - "I like the cookies, and I don't like when people ask me questions like this."



Kara Lafferty and Jocelyn Richard (11) - "We like how it's so 1337."



Caitlin Erickson (9) - "I like AB because of the cool people in it."



Dave Crocker, Thomas Vickery and Samnoon Haider (11) - "Stop giving us parking tickets: there is nowhere else to park, and no one parks in those spots anyway."



Rohin Jaiman (12) - "Unique regularities such as the valences of Mr. Crick's wonderfully inviting smile that serves as an irrefutably robust start to my morning."

Entertainment

Moon Over Buffalo: A Stampede of Laughs

By BECKY NOURSE VAN
METER
Correspondent

Moon Over Buffalo is an outrageous comedic farce set in 1953. Fate gives an aging theater couple, the Fays, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to leave their nightly productions of *Cyrano de Bergerac* (the revised one-nostril version) and Noel Coward's *Private Lives* in Buffalo, New York. Instead, couple George and Charlotte Fay are invited to take starring roles in *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, directed by the one and only Frank Kapra. The play is propelled by the enlivening acting of its small, but talented, cast. The relatively simple set and minimal scene changes allowed it to move quickly without a sour note.

The play opens with George, played by Josh Quat, trying to rehearse a scene from *Cyrano* with his clearly apathetic counterparts. Their hilariously pitiful performance irks George to no end as he attempts to make his dramatic entrances and flourishes. The scene then cuts to the couple's daughter, Roz (Maryn Jones), preparing her fiancé, Howard (Dan Ball), to meet her eccentric parents. Ball does a great job portraying Howard's meek and anxious demeanor. His anxiety is soon justified. George and his wife Charlotte (Alden Coldwell) joust, swords and all, with Howard caught in the middle. Overall, it was a humorous, energetic scene.

Confusion is the name of the

game as *Buffalo* charges forward. Characters are constantly chasing each other in and out, entering at exactly the wrong moment, and hearing just enough of a conversation to throw themselves into even greater disarray. Plot-wise, everything that could go wrong does as the cast prepares for Frank Kapra to watch the evening's performance. The mayhem almost makes you, as an audience member, want to go onstage and sit all the characters down to ease the confusion with a knowing explanation. When the going gets

convincing drunk, as well as an over-zealous actor. Kate Hanselman is startlingly believable as a deaf senior citizen and carries the show in the second half. Both Matt Sirios and Maryn Jones are excellent in their roles, playing off each other quite well. Alden Coldwell is entertaining as Charlotte, and she magnificently captures her character—outrageous pompousness and all. Among the new faces was Ankit Chandra, who astounded everyone with his hilarious interpretation of Richard, maintaining a sense of dignity amidst the craziness. The timing and coordination gets better as the show goes on, culminating in a spectacular finish.

The final scene brings everything together when George comes on stage in his *Cyrano* costume for a production of *Private Lives*. Roz, Charlotte, and Ethel all try to mend the situation,

but in the end it is irreconcilable, as the drunken George plummets off of a balcony. They are saved, however, by a convenient flight delay which holds up Frank Kapra for another night. In the end, nearly everyone ends up happy; only Richard, who is abandoned by Charlotte for her original love George, goes without. Eileen and Howard resolve to marry, but conveniently enough, Ros finally admits her love for Paul.

Moon Over Buffalo is a great show. The acting is incredible and brings some new faces to the PC scene. A great job by all!



Kate Hanselman stars with Maryn Jones in *Moon Over Buffalo*.
SNEHA ARJUN / Spectrum Staff

tough with her oddball husband, Charlotte routinely tries to run off with their well-heeled insurance agent, Richard (Ankit Chandra). Roz constantly tries to deny any affection for manager Paul (Matt Sirios), and George feebly denies his affair with the now pregnant actress Eileen (Esther Pinsky). Everyone is held in check by Ethel (Kate Hanselman), Charlotte's half-deaf mother. Throughout the second act, George is a staggering drunk, undoubtedly due to Ethel's substitution of "Irish coffee" for "lots of coffee."

Veteran actor Josh Quat is a

Sinfully Good: A Must-See Movie

By PETER AHERN
Spectrum Staff

A few months ago, I was aimlessly navigating the Internet, sampling movie trailers and listening to sound bites, when I stumbled across the title of a movie, still in production, called *Sin City*. I knew nothing about it, and frankly, the name sounded trashy and uninspired. But I proceeded to watch the trailer, and the more I saw, the more I was drawn into the noir crime world that was *Sin City*. Exciting camera angles, black and white cinematography with glimpses of color, strong art direction, and a cast that was

filled with famous actors and actresses. What was this movie that everyone knew about but me?

After bookmarking the trailer, I watched it excessively, hoping to catch a flash more of something I had not already seen. Months passed and soon more information trickled out—the occasional mention in an interview with a cast member, some still-frames posted on the Internet. Yet, I grew frustrated by the paucity of information. All that the trailer revealed was a taunting "Coming Soon." Movie forums were full of speculation, but I couldn't find anything confirmed. However, after some research, I found that

the title was actually listed as *Frank Miller's Sin City*. I looked up Miller.

Frank Miller, a big comic book artist in the 70's and 80's, has a body of work that includes the *DareDevil* comic books. Additionally, he is credited with stylishly reviving the campy 1960's *Batman* into the Dark Knight he has become known to be. Miller also used gritty noir influences to elaborate on *X-Men's* character, Wolverine, and co-wrote the second and third installments of the *Robocop* movie franchise in the late 80's. But it was 1993 when Miller's predominant creation

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The Secret Garden Revealed

By MARK KAGAN
Spectrum Staff

The lights dim ominously, the curtain lifts up, and the music begins to play. The stage lights up in a fiery pink-red as four men in black walk onto the stage, with a lady in pink following them in a beautiful dance. This is not the Mariinsky Theatre, halfway across the globe; this is the auditorium of Lincoln-Sudbury High School. The people on stage are not the Kirov Ballet Company performing *The Swan Lake*; they are members of the Commonwealth Ballet, with dancers who are mostly teenagers or kids, and they are performing *The Secret Garden*. Nevertheless, I sit in the second row of the balcony, expecting a marvelous show.

I am a fairly tough critic in

veteran performers, and a few of them attend AB. Eben Bein performed in one of the lead male roles as the cheerful country boy Dickon. Jessica Lin displayed her acrobatics and spins as the gardener's bird friend, the robin. Erica Diesel played one of the more subtle and dramatic parts as the ghost of Craven's wife. However, I was most impressed with the younger dancers in this production. Since *The Secret Garden* is a children's story, there was an unusual amount of younger performers in the cast. The two leads, Mary and her cousin Colin, did an excellent job of keeping up with their older colleagues on the stage. The demonstration of the games of hopscotch, leapfrog, and jump rope filled the audience with joy. With such a phenomenal performance, I often found my-



Eben Bein strikes a pose as Dickon in *The Secret Garden*.
JONATHAN EISENBERG / Spectrum Staff

terms of ballet. Growing up in St. Petersburg, one of the capitals of ballet, I have seen *The Nutcracker*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Swan Lake* multiple times in the Mariinsky Theatre, all before the age of ten. Nevertheless, when senior Eben Bein walked into my lunch period announcing the upcoming ballet, I knew I had to be there.

