



# The Spectrum



Vol. 23, No. 2

Acton-Boxborough Regional High School

December 2004

## Where Brawn...



## Four Titles in a Row!

By WILL CRONIN  
*Spectrum Staff*

A sigh of relief. A swell of pride. A sense of accomplishment. A touch of sadness. All these emotions were felt as the seconds ran down in the fourth quarter at Bentley College with the AB Colonials winning their fourth consecutive Division IA Super Bowl title—their 50th straight win—and bringing to a close another undefeated football season.

It couldn't get any more storybook than this. The match was a classic, with our Colonials pitted against their archrivals the Chelmsford Lions for the third year in a row. The Colonials had won the last five contests, two of those Super Bowls. Many critics said AB would have a tough time getting up for a game like this, just

as they supposedly would have a hard time playing teams like Marshfield in the beginning of the season. But if the Colonials have shown us anything this season, they have shown us that despite their size, they win, week in and week out. And one would think that with a fourth straight Super Bowl title, 50 straight wins, and the last memory for the team's senior class on the line, the Colonials would be more than ready to go. Playing on a field that has become a second home to them (Bentley College is the site of the Colonials' pre-season camp), the team seemed to have good fortune even before the game began. Throw in a senior class that had yet to lose a game at the varsity level (except for the Abares, who lost their first game their fresh-

See FOOTBALL / page 17

## ...Meets Brains

## AcaDec Wins Again!

By LINDA YAN  
*Spectrum Staff*

Twenty-three students stared, riveted, at the large screen in front of them. The Weymouth Rabbit's ears and white-sheet toga moved gently in the breeze as teams scrambled to answer the question displayed:

What is on the x-axis of the Hertz-sprung-Russell graph?

- temperature (answer)
- luminosity
- mass
- gravitational force
- color

Welcome to Superquiz, the test with the highest stakes in the overall high-stress competition that is Academic Decathlon. Decathlon, traditionally an athletic event in-

volving the mastery of ten sports, was borrowed and transmuted in 1981, into a no-less-grueling mental battle encompassing a venerable ten subjects. Economics, Art, Math, Literature, Social Science, Music, Essay, Speech, Interview, and the horrifically detailed Superquiz test the mettle of six to nine dedicated students every year.

On Saturday, November 22, Acton-Boxborough's "AcaDec" team trickled into the front circle of the school in various states of readiness. Honors' Alex Kazberouk, Kevin Liou, and Rashmi Jasararia; Scholastic's Linda Yan, Swetha Valluri, and Andrew Kuo; and Varsity's Gautam Bhat

See ACADEC / page 3



### Forum 8



Graphing Calculators; Tests; Open-Campus Policy

### Entertainment 12



Jamnesty; "10 Things I Hate About You"; Halo 2 Released

### Features 14



Cheating; Living Strong; Doubling Up; Photo Poll

### INSIDE

Entertainment	12
Features	14
Forum	8
Other Side	20
Politics	4
Special	10
Sports	17
World View	6

# News

## Career Exploration

By WENXI LI  
*Spectrum Staff*

Henry Ford said, "The whole secret of a successful life is to find out what it is one's destiny to do, and do it." It is never too early to start thinking about the future. Here at Acton-Boxborough, students are offered many opportunities to learn about the world of work, to discover their own skills and interests, and to explore careers that they are interested in while still attending high school.

One component of career exploration is job shadowing. The job shadowing program consists of a one-day visit to the workplace of a career the participant is interested in. The program began 30 years ago at AB and has transformed into a larger and more popular organization over the years. The visits range from group visits to individual appointments, depending on the preferences of the adult sponsor. Traditionally, the adults that participate, sharing information about their career paths, have been parents of high school students, local organization leaders, or ABRHS alumni. This program is targeted towards juniors, although interested seniors and sophomores may also participate.

Mrs. Steeves, the student faculty coordinator, along with many others, work together with community businesses to find individuals willing to help out and then match students with the adults from their professions of interest. This year, 245 students were interested in job shadowing. There is also a National Job Shadowing Day held February 1, when local companies such as Monster Inc. and Cisco Systems allow large numbers of students to visit their facilities to learn more about their industry. So far, 70 students have spent a day learning about careers in their areas of interest, ranging from architecture to computer software engineering. "I learned a lot about the demands of the job," says junior Anisa McCree after spending a day with computer engineer Kerry Soroka. "It gave me a good sense of the field."

