



The Spectrum



THE BEST FOOTBALL TEAM IN STATE HISTORY



AB football won its 41st straight game by beating Concord-Carlisle in a dramatic bout that shattered CC's own state record of 40 straight wins. Five thousand fans cheered AB to a 19-7 victory. See SPORTS p. 18

DAVID EMER / SPECTRUM STAFF

Construction Nears End

By TESS O'BRIEN
Spectrum Staff

Construction has become a way of life at AB. Over the past several years it has not been unusual to dodge drip-catching trashcans in hallways, duck raw wires that dangled from the ceilings, or see a back-end loader digging outside a classroom window. But on November 12, five years after the first pile drivers started distracting kids in math class, the school's omnipresent construction will finally come to an end.

Acton-Boxborough Regional High School, along with many others in the area, was first erected 30 or 40 years ago when Massachusetts suddenly needed to accommodate a population explosion. Consequently, these schools of the same generation all required renovations simultaneously, causing a great press for state funding several years ago. Lani DeRome, the school's Building Project Coordinator, said that

AB was able to secure state funding because "we met the stringent criteria the state set down...[and] we had a real necessity for renovation and expansion." This necessity encompassed a complete overhaul of several Acton schools, namely, the double elementary school, the junior high, and the high school.

State funding, however, has not provided for complete financial support of the construction. The state will reimburse the school for two-thirds of every one dollar spent. The town taxpayers are responsible for the remaining one-third of construction costs.

At the high school alone, renovations include three student centers, a double-sized fitness center, an additional commons area, several computer labs, conference rooms, a digital language lab, locker rooms in accordance with new safety codes, and cutting-edge science and art classrooms. In addi

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Indecent Assaults in Acton

By DEBLEENA MITRA & RASHMI JASRASARIA
Spectrum Staff

In October, two Acton women were indecently assaulted by a 5' 6" man who remains at large. An investigation is currently being conducted and the police are searching for information on the suspect.

The first attack occurred on October 4, when the victim was entering her apartment on Great Road. The victim described the assailant as wearing a white or light colored shirt pulled over his head. The man indecently assaulted the victim by touching her improperly in a sexual manner. He advanced toward the woman from behind and then ran away. The second time, another woman was assaulted indecently in the West Acton area during the evening. The vehicle that the suspect was driving may have been a two-door, silver Honda.

"Nobody has reported any new

incidents since these two attacks," said Lieutenant Palma of the Acton Police, "but in order to prevent these assaults from happening again, everyone has to be careful and stay aware of their surroundings and what's going on in their community." The Police Department also warns that citizens should be aware of "anything that looks out of the ordinary, especially suspicious or unknown persons."

The Police Department stresses that people should always be aware of what is going on around them so that they do not become the victims of attacks. The public should take extra precautions such as locking all doors and traveling with a buddy, especially when walking around late at night. Even simple actions like remembering where a car is parked will help people avoid incidents similar to those aforementioned.

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A Taste of Spain: Spanish Author Comes to AB

By RASHMI JASRASARIA
Spectrum Staff

The student union was packed with students of Spanish as a short man of dark complexion composed himself to speak about his language and culture. On October 25, during first and second period, Spanish author Angel Esteban came to ABRHS to speak to Spanish classes at the invitation of Mr. Diego Mansilla, a new Spanish teacher at AB.

Esteban is the Professor of Latin American Literature at the University of Grenada in Grenada, Spain. He received his doctorate in literature in 1989 and is now a distinguished professor or Profesor Titular. He is also a published author and has written over 30 novels along with a

number of essays and poems. Esteban has given conferences all over the U.S. and has spoken at Harvard University, Wellesley College, UCLA, University of Delaware, and University of Miami. He is currently visiting the United States for a few months to help prepare graduate level students who are pursuing a doctorate in the Spanish language. Clearly, Esteban is well-

known throughout America, and with his newly published book, his fame is sure to explode.

Esteban's most recent novel, *Gabo y Fidel*, outlines the friendship between the Nobel Prize-winning Spanish writer Gabriel Garcia "Gabo" Marquez and Cuban dictator Fidel Castro. "It's a very in

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Angel Esteban, who has written 30 novels, speaks to Spanish classes on October 25.

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News

Construction Continues at AB November 12 Finish Anticipated

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tion, classrooms have been outfitted with a plethora of new technology including projectors, mobile laptop labs, and Smart Boards.

TLT Construction has completed nearly all renovations, making the November 12 finish date a viable goal. Every phase of construction—including the fifth and final phase that is currently drawing to a close—has miraculously been accomplished on time or a day early thanks to TLT's "absolute commitment to schedule," reported Building Committee member John Fallon. Finally, with five years of heavy construction and \$52.4 million behind us, the school is nearing completion.

Ironically, however, AB's expensive building project coincides with the severe statewide budget-crunches of recent years. As a result, state deficits have caused the unemployment rates to rise, and with a fast-growing town and state population, AB awkwardly finds itself money-conscious. Just as millions of dollars are poured into the construction project, the school doesn't have enough teachers to fill all the new classrooms.

In recent years, students have found school amenities shrinking in accordance with budget cuts; this year AB has extremely large class sizes, fewer teachers, an exclusion of independent studies, and inflated athletic fees. These academic privileges are arguably far more important to students' wellbeing than new whiteboards and their deprivation is fueling a common sentiment among students: money for teacher salaries and independent studies is being drained to supplement the cost of construction. However, Ms. DeRome insists that this is simply not the case. Funding for

construction and funding for other school-related expenses come from different channels. The two costs are covered by different taxes and different federal contributions, and they simply cannot be compared. The recent budget-crunches just coincided unfortunately with the construction project.

Fortunately, AB's classrooms will not be empty for long. School renovations were designed to accommodate an estimated student population peak in the 2010-2011 school year, when 2050 students are projected to be attending AB. But even if such significant expansions are necessary, is the new school too vast? The main hallway is a quarter mile long, the HVAC

period—have accompanied this new rule, head custodian Stan Nelson assured the school that these new restrictions "have been a huge help." Before the food-and-drink rule, one full-time custodian was required just to take care of crumbs and spills about the school. Now, thanks to the cooperation of AB students and the continued hard work of the custodians, the halls remain spotless despite their vastly increased square-footage.

Through compromises like this, the students and the administration are all acclimating to the new environment. And although we might need roller skates to get from Chemistry to Spanish in our five-



Trucks and equipment still litter the school grounds.

ALFRED DEGEMMIS / PHOTOGRAPHY CORRESPONDENT

heating system struggles to maintain consistent temperatures, and the school's hardworking custodians are now expected to maintain a much greater area without any additional aid.

In an effort to help AB's custodians keep the school a cleaner place, students this year were asked to restrict all food and drink to a few specified areas. Though countless grumblings—especially from coffee-deprived students in first

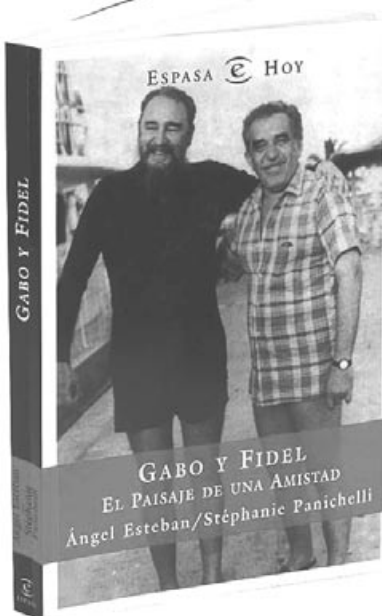
minute passing time, most students acknowledge that the renovated school is a definite improvement, if only because the expansive library affords easy access to the daily crossword puzzles. After years of adjusting for the ubiquitous high school construction project, students and teachers alike will be happy to see it draw to a close. Hopefully, we will find something new out the window to divert us from class.

Gabo y Fidel Author Angel Estaban Engages Spanish Students

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interesting book. He certainly took some risks in writing that book," said Mansilla. The book has sold well all over the Spanish-speaking world. Recently Estaban's novel was translated to English. It is due to start selling in mainstream bookstores such as Barnes & Noble in mid-November, when Estaban will begin his national advertising campaign for the book. Students at AB can look forward to hearing more about Estaban and his book in the near future.

The Spanish teachers were very excited to have such a distinguished guest at the school, as they had several objectives in introducing the students to Estaban. Mansilla commented that in the language aspect, he wanted his students to be exposed to different accents.



"They don't hear many people from Spain," Mansilla said. Concerning literature itself, both Ms. Dix and Mr. Mansilla want to encourage students to read books by Spanish authors. "We want them to read—not necessarily books written in Spanish, but books by Hispanic authors," Mansilla added.

Students were engaged and excited throughout the speech. Seniors in Mr. Mansilla's class had questions for the author and received some thorough responses about the author's interests in traveling, in foreign cultures, and in the Spanish language. Angel Estaban's visit was unique and educational for all involved. "I was expecting it to be boring and hard to understand, but it was interesting and easy to understand," commented senior Prasad Patil.

AB Speech and Debate Takes First Place at Sacred Heart Tourney

By JYOTI JASRASARIA

Correspondent

The AB Speech and Debate team placed first at the Hall of Fame Tournament at Sacred Heart, on October 23.

The large group of rowdy, yet articulate, students gather every Monday and Friday to practice their pieces in 258W. Made up of a wide variety of students, the team competes periodically in a series of tournaments hosted by different schools. Out of the many students competing at the Sacred Heart tournament, 16 of them broke into finals, meaning that they competed again in the final rounds and were recognized at the award ceremony. The competition events ranged from

rick, a novice, won second, fourth and seventh in Group Discussion. In Novice Extemporaneous Speaking, freshman Don Trombly won first place and junior Helen Alesbury won fifth. Finally, in Varsity Extemp, senior Brandon Lemos placed fifth. A typical tournament runs from 7:30 AM – 6:00 PM, including meetings, rounds 1 to 3, lunch, final rounds, and ultimately, the long-awaited award ceremony.

Mr. Beck, an English and History teacher at AB, continues to coach the team. This year, he is adding more structure and organization to the team. For example, the Speech and Debate board meets much more regularly to discuss the team and its progress. Seniors Katie Ames and Susan Yao, co-captains of the team, are optimistic about



AB's speech and debaters wait in the Sacred Heart auditorium to find out the results of the tournament

DAVID EMER / SPECTRUM STAFF

Children's Literature (known as Kiddy Lit to Speech and Debaters) to Radio Broadcasting, in which Prasad Patil and Oliver Hong, two seniors, won second and fifth place, respectively. In Declamation, sophomore Sneha Arjun won first place and the title of Top Novice. Out of the 18 Acton Boxborough members sent to compete in Student Congress, another event, four of our students ranked among the top twelve. Senior David Emer, juniors Julia Rey and Wenxi Li, and

sophomore Mark Amoroso earned fifth, seventh, eighth and ninth place, respectively. In Poetry Reading, Kelsey Jarboe, a sophomore, won first place, and Susan Ma and Ning Qin, two seniors, placed first in Duo Interpretation. Seniors Ankit Chandra and Charles Fisher-Post along with junior Shawn Kilpat-

this coming year, and rightfully so, after their outstanding performance at the first tournament.

The team members enjoyed themselves immensely at the competition. "We had a really big victory over Milton, our biggest rival, so that was cool," commented Arjun. "You're not really competing against the people you're competing against. You become more like friends... You care more about doing your best and doing well than winning, which is what's really great about it," Jarboe added.

The entire team has worked hard,

practicing its pieces or researching for a bill or group event during the past few weeks in preparation for this competition. Clearly, the practice produced fantastic results. It was a great tournament. Congratulations to the AB Speech and Debate Team, and good luck to them in the future!

"We had a really big victory over Milton, our biggest rival, so that was cool,"
- Sneha Arjun

News

Martha Coakley's Visit to AB

By HARSHA KROVI
Correspondent

On Thursday, October 21st, Martha Coakley, the Middlesex County D.A., visited Mr. Kilpatrick's You and the Law class and Ms. Houle's Sociology class to talk about her job as District Attorney. She discussed student rights with the members of the class, and educated them about their Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Amendments, throwing in examples to illustrate those rights.

Over 50 cities and towns fall under Coakley's jurisdiction. This makes her job especially difficult, as she has to take into account all the different town laws. She fights vehemently for both prevention as well as punishment.

Coakley explained the legal system in a nutshell, through the now common motto of "innocent until proven guilty." Coakley acknowledged that individuals sometimes do get jailed for crimes they did not commit, and said that "the law tries to hold accountable the wrong people, and it's hard to always be right." Coakley cited two instances, where innocent men were mistakenly imprisoned for rape, one fifteen years ago and one nineteen years ago, until recent DNA technology proved them innocent. Coakley admitted that this upset her, but said that she had to take the bad with the good, and the good outweighed the bad.

Coakley was involved in the famous "Nanny Murder" case Commonwealth of Massachusetts v. Louise Woodward in 1998. The case

revolved around the death of young Matthew Eappen by Woodward, after the young nanny tried to calm the baby down by shaking him. The prosecution, with Coakley, argued that the death resulted from brain damage resulting from the shaking. The defense however argued that those damages were already present in the baby and thus not caused by Woodward. In the end, the judge



District Attorney Martha Coakley
DAVID EMER / SPECTRUM STAFF

ruled Woodward guilty of manslaughter and sentenced her to 297 days in jail. Coakley played a major role in the conviction of Woodward and this case was monumental in the advancement of her career to become D.A.

Another famous case that Coakley was involved in was Commonwealth of Massachusetts v. Thomas Junta in 2002. Junta was charged with the murder of Michael Costin when they got into a fight at their sons' hockey game. Accused of excessive self-defense, Junta was sentenced to six-to-ten years in prison. This case later prompted the creation of the Victim Witness Bureau in an effort to help the families of such victims cope with injury or death. Once again, Coakley was a huge factor in this case.

Coakley's emphasis on safety and prevention has been at the core of her reputation as a firm District Attorney. "It is my goal to reach every educator, police officer, parent, student, and business leader with the information and resources they need not only to maintain day-to-day safety, but to foster an overall climate of respect and accomplishment in our schools and communities," she says, having worked extensively with various community services.

Our D.A. has announced that should Senator John Kerry win the 2004 Presidential Election, she will run for his position as Massachusetts Senator. With the respect she has garnered and all that she has done for the community, Martha Coakley will be a very strong candidate.

Assault in Acton Considered a Police Priority

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Beth Petr, an AB parent who publishes a community e-mail list, sent out a press release from Acton Police Chief Widmayer about the assaults. It raised awareness of the issue in the community and has encouraged people to take measures to ensure safety. The press release

contact the police department immediately. Lieutenant Palma said, "We would rather check a thousand suspicious activity calls and find them unfounded than have one incident occur when nobody called." The indecent assaults have severely upset the Acton-Boxborough community and are considered high-



The Acton Police have been very active in alerting citizens about the recent attacks.

ALFRED DEGEMMIS/ PHOTOGRAPHY CORRESPONDENT

warns citizens not to get involved in any suspicious behavior that they may see. "Drive away if you are unsure of the intentions of people loitering around your home when you arrive," Widmayer advised in the message. It also goes on to describe the vehicle that the suspect may have been driving as a two-door, silver Honda. Finally, Widmayer asks anyone with additional information concerning the suspect or other suspicious activities to

priority by the police.

The community reactions to these assaults have varied, ranging from anger to surprise and fear. "I feel scared to walk around by myself," said junior Cecilia Pontoriero. The counseling department has opened its doors to any student who has felt threatened or uncomfortable. As one counselor put it, "If anyone has any concerns, they should absolutely see their counselor. We are happy to help."

Keeping an Eye on March 2005: The 411 on the New SAT I

By WENXI LI
Spectrum Staff

The members of the Class of 2006 have seen many changes. They were the first to take the MCAS in 4th grade, and the first to enjoy the fruits of the construction project at R.J. Grey Junior High. Now, they will be the first class to take the new SAT I: Reasoning Test. Although the SAT I is an important factor that colleges use when admitting students, it is not without its faults. It has been criticized by many, including University of California President Richard C. Atkinson, on grounds of inequality. Atkinson was horrified at the lengths that parents would go, sometimes even shopping for doctors to declare their children disabled in order to procure more time to take the test. Decisively, he announced that the University of California would no longer take the SAT I, as it was, under consideration in the admissions process. As one of the most-applied-to state schools (with highly-lauded UC Berkeley and UCLA) the university's decision forced the College Board's hand. The College Board manages the SAT I among

many standardized tests, and will implement a new SAT I: Reasoning Test in March of 2005.

The new SAT I will have significant differences from the existing test. For starters, the Verbal Analogies will be removed from the Critical Reading sections. However, short reading passages (around 100 words) will be added to the existing long reading passages and sentence completion questions. The math section will eliminate Quantitative Comparisons, but will include harder Algebra II problems (such as exponential growth, absolute value, functional notation, etc.)

The largest change to the exam will be the addition of a Writing Section. The College Board explains that "writing is a core skill needed for success in both college and the workplace." This section will include multiple-choice questions and require a student-written essay. The multiple-choice questions will be similar to the ones on the SAT II: Writing Subject Test. Therefore, when the new SAT I is offered, the SAT II Writing Test will no longer be needed. The essay's objective is to try and measure the student's skill in developing his or her stance

on an issue. The essay graders hired by the College Board are not expecting a perfectly polished piece of writing, but will grade the essay "on the total impression that it creates." Two readers, who will assign a score ranging from a high of 6 to a low of 1, will read each essay. The average of these two numbers will be the total score for the essay, which counts for one third of the final SAT I Writing Section score. Colleges will also have the choice to view the essays in order to gain an understanding of a student's writing when they are considering admissions. The test will take a total of 3 hours and 20 minutes, 25 minutes longer than the old SAT I. The scoring of the SAT I will also be different; a perfect score will no longer be a 1600, but a 2400 due to the fact that the new Writing section adds an additional 800 points. The College Board does not believe that these changes will make the test harder, and expects to see the same range of scores from previous years.