Unlike *The Nutcracker*, which the Commonwealth Ballet marvelously performed during Christmas season, *Secret Garden* is not a classical piece. However, the show was no less impressive. The plot of *The Secret Garden* is quite simple. A rich spoiled English girl named Mary (Katie McArthy) living in India suddenly finds herself alone when everyone in the area but she dies of cholera. She goes to England to live with her Uncle Craven, whose wife died ten years prior. Mary, along with her new friend Dickon, discover the secret garden, the site of the death of Craven's wife's death. Happiness returns to the Craven family as a result.

Although the plot seems simple, the difficulty in ballet is conveying emotion through dance. The dancers rose to this challenge and gave an incredible performance. Many in the cast were

self asking if this was actually an adult production.

The costumes and decorations of the play enhanced the choreography. Dickon's hat and trousers fit the time perfectly and helped set the scene. The costumes of the garden vegetables were simply hilarious. The bright colors of the spring flowers provided the necessary contrast with the black and somber suits and dresses of the men and women.

Even though the company could not hire a live orchestra, the selection of pre-recorded music worked very well. The exoticism of India, the terror of cholera, and the joy of spring were all captured in the different tunes played in their respective scenes. This created just the right emotional atmosphere needed to appreciate the dancing.

The Secret Garden was a tremendous success and a perfect way to spend a Saturday evening. We are all lucky to have such an excellent troupe of ballet dancers right in the middle of our community. May Commonwealth Ballet continue to enrich the culture of our suburban communities with performances similar to *The Secret Garden* in future years.

Entertainment

SIN CITY/ from page 14 would be published. His first graphic novel of the soon-to-be many *Sin City* stories quickly gained a following. A second was released, then a third, then a whole slew of them. He created a grand total of seven *Sin City* graphic novels. These books were supposedly full of violence, hard humor and bizarre characters. I had read none of them.

April first. That was when the movie was to be released. April first. Less than two weeks until I would feast my eyes on the film.

"You haven't read any *Sin City* book and you're going to see it next Friday?!" Apparently I had committed a crime. My friend

Matt was very passionate about comic books, and this series was no exception. I found myself apologizing and asking if I could borrow them. He was reluctant. This made me feel more desperate for them. Obviously,

there was something about these stories that caused people to cling

to their copies like bees to honey. Finally, the Monday before I was to see it, he handed me the first of the three books that inspired the movie, titled *The Hard Goodbye*.

The book's story focuses around the character Marv, who, after a night of hard drinking, wakes up to find Goldie, the hooker, dead in his bed, and the cops at his door. Naturally, he was framed. "Who ever did this to you, Goldie, is going to pay." Marv proceeds, in classic comic book fashion, to smash aside anyone in his way and rip through to the roots of the murder, leading him to find a cannibalistic woman killer. The story is fast and beautifully drawn with many sub-plots and deep characters. I loved it.

Next was *The Big Fat Kill*, focusing this time on Dwight, who, in an attempt to protect his girlfriend, gets involved with tracking down her psycho ex, Jackie Boy. After a brief confrontation,

Dwight follows Jackie Boy into Old Town, a section of Sin City run by lethal vigilante women. Here, an intoxicated Jackie Boy offends a few fem-fatales. As a result, he and his crew are surrounded and "taken care of." But this is what sets the story in motion. What we learn about Jackie Boy's background (after his death) results in a spiral of events and threatens to throw off the fragile truce between the gun totting prostitutes and the corrupt police of Sin City. Another hyper violent, excellent read.

Finally, a day before the movie's premiere, Matt hands me *That Yellow Bastard*, the last of



Jessica Alba in an example of the actual black and white cinematography used in *Sin City*.

the books upon which the movie is based. The first thing I noticed about this book was that the traditional color scheme of black and white used in the previous two had been broken. This time the colors were black, white and yellow. Why yellow? You soon find out. The plot is probably the weakest of the three, this time following an almost retired cop, named Hartigan, who saves a kidnapped young girl named Nancy. He severely maims her crazed captor, Junior, before being pumped full of far beyond the normal amount of bullets, and yet he survives. Waking up hospitalized, he recovers, is abused by the corrupt justice system, becomes convicted of the very crime he saved Nancy from, and then sits in jail for years and years. His only contact comes from letters sent by Nancy. Then the Yellow Bastard, one of the strangest and most repulsive characters I've ever seen,

shows up, and things go from bad to worse. Nancy stops writing to Hartigan, which suggests that she might be in trouble. He needs to fake a confession to get out and help her. Yellow B., who looks like the cross between Gollum and a Smurf, is illuminated in bright yellow ink; he even bleeds yellow, and he plays dirty. He truly is one of those villains you love to hate.

April first finally arrives, and the movie astounds me, not only because of how remarkable all the actors resemble the characters Miller created, or because of the arresting visuals, but because of how amazingly close it keeps to the original stories. There are scenes where everything, right down to the papers scattered on the floor, match up to their exact positions as they were drawn.

The cinematography floored me. Shot in black and white, there are beautiful glimpses of color, red lips on one character, blue eyes on another, and the phosphorescent white blood which gets everywhere. Color, and lack thereof, plays an enormous role.

Every frame of the movie could be appreciated, if not for what was happening with the actors, then for the process used to create each shot. All the actors performed in front of green screens, and every background, every weather effect, every piece of set detail, was digitally added, much like the technique used in *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow*. Before seeing it, I was skeptical that this approach would fit, but it mixes perfectly to create a comic book feel of things.

Chock full of highly stylized visuals, stunning characters, ultra violence, and amusing narratives, *Sin City* marks the end of cliched Hollywood. Go see it. It is rated R for all the obvious reasons, but beneath all the cuts and blows lurks true art. It sounds crazy, I know, but if you look past the suspended reality and "needless" brutality, there lies genius.

A Taste of Chaos

By HEATHER McCORMACK
Spectrum Staff

On February 28th, I went to the Taste of Chaos concert. It shames me to say it, but I spent nearly \$30 on a ticket to a show whose fan base shops exclusively at Hot Topic. Waiting in line outside the Tsongas Arena, my friends and I made a game out of counting how many people were wearing the t-shirts of the bands they were going to see. (Note to all: The number one rule of concert-going is this: never wear the shirt of the band you're seeing. We *know* you like the band. That's why you went to see them.) I expected thick-necked men in tight black pants and chain wallets. I wasn't disappointed. But despite the jock-like conformity of the general crowd, I was impressed by what matters most: the music.

And believe me, there was plenty of it. Eight bands played on the main stage, intending to create a Winter Warped Tour of sorts—getaway for those who can't stand going a whole three months without seeing their favorite makeup-clad band of the month. Although I entered with a cynical attitude, I was quickly proven wrong when those same flavor of the week, formulaic "screamo" bands I had so loathed took the stage and erupted not with mediocrity, but fury-driven charisma and talent. The audience chanted and slammed as one, shouting lyrics of heartbreak over chugging guitars. Sure, I was beaten to a bloody pulp and starved for oxygen, but I was witnessing a punk rock miracle. Bands A Static Lullaby, Killswitch Engage, and Senses Fail flailed around the stage wildly, pumping fists furiously in the

air. Their electric presence paved the way for arguably one of punk rock's biggest bands at the moment, My Chemical Romance.