Listening to a speaker's description of his or her work is also a great introduction to a career field. The career breakfasts, held during first period, invite speakers from a range of professions to explain their jobs and answer any questions that students may have. The first career breakfast of the year, held on November 16, had seven speakers with occupations ranging from graphic designer to personal trainer. The next career

breakfast will take place on December 16 with eight different professionals speaking on interior designing, developmental psychology, and much more.

Career speakers may also come to classes as part of course curriculum. District Attorney Martha Coakley visited Mr. Kilpatrick's "You and the Law" classes this year to discuss her work and spent a class period answering questions for all interested students at the Counseling Center. Other classes, such as Advanced Placement Biology, require students to experience the work field for a day as part of a project for the course. AB also has a number of career-related coursework. This enables students to explore career areas while earning high school credit. Some courses include Child Development, Cisco Academy (computer networking), Radio and TV Broadcasting, Technical Drawing, Computer-Aided Graphic Design, and Accounting.

Another part of career exploration is Senior Seminar. This course, which meets daily for one semester, is taught by Mrs. Starr and is only open to AB seniors. It is a class that concentrates on career research, job research, and self-assessment. Students are taught how to write a résumé, search for a job, present themselves during an interview, and balance a checkbook, among other crucial skills preparing them for their future. Participation in the class also gives seniors the opportunity to be a part of a three-week full-time internship at the end of the year.

Employment opportunities are also available at the high school. Students sometimes feel that finding part-time jobs or work during the summer helps them refine their thinking about the work that they would eventually like to do. AB has an employment website, where there are a number of employment opportunities, such as tutoring, babysitting, and office work. For juniors and seniors who show a serious interest in work, a work-study program exists to allow students to leave school for their job before the regular end of the school day.

Whether it is a one-time visit with a research scientist or taking a class on accounting, students are strongly encouraged and provided with many occasions at AB to pursue their career interests for the future. "We're working hard to put kids in touch with career exploration opportunities," says Mrs. Steeves. "It is amazing to see the number of kids who are interested in these programs.

By DEBLEENA MITRA &  
RASHMI JASRASARIA  
*Spectrum Staff*

After three years of jack hammers interrupting history tests, dark hallways with wires looming overhead, fumes of fresh paint, and detours through bottleneck staircases, the Acton-Boxborough High School building project is in the completion stage. The construction team, TLT, officially ended the project on November 12, 2004, right on schedule with the school building plan.

The building has truly witnessed a makeover. New colors adorn the walls and ceilings while old spaces have been renovated to be more modern, spacious, and bright. Many students have already been enjoying the roomy library, added student centers, brighter gym spaces, renovated commons, and extra classroom space with special science labs and high-tech equipment such as projectors and screens. This last stage of the construction has consisted of completing the North Wing renovation. It is nearly complete, and students began moving in on November 18.

The primary parts of the North Wing renovation were relocating the faculty support center to a more central location, renovating the band and chorus rooms, re-establishing the fitness center at the high school, and adding a communications classroom along with new television and radio studios.

The new music suite is ideal for the large band and chorus classes. Although both are located in their previous spaces, much has changed. Students are pleased with the renovation, although many nostalgically remember the cozy band closet and the stage at the back of the room, where percussion used to practice. In their place, though, the room has several new additions including personal instrument lockers along the back wall, two sound-proof practice rooms, and new storage areas for the music library and percussion equipment. The space is large and bright with improved sound-proofing between rooms. Additional equipment has also been added to the music suite. The department now enjoys a new

## Cranes and Chaos No More

grand piano in the chorus room and stackable chairs that will allow for easier movement between the auditorium and band room. The music office is still located between the two rooms, and Mr. Hickey and Ms. Moss, the band and choral directors, will move in shortly. Mr. Hickey, the head of the performing arts department, is very excited. "The new music suite is wonderful! Though the footprint of the space is the same as it once was, it has been totally reconfigured and now is a very efficient use of the space... a big thank you to our building committee and our communities! Bravo!"

Another main addition to the North Wing is the return of the fitness center to its location by the cafeteria. The room has a new color scheme of blue and purple that many students have found "soothing rather than energizing." Mr. Green, one of the after-school supervisors, says, "It's fantastic! I want to get more people in there. With the new equipment,

Marashio talked to students while leading stretches in gym class, and suggested they learn how to use the machines and take full advantage of the fitness center and their time there.

The final attraction in the North Wing is the new communications center. Comcast moved into their new TV studio. Mr. Drinkwater is moving in equipment for the new radio station as well. The new communications classroom, located near the music suite, will be shared by Mr. Kilpatrick and the performing arts department. These areas are great new resources for students interested in media and communications.