How are students at AB preparing for this alteration? Some students are enrolled in the prep courses offered by Kaplan and The

Princeton Review, two test-prep companies in Acton and nearby towns. These courses usually last for many weeks, and meet for three to four hours a few days each week. Costs range around \$900, and many of them prepare students for both the current and changed SAT I's. "We're given Verbal and Math manuals, and we use them in class and for homework," says Junior Jeff Shane who takes the course offered by The Princeton Review. "From the first test to the last test, my score went up 180 points." Other students plan to prepare themselves by buying prep books that contain test taking strategies, vocabulary lists, and practice tests. "I use a computer course to help me study," explains Katie McManus, "I can study when I feel like it because I usually don't have a lot of time." Research from countless universities has proven that preparing for the SAT I, even if it is only memorizing a few words or reviewing a few math concepts, could greatly improve an individual's score.

Since the first offering of the new SAT I will begin in March 2005, should students take the old exam as well as the new one? Will

colleges accept only one or the other, or both? Ms. Rosenman, a counselor at AB, advises students to take the new SAT and leaves the decision to take the original SAT I up to the individual student. According to an article in the Wall Street Journal on July 2, 2004, a number of top-notch colleges, including Harvard, Yale, and the University of Pennsylvania, have decided to let students submit scores from both tests. Some schools are even willing to mix and match scores. However, many other universities will not accept or consider an applicant's total from the current test. The majority of colleges will want to see the newer version; even the schools that are open to either test still prefer to see the newer version so that they can compare students on an equal footing.

Even though the new test could evaluate a student more accurately, not everyone is thrilled. "I prefer the old one over the new because I don't like the essay and I'm not too excited to have a longer test... but I still have to take the newer version," says Junior Angela Gan. "I guess I'm just more used to and familiar with the older version."

Local Politics

Local Politicians Debate Issues at Town Hall

Worcester and Middlesex Senate Seat (Acton and Boxborough)

Senator Pam Resor

Sen. Resor has been serving the region in town and state government for nearly thirty years. After graduating from Smith College, she moved to Acton in 1966 with her husband. Over the next twelve years, Resor spent her time raising her three children and serving on the School Committee and the town's Finance Committee.

In 1978, she became the president of the local chapter of the League of Women Voters. At around the same time, the local water pollution caused by W.R. Grace was becoming a big concern. Resor was very active in raising awareness of this issue and served on several groups that dealt with its resolution. She

was elected to the Board of Selectmen in 1981. Nine years later, she was elected to the State House of Representatives, where she served the 14th Middlesex District for nine years. In 1999, Resor was elected to the State Senate, where she has served ever since.

At the October 14th debate, Resor explained her qualifications for the position of state senator, and cited "environmental concerns" as her original motivation for seeking office. She supported rolling back the income tax rate to 5.0% "in time." The Senator closed by characterizing herself as "an independent voice," noting that she has historically voted with Republican Governor Romney "when it made sense."



Senator Resor (left) and Rod Jané (right) square off at the Acton Town Hall
DAVID EMER / SPECTRUM STAFF

Rod Jané

Sen. Resor's challenger, Rod Jané, has not spent as much time in office, but his resumé is no less impressive. Jané is a graduate of Colgate University with a B.A. in economics. He also received an M.B.A. from Harvard University, and later served as the president of Honeywell, Inc. Consumer Products, a

\$300 million company with 4,500 employees. He has also served as the chairman of the Westborough School Committee. Jané, his wife Sandra, and their four children currently live in Westborough, MA.

Jané highlighted his service on the Westborough School Committee during his opening remarks at the debate, and again during his

closing statement. The topic of education came up again when he called the MCAS "one of the great success stories" in Massachusetts education. He also advocated English immersion in schools, and promised to "fight for education." Jané concluded the debate by calling the past several years "painful for the Commonwealth."

37th Middlesex House Seat (West Acton, South Acton and Boxborough)

Representative James Eldridge

Rep. Eldridge is a member of the ABRHS Class of '91. Eldridge played on the Colonials basketball team, where he met Coach Arthur Lambert, who happened to be the Chief-of-Staff to then-State Representative Bob Durand of Marlborough. Lambert encouraged Eldridge to accept an internship with Durand. Eldridge then attended Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD, where he was elected President of the student body in his junior year. After graduating from Boston College Law School, Eldridge worked as a public interest lawyer in the fields of housing, Social Security, disability, and unemployment law. In the fall of 2001, he announced his candidacy for the

position of State Representative for the 37th Middlesex District. Eldridge was elected, and he has held the position ever since.

Rep. Eldridge opened his debate with T.J. Dyer by describing his close ties to Acton. He mentioned his childhood, and praised the community and the school system. "I want to make sure future generations have the same advantages I had," said Eldridge. The Representative mentioned his "commitment to reform" in his opening remarks and his closing statement. He attacked Dyer's voting record, noting that the Republican challenger had failed to vote in the last six out of eight town elections. Eldridge also commented that his opponent has demonstrated "an unwillingness to be a full-time legislator."



T.J. Dyer (left) and Rep. Eldridge (right) at a recent debate sponsored by the Acton chapter of the League of Women Voters.
OLIVER HONG/SPECTRUM STAFF

T.J. Dyer

T.J. Dyer has kept himself busy as well. Dyer lives in Acton with his wife and two sons. He is the owner of Dyer & Associates, an employee benefits firm, and a financial planner for New England Securities. In his spare time, Dyer has served on the Acton Lion's Club, the Middlesex West Chamber of Commerce, and

in the Acton-Boxborough school system both as a parent volunteer and as a business owner.

Dyer began his opening remarks by characterizing himself as a "man of many hats," referring to his status as a husband, parent, homeowner, and community volunteer. He criticized the current State House of Representatives, declaring that "the voice of the voter is not being heard

at all." Dyer also attacked his opponent's voting record, noting that the incumbent had voted with the Speaker of the House 90% of the time. He promised to "look outside the box to find creative solutions" for the issues facing Massachusetts. Dyer concluded by vowing to fight to bring about "positive change on Beacon Hill."

Summaries by EVAN BROWN
Spectrum Staff

14th Middlesex House Seat (North, East Acton)

Representative Cory Atkins

Atkins received a Bachelor of the Arts degree in Political Science from the University of Massachusetts. As a member of the state House of Representatives, Atkins has served as the House Chair of the Science and Technology Caucus. She is also a founding member and current Leadership Development Chair of the House Democratic Council, as well as a member of the Environmental League of MA, the Concord League of Women Voters, and the chair of the Lowell Mayor's Drug Task Force.

Rep. Atkins lives in Concord with her husband Chet.

Atkins used the debate to outline her three priorities as a representative: education, legislation reform, and economic development. She noted that she had "one of the most independent voting records in the house." The representative spoke about the need for more affordable housing in Massachusetts, calling the current state of low-cost housing "the Achilles heel" of local economic development. She also promised to work for legislation that would benefit local public schools and the environment, noting that, in both cases, "we can do better."

Doug Stevenson

Rep. Atkins's challenger, Doug Stevenson, sports an impressive resumé as well. After graduating from Concord-Carlisle Regional High School in 1981, Stevenson went on to attend Boston College, where he double majored in Political Science and Physics. He is currently in his third term on the Carlisle Board of Selectmen, where he has served since 1997. During two of those terms, Stevenson was the Chairman of the Board. Stevenson has also volunteered with the Carlisle

Fire Department, the Carlisle Firefighters Relief Association, and the local Boy Scout troops. He is currently the Operations Manager for a custom residential building firm based in Acton. Stevenson lives in Carlisle with his wife, Mary Beth, and their three-year-old triplets.

Stevenson's debate with Rep. Atkins allowed him the opportunity to communicate his qualifications for the position. He portrayed himself as a "family man" and a "small business man." He also stated that

he was "proud of his record at the local level." On the subject of the environment, Stevenson cited "conservation and protection" as his top environmental priorities, and noted that although he had Governor Romney's endorsement, he was disappointed in some of the Governor's environmental stances. Stevenson concluded by challenging his opponent's status as a reformer, and asked for help on November 2nd.

Don't Forget To Vote on November 2nd!

Local Politics

Viewpoint: Acton Speaks Out Against Electoral College

By JARED EISENBERG
Correspondent

Twice in the history of the United States a presidential candidate has received the majority of the popular vote but a minority of the electoral votes and therefore lost the election. Twice, the people decided upon a leader and then had that decision reversed by the Electoral College.

Now, many residents of Acton, a traditionally Democratic town, have had. Since the 2000 election, in which Al Gore won the popular vote but lost the election, there has been much trepidation that the same turn of events may occur in 2004. "It's always going to happen: someone's vote is going to not count because of the Electoral College," said an ABRHS senior.

Many agree with this point of view; as long as the Electoral College exists, millions of votes will be uncoun- ted. If a state goes to one party, every individual's vote for the other candidate counts for nothing. In the 2000 election between Al Gore and George W. Bush, six states, accounting for 60 electoral votes, had margins of victory of less than 8,000 popular votes. These would have been more than enough to swing the vote in favor of Gore, considering that Florida, whose 27 electoral votes could have given the presidency to Gore, ultimately chose Bush.

"It's a difficult situation for two reasons," comments Mr. David Green, our beloved history and political science teacher at AB. "First, people are attached to the system. Second, elections are the responsibility of the states—if you eliminate them, many people will wonder if you're compromising state power."

Another argument for the College is that it helps spread out the attention of the candidates, making less populous states such as Vermont and South Dakota receive some attention. Yet the opposite is also true, as a victory is possible with just eleven states: California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia, and North Carolina. As a result, the other thirty-nine states will receive significantly less attention due to their diminished importance in the campaign.

"Does anyone notice how all of the attention of the candidates is now focused in Ohio, Florida and Pennsylvania?" remarked an anonymous ABRHS teacher. Evidence would indicate that the candidates have noticed. Take Bush, for example. Instead of wasting his time trying to get the Massachusetts conservatives to vote for him, Bush is spending his time shaking hands and kissing babies in Florida.

But it comes down to this: all of the "disenfranchised" liberals of Florida (and the rest of the country) will definitely have some harsh words for the Electoral College if it once again betrays them as it did four years ago. After an interview, Green stood up, laughed at the subject and said, "Oh well, we just have to hope it won't happen this time." This seems to be a recurring theme among voters; even though many don't like the system, there is an overwhelming feeling of futility for those who wish to abolish it. Until then, we will see 3-vote states like Vermont happy with their visible contribution to the election cycle, and Georgian liberals upset at having their votes count for nothing.

Calendar

November 2004

- 5 Hypnotist, 7:00 PM
- 5 & 6 Cabaret, 7:30 PM
- 11 No School, Veterans Day
- 12 End of Term I
- 10 *Things I Hate About You* - Opening Night
- 16 Career Breakfast, 7:23 AM
- 18 Acton School Committee, 7:30 PM
- 19 Early Dismissal
- 22 Family Night, 7:00 PM
- 23 Report Cards Distributed
- 24 Fall Athletic Recognition Day
- 25 & 26 No School

December 2004

- 2 Regional School Committee, 7:30 PM
- 8 Financial Aid Night, 7:00 PM
- 14 ABRHS Winter Concert, 7:30 PM
- 16 Career Breakfast, 7:23 AM
- Acton School Committee, 7:30 PM
- 24 Winter Recess Begins

Senior Class Set To End With Style

By NICK JESSOP
Spectrum Staff

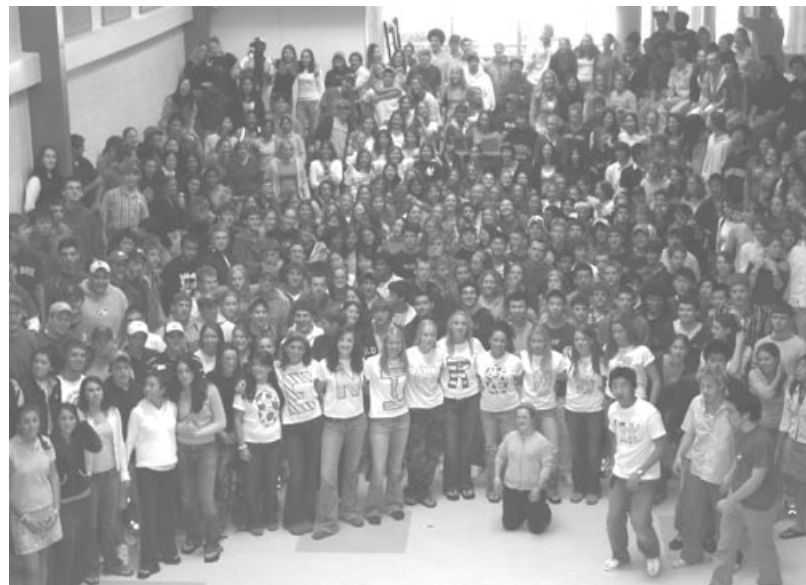
The senior class has had a busy year thus far, and it looks as if it'll be getting even busier in the coming weeks. All four of last year's officers were re-elected last spring, and President Peter Lowe, Vice President David Shi, Treasurer David Harris and Secretary Amy Mehta have already picked up where they

fundraising events in preparation for the Prom and the Senior Class Trip at the end of the year.

The class sponsored a dance at the high school on Friday, October 22, in the cafeteria. The dance is one of the first events of the year to be planned and organized by the senior class, and it represented a good start. Although it was not intended to be a fundraiser, early reports indicate that the class will

accomplished much already, the future holds even more in store for them. The class will sponsor its 5th speedball tournament on Friday, November 19. "[Past speedball] tournaments have been very successful," noted Secretary Amy Mehta. "We expect this tournament to be successful as well." The officers hope that these events will add to the already significant amount of money raised.

There will be several meetings involving the class officers and committees that will be very important to the class of 2005. One such meeting will involve the Prom Committee. Lowe encourages seniors to attend as many of the upcoming meetings as they can, stating that the class "will need help from many people to make this a great year for everyone." The dates of these meetings have not yet been set, but interested students should ask either class officers or class advisor Ms. Houle, or to check the senior board to find out more about upcoming events. Topics such as the prom, the senior class trip, and Fall Athletic Recognition Day, will be discussed in the near future. "We need your help," stressed Lowe.



The senior class is off to an enthusiastic start.

left off. Although it is still early in the year, the officers are already hard at work, planning several

turn a small profit from the event.

Although the senior class has

Junior Class Leaves Mark on the Community

By DEBLEENA MITRA
Spectrum Staff

The class of 2006 is off to a great start on their junior year. The officers have already met several times and have come up with many ways to make this year as enjoyable as possible for their fellow classmates.

The junior class officers started off the year by passing out surveys to their classmates during homeroom in October. The survey requested that juniors list their e-mail addresses so that the officers can communicate with the class about upcoming events. The survey also asked what types of class fundraisers the class would be interested in holding, including some options generated by the officers. The most popular choices were a flag football tournament, a talent show, a bowl-

ing tournament, and a dance. "The bowling tournament is a definite possibility," said Class Treasurer, Danielle Raad. "We are hoping to do that around mid-December."

Before starting fundraising efforts, the junior class is starting off its year with a community service trip. On November 19, volunteers from the junior class will go around to different neighborhoods in Acton and Boxborough to rake yards for senior citizens. This trip will be a chance for students to earn community service hours as well unite as a class. "I think raking is a great way for us to connect with our community," said Vice President Brian Callahan. The students will meet at the Acton Senior Center after the early release from school. Pizza will be served for lunch, and then groups will spread out to different areas of the town to start raking.

The day will be a great chance for the junior class to come together and do something positive for the community. If you are a junior and are interested in helping out with this project, sign up at the counseling office on the Junior Bulletin Board or on Mr. Green's classroom door (Room 240S).

The juniors have a busy year ahead; they already have several events planned, including different fundraisers such as a possible auction in spring. Mr. Green, the class advisor, and the officers, Rashmi Jasrasaria, Brian Callahan, Danielle Raad, and Debleena Mitra are optimistic about the upcoming year. Class President Rashmi Jasrasaria added, "I'm really excited and I think we'll accomplish a lot this year."

Freshman Class Officers Off To A Fast Start

By EVAN BROWN
Spectrum Staff

The freshman class elections were held on September 29. Miles McDonald, Dave Margolius, Josh Crofton-MacDonald, and Kate Rodophele emerged victorious in close races for President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary, respectively.

Although new to office, the officers have wasted no time in beginning to plan out the year. Shortly after the election, McDonald, Mar-

golius, Crofton-MacDonald, and Rodophele met with freshman class advisor Mr. Frank Calore to discuss the year ahead. Calore and the officers discussed possible community service events for the class, but no details have been decided upon at this point. "It was basically an overview," said McDonald. "We talked about what we're going to do this year," he continued. The officers also discussed possible fundraising ideas with Calore, including a possible trip to Fenway Park for a Red Sox game in the spring. There

is also a freshman-class-sponsored dance in the works on which more information should be available in the near future. Calore and the officers will be meeting approximately once a month during the year to discuss these plans and formulate new ideas. The help of class members is strongly encouraged. Students interested in helping to organize these fundraisers and activities should speak with any of the officers or Mr. Calore.



International Summer Experiences

People to People: Japan

By ALFRED DEGEMMIS
Spectrum Staff

Culture shock had never been a part of my travel plans, as my trips to this point had been to the various ordinary tourist traps around

to feudal times, such as the Himeji Castle (or the White Heron Castle); we saw firsthand the devastation of the atomic bomb at Hiroshima; and we explored the technological capital and massively cultural city of Tokyo, where liquid-crystal screens mounted halfway up every skyscrap-

larger. The phones also had cameras which they snapped quite frequently; some even had limited TV's.

In contrast to our colorful and newly renovated school, theirs was somewhat older and as dry and colorless as a hospital. They didn't wear their shoes in school

By HANNAH MAYER
Correspondent

Playing games, singing songs and learning how to play a sport are generally the images that every American child has of overnight camp. Children all over the country have been going to camp for years and for many people, it's become an annual tradition. However, for many people living outside of the United States, camp is an experience both new and unique. While working at camps on Cape Cod, I learned that most places outside of the US do not have any camps.

Camp Hayward for girls and Camp Burgess for boys are unique in that most of the staff is from foreign lands. For many of them, it was their first time working at a summer camp. Upon realizing this, I interviewed some of my international friends to see how they felt about going to camp and what got them interested.