Striped with red eyeliner and pale as a ghost, lead singer Gerard Way opened up the show with a very family-friendly query: "How many of you girls out there have gotten knocked up? This is for you." The crowd roared and jumped, and the band ripped into power chords and leapt around the stage with the energy of an energizer bunny on Red Bull. Meanwhile, I was surrounded by beefy, intoxicated college kids hurling punches left and right simply for fun. My Chemical Romance exuded not only remarkable talent, but a confidence unmatched by most bands just breaking onto the scene.

But no one projected such a visceral charisma as The Used's lead singer Bert McCracken. Sliding around on the slick stage and relentlessly shouting obscenities, the Used was the headlining band for a reason: they thrived on the audience's obsession with its music. The set-list included more recent hits, rather than old time favorites, but the ferocity of the performance was unmatched by any other band that night. Somehow I managed to inch my way up to the very front, close enough to see the beads of sweat on the musician's faces, all the while getting crushed to death by the surrounding masses. It was all worth it. I had bruises covering my entire body and a chunk of hair missing from the back of my head, but I had experienced something that most have not: I saw the future of punk rock. \$30 or not, I think I made the right decision.

Gould's Plaza, 260 Great Road, Acton, MA 01720
Gould's Colonial Plaza, 74 Main Street, Medway, MA 02053

State of the Art Soundtrack

By MO DANE
Correspondent

With the recent release of the DVD *Garden State*, Hollywood's latest indie success story has continued to ride the wave of acclaim it received with its initial release. Critics, teenagers, hipsters, and soccer moms alike have connected to the relatable, quirky characters and the heartwarming, if predictable, plot. The film manages to stay relatively true to its artistic aims without getting bogged down or confusing to the audience. However, one does get a sense that writer/director Zach

Braff may have tried to appease too many genres. It is unclear whether he wanted a commercial romantic comedy or a commentary on culture in America. For better or worse, he seems to have achieved both.

One area in which the film shows no evidence of uncertainty, however, is its soundtrack. Each carefully chosen track distinctly punctuates a scene to contribute to the overall mood, tone, and quality of the film. Originally, the soundtrack gained popularity in the tradition of all great CD's: word of mouth. It evokes thoughts of a mix tape passed down by someone's older brother and rev-

erently deemed "good music." The soundtrack achieves what the film itself fails to do. Once again, Braff, who handpicked the soundtrack, aimed for the middle ground between indie and commercial. Each song perfectly verbalizes the central theme of *Garden State*: life can be terrifying, but don't panic—just let go. The tracks differ in style, age, and artist, but the themes are closely related. When initially reading the track listing, I noticed what seemed to be a strange juxtaposition of artists. Upon listening, however, I realized that the seemingly random selection of artists made perfect sense. The album

opens with Coldplay's "Don't Panic," a recognizable track from the advertisements for *Garden State*. The soundtrack builds in intensity, with upbeat points such as the Shins' "New Slang" and Thievery Corporation's "Lebanese Blonde." Simon & Garfunkel's "The Only Living Boy in New York" is arguably the pinnacle of the soundtrack because of the distinctive scene it corresponds to in the film.

This album triumphs in its attempt to find a delicate balance between tracks that are familiar and those that are more obscure; it features, for instance, less mainstream but nevertheless widely

appealing artists like Iron and Wine and Remy Zero. Listening to the CD is peaceful and relaxing, but it is never boring. Unlike some mellow music, it is not just a background for other activities. In itself, the soundtrack is engaging and interesting. It is a rich, layered, and most importantly, thoughtful approach to accurately representing the themes of the film. The soundtrack seamlessly blends different styles, with each individual song relating back to the film. What Braff missed in *Garden State* is more than made up in this soundtrack.

Sports

The Last Dance for the Colonials

By BRIAN CALLAHAN
Spectrum Staff

"When you coach a great group like this year's seniors, the most disappointing thing isn't losing your last game but realizing the ride is over. They were a special group because they were truly a team. They supported each other, played together and got along very well."

-Boys Varsity Coach Rick Kilpatrick

When the seconds ran down during AB's North Sectional Final against Lawrence, there was a moment of embrace for Kilpatrick and senior standout Kyle Jackson. AB's season was about to end, and so would the careers of Jackson and a special senior class that also includes starters Larry Abare, Bobby Abare and Dan Salvo. Like most endings, it was bittersweet, to say the least.

Jackson capped off his impressive career at AB with a Globe All-Scholastic honor and a DCL MVP Award. In his final home game, a tournament win against Boston Latin, he fittingly scored his 1,000th point, and he would finish his career with 1,047. Regarding one of AB's greatest players, Kilpatrick said that Jackson "was the most dedicated player I have ever coached. No player has ever

worked harder to get better at his game. Talented, hard working and humble. I'm going to miss him." Jackson's presence in the paint was integral in leading the Colonials to their second straight DCL Title and appearance in the North Sectional Final.

Fellow seniors Larry and Bobby Abare have been playing varsity basketball since freshman year, and they have used their raw talent to develop themselves into strong all-around athletes. This year, Larry started the season on the injured list, but he was able to recover in time for the tournament and became a factor in the starting lineup. Bobby excelled at the point guard position, and he sharpened his ball-handling and passing skills from the year before. Junior Will Cronin played alongside Bobby in the backcourt in his first full year of varsity action, and he showed that he was capable of leading the team next season. Senior gunner Dan Salvo may have been the purest shooter in the DCL, and he went on stretches in games where he was unstoppable from downtown. Seniors Ted Keith and Joe O'Brien have given the Colonials good backcourt options off

the bench. Fellow seniors Peter Rankis, Chris Martin and Mike Horan not only gave the team a deep bench, but they provided an invaluable source of key role players.

While the '04-'05 season was certainly a success by many standards, it marked the end of an



The team played hard in the section finals.
JONATHAN EISENBERG & MARK KAGAN / *Spectrum Staff*

era for AB Basketball. Not only will the team lose seven seniors next year, it will also lose four of the five members of its starting lineup from this season, including Kyle Jackson, one of the best players in AB Basketball history.

Coach Kilpatrick is optimistic, however. "Next year will be different," he asserts. "[There will be] lots of new players, but that does not mean it can't be special and rewarding too. Every team is different and has the potential to get better and do great things. I'm already looking forward to next year. I'm confident next year's captains will do a great job. We'll work hard and get better." Returning juniors who will be an integral part of AB's run for a DCL three-peat are Cronin, center Alex Scheier, and forward Bobby McLaughlin. This year, freshman Peter Tongo demonstrated why he is the future of the team, and he was able to get in solid minutes to get some experience for his growing role next year as a sophomore.