The Burgess director, who originally lived in Ireland but now resides in Sandwich, MA, explained the application process. He told me that he hires staff from the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia and

very nervous. They were in a new country, and had to live—and make friends—with about eighty people they had never seen before. All of their reactions were different; some were uneasy about getting along with the other staff members, while others were excited about getting started. The first week of camp consisted of staff training, in which all of Burgess and Hayward staff resided in one camp and attended workshops teaching them how to deal with children. They also did activities in groups—dances, a co-ed sleepover and different games that they would play with the campers during the summer. Although it seemed really silly, and they felt kind of lost, the counselors got interested in the games and began to love them as much as everyone else.

I asked them how they felt their accents impacted their work; one would imagine it would be hard for younger children to understand a thick accent. At first, most of the staff found it hard and somewhat frustrating to talk to children because they had such trouble with their accents, but in the end they all became comfortable speaking English. Moreover, they said that the camp was an excellent way for them to expand their vocabulary. The accent barrier went both ways. It was hard for me personally to understand, but after a week or so, I adjusted and could easily understand some of them, although I still found Scottish accents difficult.

I found myself saying “garbage” instead of “trash,” or “trousers” instead of “pants.”

other countries when they apply through organizations such as Camp America and Camp Counselors USA. The organizations set up a director's fair, which American camp directors attend to interview the hundreds of applicants. The director also uses his personal connections overseas to recruit staff.

Many of the people I interviewed became interested in going to camp because they wanted to have a different job and travel to a different country. Others were interested in working with children. But none of them knew exactly what to expect. One of my friends, Andy Tullet, said that he prepared himself by watching *Dawson's Creek* because he heard that it was filmed on the Cape.

When the international counselors first arrived at camp, all were

er advertised all the latest products.

However, what made the trip fundamentally different from my American trips was the interaction that I had with the students at Tokyo's Reitaku University. We spent five days at the campus, interacting with giggling hordes of Japanese high school students. At an American-style barbecue that we held, we sat down with the students and were able to converse one-on-one with them and learn more about students from a completely different part of the world.

While students here are generally free to express themselves through their appearance, the Japanese school uniform doesn't allow much room for personalization. In fact, they basically only get to choose their hairstyle, and the brand symbol on their knee socks, which is used as a status symbol. All students carried cell phones, as they do at AB; however, theirs were slightly

but rather the brown slippers that they asked us to wear. My feet couldn't fit into the biggest of them. There was no air conditioning, and in July they were still in school, despite the blistering heat.

Even those who dominate AB's competitive academic environment would find it challenging at Reitaku University. The classes are so demanding that students couldn't spare two hours for a barbecue when that time could be better spent studying. The competition to achieve high status in their university presses them to work harder and harder at school. This could explain the large number of student suicides each year in Japan.

Clearly some parts of the schooling system in Japan are different from those of Acton-Boxborough, but when it comes right down to it, they're just cell phone-toting, status symbol-wearing, over-dedicated students like we are.



A group of students at Tokyo Reitaku University.

the United States. Despite the numerous national parks I had visited, I still hadn't found the eye-opening experience I was looking for. However, when I joined a program called People to People, a government sponsored group that takes “student ambassadors” to various locations around the world, I was able to go across the Pacific to the island nation of Japan and experience a truly different world.

People to People was founded by President Eisenhower, who served as Honorary Chairman. Each summer and during parts of the school year, it takes students from 7th to 12th grade around the world in order to connect cultures. It seeks to educate youth by giving them hands-on experience with different cultures around the world.

Of course, we visited the famous historical and current sites in Japan. We saw plenty of sites dating back

Foray into Venice of the North (a.k.a. Potato Heartland of the World)

By SYLVIE SCHWARTZ
Spectrum Staff

Last June, the Greater Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra embarked on its seventeenth international concert tour. This year's tour was to five cities throughout Estonia, Latvia, and Baltic Russia. While much of what we got out of the trip was the memories we

shared, the experience of immersion in intriguing and foreign cultures, just from walking through the beautiful cities, was incredible and will remain with all of us, along with the desire to come back to the countries we visited and explore others.

The first vista that sticks in my mind came after dazed bus rides through Helsinki and Tallinn on the way to our first destination, the

small but significant town of Viljandi nestled in the pastoral countryside of Estonia. We came to the town via bus, rolling through the rich green fields with their clay-tiled houses. Later, we spied the evening light of Midsummer's Day, the sky dotted with customary bonfires for the celebration. Our next direct experience of European culture came while we at-

tempted to move our very American (large) stuff into the very European (petite) elevator, or up the rather lovely windowed stone stairwell. In the elevator, there was room for three people plus most of their baggage if you actively crammed until the doors closed and abandoned all hope of personal space, apparently a distinctly American value. We encountered the problem of huge suit-

cases and tiny elevators throughout the trip, which made for rather substantial headaches while transferring 130 people into and out of hotels. In Eastern Europe as much as Western, the staircase is the much favored transportation device.

The morning after this late-night hotel invasion, when our

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VOICE Making Noise in the Community

By WENXI LI & RASHMI
JASRASARIA
Spectrum Staff

As the student population becomes increasingly diverse, the VOICE committee acts to enhance cultural education and address racism issues at Acton-Boxborough Regional High School. Headed by ABRHS vice-principal Ms. Susan Atwater-Rhodes, the student-faculty committee has been meeting for four years. Initially, the committee's main project was organizing a day to celebrate the myriad cultures represented by the student body and talk about cultural issues. This manifested itself in the creation of VOICE Day, which has been held on an early release day each April for the past three years.

This year, though, VOICE would like to expand its influence and address more than just the visible cultural aspects such as food, clothing, and music of different ethnicities. The initiative began last year when counselor Ms. Serino, a VOICE faculty member, and a group of students invited Project Hip Hop to help AB students understand some of the racial problems existing at ABRHS.

Kicking off this year, the VOICE committee set up a table in the library during Back-to-School Night on October 20, 2004. Their objective was to show parents that the community has grown more diverse over the past couple of years. Committee members Wenxi Li and Carlos Garcia announced the end of classes in Mandarin and Spanish, respectively, during passing time over the loudspeaker. Senior Linda Yan, also a member of VOICE, commented that "parents were very pleased and appreciated the effort." The announcements were a nice way for the committee to start spreading its message to the school community.

Goals for this year include a continued focus on spreading awareness of different cultures to the students at ABRHS. Senior Susan Yao is creating a twenty-minute documentary that addresses ethnic and racial stereotypes that occur at the school. "It is all about awareness and looking at our school to see what problems we have and what we don't," says Yao. Within the year, the VOICE Committee plans to show the video in classes. "Because VOICE Day has an Epcot-like feel, I don't think it is very effective. We want something that will reach people in everyday life and also affect them daily," said Yao. "Although there have not been many racist incidents at school, which is good, there are a lot of subtle things that go on such as negative stereotyping." So far,

she has interviewed about 15 students of varied ethnic backgrounds. The video is scheduled for completion shortly after winter break.

In addition, the committee wants to construct a database of different resources (e.g. books, videos, movies, media articles, etc.) that show racial problems and stereotyping of different groups of people. Books such as *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*, by Beverly Tatum, and the article "White Privilege: Unpacking the Knapsack" are a few examples of publications that the VOICE committee is including in its database, which teachers can use as supplements for their classes, especially during MCAS week. The head librarian, Ms. Voorhees, has pulled out a great deal of useful material and is helping the committee find appropriate articles for their project.

Another idea to improve awareness of racial issues is to hold movie screenings after school in the cafeteria periodically throughout the year. Some movies being considered are *Remember the Titans* and *Stand and Deliver*. Examples of both positive and negative stereotyping, these movies will encourage students to actively reflect on their actions. This is still a work in progress, but members of the committee are enthusiastic about its reception by the student body.

VOICE has become an integral part of the ABRHS philosophy, and other student organizations are carrying on the VOICE message in their activities. For example, junior Katie Peabody, Secretary of the Student Council, is organizing Mix It Up Day at AB. A nationwide day for the celebration and encouragement of diversity, Mix It Up Day has been observed for the past two years at R. J. Grey Junior High and will come to the high school on November 16. During all lunches on November 16, students entering the cafeteria will be handed a colored identification and will be asked to sit with others that receive the same color. The goal is to give students a chance to interact with students outside their ordinary group of friends and meet students of all grade levels. Students will not be forced to participate, but the Student Council and faculty strongly encourage their involvement, as this can only benefit the goal of an inclusive social environment that VOICE advocates.

The message of VOICE has reached many members of the school community as the organization continues to strive to make ABRHS a friendly and respectful environment for all.

Students potentially interested in VOICE, please contact Ms. Atwater-Rhodes in the Administrative Office (South Wing.)

To become involved with Susan Yao's special documentary, readers should contact Susan via email at YaoSquared@lycos.com.

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first concert was canceled due to the late arrival of cargo containing the large instruments, we had a full day to wander the ancient streets lined with 18th-century traditional houses and the park with preserved medieval buildings and castle ruins



Old Tallinn.
BEN MICHEL

overlooking the river. The sheer age of everything was one thing that really struck me in all of the cities we visited except for St. Petersburg, a comparative adolescent—celebrating just its 300th anniversary last year. To an American, the medieval feudal city is a concept out of fairy tales or David Macaulay videos; it was quite an experience to walk through narrow cobblestone streets and past landmarks that have been there for centuries. The juxtapo-

sition of 15th century structures and architecturally modern movie theatres was also quite amusing.

Alright, enough architecture for now—about those potatoes. There were a lot of them. Everywhere. After a week of eating essentially nothing but potatoes (there is no word for "tofu" in Russian), the vegetarians among us were screaming, and everyone else was adjusting to eating much more meat than we had been accustomed to at home. One of the most memorable meals of the trip was the lunch served to us at the Latvian equivalent of Old Sturbridge Village—a reconstructed traditional Latvian medieval fishing and farming village. The meal was in keeping with Latvian agricultural culinary tradition, meaning it consisted of three meat courses, a large bowl of potatoes, and a shredded cabbage dish resembling sauerkraut, but made with vinegar rather than being actually pickled/fermented. Mind you, it was all good food, but none of us wanted to eat potatoes for a very, very long time after we got home.

The food, like the broader prevailing culture in the cities we visited, was generally not drastically different from mainstream American culture, probably because of our own European roots and the influence of American culture throughout Europe. It was quite easy to see the fundamentally different elements of Estonian, Latvian and Russian culture that have evolved through many centuries of history, including the characteristics of fish and other meat and winter-surviving root vegetables—and the medieval layout of the older cities.

Another cultural difference of particular interest to those of us in the orchestra was the much more integral part classical music plays in the daily lives of at least urbanite Estonians, Latvians and Russians. We saw this especially in the cultural capital St. Petersburg, where we sold out the major concert venue, Philharmonia Hall, to a very appreciative audience.

In short, while five cities were a lot to cover in two weeks, the tour was a fascinating exploration of Baltic and more broadly European culture. The snatches of life and landscape, through train windows and on hurried walks through bustling cities, were incredible to observe, and I would go back to immerse myself more fully in a heartbeat.



262 GREAT ROAD
GOULDS PLAZA, ROUTE 2A
ACTON, MA 01720



UGG BOOTS
WILL BE ARRIVING SOON

Forum

Should Food Be Allowed in Classrooms?

Food Should Be

Allowed in Classrooms

By STEPHANIE LI
Correspondent

Food has been an integral part of the classroom since quills were replaced by ballpoints. Once upon a stricter and considerably less happy time, chow and chalkboards were fiercely segregated. Fortunately for the modern day ABRHS student population, those days of gastric oppression had been over for a while. Until recently, food had been permitted in the classroom, greatly enhancing the general school experience. Now this progress has been reversed. A brand new rule, implemented this year, firmly forbids any food and drink (other than water) inside the walls of our classrooms. However, if there is anything that a liberal Massachusetts education should have instilled in us, it is tolerance for different ways of life. And food in the classroom has been our way of life, from first grade to senior year. Perhaps I'm only a nostalgic schoolgirl, but humor me for a while. Recall your primary years of education, when cursive writing appeared as meaningless as Caesar's cipher. Think about the role food has played in establishing the school environment up to the present. What would school have been without the hush-hush under-the-desk Doublemint distribution? What would it have been without the brownies and cookies devoured during in-class holiday parties? Would school have been school without Munchkins the day after a chorus concert, the due date of a particularly impossible project, or as a special treat for the class on a not-at-all-special day? Even if it isn't just for physical sustenance, food is an irreplaceable element of the student experience. Not only is food an enjoyable break for students, it has proven itself time and time again a valuable tool for teachers. Just think, how long

would your attention span have held during tedious videos in history class, without the compensatory handfuls of popcorn? Would you ever have understood the double-helix structure of a DNA molecule without the memorable hands-on approach involving toothpicks, Twizzlers, and marshmallows? Would you even have considered raising your hand in some dry class had it not been for his or her bribe of candy for participation? The answer is a resounding "No!" The new ban ruthlessly strips students of a fun and interactive part of their learning environment, and unsurprisingly, the issue is a budget one at base. With the addition of 140,000 square feet to the school building, there is no longer money in the budget for enough janitors to maintain the space. If students go about the additional acreage leaving messes of their food, janitors would have a much more arduous task before them. However, all this should mean is that in order to keep food inside classrooms, students would have to take more responsibility of disposing of their messes; simply, students would have to clean up after themselves. Still, as the old adage goes, don't cry over spilled milk. If AB students can sweep most of the country away with their standardized testing scores, surely they can sweep up some Snickers wrappers. In her popular cookbook chef Sheila Graham declares, "Food is the most primitive form of comfort." In our school food has become a tradition in the classroom, serving as a motivation and reward for students, as well as a useful tool for teachers. Therefore, if there is enough money in the budget to lavish on new tennis courts and high-tech language labs, it logically follows that students should be granted the sorely missed liberty of food in classrooms.

Food Should Not Be Allowed In Classrooms

By SUE ZHANG
Spectrum Staff

They're standing there, carefully surveying the flow of students, making sure none of us smuggle anything out. They're spread throughout the school—on the pavement, in the common areas, stationed outside our cafeteria—making certain

one's math lesson. Because of this sudden change, many oppose this new "no food" rule. After all, being allowed to eat in class has always been one of those quirks that set ABRHS apart from other schools. The students here have gotten so used to having certain liberties that they quickly fill the niche of the rebellious spoiled child once those liberties are taken away. However, in-

override is successful, he has been forced to resort to other methods for increasing the budget. Many have noticed that the fees for certain extra-curricular activities, especially sports, have risen since last year, as has the senior parking cost. This trend is likely to continue until the money problem is resolved. To demand more janitors in our school now would just be adding fuel to an already raging fire. And personally, I don't want to be paying \$400 for parking when I'm a senior.

However, that is not to say that our eating liberties will continue to diminish. In November, a food court will be established and ready to go. Also, the area behind the counseling office was just recently finished, providing yet another location for munching. The vending machines are now filled with even more choices than before, lining one entire wall. Think of these additions as compensation for the new rule. As atonement for closing the hallways as potential places to eat, the building committee has opened up even bigger possibilities.

On top of that, the administration eliminated the only compelling reason for having food in the classroom. Last year, students were allowed to take a full eight periods of classes a day, meaning that they were skipping their lunch. In that case, the students were allowed to have their lunch during a regular class. Now, however, there is a new rule stating that students must have a lunch period. Now, no one should be going hungry during the day, since we've all been assigned a 47-minute time slot for enjoying what the cafeteria has to offer.

In the words of Mary Engelbreit, "If you don't like something, change it; if you can't change it, change the way you think about it." We may not like the school's new rule, but right now we have no real choice but to tolerate it. We cannot put more financial stress on this school by demanding more janitors; they have a hard enough time maintaining the school as is. Also, more eating space is being provided soon, so overcrowding should no longer be a problem. And with the addition of the food court and the new vending machines, we will have more food choices than before and a mandatory lunch period to enjoy them. So folks, what will it be? Are we going to continue complaining about this new rule or act like mature adults and just learn to deal?



Students protesting the new rule that forbids food in classrooms.
JONATHAN EISENBERG / SPECTRUM STAFF

that no forbidden substances enter the hallways. Doubtless, we've all acknowledged their presence.

I'm talking, of course, about the monitors. Along with their tasks to maintain peace in the hallways, they have also been hired to strictly enforce the new school rule that came with our impressive new building, the no-food rule. No food is allowed to exit the cafeteria, unless it has the intention of heading towards a designated eating area. If you're caught eating in the halls, you are quickly shooed to the nearest eating area and asked to remain there until finished, leaving our halls barren of students with food.

This sight is such a contrast from last year, when students with bagels and cookies could be seen crowding in the corridors, and the occasional crunch was heard during

stead of complaining, we should try to grasp the bigger picture instead.

You see, the reason for this new rule is quite simple: there are just not enough janitors to clean up after our spills anymore. Our school is now roughly 540,000 square feet. That's the equivalent of about 216 four-bedroom houses. If you think mopping your floor once a week is a chore, imagine having to do it every single day, 216 times each day. Well then, imagine how the janitors must feel.

"Well, why not just hire more janitors?" one might ask. Sure, that seems like the easy, logical solution. However, that question brings to light the real root of the problem, the school's financial issues. Principal Donovan is expected to cut \$1.2 million from the budget for the upcoming year, and the numbers are only expected to increase in years following. Even though 65% of it was state-funded, the building project still drained \$14 million from local funds. Also, since student enrollment each year is increasing, there is expected to be an increase in classroom size, and eventually, the number of teachers. To alleviate the financial issue, Mr. Donovan is working hard for an override from the town, which would grant the school an additional \$6 million to work with. However, until that

Late To Class Will Not Cut It

AMY DU
Spectrum Staff

On the first day of school, as many teachers go over the "what's expected of you for being in my class" guidelines, they never seem to forget to reprimand their late students for being late. They yell at the belated students, terrifying the unfortunate souls into babbling wrecks. Next, they go into that long speech about the importance of being on time, warning the other petrified students of the horrors that would take place if they ever dared to be late. The teachers completely ignore the fact that it is still incredibly difficult to be on time if the student has a class in another wing of the school.

Last year, the teachers understood and sympathized with us, excusing students for being late if they became caught up in the pandemonium of the crowd. It was tough to get to class on time and the teachers realized this, many of them having the same problem with their mobile classrooms.