Too often in sports, what happens off the court can be more powerful than what happens on it. The Colonials played their final game of their '04-'05 season in Tsongas Arena in Lowell in a losing effort to Lawrence High School. Hector Paniagua, MVP of the Merrimack Valley Conference and a local star for Lawrence's high school basketball team who also led them to

the Eastern Mass Finals, was on the court that evening. Shortly after that game, Paniagua went to a club in Lawrence where, as an innocent bystander, he was shot in the neck; in the process, he became paralyzed from the neck down. Paniagua will never be able to play basketball, the sport he loves, on the college level. In support of Hector's family, which is trying to raise money to build a handicapped facility for him, Coach Kilpatrick and the basketball team raised money to support this cause during school on Tuesday, April 6 and Wednesday, April 7, and students were still able to give donations to Coach Kilpatrick afterwards. But no amount of money will ever return Hector's rare ability on the basketball court, and more importantly, the ability to walk and live like a normal human being. Moments like these happen unexpectedly and should serve as a living reminder to people who take for granted certain things in life.

At a game against Cambridge earlier on in the year, Coach Kilpatrick experienced what ended up being his most memorable moment of the season. "Seeing the smiles on the player's faces as they celebrated with their friends and families on the court after the game," he says, "was something I'll never forget."

Girls Basketball Wrap-Up

By BRIAN CALLAHAN
Spectrum Staff

Despite a strong regular season and top seeding in the Eastern Mass State Tournament, the AB girls basketball team was given an early exit in the state quarterfinals, losing to Andover 46-44. Seniors Liz Tindall and Olivia Nagle delivered gritty performances with 12 points apiece, and sophomore Gabi Fox turned in 9 points in the losing effort.

Throughout the season, the girls team dominated the DCL, defending their crown from previous years and putting themselves in good position to do well in the tournament. The team dropped its final game of the regular season to rival Wayland, who hadn't beaten the AB girls in several years. In the first round match up against Lexington, the Colonials defeated the Minutemen in a 57-52 victory at home. In that game they were able to overcome a first-half deficit and hold off a tough Lexington team that just would not quit. This tough first round match up wouldn't help the Colonials when they had to use all their reserves against a stellar Andover team

in the second round. In the end they just couldn't do enough to stave off Andover's offenses, despite having executed their game plan. As previously reported in *The Beacon*, Coach Cathy said their plan "was to stop the three and rebound the ball, and the girls did exactly that. Unfortunately, their [Andover's] pressure kept us from setting up on offense and getting into a rhythm."

Much like the boys basketball team, the girls will lose two Co-MVP's in Tindall and Nagle to college, where the dynamic senior duo will play ball at Harvard and Wagner, respectively. Losing these two players won't be an easy thing for the team to overcome, for they have solidified themselves as the best down low presence in the DCL and one of the best in the state. However, junior Jill LaForest has the potential to pick up where the two seniors left off. She has become a vaunted inside force for the girls and is a likely captain. Sophomore guards Fox and Erin Cartwright will only get better in their junior year and will give the Colonials a great core of guards for the future.

Hockey Team Skates to a Finish

By SCOTT LABENSKI
Spectrum Staff
KEVIN WHITE
Correspondent

As the AB hockey season came to its conclusion there was a bittersweet feeling in the air. While the team felt they had accomplished their goal of making the State Tournament, they thought they could have taken the season even further. The team's final game against St. Bernard's ended up with the same result as their earlier meeting in the year: a loss.

Although the end result wasn't what he would have hoped for, senior captain Brendan "The Body" Agrillo was able to put it in perspective. "Although we didn't make it far in the state tournament, I feel as though I have still won with this team. Each and every man on this squad is now a member of my family. I feel as though I have learned more about myself as a player and more importantly as a person."

It was obvious from the start of the season that this team had the potential to do well. From the first day of practice to the final minute of the State Tournament, everyone felt a deep connection

to the team and to fellow teammates. Role players like Jeff "The Stallion" Marrion are the supports that lifted this team into the state tournament. On his progress with the team, Marrion said, "At the beginning of the year I was known as Marrion, or, as I like to look at it, Marrion the Mare. However, as the season progressed, I was able to prove myself to the boys and I achieved the nickname Stallion. They said I had upgraded myself from a boy to a man or a mare (female horse) to a stallion."

Another factor that propelled the team into the state tournament was the strenuous work ethic of individual players. Team leader and star defenseman John Webster says of his rigorous workout routine before, after, and during school, "The gym isn't just a place to work out; it is a place to hang with the boys. For example, when I get there I expect to see a lot of my teammates working out, and do some upper body, ya know? Pecs, for the ladies of course. Then I get away from the beach muscles and work on the hockey muscles such as my well-defined quadriceps, which can make the difference between winning and losing and even living and dying."

But the team leaders weren't the only ones working out. The work ethic of the role players was also evident in up-and-coming freshman defenseman Tony D'Augustine. "Playing with star John Webster had its ups and downs and sideways. Although I was not the star of the line like I wished to be, a lot of his habits rubbed off on me. I was in the gym day and night just to be like Johnny the 'Chise.' I admire his body and hope that one day I can tone it just like Johnny. By this I mean that I wanna be a lean, mean, clean fighting machine."

On the varsity team's successful season, Andrew "Tuna Can" Christmas says, "This was my senior year at Acton-Boxborough and my last year of organized hockey. I was really happy to be on a tournament-bound squadron for my banner year, and I couldn't have asked for a better coach than Danny, my boy, Fontas. He taught me how to fly and how to land, he caught me when I fell and lent a helping hand. This man taught me more about myself than I could have ever imagined possible." The team finished with an overall record of 7-8-6 and an appearance in the state tournament for the first time in six years.

Sports

Callahan's Corner

By BRIAN CALLAHAN
Spectrum Staff

Remember the '90s, the days of Michael Jordan and the Bulls? Whether it was MJ having a legendary performance with a flu, making an ice-cold final shot against the Utah Jazz in the '98 Finals to cap a second three-peat, or dunking to win the game in "Space Jam," Jordan transcended the game on multiple levels and became this generation's Babe Ruth. When Jordan called it quits for the first time, we thought we had our next 23 coming out of high school. In Lower Marion High School in Pennsylvania, a young Philadelphian prodigy gave a press conference in his school's auditorium to inform his classmates of his decision to skip college and go pro. Six years later, Kobe Bryant would be charged with the rape of a young woman, and his once dominant Laker team would be struggling to remain in the playoff picture. Considering this series of events, one might think the NBA has a bleak future-but that couldn't be farther from the truth.

I have to admit I wasn't a believer when the press hyped up Akron, Ohio phenomenon LeBron James. They touted him as a #1 pick, regardless of the fact that he didn't attend his senior year... of high school. I thought the stage was set for the ultimate letdown; because of this opinion and loyalty to the old guard, I bet against him. Now, in only his second year, James has far exceeded my and many others' expectations, for he has become one of the best players in the NBA. He is up for MVP, his Cavs are in a position to make the playoffs and the team has a legitimate shot to make a run deep into the postseason-provided they don't have to play Miami or Detroit in the first round. Already, James has been called a hybrid of Jordan and former Laker Magic

Johnson for his ability to create shots for himself and his teammates. At this point in his career, there is no doubt that he has the talent to be the next Jordan, but ultimately it is the intangibles that will define his place in NBA history in the next decade and decide whether or not he can be the ambassador to the game that Jordan was for so many people around the globe.