Unfortunately, the hallways aren't much different this year. There is still only one hallway from the two extremes of the school since the Old South Wing is now closed off. Not only is it a full quarter mile but traffic is just as congested as before. There are still clumps of people blocking the way during passing time, and it's still a hassle to get through the jam. To make matters worse, the

crowd is even bigger this year with the large incoming freshman class.

Unlike the leniency that teachers exhibited last year, this year's teachers have suddenly started enforcing the policies on tardiness, even though construction is still ongoing. Perhaps with their brand new classrooms, teachers have forgotten how difficult it is to commute from wing to wing in the crush of hallway traffic.

Tardiness is a problem with many factors beyond the control of students. Two solutions are viable: to have either teachers understand the problem and not make it a huge issue...or to commission a new secret weapon that will decrease the population in the hallways by a factor of ten.

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

Forum

Kagan's Komments: A Paradoxical Approach to the Drinking Problem

By MARK KAGAN
Spectrum Staff

It is Friday night in Acton and Boxborough. Adults return to their families to eat dinner and celebrate the end of the week. A teenager hopelessly looks around for something to do, somewhere to go to let his or her spirit go wild. Often, the search proves fruitless as



ity is what attracts the vast majority of teen drinkers. If the drinking age were lowered, drinking would not seem as attractive to teenagers.

Lowering the drinking age would also help teach students how to drink responsibly. In European countries where drinking is not considered to be taboo, kids learn how to drink, but not become alcoholics. Drinking ceases to be such a big deal. Instead of getting wasted every weekend, European teenagers gather to have a few glasses of wine and enjoy an intellectual conversation in a relaxed atmosphere. This could be possible in America, but only with a lowered drinking age. Teenagers would learn how to drink moderately and responsibly under the proper supervision of their parents.

Lowering the drinking age would also help solve another fundamental problem related to alcohol: teenage drunk driving. Despite the fact that drunk driving laws are fairly tough, it still remains a major problem in suburban communities. Every week the police log is filled with occurrences of teens arrested for drunk driving.

Why? Teenagers are already breaking the law when they drink, so breaking another one by getting behind the wheel does not seem like such a big deal anymore. With a lower drinking age, teenagers wouldn't be breaking the law when they just drink, so they would think twice before getting into the car under those very same conditions.

Teenage drinking is a major problem in suburban communities like ours. Clearly, the most adequate solution is lowering the drinking age. Although it may sound ludicrous, this would reduce drinking and DUI violations among teens, and make it possible to educate teens about responsible drinking. Most importantly, it would protect the people of Acton, Boxborough, and other suburban communities.

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Frivolous Fashion Magazines Do Not Belong in Library

By SARAH ZHANG
Correspondent

When walking into the new school library, one first notices the large collection of magazines. While these publications can be wonderful resources, there are a number of irrelevant magazines, specifically the fashion magazines. At least six magazines can be classified as fashion or gossip magazines. Do we really want the glossy covers of Seventeen or Instyle on the shelves of our school library?

I am by no means saying that I am against the publication of fashion magazines. The freedom of press is extended to all. Everyone has the right to write and read such magazines, whether at home or at a public library. I just think they do not warrant the library's money.

While we do not all have to be diligent-minded, fun-scoring Puritans, we should take a look at the suitability of fashion magazines in our high school library. I expect to find educational materials at a school library, rather than magazines listing J Lo's favorite perfumes.

Unfortunately, all fashion magazines sell on sex appeal. They promise to improve your looks and love life and are filled with pages of glossy photos of beautiful people airbrushed to perfection.

The pictures projected from the pages of Teen People present a body image impossible to really achieve. Studies have shown that the unrealistic photos in fashion magazines contribute to the negative body image of teens, especially adolescent girls--our high school library should be the last place to find magazines

promoting this negative body image.

There are also a number of magazines with questionable content. Glamour magazine recently ran a cover story titled "The Ultimate Dos and Don'ts of Sex" and regularly features such articles in all of their issues. While not a fashion magazine, a recent The Outdoors Man was subtitled "The

and would be totally inappropriate if found online. Why is there such an inconsistency in the policies of Internet use and school magazines? While a teenager is not allowed to even play computer games at our school library, he or she can look up tips on how to "sustain the peak" in magazines at that very same library.

Fashion magazines are among



Frivolous fashion magazines infiltrate the school's library shelf
ALFRED DEGEMMIS / CORRESPONDENT

Sex and Sin Issue". By displaying magazines of such content, the school unwittingly endorses the dubious values shown in these magazines. Is this the right message to send to high school students?

Our school's strict Internet policy forbids students from viewing similar material on the web. Internet use is both monitored and narrowly limited to educational purposes. In contrast, there are currently no guidelines for school library magazines. The content of fashion magazines is definitely not educational

the most widely read magazines in our library. Thus, it would be illogical to advocate the banning of all fashion magazines from library shelves. Their presence doesn't bother me as much as the quantity present. Why do we have six different magazines all telling us what to wear or how to flirt?

For next year, I suggest canceling some fashion magazine subscriptions. I hope to see fewer fashion magazines and more magazines along the vein of The New Yorker.

Confused? Stressed? Ask Advice Anna

Dear Advice Anna,

I just started on a Junior Varsity basketball team, and I really enjoy basketball. But I broke my finger and wasn't able to play. Now I can play, but nobody is very nice, and I think the coach really hates me because he is always yelling at me. I want to quit, but my parents are counting on me to be on the team. What should I do?

-Unhappy Player

Dear Unhappy Player,

I think you should base your decision on what truly makes you happy. If the reason you want to quit is because your team is being mean to you, but you really enjoy basketball, stick with it because it is something you love and they'll warm up to you eventually. A sports team can be a pretty tight-knit and exclusive group, but once they feel more comfortable around you, you should have an easier time making friends. If you feel that their attitudes

are just too oppressing, don't stay if you're not happy. In addition, don't stay on the team just to make your parents happy. I think it might be more important to them that you're happy, and they understand if you tell them that you're unhappy. If you really can't stand the basketball atmosphere, then you might consider joining another sport or activity. There are a many cool choices out there! Don't do what other people want or you'll just end up unhappy. I hope I gave you some things to think about to help you decide.

Dear Advice Anna,

I'm going to a new high school and I'm really scared. I know that there are going to be a lot of new people and a lot of girls that I will need to compete against. I was kind of popular in my last school, but most of my friends are going to another school or are not in my classes. I'm just terrified. What's high school like?

-Hopeless In High School

Dear Hopeless In High School, High school will be one of the scariest experiences in your life, but also one of the best. You have to remember that there are a ton of people in this high school just like you. They are uncertain and afraid of not making any friends. Usually in class, you will do get-to-know-each-other activities, which lessen the tension. Just talk to whoever is next to you, and I'm sure you will find friends in every class.

Another scary thing is lunch; wondering who you're going to sit with and fearing that there might be no room. Don't worry. I got scared too, thinking no one I knew would be in my lunch, but there was always at least someone I knew that I could sit with. It's human to assume the worst--but it's really not that bad. After you get into the routine of it, you'll be happy you're with so many new people. Just relax and remember these are the best years of your lives--the best of luck to you!

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You and the Media - How Much are YOU Influenced?

Celebrity Scoops or Presidential Elections?

By ROSANNA XIA
Spectrum Staff

Teen People or *The Boston Globe*?

Which do you prefer to read?

When given a choice between reading one or the other, some students at AB would choose *Teen People* while others would choose the *Globe*. As a whole, parents and teachers regard *Teen People* and other magazines that fall in this category as non-educational literature and encourage their children or students to read more along the lines of *The Boston Globe* and *The New York Times*. But is there really something wrong with reading *Teen People*? What is the reasoning behind the choice students make to read one or the other?

Students like to read *Teen People* or *The Boston Globe* based on personal interest. *Teen People*, *Cosmogirl*, *ym*, and such are all magazines that "bring you intimate profiles of your favorite celebrities and inspiring stories of teenagers just like yourself. Each issue reveals the latest trends in clothes, hair and cool gear as well as the inside scoop on celebrities, styles and more" (www.teenpeople.com). The reading level of magazines such as *Teen People* is simple—the language is written in a

manner that allows every reader to understand. Though magazines like *Teen People* are not "educational" in the academic sense, the magazines deal with real life situations or problems that teenagers face

These magazines deal with another important aspect in an adolescent's life: fashion, especially finding out what's "in" this season. An advertisement for *Teen People* magazine included the line, "You'll

read."

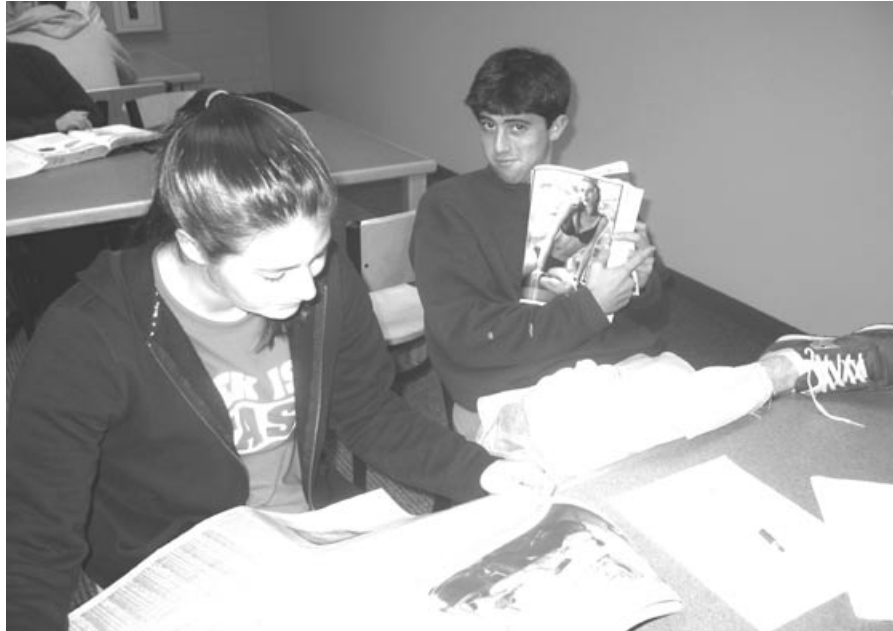
The key word to all of these teen magazines is "fun." In the end, teen magazines are pleasure reads. When reading *Teen People*, students do not expect to increase their vocabulary, learn the history of America, understand what's going on in Iraq, or to gain any form of academic knowledge. "Teen magazines are good for occasions when you don't feel like thinking," says Blaise Nothern.

The Boston Globe is a general circulation newspaper that provides local, national and international news coverage. The *Globe* includes sections on politics, science and technology, business, real estate, arts and entertainment, and sports. "The *Globe* covers much more than *Cosmo*," says sophomore Doug Breuer. "If people want to stay informed about the world around them, they can look to *The Globe*—from science to cooking, it covers a lot."

The *Boston Globe* readers tend to be more aware of current issues, such as the presidential elections and the happenings in Iraq. "I personally think that reading *The Boston Globe* is better because it keeps us updated on what's going on in the world," says Kristen Ayers.

Many believe that reading the newspaper is more educational and beneficial for school. There is some truth to that belief. For example, vocabulary words which appear in the SAT are often in *The Boston Globe*. The writing style of *The Boston Globe* is simple but to the point, and the reading level of *The Boston Globe* is worthy of a high school student. Written in a straightforward style, it still provides models for any student writing an analytical or nonfiction paper. Between *Teen People* and *The Globe*, Blaise Nothern believes that "*The Globe* is obviously more intellectually stimulating and worth the time."

Ultimately, the reasoning behind the choice is a matter of what interests a particular person. There is nothing wrong with preferring to read *Teen People* over *The Boston Globe* or the other way around. Both publications create awareness, whether it applies to the happenings in Iraq or the best way to help a friend with anorexia. Yes, *The Boston Globe* does help a student academically, but reading *The Boston Globe* is not necessarily the only way to do well in school. The range of content that news publications and teen magazines cover provides a much-needed balance in a student's life. So what's the verdict—*Teen People* or *The Boston Globe*? You decide.



Two students reading: one reading *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, the other reading the *Boston Globe*.

DAVID EMER / PHOTOGRAPHY CORRESPONDENT

everyday, such as eating disorders, family problems and relationship advice. "It [*Teen People*] talks more about issues that pertain to people who are our age," Sue Zhang, an AB sophomore, says, "It's more applicable to our life."

know What's what. Who's who. What's new. What's cool. Don't miss out!" As one student explains, "I like to read *Teen People* occasionally just to see what is new. I don't always follow what the magazine says, but it's always fun to

Why Does Everyone Wear Abercrombie?

By HELEN ALESBURY
Correspondent

The effects of the media can be seen everywhere as you walk down the halls of AB. In many ways, the halls resemble a runway. Both boys and girls are decked out in the most fashionable and trendiest clothes from some of the most stylish stores. We proudly strut around in our American Eagle, Abercrombie, and Victoria's Secret. Is there a reason why we latch onto name brands and pay \$100 more for a pair of jeans that could have been easily bought cheaper somewhere else?

The affect that TV, music, and other media hotspots have on our minds today is astounding. As manufacturers come to realize that parents do not control what their kids buy, they target us more and more. At an early age, we get introduced to the brands and icons of America. When shopping for toddlers, it is impossible to find diapers or clothing that don't have pictures of Sesame Street or Disney characters on them. When we are young and absorbing the world around us, the encounters with our culture are little more than disguised sales pitches, shaping us when we are still too young to react to the media. The fact is, we are being "prepped" to devour styles and to become shop-

ping machines.

Furthermore, there are entire networks on TV specifically geared towards kids; some channels include Nickelodeon, the Disney Channel, and ABC Family. According to the Media Awareness Network, in a three-year period in the 1990's alone, the advertising geared towards teens rose an astonishing 50% to \$1.5 billion. Companies are focusing their efforts to reach kids because they want to discover the things that kids latch onto and want to buy. The effect of this research is that preteens are treated like miniature adults, and start to make decisions that only their parents should make. These days, it is not strange to see an eight-year-old with a wallet filled with allowance money and given the freedom of making his or her own choices on what he or she wants to buy. In this year alone, an average teenager will have watched an estimated 20,000 commercials, ranging from Cover Girl to Levi's. With these statistics, it's hard not to get hooked on American industry. "I buy toothpaste based on commercials, but the media wouldn't cause me to do something I felt was immoral", explains freshman Margaret Neptune.

However, the effect of the media does not only come from the commercials that are targeting kids to attract them to a certain product; it

is the actual shows that teens watch that influence them as well. The subliminal messages that lie under *Everwood*, *Alias*, and even the dearly departed *Friends* are only part of the reason why kids are willing to pay \$20 more for a shirt from Pac Sun than from Target. According to an article in *Rolling Stones* magazine, the shows that we watch all give the same stereotyping messages. Women are perceived as looking sexy and perfect. Although that mentality and picture may not apply to all shows, the popular ones depict women as physically flawless. Usually, all of the main characters in sitcoms are Caucasian; there is little diversity within these shows. When performers are from minority ethnic backgrounds, they may support racial stereotypes and cause damage to that ethnic group. These shows not only affect what we wear and eat, but also influence our ethnic views. *Friends*, where all the main characters are Caucasian, portrays women as size two and beautiful, and it shows the "friends" having unrealistic relationships with their parents.

The tobacco industry also targets the teenage viewer by using nontraditional marketing programs, such as prize giveaways, that PepsiCo and other food companies use. Philip Morris Co. denies that their cowboy gear on cigarettes is aimed

at teens, yet Marlboro is the brand of choice for 60% of teen smokers, according to David Leonhardt, author of *Hey Kids, Buy This!* He also reports that Camel has a similar program called Camel Cash, which is trying to appeal to teens by sponsoring rock concert tours.

The Media Awareness Network reports that television viewing generally drops during adolescence because teens spend more time socializing and doing schoolwork. Watching TV becomes a relaxing activity that does not require high levels of thought or concentration. Regardless, TV still remains as a major source of information about sex. A 1997 study by the Kasier Family Foundation found that 61% of teens said that entertainment media was their top source for information concerning sexuality and sexual health.

Other shows, like *Sex in the City*, are literally a fashion runway. Teens and college students eagerly drink up the new plot line... and the dresses; what Carrie, the main character, wears is what is considered to be cool. The reason we wear these clothes at AB is because it is cool on TV; the TV people who are wearing these clothes usually get the guy or the girl.

So there you have it. A plethora of information on why we feel compelled to buy sexy, trendy

clothes, and do sexy, trendy things. The depiction of teens living in a world that can't possibly resemble reality makes the images and ideas that they portray exciting and cool. In real life, these lifestyles are unlikely or impossible to attain.

It may seem like the viewing audience is at the mercy of the media kings and queens that control TV programs and magazines, but don't despair. There will always be a chance to express yourself and be unique. Simply do not succumb to the conformity that is forced upon us. At AB, there is diversity and no law stating that everyone must wear Abercrombie jeans. The media may influence teens, but we can still be individuals. The Media Awareness Network states that it is at the ages of 14-18 that teens are most easily molded into believing that they need to be cool. Although some AB students may be less influenced than the average teen by the media, there is still the lingering thought and desire to fit in. "I think the media influences 67% of my decisions," says Senior Elly Burke. The students of AB feel the insecurities of our age and surroundings. We cling onto what beauty magazines like *Seventeen* tell us: if you buy hipster jeans you will be cool.

Features

Lessons on Mud, Friendship, and Giving

By ROSANNA XIA
Spectrum Staff

"Wow, I've never seen so much mud," I first said upon reaching the weather-damaged trail. For the next two weeks, my team and I would be fixing this trail. Our team, twelve high school students from all over the country, volunteered to fix trails in the Adirondack Mountains for two weeks as part of Landmark Volunteers, a non-profit summer service organization.

The first thing we did when we got to the base camp was to get rid of any "unnecessary" items from our backpack, including extra clothes, soap, and snacks. We learned from our team leaders that it was a four-mile hike up to the cabin, which we were going to be staying in for the next two weeks. In addition, we had to bring all our food and tools along with our personal gear. There was no running water, so there was no point in bringing soap. "Get used to being smelly, 'cause the next time you'll take a shower is in two weeks," our leader told us.