There has been a recent Boston revival as well. Danny Ainge took over the team more than a year ago and put his stamp on the franchise, trading fan favorite Antoine Walker. He then traded for a player who didn't want to play here-Gary Payton. And guess what? He traded back for Cyber 'Toine. Those two trades couldn't have worked out any better for this team, as Payton has helped give his veteran leadership day in and day out, while Walker has more than met the expectations he never quite met during his first tenure in Boston. Unfortunately for fan Harsha Krovi, a current third place standing and lead in the Atlantic division has not been enough for what the junior hoped would be a 50 win season. So confident was Krovi that he challenged boys varsity coach Rick Kilpatrick to a bet on whether the Celtics could achieve that 50 win plateau. Needless to say, Krovi lost, and Kilpatrick reaped the benefits of a delicious sub from Lando's. Regarding his victory over Krovi, Kilpatrick struggled to explain Harsha's true intention; but like all true competitors, he enjoyed his reward in the end. "Harsha? There really are no clear answers to the mystery that is Harsha Krovi," Kilpatrick says. "I will add, though, that my budster tasted splendid." Maybe Harsha would have been more successful had he bet Kilpatrick on whether or not the NBA would rise out of the cellar it has been in for the past several years.

Spring Track Preview

By DAVE RILEY
MIKE AIROSUS
Spectrum Staff

As the ice and snow melt off storied Leary Field, the Acton-Boxborough Spring Track team is getting geared up for what promises to be another successful season. Under coaches Ryan Steege and Nate James, the girls squad will try to build on their successful campaign from last season. Boys coaches Ron Vogel, Alex Ivanov and Stephen Hitzrot look to help the boys team rebound from a lackluster DCL record of 2-6. Returning captain Peter Lowe and captains John "Old Man River" McCoy, Zac "Mr. Whip" Del Nero, and Chris Eckersley provide a strong leadership core for the boys.

The sprint group for the boys squad will be led by senior Eckersley, the reigning 55-meter DCL champion and first team all-star in indoor track. Junior John Chou will enhance both the 100 and 200 meter events, as well as supply his abilities as a top long jumper. Junior McCoy and sophomore

Andrew Musacchio will pace the hurdle crew. Seniors Tom Egge and Matt Shimizu will add depth to the 300-meter hurdles.

Shimizu will also lead the mid-distance squad. Peter Lowe will have to assert his dominance in the 400-meter event. Underclassmen Chris Diaz and Eric "Nish" Carlson will carry their indoor success to the spring season and intensify the 800. Junior Del Nero will attempt to improve on his sixth place finish in last year's DCL championship meet. Juniors Mike Airosus and Anton Trubitsyn will do more than fill the gaping void left by last year's departed seniors. Rising sophomore Keon "Don't Call Me Keanu" Reed hopes to improve his already-impressive indoor mile time. Underclassmen Brett Herrick and George Neagle will also contribute in the distance department.

Leaders in field events include brothers Peter and Dave Lowe in the high jump, along with McCoy. McCoy will also contribute in the shotput with senior Dave Teebagy. Pete Rankis, another se-

nior, will use his basketball skills to compete in the javelin and pole vault events.

The girls track team is fresh off a winning DCL Championship during winter track and isn't ready to stop its run just yet. Seniors Katy Agule, Allie Schneider and Becca Maitland lead the long distance crew and are joined by freshman Kate Warwick who has shown this year that she is the future of the girls track team. Juniors Kara Lafferty and Sam Pappin showed over the winter that they are a strong duo in the mid-distance races. Fresh off her Boston Globe All Scholastic winter track season, sophomore Natalie Crutchfield is back for the spring track season and will continue to develop as a top-notch runner.

Along with the arrival of the warm spring weather, longer days, and greener pastures, comes AB's unrivaled passion to compete and succeed. Though the snow may be lacking, mental toughness and Colonial fighting spirit still flow through the veins of AB runners.

Callahan's Other "Corner"

By BRIAN CALLAHAN
Spectrum Staff

Ehh, what's the story with the Chem Corner Classic this spring? -Junior Shawn "Mr. Clutch" Myrick

This is a story that will gain heat as the weather gets warmer. The Chem Corner Classic broke onto the scene last year and was a roaring success, ending with the instant classic team of "Callahan for VP" winning it all in an extra inning classic. However, a dark cloud was recently cast over the future of the wiffle ball tournament. I have multiple problems with what happened to the area formerly known as Chem Corner. A playground was built there for the preschool program, but in the end I believe the central focus of

a high school should be to please its own students and make the high school experience a more enjoyable one, which was something Chem Corner was doing. By no means am I against the preschool program; I just believe that building a playground in Chem Corner for the program was unnecessary. But back to your original question-I have talked to sophomore class advisor Rick Kilpatrick, and he had this to offer about the return of everyone's favorite wiffle ball tournament: "Chem Corner will march on! I'm not exactly sure where to, but we'll find a home



The former home of the Chem Corner Classic now houses the preschool playground.
ALFRED DeGEMMIS / *Spectrum Staff*

for it...someplace." On potential changes he added, "I am hoping to have it a bit earlier this year so that seniors won't be gone and can participate. I also hope to add a few more wrinkles, but they are still under wraps." No word yet on whether or not there'll be a steroid test.

A Closer Look at the Upcoming Baseball Season

By BRIAN CALLAHAN
Spectrum Staff

Coming off a season of Red Sox proportions where the AB team made the state tournament, we can only wonder what the Mike Smith-led team will do for an encore. Playing their first full season on the newly renovated high school field and wearing a set of new uniforms, the 2005 Colonials have every reason to expect even bigger and better things in the postseason this year. On his team's prospects, senior Ben Larkins said, "We're taking the state

by storm; we will shoot to kill!"

Returning to this year's team are senior captains Larry and Bobby Abare, who will be playing center field and left field, respectively, and senior captain Kevin Cobb, who will anchor the pitching staff. As captains of the team, the Abare brothers have now completed their stronghold on the captain spots for three sports in this school, the other two being basketball and football. Cobb is already one

of the best pitchers in the DCL and should only get better in his



As spring arrives, so do the daily baseball practices.
NATE FRANZ / *Spectrum Staff*

senior year campaign.

The Colonial infield is marked by seniors Larkins at first, Joey O'Brien at second, and Andrew Sides at third, with junior Will Cronin coming back to play shortstop. The outfield is rounded out by the Abares in left and center, and newcomer Chris "Goose" Grosjean in right. Other outfielders include returning seniors Ted Keith and Evan Brown, who will

be playing in left and right, respectively, and junior John Magner.

The pitching staff will be caught by returning junior Matt McCusker and newcomer Brendan Wonn, a junior, who will be used in the backup role to start the season. The staff features Cobb, Larkins, Grosjean, returning senior Pat Little, returning junior Kyle Pochini, and Chris Seward. The Colonials begin their season on Saturday, April 9 at home. Cobb, who will pitch the opener, says that "the team has high expectations."

Letters and Editorials

Realizations in Solitude One Last Night in the Mac Lab

By JONATHAN EISENBERG
Chief Layout Editor

I can still remember the first time I walked through the Activities Fair during my lunch period in ninth grade. I remember looking around in awe at the multitudes of students trying to entice me and my fellow freshmen into their activity of choice. I remember thinking lightheartedly that none of the activities appealed to me. I remember walking by the table of the school newspaper, *The Spectrum*; I saw the spectrum of black, white, and gray that made up the attractive, professional-looking newspaper. I looked critically and then wondered "who would waste their time doing this." Then I moved on. Little did I know that by the end of the year I too would be devoting my soul to the crazed endeavor to produce the very newspaper that I initially overlooked. *The Spectrum* has been the most wholesome and formative activity of my high school career. It has helped to shape my dreams and aspirations.

I was drawn into this Herculean effort by my friend David; he came to me with a technical question. I solved his problem while also demonstrating my technical aptitude, and I was soon made the Chief Layout Editor for the following year. My role was originally very simple, for I was a technical advisor. During Layout Week before the printing of each issue, the section editors would layout their sections; my friends and I would help out.

It seemed, however, that we ran into new problems with each issue. Sometimes they were my fault; other times, section editors would fail at even the simplest tasks. I worked with a few friends to overcome all challenges, even when that meant staying late on Friday night when the paper absolutely had to be done. We quickly recognized that literary editors were not meant for layout. I was given the task of forming a group of layout editors who would be responsible for the layout of the paper and possessed sufficient technical skill for the task. The task itself changed me. Asking my friends to stay late each afternoon to layout the paper forced me to do the same. I began to genuinely care about the quality of each edition.

One week is particularly marked in my memory. Lay-

out Week began badly and grew worse. We hit problems at every turn. This time we had an absolute deadline to get the paper to the publisher. Section editors were too busy, editors and writers deserted us, and work was handed in long after the deadline. The layout staff was left to cope. My friends and I stayed on Friday night until 3:30 in the morning; we worked on the *Spectrum* layout for over 13 hours non-stop, coping with other people's faults.

I came to certain realizations in the serene solitude that I found wandering the school after even the third shift of janitors had left the building. I realized that the completion of such an intimidating project—from writing articles to layout to the final check—could not be done without the successful cooperation of many people. In a way, coordination between these people is more crucial than even the work itself. As I watched editors struggling with writers who turned in articles that had obviously taken fewer than ten minutes to write and writers who would not turn their work in on time no matter what the consequences, I realized that dedication was crucial. The ultimate irony is that I never laid out a full section. My role throughout was in coordination: I had to coordinate the layout process so that each person involved would complete his role successfully. I realized that my dedication had made a noticeable impact on the final result. My friends and I could always be found on the last day of Layout Week finishing the paper regardless of extenuating circumstances. My ambitions extend no further than what I learned during the course of Layout Weeks: I aspire to dedication and to hard work. I am sure that whatever my chosen profession may be, success and happiness are to be found in my devotion and commitment.

Thus, when I attend the Activities Fair as a senior (this time sitting behind the table rather than standing in front), I have no qualms about bringing new people in. "Come: join layout," I advertise. "It's fun—you get to play with cool technology." But I know in my heart that layout is more than that. It is a place where the next generation of layout editors will mature, a place where they will learn the valuable work ethic that will serve them throughout their lives.

By DAVID EMER
Editor-in-Chief

It is almost eleven o'clock on a Friday night. The coffee is wearing off and the pizza has done little to alleviate my hunger. My eyes are exhausted from looking at the computer screen for the past nine hours, but there is no better feeling than being able to say the three words, "It is done."

Having that feeling of accomplishment is just one of the many reasons that I love working for *The Spectrum*. The completion of the paper is so fulfilling because of the tremendous amount of teamwork that it takes to produce a 20-page newspaper. The many different types of skills needed to produce a newspaper require students who usually would not be even talking to each other to work cooperatively.

Senior Matt Baskin, the Entertainment Editor, and junior Matt Kagan, a Layout Editor, do not have much in common other than their first names. *The Spectrum* forced these two people from different classes and different cliques to work together to complete the Entertainment section last issue.

Over 60 students work on every aspect of the paper's production, including writing, laying out the paper, copy editing, collecting advertisements, and much more.

I am proud to have had an integral role in such an undertaking for the past four years. When I overhear students discussing the issues raised by the paper, I am convinced that the late night sessions and everyone's hard work was worthwhile.

And everyone did work hard, but it is the great people on *The Spectrum* that have made my time here such an enjoyable experience. Nearly everyone I have worked with on *The Spectrum* has been very conscientious and enthusiastic, but I would like to name a few individuals who have really gone the proverbial extra mile:

•Linda Yan, the Senior Editor, writes almost every last-minute article that makes the paper timely. She also keeps me sane during the long layout sessions.

•Matt Fisher-Post, the Chief Copy Editor, is so good at finding errors in the paper that the spell-checker misspells more words than he does.

•Jonathan Eisenberg, my best friend since age two and the Chief Layout Editor, still astounds me every time he leads the effort with his take-no-prisoners approach to turn 60 Word Documents into a newspaper in under five hours.

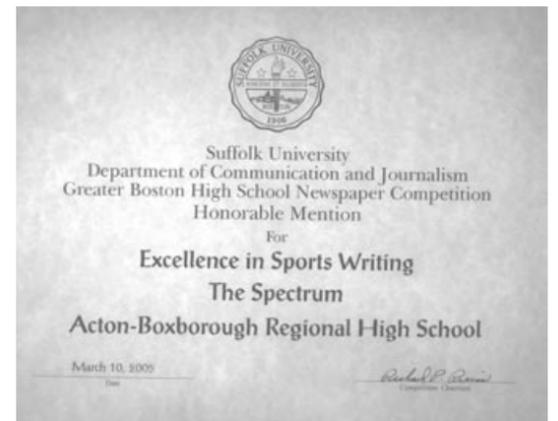
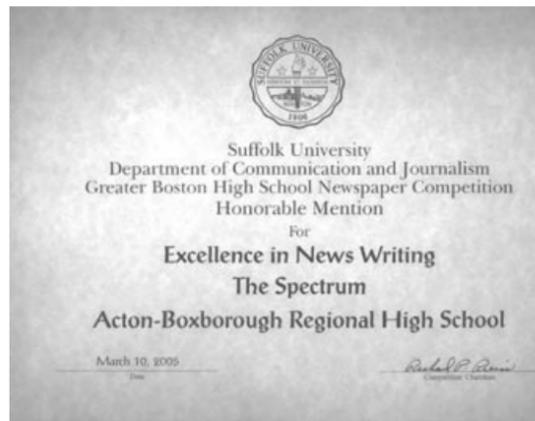
•Joel Emer, my dad, manages the newspaper's website and stays with us as a de facto advisor long into the wee hours of the night on the final day of layout.

•Ms. Blauch, one of the two co-advisors who both go way beyond the call of duty, has always trusted in my abilities and gives me the chance to make mistakes so that I can learn from them.

•Ms. Lenington, the other co-advisor, has almost become a second mother to me after being my newspaper advisor at AB and R.J. Grey for five of the past six years.

The Spectrum is one of the aspects of AB that I will miss the most and also remember the most fondly. I even will miss the long Friday nights in the Mac Lab that we spent trying to put each issue to bed.

I wish the best of luck to Tess O'Brien and Wenxi Li for much success next year.