The hike up the mountain was intense, but we made it. We had to train hard to get in shape before camp, and now we knew why. For the following two weeks, our days started at six in the morning and we worked until six in the evening. We pushed back root masses, filled in ditches, and covered a huge mud pit with rocks that we hauled up from a nearby river. We lived off of peanut butter, canned tuna, and other foods that did not have to be refrigerated. The team bonded; there's nothing like shoveling mud together for four hours to break the ice. It was an amazing way to live for two weeks, because it was so far from anything

any of us were used to. "I loved the physical challenge," said Nathaniel, one of the volunteers in my group and a junior at Weston High School in Connecticut. Although not everyone adored the physical aspect like Nathaniel, it was truly wonderful.

Landmark Volunteers is a

historical, cultural, environmental or social service institutions for community service. (Examples of such institutions include Plymouth Plantation, Gould Farm, and Shelburne Museum.) The main idea of the program is for a group of teenagers who have never met



The finished trail that was completed by Landmark Volunteers.

two-week program in which high school students work at important

to live together for two weeks, be

See LESSONS / page 12

Got Xanga?

By JI XIAO
Correspondent

I'm sure that some of you have heard your friends talking about Xanga, and you may have wondered, "What is Xanga?" Simply defined, Xanga is a community of online diaries and journals. It's an easy-to-update personal website where you can design your own layout and embed music. This may sound boring and abstract, but there is more to it. Many AB students have a Xanga, and each and every one of them carries their own identity.

One of the reasons why Xanga is so popular among us teenagers is the fact that it's free. Of course, being free does not mean it's worthless, and it is not the only reason why it's popular. Xanga is free because it was created for convenience, not profit.

Another benefit of having a

Xanga is that you can write anything you want. If you had a really bad day, you can rant and complain. If something good happened to you, you can express and share your joy. It really helps sometimes when you

live and read comments left by my friends.

Xanga is also a way to express your personality and sometimes, the side of you that your friends don't know about; the BlogRing feature enables people to do this. A BlogRing is a place where people get together and share a common interest. It can be grouped into many categories, including entertainment, school, computers, and sports. Depending on your interest, you can join a BlogRing that's dedicated to your favorite movie star, football player, or even your school.

Xanga is also a nice way to get in touch with your friends no matter where they are. You can leave comments to ask friends in school if they have finished their

See XANGA / page 13

An AB student's Xanga
JONATHAN EISENBERG / SPECTRUM STAFF

just want to reveal how you feel. People may leave encouraging comments or messages if they like. I have a Xanga myself, and I find it comforting to write about my



Odd Girl Out

By CHARLOTTE BIGFORD
Spectrum Staff

Walking into the East Wing lecture hall for an after-school meeting of the Odd Girl Out Book Club, I half expected to find a gaggle of English teachers sitting in a circle and discussing feminist issues. To my amazement I found a diverse group of at least thirty girls and even some guys, spanning different grades, styles, cliques, and ethnicities.

Ms. Blauch began by addressing the audience with an enthusiastic "Welcome back!" and a recap of the progression of the Odd Girl Out Book Club, named after the book that is being spotlighted. The book is a character study of girls in grades K-12 who deal with bullying and aggression from other girls. The group met at the end of the last school year with intentions to read the book, written by Rachel Simmons, over the summer and come back to school prepared to speak out about the issues discussed within its pages.

As girl after girl shared her own experiences dealing with "alternative aggressions," such as "the note that is slipped into a desk; the eyes that catch, narrow, and withdraw; the lunch table that suddenly has no room," I realized how wonderful and rare the situation I had fallen into was.

Topics flew around the room, ranging from how girls have unreasonable expectations that lead them to aggression, to social issues present at AB. One girl stated that girls are not inherently "bad," while another stated, "At AB, girls give you 'looks' and you know that they're checking your jeans and hating you for wearing the same shirt as they are."

The teachers also shared their experiences from their classrooms and their own teen years. One of them described how male teachers don't always see the issues that girls have with one another, while female teachers do because they've been through similar situations themselves.

A description from Rosalind Wiseman's popular book, *Queen*

Bees and Wannabees, perfectly sums up the aggressiveness of girls: "A world in which she comes to school one day to find that her friends have suddenly decided that she no longer belongs. Or she's teased mercilessly for wearing the wrong outfit or having the wrong friend. Or branded with a reputation she can't shake. Or pressured into conforming so she won't be kicked out of the group. For better or worse, [a girl's] friendships are the key to enduring adolescence—as well as the biggest threat to her well-being."

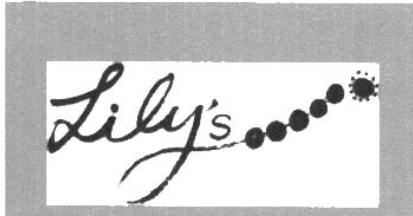
The thought that a girl's friends could also be her enemies is a scary thought, but the Odd Girl Out Book Club allows girls to open up, speak out, and trust other girls with their own personal issues about teen aggression and bullying.

In addition to allowing girls to voice their opinions, the book club lets girls know that other girls have shared the same feelings of loneliness, exclusion, and backstabbing. This is what makes Odd Girl Out Book Club a unique organization; it informs while it cleanses the conscience of negativity.

Published in 2002, *Odd Girl Out* is the first book of its kind. When Simmons was researching girl aggression, she came up with a surprisingly small amount of sources. For this reason, she is one of the first people to "shed light on destructive patterns that need our attention. With advice for girls, parents, teachers, and even school administrators, *Odd Girl Out* is a groundbreaking work that every woman will agree is long overdue" as described by the publisher.

If you would like help or more information dealing with teen aggression, contact members of the AB staff: Christina Granaham or Mrs. Nancy Kolb. Or, you can read *Reviving Ophelia* (by Mary Pipher), *Queen Bees and Wannabees* (by Rosalind Wiseman), *Odd Girl Speaks Out* (by Rachel Simmons), or visit www.empowerprogram.org.

If you would like to get involved, contact Mr. Hitzrot or Mrs. Rosenman, in the counseling department, to learn more about Mentors in Violence Prevention.



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You said it The Spectrum Photo Poll

What should be done to reduce the stress level of students?



Ryan Grogan (10) – Have more free periods and less homework.



Lauren Rodda (10) – There should be a week of vacation every month.



Eric Carlson (10) – Outlaw pop quizzes; they're pure evil!



Alisha Mueller (11) – We should have longer lunch periods, so we can eat, de-stress, relax, and just chill, you know?



Rob "Durdin" Hagelstein (12) – People should know their own limitations and stay within them.



Mike Mandrus (9) – Get us out of assigned study... it kills free time and it's impossible to get work done in it anyway.



Hannah Mager (12) – We should reduce overly demanding academic work... no, wait, that sounds bad; just give less work and start classes later.



Kelsey-Tait Jarboe (10) – Students should not be required to take courses they know they won't use in real life... for an artist, everything's wrong with math courses!



Brad Dye (Alumnus) – AB should tell students to relax. It's easy to do it. I got into college and my teachers all suck.



Ankit Chandra (12) – Everyone should have a life-sized cardboard cut-out of my handsome face.



Doug Breuer (10) – Try to reduce the amount of busy work and give a quiet place to daydream.



Matt Shimuzu (12) – I don't feel stressed, but maybe make the colors around school look nicer.



Brandon Lemos (12) – Eat, sleep, and homework can't be all we do as colleges don't even like this, our future depends on extra curricular as much as schoolwork



Alice Ren (10) – Bring back couches and make more comfortable student centers.



Lauren Brooks (10) – Try to space out tests more and make class participation have more on an impact of the grade.

LESSONS/ from page 11 come a team, and help others. In their words, "Participating in [our] missions will help you understand our environment, gain a feeling for the needs of others, appreciate our history, and develop insight into the importance of the arts" (www.volunteers.com). Upon finishing the two weeks, volunteers receive a letter of recommendation and eighty hours of community service. My time in the Adirondacks

this summer were unforgettable. I took a break from my everyday life and went into the wilderness. I met eleven other people my age who were just as dedicated, generous, and willing to do something new and different as I was. During our two weeks together, we had fun, accomplished rewarding things, and learned from one another as well as from our surroundings. Two weeks in the mountains reminded the twelve of us of everything that

we take for granted here at home. "I think this [Landmark Volunteers] was an excellent experience and I recommend it to anyone who enjoys working in groups and exercising and working outdoors," said Nathaniel. My experience with Landmark taught me many things, but most of all that it's worth it to give back to the community.

If you're interested in applying for Landmark Volunteers, visit their website at www.volunteers.com.

AB Alum is New Choral Director

By RASHMI JASRASARIA
Spectrum Staff

One of the many new teachers this year is the new choral director, Ms. Jennifer Moss. She is a young, charismatic leader who loves what she teaches and has already brought new life to the choral program at AB. Furthermore, she was a student at Acton-Boxborough ten years ago and finds it interesting to be experiencing the music department from a faculty member's point of view. Having her return as a colleague has been a pleasure for her former band director, Mr. Hickey. "I was extremely excited that we were able to bring Jennifer, Ms. Moss, back to Acton-Boxborough. She was a great student—talented and hardworking—and I knew she would bring that to our program."

As a student, Ms. Moss describes herself as heavily involved with the music program at Acton-Boxborough. Ms. Moss played clarinet in the band, was drum major during marching band season, and a member of the Madrigal Singers. She thinks it was really beneficial to be a part of all these.

Although she enjoyed band, she felt more comfortable singing than playing the clarinet and chose to major in voice when she went to college. She was also very interested in education: "I knew I wanted to be a teacher from my leadership experiences in the band." She studied voice at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, and continued her graduate studies at Temple University. At UMass Amherst, Ms. Moss was part of an all-female *a capella* group. While she was a graduate student at Temple, she was the advisor to an undergrad mixed *a capella* group and helped it grow into a successful ensemble. She was sure of her career once she took conducting classes; it reinforced her desire to teach choral ensembles. "It was just fun," she says of why she finally chose to go into music education.

Once she was out of college, Ms. Moss lived in Pennsylvania, singing in Philadelphia. She also taught sixth to eighth grade students general music and sixth grade chorus at a middle school in Yardley, PA, a suburb of Philadelphia that was "very similar to Acton." She liked it a lot, especially since she "got to see all the kids." Ms. Moss also periodically went to help out at the high school in Yardley. She felt more suited to teaching at the high school level because she could relate better with the older students. "High school is such a fun time in life. You're young adults, [you] get to make your own choices, and you're getting ready for what you'll do next: college, travel, work."

Many things have changed at AB since her high school years.

"The building is better—more open and brighter," Ms. Moss comments on the new construction. There are more activities, and the school presents a more "open campus, collegiate atmosphere, which is great." The students are more driven to do well, more involved, and somewhat nicer than the classmates she remembers.

Ms. Moss is enjoying her new job. "It's really great that I can come in and teach... I laugh all the time, and the students are open and interesting." She has quickly become close with many students who find her easy to relate to as a young teacher. "I haven't met with any animosity, and the administration has been great to work with," Ms. Moss says of her new job.

As for her personal music tastes, Ms. Moss enjoys "all kinds: jazz, classical, folk." Some of her favorite artists include The Police, Rufus Wainwright, Led Zeppelin, John Coltrane, and various hip-hop and classical artists. When performing music, Ms. Moss prefers singing in small chamber vocal ensembles, where there is usually one person per part, or singing *a capella*.

One of Ms. Moss's favorite pastimes is traveling. "If I could live in Europe, I would," she says, recalling her past summer there. Her favorite cities in Europe are Florence, Leipzig, and most of all, Dublin. This next summer, Ms. Moss is going back to Tuscany, Italy for a special music workshop. In the United States, she enjoys going to Philadelphia and Florida, where her sister and two nieces live. Ms. Moss hopes to visit Australia and the Caribbean within her lifetime.

Ms. Moss's goals for the choral program at Acton-Boxborough are to have the program grow even more. "We have a Women's Ensemble, but it'd be nice to see a Men's Ensemble," she said. She wants the music program to go beyond just the performing groups, and she continues to focus on having a good time and singing as much as possible. Ms. Moss is looking forward to the construction of a brand new chorus room as well. She is planning a festival performance in New York City in the spring, because she believes "a tour is really important for the students." She is very excited for the upcoming year, and plans to continue performing for a while, eventually hoping to be part of a semi-professional gig in Boston.

To students wary of their future positions, Ms. Moss advises, "Be patient and realize that you have your whole life ahead of you. Do what your gut tells you. Find out where you want to be and then how you want to get there." The students at Acton-Boxborough welcome Ms. Moss to the faculty.

Features

Un Nouveau Prof de Français Vient à AB

By HELEN ALESBURY
Correspondent

For many students here at AB, taking a foreign language is unfortunately not seen as an important part of their education. For some, there is no longer room for it in their schedule, and they have discontinued their study. But for those who are excited about continuing a foreign language, there is a brand-new teacher who just might inspire students to make their French class a priority.

Nicolas Cosseron, one of the newest members of the World Language Department, spent his youth in Havre, France, in the province of Normandy.

With his two younger sisters, Monsieur Cosseron attended elementary school through high school immersed in French traditions. He studied German, but he lost interest in it as he became increasingly interested in English. He later attended the University of Le Havre and earned his B.A. in English.

Like many people after graduation, Monsieur Cosseron was not entirely sure what it was that he wanted to do with his life. At first,

he thought that he wanted to have a career in translation and eventually become an interpreter for the United Nations. After finally deciding to become a translator, Cosseron went back to school, to the University of Paris, to get a Master's degree in Literary Translation.

After getting his Master's degree, Cosseron elected to go abroad and utilize his language skills as a teacher. He sought inspiration from his father, who was an English teacher, and applied for a teacher's assistant position at Mount Holyoke College, receiving his first experience teaching French there. He remained at Mount Holyoke for a year, living in a dorm and teaching all levels of French, from elementary to intermediate.

After his first year of teaching, Cosseron returned to France and decided to give translation a shot, applying for a position in Toronto, Canada, which, as it turned out, was not as exciting as he thought it would be. After this realization, he resolved to go back to the United States, deciding to teach French instead of English because he had been learning English for so long that he needed a change. As he put it, "I feel very proud to teach

my native language." Last June, Cosseron received a Master's degree in Teaching at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Then comes the question: what was it about AB that made him want to work here?

Simply put, AB was the first to reply to his job application. However, it seems to have been a good choice, as he says he really likes teaching at AB and intends to continue teaching here for some time. He now lives in Watertown and, unfortunately, only moved in two days before school started, having to start the school year barely unpacked.

Currently, Monsieur Cosseron is not a United States citizen and does not want to forgo his French citizenship, which means he cannot vote in the coming presidential election. When asked how he would vote if he could, he replied, "Kerry, definitely."

Additionally, Monsieur Cosseron's favorite movie is *Moulin Rouge*. That's right, *Moulin Rouge*, the American translation of a French story. Don't worry; I was confused too. I was expecting some French film I had never heard of and would have a hard time spelling.

Monsieur Cosseron is welcome

here at AB and is obviously very talented in linguistics. If you didn't know better, you would think English was his first language; he speaks it without even a hint of an accent. Although I have only been his student for a few weeks now, I can honestly say, and so can many of his other students, that he is a very hip teacher. Maybe that will convince those of you who have dropped a language to take it up again.

Alors, Monsieur Casseron, les élèves d'AB voudraient vous dire "Bienvenue!"



Monsieur Cosseron
SNEHA ARJUN/CORRESPONDENT

Interview: Diego Mansilla, Español

By PRASAD PATIL
Spectrum Staff

I had the opportunity to interview one of the newest recruits to the AB World Language Department, Señor Diego Mansilla. Sr. Mansilla teaches Spanish II AE, III CP, and V AE, and I believe he will be a great asset to our staff. Our interview went as follows:

Prasad: Give us some background on yourself: Where are you from? Where did you study? Family, interests, etc.?

Sr. Mansilla: I was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. I came to the US in 2000, currently live in Andover, and taught in the Boston Public School system and in Newton before I came to Acton. Before I began teaching, I worked as a translator, and even helped develop one of the texts we use here today. My parents and sister live in Buenos Aires, but they visited me here recently. In my spare

and an all-around good place to teach. The principal at my old school told me it was a great community, so I was very interested.

P: How are you finding the school so far? How do you like the facilities, the faculty, and the students?

SM: Great! Everything is absolutely great; I couldn't have

P: How do you compare teaching here to your prior jobs?

SM: You mean in Argentina?

P: Sure.

SM: Well, I have to say the students are more mature here. I haven't seen any fights or arguments, and I love the kids.

They are respectful and they want to learn, and I like this. The workload and homework is basically the same here and there, but overall, it is a very different environment.

P: Since we're running low on time, one last question: What are your plans for the future now that you are here?

SM: I plan to stay here as long as I can. I love teaching—I think it is very rewarding—and I'd love to stay as long as I can.

I would like to thank Señor Mansilla for offering some of his time to do this interview. We are lucky to have him join us, and I'd like to formally welcome him to the AB community! Bienvenidos!



time, I love to read, and enjoy Señor Mansilla photography, soccer, and boating.

P: What made you decide to come here?

SM: I was told that this is a great system, a great community,

hoped for better. The students are very good, the faculty is great, and everything is just great!

XANGA / from page 11

homework, or for friends that are far away, if they have time to get together on a three-day weekend. When you have a Xanga, you can also subscribe to your friends' Xangas online and get daily emails containing all of their most recent posts helping you get in touch with what's going on in their life.

Many people, especially parents, dislike the idea of their children owning a Xanga because they think it is addictive and provides a distraction from schoolwork. These claims are unfounded; writing in a Xanga is not the same as playing a computer game. For Xanga, there is no addiction involved in terms of updating. It is possible to get addicted to it if you choose to update your Xanga multiple times a day, but that time commitment is not necessary to enjoy it. Similar to a diary, it is rare that someone will want to make several entries a day, barring extraordinary events. Checking your Xanga for comments and subscriptions

is also an effortless thing. It is very similar to checking your email; it should not take longer than five minutes, nor should it be considered a distraction from work. However, it will take some time if you choose to explore your friends' Xangas and leave comments for them. That is why you can subscribe to them, so you will get an instant reminder when they've updated their Xanga. This saves you the time of actually going to their sites to see whether they have updated or not.

Some people protest that it is dangerous to put up online journals because it is easy to attract strangers. But unlike chat rooms and forums, Xanga provides security measures to protect your privacy. First, you can limit the amount of information you choose to post. Also, if you desire, you can protect your posts so only those on your friends list can view them.

Joining Xanga is very simple. All you need to do is go to www.xanga.com and register for your own. This way, you can explore and find out more about Xanga yourself. If you don't know where to start, check out my Xanga at www.xanga.com/

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10 Things I Hate About You: Totally Grody!

By HEATHER MCCORMACK
Correspondent

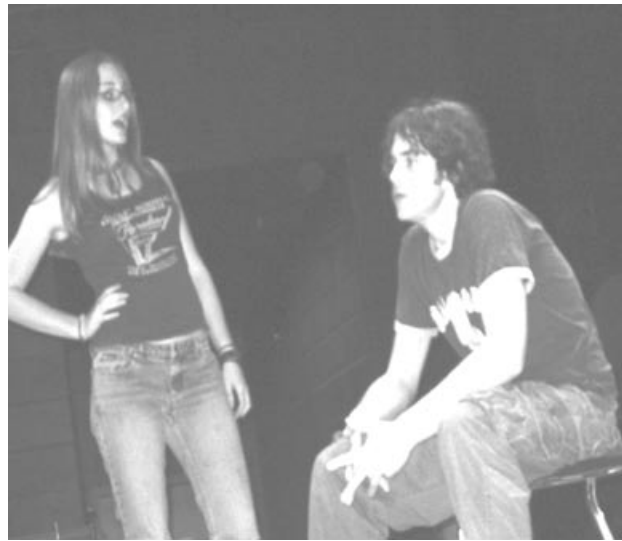
Chances are, if you're reading this and you don't live under a rock, you've probably seen *10 Things I Hate About You*. And if you're a normal teenager with any taste for good clean comedy, you liked it. You liked it to the extent that you'd cut off your left arm to be anywhere near Heath Ledger... Okay, clearly you're not all normal teenagers like me, but I'll let that slide.

As soon as I found out that it was going to be AB's fall play this year, I put on my extra eyeliner and slid into some Birkenstocks, hoping to be the Julia Stiles of Acton-Boxborough. Sadly, not every story has a perfect ending, but watch for my three mesmerizing lines as the kid in detention!

Being in the play has given me a first-hand view of what really goes on in a theater production. It's not all glitz and glamour by any stretch of the imagination; for every ounce

of glitter, there is a pound of sweat.

Be that as it may, I can tell you one thing—this show is really, really good. I'm pretty sure you are just as excited about this show as I am. Well, maybe not to the extent of the limb amputation, but I can get pretty worked up sometimes.



Maya Cookson and Russ Viola practice for the fall play.
MATT BASKIN / SPECTRUM STAFF

Anyway, this show is going to be amazing. It's based on the movie, but with one clever alteration—it's set in the eighties. Starring freshman Maya Cookson as the totally

frigid Kat Stratford, an uncompromising feminist whose dress is drab and who refuses to date. Her younger sister and professional daddy's girl Bianca, played by sophomore Angela Powell, desperately wants to be a teenager and party all the time. However, their psycho dad

won't let Bianca date unless she's accompanied by Kat, otherwise known as "the shrew." So Bianca and her slightly misguided love interest, Cameron, played by senior Alex Eksir, devise a plan to get Patrick, played by junior Russ Viola, the intimidating and intriguing rebel with an attitude problem, to go out with Kat. Trouble is, he ends up falling for her. Now, I don't want to give anything away of course, but let's just say there are fist fights, live music, and totally tubular 80's references. Be at the fall play, *10 Things I Hate About You*, and be gnarly.

Performances are November 12th, 13th, 14th, 19th, and 20th.

Pearl Jam Rocked

By TRAVIS PALANO
Correspondent

The stage is empty and darkened. Except for a few roadies milling around, checking instruments, all is still. Then, just barely visible in the smoky darkness, a lone figure clad in a jean jacket carrying an electric guitar approaches the microphone. Suddenly, a beam of light slices through the darkness and shines upon the figure. It's Eddie Vedder. This enigmatic vocalist of Pearl Jam, the headlining band for the night's festivities, has decided to kick tonight's concert off with a little solo performance. He begins to strum out a chord progression on his guitar. Ed starts to sing the first few bars of the song. As the first words come out of his mouth, everyone loves it. He is covering a Jackson Browne song called "I Am a Patriot," which is incredibly appropriate for the *Vote for Change* tour. Ed starts to sing the bridge of the song, "And I ain't no communist, and I ain't no capitalist," and the crowd eats it up. When Ed sings, "And I ain't no Democrat, and I sure as hell ain't no (expletive) Republican," the crowd really goes ballistic. As he walks off, I know that I am going to see something amazing.

The *Vote for Change* tour is a series of shows that features, among others, *Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band*, *Dave Matthews Band*, *R.E.M.*, *Jurassic 5*, and, of course, *Pearl Jam*. The tour has thirty-seven dates and will go through thirty cities in battleground states. *Pearl Jam* decided to do a warm-up show in Boston at the Fleet Center before they join Bruce and the others. Originally, the group was only going to play one show in Boston, but the show sold out in a matter of days. Since it had been only available to the *Pearl Jam* fan club, they decided to add another date. I bought tickets for this second show on Wednesday, October 29th.

After Vedder completed the first song, he introduced *Gob Roberts*, the first of the opening acts. *Gob Roberts* wasn't as terrible as the crowd made them seem, but they weren't good either. Tim Robbins (yes, the actor) is the lead vocalist for the band. All of their songs had some kind of political message in them. They played mostly power/punk rock, which didn't seem very difficult and wasn't always enjoyable for me. They finished up quickly and exited to several boos from the crowd. After *Gob Roberts* came *Death Cab for Cutie*, a pleasant surprise especially after the *Gob Roberts* fiasco. They played a pop-emo style that was very well done. The lead vocalist, Ben Gibbard, who is also a member of *The Postal Service*, has a dreamy, flowing voice and a very good range. Between songs, they would talk about random topics, which were actually pretty funny.

When *Pearl Jam* finally came onto the stage, it was about 9:15. The opening tune of the night was

appropriately, "Go." Coming from their second album, *Vs.*, "Go" was a very fast paced song that got the crowd up and going. They kept the momentum going by playing "Animal," also from *Vs.*, and "Do the Evolution," from *Yield*. The crowd was very pumped for the first half-hour of the show because *Pearl Jam* played many of their hardest songs early. Nearing the end of the song, Eddie started to improvise some of the lyrics, making them about politics. One line that I found particularly fitting was when he sang "I wish I was the president..." showing his dislike of the current inhabitant of the Oval Office. From "Wishlist," they moved onto "Present Tense" and "Corduroy." To end their main set, they played "Once," a hard-edged, fast-paced, slam-pit song.

When the group came back on stage, they explained that the next set would be quieter. They started their first encore with "Lukin" from *No Code*. They also played "Man of the Hour," from the *Big Fish* soundtrack. To end this first encore, the group played their biggest hit so far, "Black" from *Ten*. Live, this song was amazing, easily my favorite of the night. They mixed the moaning vocals of Eddie with Mike's Jimi Hendrix-esque soloing beautifully. The song was extended with Mike's incredible soloing for a long time. After "Black," they exited the stage and the crowd waited for more.

When they came back, everyone was out of their seats—I don't think I sat down for the last half of the show. They started off the second encore with "The Seeker," a *The Who* cover. After that, they broke out another big hit, "Daughter" from *Vs.*, which absolutely blew my mind. At the end of "Daughter," Eddie started to sing "War" and the crowd sang along. The center was deafening. After that, they continued the hits by playing "Glorified G," one of my all time favorite *Pearl Jam* songs. It's got a hard and funky guitar part and some very poignant lyrics about gun control. Eddie apparently took the lyrics verbatim from an argument he had with the group's former drummer, Dave Abbruzzese, when Dave had bought a gun. After "Glorified G," Tim Robbins came out for a duet with Ed on the song "The New World." The energy slowed a little with this song, but it was picked right back up again when the band played a song that they hadn't played for ten years called "I've Got a Feeling." Mike and Stone's good guitar riffs and Eddie's wonderful vocals made it one of the highlights of the night for me.

Pearl Jam played their last song at about 11:45 pm. The house lights came up and the opening notes to "Rockin' in the Free World" came out of the speakers. The crowd reaction to this Neil Young classic was amazing. *Pearl Jam* has been closing with this song since 1992, and playing it for the *Vote for Change* tour really capped the

Cabaret: A Preview

By ESTHER PARK & DIANE
HWANG
Correspondents

Cabaret: n. A restaurant or nightclub providing short programs of live entertainment...

Well, it won't be in a restaurant or a nightclub, but this year's Cabaret Night at AB is sure to provide many short and entertaining live programs. Cabaret is an opportunity for students at ABRHS to show off their musical talents. While we were researching this year's show, we had a chance to catch up with our new choral director, Ms. Jennifer Moss, who is also an AB alum. As director of this year's Cabaret, she gave us the inside scoop.

1. Where did the name "Cabaret" come from?

Ms. Moss: A traditional Cabaret show is one that takes place in a

restaurant or nightclub that features entertainment, specifically singing and dancing. AB's version of a Cabaret show includes the usual singing, dancing, and food, but we've expanded the entertainment to include instrumental numbers and novelty acts as well. There is also a well-known musical entitled *Cabaret*, which takes place in 1930s Germany and follows the life of Sally Bowes, one of the cabaret singer-dancers at the club.

2. What is the difference between Cabaret and a talent show?

Ms. Moss: A Cabaret show usually features acts with music selected from genres such as musicals and Broadway shows. A talent show may include things like juggling and stand-up comedy. AB's Cabaret show includes music from genres outside of the traditional Cabaret scene, but we keep the original

musical performance atmosphere.

3. How is Cabaret different now from when it first started?

Ms. Moss: As an AB alum, I remember performing in the first Cabaret. It took place in the old McCarthy-Towne cafeteria and the acts were similar to the ones that appear today, but the number of acts has increased greatly. Since then, Cabaret has also become an almost entirely student-run production with members of the chorus acting as committee chairs for various parts of the show. Students gain valuable leadership skills by organizing, planning, and leading groups such as Backstage/Tech, Crew, Decorations, Bake Sale & Food, Publicity, Ticket Sales, and the ever-popular Emcee Committee. It is wonderful to see how the size and popularity of the show has grown over the last ten years.

4. What will be special/different about this year's Cabaret since it is the 10-year anniversary?

Ms. Moss: This year's Cabaret will showcase a wide variety of acts performed by students involved in AB's music program. Since it is the tenth anniversary of Cabaret, it is our goal to feature as many different students as possible in the show. The acts range from upbeat to contemplative, serious to outrageous, and much more. There will be both solo and ensemble singing, dancing, bands, a cappella groups, and special introductions by student Emcees.

Cabaret will take place at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, November 5th and Saturday, November 6th at the Parker Damon Building. Tickets will be sold during lunches in school the first week of November and will also be available from Ms. Moss in Room 130E.

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Entertainment

Wilco: Good Country

By MAGGIE DUFFY
Spectrum Staff

It's not that I love country music. I've got a healthy contempt for the stale chords and trite ballad lyrics that cling like parasites to the stuff. When my neighbors blast the country station loud enough to be heard in their driveway as well as across the street, down the road, and through my closed windows, I cringe. So don't go accusing me otherwise.

That said, I'll admit that I've developed a fondness for steel guitars and raw lyrics. You could even call it a preoccupation. Wilco, a band which has evolved through hazy electro-montage and conscientious pop on the way to becoming what it is today, has done this to me. There's a good chance that I'll never be the same again.

Wilco's most recent album, "A Ghost is Born," has won them the praise and attention they've always deserved, and has placed the band foremost in the sprawling genre of alt-country. While artists ranging from Bright Eyes to Norway's Sondre Lerche to Elliott Smith have been influenced by alt-country, it's a difficult label to define. Leann Womack and Tim McGraw are country; Whiskeytown, The Old 97's, and the Jayhawks are alt-country. Suffice it to say, alt-country isn't satisfied as easily—while your average country singer lolls in the stylization of the genre, alt-country musicians look for something more. Wilco has managed to absorb the emotional honesty and spacious energy of country music while discarding the rest of the sensationalized mess. It's a return to an earlier immediacy, similar to that of Johnny Cash, granddaddy of all things country. So in this sense, I see Wilco and the other alt-country bands not as an alternative to country, but rather country as it should be.

On Wilco's earlier albums, the connection to country music is more literal. AM and Being There are full of ringing ballads about love, highways, and whiskey. Harmonicas wail, hearts are mentioned—it's the familiar country music. There's a certain dissatisfied quality to this early music which makes it both appealing and somehow unfinished. "You Already Know the Story" lead singer Jeff Tweedy growls in "Someone Else's Song": "And the chords are just the same / You already know I love you / And I sound like what's his name."

Since then, spanning eight major albums, as well as countless collaborations and side projects,

Wilco's sound has grown so that it's no longer easily recognizable as country. The lyrics, while still as minimal and incisive as when set to rowdy country beats, are now surrounded by nuanced, jarring chords. No matter what Tweedy writes, it's impossible for us now to say that they "sound like what's his name." Wilco sounds more itself than it ever has—the words are personal and unexpected at every turn. "A Ghost is Born" is one cohesive thought; the beats and styles of the record, instead of adhering to a genre, focus on expressing that single thought. The lyrics on the new album are more precise and more distinctively Tweedy's own as the group's sound on the whole has become something completely unique.

Wilco has always been great enough to have plenty of crossover appeal—its following is extremely varied. When I went to their concert in Boston at the beginning of October, I noticed this in their audience. I saw my fair share of cowboy boots, but there were just as many dreadlocked heads as black-rimmed glasses in the crowd. The age range especially struck me—it's rare to see teenagers and adults boogying together so harmoniously. While all the members of the band are extremely talented, it was Jeff Tweedy for whom the audience showed the most fondness and who did the most talking between sets. His ever-personable stage presence, as well as his recent return from drug rehab, made for a supportive, affectionate audience. The performance didn't lean on this affection in the slightest, though; Wilco filled the large Wang Theater with undeniably gorgeous music. Instruments that were de-emphasized on the CD were more noticeable, and the band played a great selection which spanned all of their recent albums. The performance was complemented by a large screen behind them which showed footage of bees, skyscrapers, and other semi-psychedelic images. Tweedy sounded remarkably good—his gritty voice hung on the notes in a way the album had subdued, making a phenomenal performance.

"Every time I make a rhyme / I live my life like I wasn't invited," Tweedy sang towards the end of the concert. His lyrics, which are often lost under the soaring chords and mind-bending effects, have the uneasy grace of an introverted child. Only it's clear now: not only has Wilco been invited to this party, but they've come bearing a fine gift for the rest of us.

Trite Times at Pennsbury High: The Forgery of a Wonderland

By MATT BASKIN
Spectrum Staff

Every so often, a book comes along that is so powerful, so vivid, and so full of truth that the reader can't help but *feel* it. Sometimes, such a book is set in the desolation of Auschwitz or the deserts of Africa. On the other hand, *Wonderland* is a non-fiction taking place in the corridors of a high school that failed to take me any further than the bathroom. Full of typecasts and banalities, *Wonderland* reads like a glorified report on the youth of America as if the youth of America was concerned with nothing outside of going to the prom.

Author Michael Bamberger, who is of all things a *Sports Illustrated* columnist, never strays far from bland. In choosing his characters, Bamberger tries to create a cross-section of Pennsylvania's Pennsbury High School, yet comes out with stereotypes. From the prepie three-sport athlete down to the leather-jacket rebel, he represents what he claims to be a socially diverse student body with students so clichéd that one can't help but laugh at his naivety. In a sad and obvious effort to keep the reader on his toes, Bamberger makes sure that his students have the proper eccentricities so as to make their stories readable. And so, the three-sport athlete has a handicapped brother,

the rebel has a pregnant girlfriend, and so on. In doing so, he attaches the boring to the extreme, and his book slowly turns into an episode of *Oprah* gone horribly wrong.

Bamberger mixes the common with the melodramatic for a result that is comparable only to taking heavy sedatives. One might argue that melodrama is appropriate; after all, the book is set in a high school. However, he uses it to the extent that one wants to forgo tears in favor of vomit. It's not that Bamberger's writing is ineffective. To the contrary, he proves himself capable of reaching the reader, taking him to emotional highs and lows while also maintaining a sense of humor. However, Bamberger maintains that despite all these tools used to influence the reader's emotions, his book is still a work of journalism. By doing so, he turns it into a work of exploitation, not only of the reader, but of the students he profiles as well as their families. In one passage, he reduces the death of a student hit by a car to a fictional tragedy, building suspense leading up to the death and showcasing the actions, words, and emotions that went along with it. In another, he depicts a girl's heart condition as a result of bad karma. All of this adds up to one word: sleazy. Bamberger's techniques are cheap, and while he shows himself capable of being a writer, he does not show him-

self capable of being a journalist.

The event that *Wonderland* relies on to carry the reader through is the stereotype to end all stereotypes: the prom. To my surprise though, Pennsbury High's prom is somewhat different from what we're used to. Instead of limos escorting dates to the doors of some semiritzy hotel, students find innovative ways of getting to the school gym, setting for the biggest event of the school year. While an interesting component to the book, Bamberger relies on it far too much and consistently implies that it is the pinnacle of social life for every student, again reducing the students of Pennsbury High, and America, to a stereotype.

Read *Wonderland*, but don't think that you're reading a work of nonfiction, lest you react as I did. Instead of reading it as the groundbreaking piece of journalism which it proudly claims to be, read it as the decent piece of fiction which it humbly is.

PEARL JAM/ from page 14
night nicely. All in all, this was an amazing experience for me and hopefully, *Pearl Jam* will be back next year. Or as Eddie put it, "We'll see you next year, in Fenway."

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Entertainment

Game Time: Halo 2 Coming Soon

By NICK JESSOP
Spectrum Staff

Unless you plan on spending the rest of the year in front of your television, don't buy *Halo 2*. Don't purchase it. Don't barter for it. Don't even steal it. *Halo 2* should not be in your household when it is released on November 9th. You may be wondering why the single most highly anticipated video game in the history of humankind should be avoided at all costs. Don't worry, *Halo 2* will almost certainly exceed your immense expectations. No, the reason for caution is really much less surprising: quite simply, *Halo 2* will change your life.