Letter to the Editor

This letter is not quite directed at any particular individual, but instead at the school administration. After reading the article regarding the limits of the library, it occurs to me that the town of Acton has just built a multi-million dollar school facility, yet its library has a capacity for 160 students, which is approximately 9% of the student body. Such a realization is quite alarming, because as it is, the building is nowhere near full capacity. Following trends of the past few years, the size of the high school's student body is expected to rise. This leads me to question where will students go when there are 2000 students in a school whose library accommodates such a small number of people. I believe that the school's administration is fully to blame for the current situation with the library, and it will only become worse in years to come.

-Daniela Sasson ('07)

The Spectrum

Founded 1982
"ut omnes te cognoscant"

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LETTERS TO EDITOR

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NO ATTACHMENTS PLEASE

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The Other Other Side

Acton and Boxborough Police Logs

By DEREK MATYAS & TESS O'BRIEN
Spectrum Staff

The following entries have been selected from the Acton and Boxborough Police Log, courtesy of *The Beacon*. We promise these are all real.

- Resident of Littleton County Road called to complain about noise from the gun club.
- Suspicious activity was reported on Massachusetts Avenue. It turned out to be a man using a phone.
- Suspicious activity reported on Meadow Lane [on November 2]. Caller reports approximately 12 high school aged youths trick or

treating door to door. Parents advised to keep the kids in until the end of the party [and to demonstrate to use of a calendar to the youths.]

- Fire Department responded to Seminole Road after a woman reported she might have put too many chemicals down on her lawn.
- An officer responded to reports of a tree blocking parts of Route 2. The officer was unable to locate the tree.
- An officer responded to a suspicious vehicle report from Quill and Press on Route 27. The officer reported that the vehicle belonged to the owner of the store.

To Whom It May Concern:

By LINDA YAN
Spectrum Staff

It has come to my attention, being of a delicate temperament, that strolling the corridors of this prestigious institution resembles more a dangerous crusade into barbarian lands than warranted.

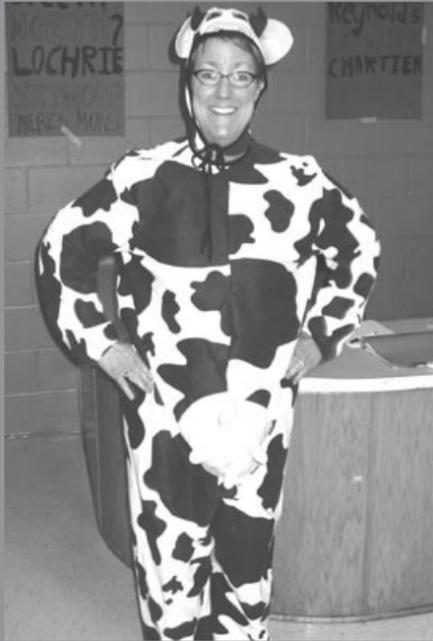
It was just last Monday that I was striding with intent towards the powder room, when the door opened, much like Pandora's box. Cheap mango in unholy matrimony to rancid vanilla with a dalliance with spoiled peach nearly sent me to my knees. Thus, it is with swollen eyes and numbed nose that I take pen to paper and draft this letter.

Honestly! If one is possessed of proper fragrances from lines such as Chanel or Dior, then it is merely bad taste to throw around one's money in such obvious ways. Much worse is when presumptuous little twits who aspire to womanhood prance around the halls of this institution reeking of smells (I shudder to consider them scents) that would stop a full-grown rhinoceros in its tracks. It would be laughable if it were not so pathetic. This poor attempt at either luring those of the male persuasion or displaying some sort of mature superiority is akin to all attempts to invade the Russian hinterlands—only dead men and an ignoble retreat can ensue. All that these callow girls are displaying is horrendous taste and the dubious evolutionary trait of a lacking sense of smell. In my day and age, oranges and raspberries and sweet pea were things that one ate, not splashed on the body as free as any libertine.

I recall a venerable olfactory grenade of some sort of garden tool being quite popular among the faceless hordes. It was Saw, perhaps, or Hatchet? Either way, its strange name is entirely too apt in describing how it hacks into one's nostrils and mind, sending waves of pain into one's terribly sensitive eyes and sinuses. It is a cruel, cruel cycle, where those who immerse themselves in this radioactive cloud lose higher mental processing and become carriers of this terrible organism. These poor lost souls roam the earth, huddled in mobs and infecting innocents with clouds of toxins wherever they go. I fear that at this level, even shots of Febreze to the head and chest will not suffice to end this plague.

Please allow the population to read my humble words and understand my concern. The good Lord knows how I wish them the best, and may their class-less souls find some comfort. Somehow.

Livestock on the Loose \$500 Reward for Information Leading to Their Whereabouts

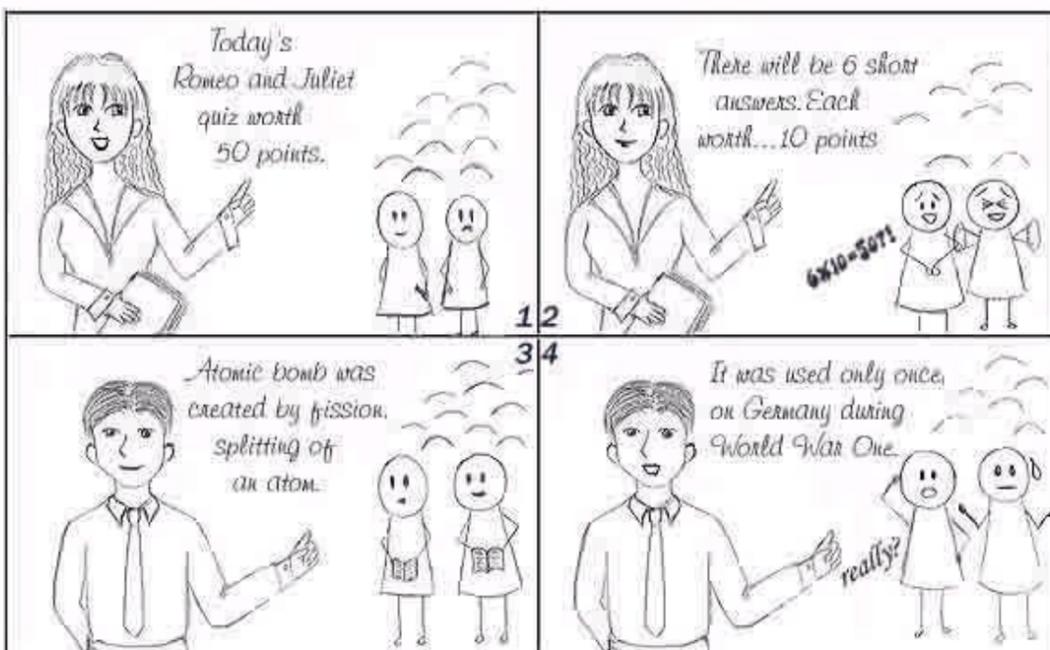


Solutions to Crossword From Page 20



How Would Ms. Lenington Score in Calculus?