Ever since the 2001 release of *Halo: Combat*, which drew praise as "one of the best games in recent times, on any console, bar none," gamers have been salivating over the prospect of a sequel. This is not to say that they have not enjoyed every minute of the original. I myself have wasted countless hours on my friends' couches vainly attempting to save the human race or merely enjoying the dizzying variety of multiplayer games, only to get humiliated by

my own buddies. Perhaps this is what has made *Halo* such a wildly popular game over these past three years—the fact that you don't need to be a hard-core gamer, or even good, to reap its boundless fruits. The greatest proof of this reality



lies in the vast range of people who play the game. *Halo* has truly elevated gaming to the mainstream.

Obviously, this hasn't gone unnoticed by Microsoft. The maker of Xbox realized that *Halo* alone had the ability to sell consoles. With dollar signs in the executives' eyes, a sequel was immediately proposed. Now, after three years of setbacks, delays, and general quag-

mires, the moment of truth is tangible and finally upon us.

Hundreds of thousands of words have been written about *Halo 2*, most in more detail and depth than I could even pretend to exhibit. A few extremely helpful websites with a plethora of articles, screenshots, and movies include IGN.com, Bungie.net, and Gamespy.com. What I can add is that, while *Halo* might have had an impact on our lives in the past three years, it cannot compare to the imminent shock to the system that the hype surrounding *Halo 2* suggests. If the game is half of what it is expected to be, we could be in for largest media and pop culture bonanza that video gaming has ever seen.

On November 9th, you will have a crucial decision to make: To buy, or not to buy.

Actually, no; you'll buy it. In fact, you've probably already pre-ordered it. Or at least, you should have. However, you've been forewarned: *Halo 2* is threat to the productivity of you and students everywhere.

[Be sure to read next month when Matt Fisher-Post and I provide an in-depth review of the game that just inhaled 500 words in a high school newspaper 7 days before its release]

Robert ParkeHarrison: "The Everyman"

By PETER AHERN
Spectrum Staff

It's very hard to describe the work of Robert ParkeHarrison without using one's hands or voice for emphasis. Maybe it is because the artwork of his exhibit at the DeCordova Museum in Lincoln is nothing short of extraordinary. The technique, the use of props and sets, and the implied visual metaphors that characterize ParkeHarrison's creative photography are unparalleled in the world of art. But what does his work look like? Every one of his pieces consists of the same subject, a man in a suit one size too small—a man he calls "The Everyman." This man is consistently featured in an uncommon but familiarly desolate landscape, interacting with his surroundings using a variety of bizarre and strange props, while the whole time exuding a sort of uncanny innocence. For example, in *Forest Bed*, "The Everyman" is seen asleep on a mattress suspended on dry twigs and roots high above a bed frame. In another, titled *Mending the Earth*, "The Everyman" can be seen crudely stitching what appears to be a volcanic crack in the earth with an enormous needle and thread. In another of his weirdly whimsical pieces called *Suspension*, "The Everyman" is seen anchoring huge clouds to the ground with thick, coarse rope. Amazingly, all of these photographs are created without the use of any digital media.

The technique ParkeHarrison uses to create such visionary and eerie photographs is his use of silver gelatin prints and a variety of mixed media including painting and montages. ParkeHarrison also uses grand, self-designed sets and spindly machine-like props, though fashioned to be very rustic and primitive in form and appearance. The way he goes about creating these photo-

graphs can best be described using one of his pieces as an example.

To create a piece called *Navigator*, ParkeHarrison took numerous pictures of himself climbing a twisted, asymmetrical ladder, while holding an over-the-top, bizarre telescope. Next, he took numerous pictures of the sky, then pictures of cotton stuffing (to simulate clouds), finally piecing together elements from the several photographs to resemble a crude collage. But once taken into a darkroom and run through developing procedures, the image became seamless, blending perfectly the many different elements to give the end result: a surreal image of a man climbing a crooked ladder into the clouds with a telescope.

All of his photographs are tinted a warm sepia, making it impossible to tell whether they were made yesterday or just unearthed from an archeological dig. Most pieces are heavily varnished on a thick slab of birch wood, giving his pictures a grainy, rudimentary appearance. ParkeHarrison's method of creating multiple-layered photographs and his mixing in of paint and ink is astonishingly disorienting to view; the viewer is able to identify with "The Everyman," but not with the landscape or freakish objects found throughout his prints. It is impossible to tell what is real and what isn't, and it is this feeling that makes this exhibit so enjoyable, yet inconceivable. This is a must-see exhibit for anyone interested in photography or enticed by the unusual, and I give it my highest recommendations. The DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park is located in Lincoln at 51 Sandy Pond Road; to preview ParkeHarrison's work, you can visit his website at <http://www.parkeharrison.com/>.

Fundraiser? More Like FUNraiser!

By EVAN BROWN
Spectrum Staff

For one evening, the night of October 23, the students of ABRHS were transported to a dimension in which the laws of physics held little authority over their movements. Those who attended will not soon forget it.

"It was a mental stimulus for me," senior Rohin Jaiman commented afterward. "And by mental I mean physical. Intensely physical."

Although the class of 2005 has sponsored dances in the past, this one differed from past events in several ways. For example, the school did not hire a professional disc jockey for the dance. Instead, the music was prepared and selected by junior Andy Kelly, who acted as a DJ at the dance. Students responded favorably to Kelly's performance, and most did not feel a professional DJ would have added

significantly to their enjoyment of the dance. "The music sounds the same, no matter who the DJ is," commented senior Joe Hart, who attended the dance. "[Kelly] did a good job."

By hiring Kelly instead of a professional, the school saved a considerable amount of money. A professional might have charged as much as \$300, whereas Kelly was paid \$100.

The dance was also unusual in that it was not held to raise money for a class or group. "It wasn't supposed to be a fundraiser," noted Senior class Vice President Dave Shi. "It was just something people wanted to have." In fact, the ticket prices, which were originally set to be \$6 or \$7, were lowered to \$5 to raise attendance. Despite the fact that it was not intended to raise money, Shi estimates that the class will earn a small profit from the dance.

In yet another break from tradi-

tion, the school allowed students to enter the dance as late as 9:30 PM, instead of the usual 9:00 PM. This was due to the fact that the dance coincided with a home high school football game that was expected to draw a considerable number of students. By allowing students to enter later than usual, the dance was able to attract a number of people coming directly from the game. Since the official end time was 11:00 PM, students coming from the game still had sufficient time to get their groove on, and many praised the school's decision to allow students to come after the game. "I probably wouldn't have come [to the dance] if they had cut it off at 9:00 PM," stated senior Tim Glick. "I think a lot of students would've just gone somewhere else after the game."

Clearly, straying from tradition greatly benefited this event. The dance was well attended and enjoyed by all.

Write Letters to the EDITOR!

We encourage any and all feedback from our most valued readers!

submit your comments regarding articles to spectrum@emer.org (no attachments, please).

We look forward to hearing from you!

!!!AB FILM ON 3!!!

If you like movies, Tuesdays, or Fisher-Posts, there's a club in the works for you! Fasten your seatbelts and brace yourselves for the greatest club since turkey on rye!! Movies will range from good to awesome. Starts this November.

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SPORTS

Callahan's Corner

By BRIAN CALLAHAN
Spectrum Staff

"Success is how high you bounce when you hit rock bottom."

-General George Patton
Before the ALCS, I had two possible headlines for this column.

One of them, you see above. The other one, would have been "The Song Remains the Same." And for a while, it looked like I would be using "The Song Remains the Same." The Red Sox were playing horrendously, and the New York Yankees were rolling on all cylinders. And for a while, this seemed to make sense: the season to this point had seemed to be too charmed for the Red Sox. From reloading in the off-season with the additions of Curt Schilling and Keith Foulke, to a rebirth of sorts after trading Nomar, to a wild card birth, and finally to an epic sweep of the Angels in the division series, the Red Sox seemed to have everything going too well for them. You could hear everyone in New England say how this team was the best Red Sox team they had ever seen in their lifetime; a team so deep, so courageous, and so motivated to

a single ultimate goal that it would be more of a surprise if they were to lose, than if they were to win it all. But if history has taught us anything—and I don't think I need to go into details—it is that the Red Sox have been unsuccessful time and time again in their pursuit of baseball's Holy Grail. For 86 years.

On a cold, rainy Sunday in Boston, it looked like the Red Sox would be unsuccessful once again, and that their fate would once again be the same. The night before, they had suffered through one of their worst losses in recent memory. The 19-8 thrashing at home thrust them into a 3-0 hole to their hated rivals, the New York Yankees. The Yankees had outplayed the Red Sox in every aspect of the game, whether it be hitting, pitching, defense, or relief. Not helping was the fact that the Red Sox ace, Curt Schilling, had faltered in his first start and was doubtful for the rest of the series with a sore right ankle. It looked like the brooms would be taken out once the Yankees brought in their closer, Mr.

Automatic, Mariano Rivera—the most dominating closer in the history of the game. But a leadoff walk to Kevin Millar, a pinch-run steal by Dave Roberts, and a single up the middle by Bill Mueller tied up the game and gave Rivera his first-ever blown postseason save. It was one that would prove costly, for in the bottom of the twelfth, Roy Hobbs' incarnate, David Ortiz, ended the game with a home run. The ball's arc into the right field bullpen gave him his second walk-off shot for the postseason, and injected life into a Red Sox team that was in dire need of a catalyst.

By Game Five, Red Sox Na-



tion was just glad to still be alive. I was just glad that my body was still functioning properly. Sadly, Game Five didn't help me in that department, but it did help the Red Sox, once again battling their hated rivals all through the night in the longest game in postseason history. Rivera blew yet another save, and the Red Sox bullpen delivered in the clutch, providing scoreless relief for seven innings.

Read that sentence again.

When was the last time you remember Rivera blowing back-to-back saves, all the while having a Sox bullpen anchored by a soft tossing closer, a knuckleballer, a starter who was rocked just two days before, and a reliever dropped by the Kansas City Royals, one of the laughingstocks of baseball? That's right, never. And, what could be better than Ortiz stepping it up again in the bottom of the fourteenth and delivering another walk off hit to send the series back to New York? (Actually I wouldn't have minded seeing Tim McCarver in Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade drink

out of the wrong goblet and spontaneously combust.) I guess I'll live with Ortiz and an excited Joe Buck shouting, "And they're running all the way back to New York!"

The rest, as they say, is history. Curt Schilling, who had pitched the worst game of his postseason career in the past week, would deliver a gutsy performance on the heels of a fractured right ankle—one that has to go down as the most courageous performance of any athlete of our time. After battling through six innings with a blood soaked ankle and the lead in hand, Curt Schilling walked off the mound at Yankee Stadium and walked into New England lore. Later on, in the bottom of the ninth, when it looked like the ghosts of Yankee stadium would return to haunt us once more, The Incredible Foulke shut down Tony Clark to force an improbable Game Seven.

Going into the final game of the series, the anticipation was evident. The Red Sox would have the chance to complete an epic and unprecedented comeback, and stick a fork in the grave of The Bambino. Early on, it was evident that the Red Sox were a team on a mission. After Johnny Damon turned water into wine with a Grand Slam off Javier Vazquez, giving the Sox a 6-0 lead, the team of self-proclaimed idiots were able to roll. Anchored by a stellar performance from Derek Lowe, who pitched on only two days rest, they were able to cap off the most incredible series comeback in sports history. Rallying from a 3-0 deficit to a 4-3 victory, they overtook a team that had owned them ever since the sale of you-know-who, and advanced to the World Series for the first time in 18 years. That's right: they did this all in one night. And the world hadn't ended. After the game, when you were pinching yourself to make sure it wasn't just a dream, you couldn't help but wonder: could this be the turning point of a team that has been doomed for 86 long years?

One thing is for sure. After all the heartbreaking losses and meltdowns that have occurred over the years, an improbable week in October was able to capture our spirits and show us why this Red Sox team will never let us lose faith.

Just Another "Boring" Season for AB Golf

By NICK JESSOP
Correspondent

Acton-Boxborough Varsity Golf coach John Carco approaches the game with a simple mantra: "Good golf is boring. Put the ball in the fairway. Hit the green, putt twice, and move on to the next hole." However, while superb play catapulted the team to a 12-4-1 record and a state sectional tournament berth, boring is the last word one would associate with AB Golf this year.

After a mediocre 2003 season plagued by spotty play and marked by the departure of four seniors and two key contributors, the AB sixteen did some soul-searching over the summer. Knowing that he would need a huge season in order for the team to contend for a DCL title, senior co-captain Ted Keith retooled his game with the help of a local pro. His dedication and determination was matched only by that of senior co-captain Courtney Richardson, who kept her already polished game sharp by playing in junior tournaments over the summer. When the team reconvened in late August, it was clear that with a lineup featuring four tested seniors, AB was poised to make a run at a DCL title and a State Tournament berth. Along with Richardson and Keith, seniors Matt Pita and Andrew Christmas had also seen their games reach the next level over the summer. With newfound distance off the tee, Christmas posted a strong showing in the Stow Acres Junior Club Championship in August. Pita, meanwhile, took his vaunted putting touch south, all the way to Hilton Head Island where he sampled some of the finer courses on the east coast. Along with the wizened veterans, junior Matt McCusker entered the season with a new role on the team. Asked to help lift the team with his explosive play, the junior letter-winner assumed his new niche as one of the elite. At the same time, junior Chris Seward and sophomore Max Rogers witnessed significant improvements in play, and sophomore Billy Tamulynus continued his impressive consistency. With leaders and depth, the team was ready to begin an especially "boring" season, that is, until someone decided a little excitement was an order.

First, there was the shocking upset of powerhouse St. Johns Prep, an annual non-division match that was meant to challenge the players. Despite the lofty assignment, AB took a swing at the traditionally potent St. John's lineup. "We got lucky," said Mc-

Cusker. It must have been more than luck, since the Colonials played one of the best matches of their season, posting nearly one hundred points for a close victory. The team was giddy with anticipation, as the win was seen as a sign of great things to come. However, in a dramatic finish against bitter rival Lincoln-Sudbury, the glory of the St. John's win would become agony when they had to settle for a tie with LS. While a tie was better than a loss would have been, they could not help but feel dejected over several missed opportunities. "Their number-one player only had eight points, so it could have gone either way," remarked Christmas. Pita, who in an unprecedented act of short-game dysfunction, took four putts on the final hole, couldn't help but feel the unwelcome weight of guilt on his shoulders. "URGGAAH!" was his only response when asked about the crucial misplay. However, Pita would soon avenge his misdeed when, in a match at Nabnasset Country Club, home of Westford Academy, he needed zero putts on the 175 yard sixth hole. The hole in one was the first of Pita's short career, and, along with his jaw-dropping 22 points, he garnered the attention of local media outlets including the Beacon and Lowell Sun newspapers. Alas, the Colonials fell short that day against the DCL juggernaut foe. Their despair was renewed, when soon thereafter, they lost by one measly point to Concord-Carlisle on an absurdly picky rule interpretation by a CC player. While disappointed, the AB sixteen used the incident to strengthen their resolve. "It just shows you how important every shot is," said coach Carco, "One shot can make the difference in a close match." Armed with determination and vengeance, AB handed CC their collective hat upon the latter's visit to the Colonials' home course. After a seven-match winning streak, however, AB ended the regular season with an embarrassing loss to Lincoln-Sudbury, who flat outplayed the Blue and Gold. Despite the disappointing finish, their 12-4-1 final record stands as a testament to the mettle of the team. Never quitting, despite heartbreaking losses that spoiled their shot at a DCL title, AB showed that golf is not merely an individual sport. Now, primed for a strong showing in the state tournament, the Colonial sixteen is proof that player development is the key to success in high school athletics. Despite losing six key players, the team has been given new life by its improved senior leadership, emerging hotshots, and rising stars. Joining the ranks of the aforementioned

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AB Soccer Looking for Some Respect

By BRAD RIZZA
Correspondent

As the late great Rodney Dangerfield once put it, "I don't get no respect." The soccer team feels like this is the case, playing in the shadow of the record-setting AB football team. Despite setting a record for consecutive victories, the soccer team garnered little attention compared to the football team.

The reigning DCL champions showed no signs of a letdown this season by posting a 7-2-2 record in their first eleven games. Coach David Baumritter, an AB chemistry

teacher, is in his fourth season as the varsity coach and is impressed with the team's success, especially after losing John Tarson, Tyler Webster and Alex Mitchell-Hardt who accounted for 75% of last year's scoring. Filling that scoring void are seniors Dan Salvo, who leads the team with seven goals, Mike Trobagis, who has six goals, Joe Hart, with four goals, and junior Kendall Crouch, who has three goals. On the other side of the field, junior Ben Knight is quickly establishing himself as one of the top goalies in the league. With a team firing on all cylinders, captain Steve Scan-

lon points out, "We had a couple of struggles early, but we just had two good wins over Wayland and Newton South and everybody seems to be stepping it up a little bit." These wins haven't been easy, as the team has had intense practice schedules both after-school every day and in the off-season. While they may not get the recognition they believe they deserve from the student body, Coach Baumritter says he can see the soccer team's dedication and focus every time they hit the field, and that if they don't have respect yet, they definitely will soon.