How Would Mr. Noeth Score in History? By WEN XIAO *Spectrum Staff*



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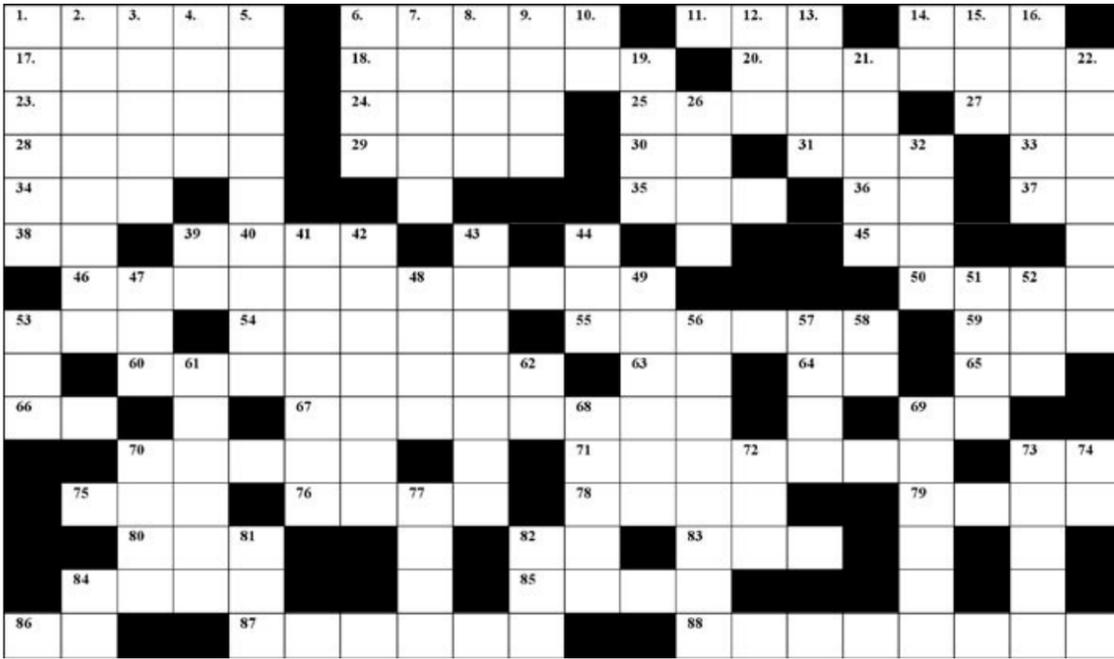
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The Other Side

Crossword by STEPHANIE MAGNUSON Correspondent



Across

- 1. oxen harnesses
- 6. stinging species
- 11. AB's league
- 14. not con, but ___
- 17. special music piece
- 18. like Huck or Puck
- 20. tragic king of Thebes
- 23. Forest Gump officer
- 24. rich, organic material
- 25. ___ of operations
- 27. "best math college"
- 28. Lowell's machines
- 29. Transfer Station
- 30. circumference / diameter
- 31. Anything goes line; "You're the ___"
- 33. SR's child
- 34. meditative sounds
- 35. time period
- 36. ex.
- 37. type of lava
- 38. Northwest state's postal abbrev.
- 39. Spanish crowd cheer
- 45. prosecuting attorney, abv.
- 46. bivalvia brain
- 50. castle owner
- 53. our country
- 54. stooded?
- 55. newest RJ Grey wing
- 59. Catcher in the ___
- 60. flower-woman herb
- 63. ___M computer company
- 64. morning abbr.
- 65. www browser
- 66. nonhuman pronoun
- 67. not positive, or zero
- 69. "Can't spell loser without ___"
- 70. earring types
- 71. Buddhist's goal
- 73. expresses hesitation
- 75. indebting note
- 76. seven in France
- 78. ___ Grey Tea
- 79. African Language
- 80. west coast time
- 82. "either ___"
- 83. CIO partner

- 84. movie Now and ___
- 85. 2000 lbs.
- 86. one of the March girls
- 87. April sign
- 88. Freshman literature

Down

- 1. South wing color
- 2. Roman foes
- 3. regard
- 4. cheese variety
- 5. foolish
- 6. Noeth's real first name?
- 7. love in Lyons
- 8. unwanted email
- 9. 50cent tune
- 10. Gestapo abv.
- 12. nearby Cape
- 13. new "cool"
- 14. detective for hire
- 15. bike speed measure
- 16. spooky letter board game
- 19. ___ in Haiti bingo night
- 21. R2D2
- 22. Mr. Hyde's case
- 26. laugh in French
- 32. summit
- 39. under antonym
- 41. reaches out
- 42. twin variety
- 43. opposites do this

- 43. potassium molecule
- 47. paddle
- 48. catch
- 49. random facts
- 51. flower variety
- 52. Bill ___ (the science guy!)
- 53. brow type
- 56. unusual
- 57. gamma-amino butyric acid
- 58. Gravity, Strong Force, Weak Force and ___ (abbr.); or Dorothy's Auntie
- 61. triangle type
- 62. Beanie Baby company, reversed
- 68. noble gas adjective
- 69. "the other" en français
- 70. second year student abbrev.
- 72. 3 to 30 kilohertz
- 73. female cow part
- 74. 12th letter of the Greek alphabet
- 77. pupil
- 81. dynamite
- 82. 1948 association of western hemisphere countries
- 84. towards

See Page 19 For Solution

Spout - Offs...

These Spout Offs are straight from the mouth of the student body and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the *Spectrum* staff.

Gavin DeGraw's coming to our school!!!

The town should reserve the snow removal budget for inside, and use the plows to remove the hordes of freshman in the halls.

We would all get to class on time if everyone walked faster.

Why can I find empty tables in the library when it is supposedly full? And how can it stay full even after people leave?

I'm so bored. I think I'll put another piece of paper into the box.

Symbiotic He-She relationships rule!

Q: Why was the time period from 1815 to 1825 known as the Era of Good Feelings?
A: The US government had just repealed the Non-Inter-course Act.

I want to see more teachers in cow suits. They should be the school uniforms.

I feel like a freshman putting this piece of paper into the Spout Offs box.

Why is the one-minute announcement never actually a minute before first period? Some days it's 3 minutes and other days it's 20 seconds. One minute isn't enough time to get to class anyway.

Where did the cow suit come from? Mr. Mutschler?

I like the name "Cambria" for a girl. It means "change."

Look Ma, I'm in the paper! -Mohsin Siddiqui

I want to know who Mr. Zip is. He seems to be absent a lot. I'd like to take his class. What does he teach?

Why is Gavin DeGraw coming to such a stupid small school?

Has anyone seen a big spool of anime running around?

I love the beached whale.

Did you know that I love the Beatles? Because I do!!!

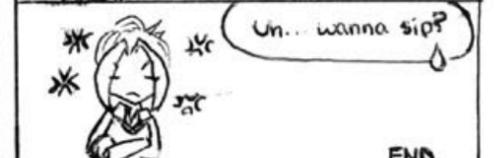
#1 Reason for guys to take French..Because in French IV the ratio is 6 girls to 1 guy ^.^

Why can't Davey Havok come to our school instead of Gavin DeGraw?

Remember, this column doesn't work without your input!

Lame Excuses

by NINA YI *Spectrum Staff*



END.