SPORTS

A Streak of Dominance Continues for AB Football



AB tries to push through to the end zone against Concord-Carlisle.
JONATHAN EISENBERG / SPECTRUM STAFF

By WILL CRONIN
Spectrum Staff

Another football season has begun, and it has been another fantastic start for the Acton-Boxborough football team. In the process of winning their first six games, the Colonials have beaten three top-notch football teams, broken a 50-year-old record, appeared on SportsCenter's "Top Ten Plays of the Day," sustained a number-one ranking in the state, and set the stage for what should be an exhilarating remainder to their 2004 season. Led by captains Bobby and Larry Abare, the Colonials are a skilled team with a good balance of skill and depth. Their running game is superb, as they have rushed over 200 yards in each game so far this season. Joining the Abares in the backfield are Nate Crutchfield and Bret Manning. They run the holes made by a proven offensive line, including seniors Ben Larkins, Matt Clancy, Jim DeCristofaro, Joey O'Brien, and junior Eric Gargulio. Junior Dave Crocker is the field general at quarterback, while his primary targets, the receivers, are tight ends Peter Rankis, Andrew Sides, and Alex Sheier. Playing both ways, the offensive starters are also the defensive starters, further testament to the versatile skill of this football team. Although injuries have riddled

the team early in the season, they only further proved the depth of the team. Bobby Abare's spot was filled by the three remaining backs when he went down with an ankle injury after the Concord-Carlisle game. Matt Clancy's position was filled by juniors Tyler Roberts and Craig Yamamoto at guard after he suffered a knee injury dur-

came out on top with a 19-7 victory. After a first half of turnovers and punts, the Colonials went into the locker room at the half only up by six. Although Concord-Carlisle played their hearts out the whole game, they mustered only one touchdown to AB's thirteen second-half points. For those of you who weren't among the some 5000 in attendance, the game was a nail-biter for a while, but the Colonials were victorious in the end. The game marked AB's forty-first win in a row, a new state record for consecutive wins. It surpassed the old record set by Concord High in 1954 and beating Concord-Carlisle



Even Mr. Noeth got involved in what he refers to as "jockery."
JONATHAN EISENBERG / SPECTRUM STAFF

ing the Bridgewater-Raynham game. Alex Sheier sustained an ankle injury during the Bedford game, but sophomore Doug Mahoney joined Rankis and Sides to fill the tight end duties. After just half a season, the Colonials have proven that they deserve the top rank in the state of Massachusetts. The first half of the 2004 season has been exciting right off the bat, starting with the first game with Marshfield. After beating them 14-9, the Colonials visited Chelmsford, then Bridgewater-Raynham, beating them 21-7 and 20-0, respectively. Then there was the historical game against Concord-Carlisle, in which the Colonials played sloppily but

lisle to to cement the record only added to the aura of the night. The next week was an easy trouncing of Bedford, 28-16, and the week that followed was a 21-7 victory in a muddy game against DCL rival Lincoln-Sudbury. As *The Spectrum* goes to press, the Colonials will be looking to extend their streak to 44 wins in a row and continue their undefeated season when they square off against Boston Latin. With five games remaining in the season, the Colonials still have some unfinished business. They will look to further their streak of eleven consecutive DCL titles to twelve and go into the post-season with dreams of yet another Superbowl berth.

Field Hockey on a Roll

By BRIAN CALLAHAN
Spectrum Staff

The Acton-Boxborough Field Hockey team has gotten off to a strong start this season, posting a 9-3-2 record in their first 14 games of the season. Despite losing several key seniors from a year ago, the Field Hockey team has arguably their strongest team since their last DCL Title in 2001. Led by senior captains Mariah Baxter and Liz Stanford and second-year coach Mae Shoemaker, the field hockey team has been firing on all cylinders, coming up with big wins and stellar performances week in and week out.

This year, the field hockey team's relentless offensive attacks have kept constant pressure on the opposing team's defense, opening up many scoring opportunities. Led by senior forward Katelyn Tulp and junior midfielder Jenny Raftery, AB's offense has been nothing short of exceptional. The defense has been just as good, anchored by co-captain and perennial DCL All-

Star Liz Stanford and senior sweeper Allison Potter. There is no reason Stanford shouldn't be an All-Star again; she has been outstanding, recording several shutouts and gutsy performances week in and week out.

With a solid group of players, it is no surprise that AB has turned in many important victories this season. They opened the season on September 14th with a 2-1 win over DCL rival Concord-Carlisle, in which the tremendous play of their defense held off a late comeback by CC. Later on in the season, their 4-0 victory against Bedford clearly showed that they were a force to be reckoned with. Although a recent 2-0 loss to Weston stymied their recent run, the team is right in the playoff mix as their regular season winds down. Hoping to avenge their loss to Westford in last year's MIAA State Tournament, the AB field hockey team is looking stronger than ever as they hope to put an exclamation point on what has been a tremendously successful season so far.

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returning players will be a large pool of solid contributors, who like their predecessors, could grow into fabulous players with complete games and unflappable nerves. While super sophomores Robbie Barton and Steve Diccico were the only two to catch a glimpse of the matches this season, potential exists among juniors Andrew Gruet and Ravi Shah and freshmen Chase Caldwell, Robert Owen, and Joe Keith,

brother of co-captain Ted Keith.

While it is easy to ponder the future of the team, the Colonials seem set on the present. If they were to advance past the state sectional tournament, they would be only the second squad to do so during coach Carco's tenure at the school. As the days grow short and the air regains the bite of winter, one thing can be said for certain about the sixteen golfers representing AB: "boring" couldn't be farther from the truth.

SPORTS

Going All-In with Poker
Here at ABGirls Swim and Dive Team
Motivated to Be "Hotter in the Water"

By MARTY GOMEZ
Correspondent

This year's swimming and diving team is the first team to use the newly renovated high school pool, and they sure are breaking it in with style. The team's motto for this season is "Hotter in the Water," and up to this point, they have been nothing but that. Under the guidance and coaching of veteran coach Jeff Johnson, the girls have gotten off to a hot 6-1 start with their only loss to the reigning state champs, Andover. Other than Andover, the team has easily cruised to victory against

many big-name teams, including its biggest rival, Chelmsford. In addition to the great swimming that is occurring this season, the team wouldn't be where it is without its skilled and accomplished diving squad. The divers are coached by AB math teacher Amanda Bromberg and are led by State Qualifying divers sophomore Renee Gliddon and senior Katelin Downer. The most important accomplishment for the team this season came when they placed 8th at the Long Island Invitational in New York in early October. The meet included teams from New York and all over

New England, and AB finished in top place for Massachusetts. The New York event is similar to the state meet that the girls will compete in at the end of their season; in both, many teams from different leagues compete in one large event. Nowadays, the state meet is the defining competition in a swim team's season. At this point, the team's success depends on whether they can rise to the occasion and get the job done on the big stage. If the AB swimming and diving team's performance at the Long Island Invitational is an accurate indicator, then they should make a big splash at States. Last year, the girls came in second place at States, losing to rival Andover. This year, senior captains Katie Niro, Cecilia Jenkins, and Megan Madaluno will do everything in their power to make sure that AB is the team on top when everything is said and done. To compete in the States, the competitors must qualify in the event that they are competing in. So far, AB has numerous qualifiers for the State meet, including Globe All-Scholastic Katie Omstead, and they hope to increase the number of state qualifiers before the team begins competition in November. Until then, the girls will keep working, keeping the water hot for as long as they can.

The Future of Cross Country

By HARSHA KROVI AND
BRYAN SHAFFER
Correspondent

Like the stars shining on a clear autumn night, the future of ABRHS cross-country is looking bright. The team here at AB has many blossoming stars that will soon dominate the varsity team of their sport.

Both the cross-country boys and girls teams have an abundance of fresh talent that will develop superbly if they keep up their work ethic. Among the new runners on the boy's team are sophomore Alex Webber and freshman George Neagle. Both are excelling in the tricks of their trade and know how to get the job done at every meet. Varsity captain Yeatman Benson, a hard man to impress, has been impressed by their running so far. He commented, "I don't know how they do it. It's like they go into a trance when they're out there. Their legs move, their hearts pump, and they breathe. It's like clockwork. Sometimes you need to fine tune the parts, and if you do you will get great results." Benson also extols the exceptional hard work and effort that runners like Brett Herrick and Dan Grant bring to the table. Herrick, a sophomore, has a blazing 3-mile time of 18:10. Unlike Allen Iverson, he rarely misses practice and sets a tone for all the other sophomores. Grant, a seasoned freshman, also is a fantastic runner. "If I had

a dime for every time he impresses me, I would be richer than the guy who owns Ikea," remarked Benson about Grant. Benson believes that this is one of the best teams AB has had in many years. "Next year will be our best year since the fall of '83. We have such strong legs coming back for us."

The girls' cross country team also has its share of solid talent. Freshman sensation Kate Warwick, who won the girl's varsity meet on October 20th, has been setting the pace not only for the freshmen, but for the entire girl's team as their top runner overall. They came out running on September 22nd and had a great meet overall against Concord-Carlisle, one of the toughest teams in the DCL. In junior varsity, Erin Kuta, a sophomore, placed sixth in the 2-mile race with a time of 15:31. Freshman Katrina Freitas came eleventh overall with a time of 15:59 with Sarah Piantedosi right behind her at 16:36, placing sixteenth in the race. Behind the leadership of these girls, AB has some other good times in store for the future. The runners practice hard and give their best day in and day out, striving for perfection at every meet. "Whenever I look out on the fields, I'm always reminded of my good friend Charles Darwin. It's survival of the fittest out there and it's not always pretty. But we never give up and keep wanting more," said freshman Lauren Shaffer.

BY DAN CROWLEY AND
SCOTT LABENSKI
Correspondents

"You were lookin' for that third three, but you forgot that Professor Green folded on Fourth Street and now you're representing that you have it. The DA made his two pair, but he knows they're no good. Judge Kaplan was trying to squeeze out a diamond flush but he came up short and Mr. Eisen is futilely hoping that his queens are going to stand up. So like I said, the Dean's bet is \$20."

-Matt Damon, Rounders

Here at Acton-Boxborough High School, a poker craze, popularized by the World Series of Poker on ESPN, has captivated many students. The version most commonly played, No Limit Texas Hold 'Em, is a fast-paced game where anything can happen at any given time. Every player is dealt two cards face-down that only he or she can see. During the course of a game, five cards are placed in the middle of the table which everyone can see. This is called the community. The object of the game is to make the best five card hand using your down cards and any variation of the community cards. While it sounds like an easy game to learn, it is certainly a hard game to master.

Senior Brendan "the gymnasium" Agrillo explains the hard work that goes into becoming an expert poker player, "Poker is just like weightlifting. To get better, you have to practice constantly. When you think about it, a masterfully played hand is kind of like a sweet max-out on the bench."

Texas Hold 'Em is also a game that requires patience. Junior Eric Byrnes struggles with this fact: "I just get bored easily so it's not my favorite game in the world. I like action. I like to go all-in on the first hand." Going all-in as Byrnes

suggested brings out the "limit" in No Limit Texas Hold 'Em. In this situation when people put in all of their chips for their bet, they are hoping that their hand will prevail in the end, and that they will stay in the game. Sometimes, players try to take out other players with low chip counts by forcing them to go all-in. Other times, a player risks it all by choosing to go all-in to see if they can get lucky. Either way, it is always an exciting turn of events.

Picking apart other people's tendencies can be a valuable asset in this game. There are many different styles of poker players. There is the aggressive player, the conservative player, and the "crazy" player who likes to bet on everything. Knowing who you are playing against helps you judge whether or not to stay in hands and whether to call or raise certain bets. Junior Andrew Long-Middleton likes to categorize himself as a little reckless or crazy. "When I play, I get into the other players' minds so that they have no idea what I'm going to do next. I guess you could say *soy loco*."

No matter what type of style a player has, however, it is always possible to win with timely bets, good hands, and a little luck. As Brendan Agrillo says, "I really like to change my style in every event I play. I like displaying a new demeanor every time out there, savage, conservative, or whatever." These different styles certainly add to the complexity of the game and make poker a game unlike any other. With the obvious popularity of poker these days, it's no coincidence that No Limit Texas Hold 'Em has been launched into the American mainstream.

Junior Mike Brown, avid poker player and wrestling star, summed up the current state of poker best: "Poker is here to stay and those who don't like it can get out."

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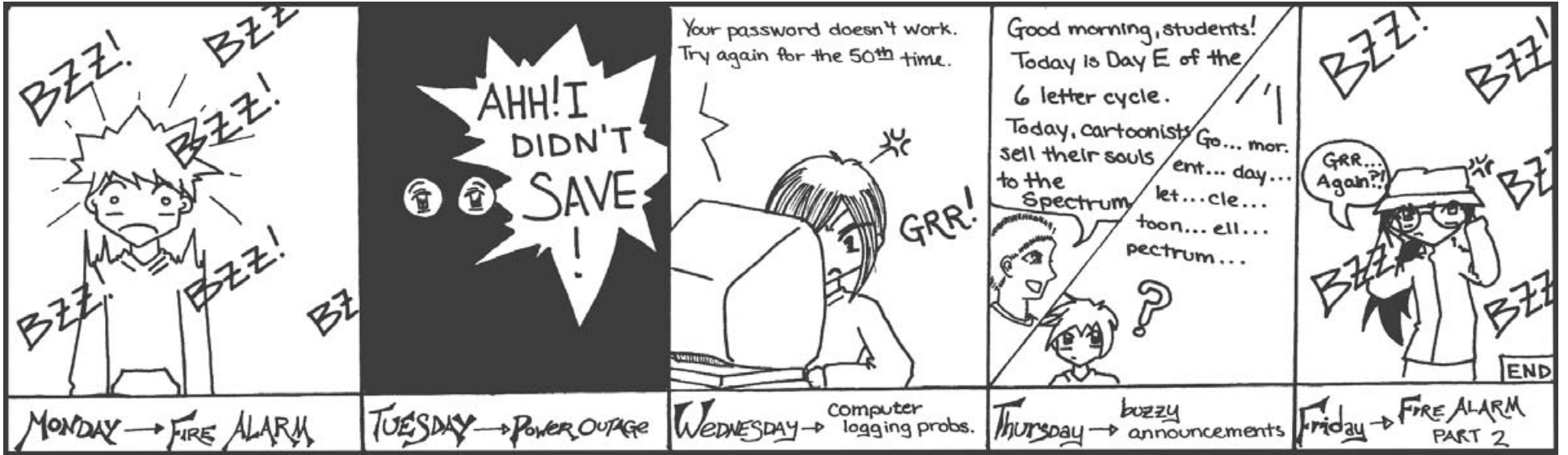
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The Other Side

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NINA YI / Correspondent

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Forced Famine

By IAN KEYWORTH
Spectrum Staff

For those of you who are unaware of the "No Food or Drink" policy, I hope you took advantage of your ignorance while you had the chance. I also suggest that you read no further.

Currently, the cafeteria is the only place that students are permitted to eat indoors, and it just happens to be on the other side of the world. It can take several minutes to travel that far. Every child that delays eating by those few extra minutes runs the risk of fainting from low blood-sugar

as he or she travels the seemingly endless hallways to the holy sanctuary. In the past, students could munch on a snack bar or drink some coffee, enough potential energy for the average student to survive until lunchtime. Since food and drinks are now banned from most of the building, a student suffering from starvation has no choice but to hike all the way to the cafeteria.

How is this affecting academic performance? Perhaps the blank stares in history class are just for show, but if you see an attentive student during third or fourth period, check their "water bottle."

Teachers are just as groggy as students are without their morning coffee. When was the last time you saw a math teacher mix up plus and minus? Or an English teacher forget the title of the book you're reading? Or a Spanish teacher start talking in French? While we have all witnessed such mistakes before, they are definitely much more common this year.

Of course, the worst part for teachers has to be enforcing the new restrictions. We must sympathize with those poor teachers who are forced to order you to put away your food or soda when that food is probably the nicest thing they've seen all morning. Perhaps the nicest thing you could do is offer them a bite, before you throw it out of course.

It is a sad thing when, despite the known fact that teenagers need to eat a lot to fuel our rapidly growing bodies, and minds, we suffer a forced famine. Students can't pay attention as well in class if all they're thinking about is when they can next eat. Sadly, we seem to be regressing to the Stone Age, so hungry that our only purpose in life is finding our next meal.

EMERGENCY STOCKPILE

In an act of desperation, if you should you ever be forced to stave off starvation and get caught eating or drinking, you may be forced to resort to the age-old technique of fibbing. In such extreme situations, a plausible excuse is always handy. We have taken the time to compile a list of helpful excuses should you ever be caught unprepared. (Disclaimer: The Spectrum does not condone nor condemn the use of said excuses and claims no responsibility for the effects of their use. Readers should be warned that these excuses have not been tested for their effectiveness and that individual results may vary.)

- "Of course it's water in this thermos!"
- "My unique religion requires me to eat at least once every fifty-two minutes." (Credited to Mr. Green)
- "Whoever said it's unusual to eat, I mean, drink water from a bowl with a spoon?" (Credited to Ankit Chandra)
- "Yes, this Sprite bottle is filled with water. It's only fizzing because it gets jostled around in my back-pack all day."
- "I'm chewing on the rubber bands for my braces, not a candy bar!"
- "It's plastic food that we're using as props for French class."
- "It wouldn't fit in my backpack, so I'm storing it in my stomach."
- "If I don't have the energy to learn, then you're wasting your energy teaching me!"
- "Mwat foo? I dome fee eny foo!"

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. Take advantage of your first amendment rights. It takes only a minute to tell the whole student body what you think. Here are the Spout Offs for the last 47,520 minutes.

Derek, stop bothering me about Spout Offs!

Remember, this column doesn't work without your input!
Place your Spout Offs in the purple box in the library.

Freshman Year For Dummies

By YIKE JIANG
Spectrum Staff

ATTENTION ALL FRESHMEN:

1. Do not read the handbook (unless you're just flipping through to find a way out of a test or homework).
2. You must obey and praise the list* (Unless you are dissatisfied, in which case profanity is acceptable when out of earshot of the office administration).
*The list: the holy scripture of ABRHS, located in the office (if you have just become very confused...shame, shame, shame. Slap yourself and visit the office to pay homage to the list immediately).
3. If you have suddenly become the random object of any teacher's or upperclassman's spontaneous road rage in the halls, accept the inflictions without complaint.
4. You must travel in packs: traveling alone is dangerous. The exception if a freshman's backpack is obstructing hall traffic, for then you all will be punished with trampling, shoving and old-fashioned stoning. In other words, travel in a straight line on the right side of the hall.
5. Your hall has the highest probability of becoming the location of any senior prank, so keep a gas mask, a change of clothes, and a greased-pig repellent in your locker at all times.
6. You must always stay in study hall (during all study halls, lunches, free periods, passing time, otherwise unscheduled time, afterlife, etc.).
7. You must leave all projects, essays, and studying for the night before and work until 4 am (if you fail to do so, it may result in a passing grade).
8. You must always talk quietly in the library, the hall, and in class (freshmen should not be seen or heard).
9. You will never get big lockers! MUAHAHAHAHA (this expires in two years...)

Biblioparadox

WEN XIAO / Correspondent