Finally, a new shipment of tables will be arriving shortly. The placement of new cafeteria tables will mark the opening of the last of the commons. New tables will also be put in the Student Centers East and West. Mr. Donovan hopes that this will "help with the large number of students using the library as a place to study together when they need table space." Clearly, the final construction will help with the increasing student population.

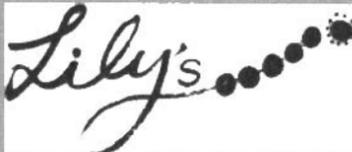
Although problems with heat and cold continue within classrooms, the HVAC units should be fine-tuned by January. These finishing touches will signal the completion of construction at the school. Mr. Donovan and Ms. DeRome have been working endlessly with other members of the administration and the

construction company to create an all-new facility for the growing number of AB students. The principal is very pleased with the progress. "Our construction team did a great job on our project."



The final touches on the outside portion of the construction project are complete.  
LINDA YAN / *Spectrum Staff*

our fitness center provides similar benefits as a professional workout place." Mr. Green encourages students to work out in the conveniently accessible fitness center, which is open every afternoon from 2:30-3:30 pm. Mr.



**Lily's Beads**

77 Great Road  
Acton, MA 02420

978-635-0068  
www.lilysbeads.com

Beads

Tools

Parties, beading

Charms

Supplies

classes &

Books

Gifts

classes for teens

Tue, Wed, Fri, Sat:  
10-6; Thur: 10-7

# News

## Fire Alarms Have Become Part of Life at AB

By DAVID EMER  
*Spectrum Staff*

AB students were evacuated from the building on November 22 during 6th period after a student pulled a false alarm, bringing the total number of evacuations since the start of school to over a half-dozen according to administration estimates.

If it is determined which stu-

sent students outside.

Most of the evacuations likely were caused by construction-related incidents, including:

- a construction worker shutting down a rooftop unit over the kitchen, causing a smoke backup
- an adjustment to the fume hood in a chemistry room
- a faulty smoke alarm
- an electrical work accident.

tentially harmful substances or by being bumped. During construction projects some schools have turned off the automatic response on the fire alarms, but ABRHS chose not to.

While acknowledging the inherent risks in evacuating over 1500 people in less than four minutes, Ms. Atwater-Rhodes said that the false alarms have allowed her safety committee to better plan evacuation routes. She explained that there has been a backup at the exit near the tennis courts because many students have forgotten that they can exit the school from the outside doors near the main entrance to the auditorium. The auditorium exit was inaccessible last year due to the construction project.

Ms. Atwater-Rhodes encourages students to see her if they have any safety concerns.

As for students being nonchalant about evacuating the school, Ms. Atwater-Rhodes said, "Every drill or false alarm needs to be treated seriously. We're pretty impatient about people taking [the fire alarms] casually." She continued, "It's easy to be silly, but none of the students have experienced the school being on fire," in reference to the 1999 five-alarm fire that destroyed the school's auditorium. The lackadaisical exit that many students make from the school suggests that the 1999 fiasco is a distant memory for AB's current population.

Alex Azzolino, a freshman Student Council representative, believes that it is the number of false alarms that has caused student indifference to the alarms. Azzolino said, "I think that people aren't taking the evacuations seriously, and I think that if there is a real fire, we're going to move slowly. It's like the boy who cried wolf."



Students are encouraged to exit through the old main entrance during a fire alarm, which had been inaccessible during the prior phase of the construction project.

NILADRI SINHA / *Spectrum Staff*

dent pulled the false alarm, that person will be "suspended from school for 10 days, fined, and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law," according to the student handbook. Massachusetts General Law 269-13 states that a convicted individual could be forced to pay a \$500 fine and serve up to one year in a house of correction.

The Nov. 22 incident marked the second time this year that the administration believes a student was involved in the alarm sounding.

Students were also evacuated earlier in the year for an annual drill that is required by law. A chemistry experiment gone awry, creating a significant amount of dust, also interrupted classes and

The high number of evacuations has caused concern among some students. Senior Darek Lisowski said, "I think we need to have better control in the construction to make sure that accidents don't happen."

When asked to comment on the frequency of the evacuations, Peter Lowe, president of the senior class, said, "It's absolutely ridiculous."

In an 11/18 *Spectrum* interview, Ms. Atwater-Rhodes, a vice principal and AB's Safety Committee Chairwoman, explained that a construction project increases the likelihood that the fire alarms will be triggered either automatically because of the presence of dust and other po-

ing the competition or displaying already-built structures). The Science Team, which consists of 35 members, is divided into two groups: one competing in the state competition and one in the regional.

Despite the internal division between regional and state groups, teamwork is strong and prevalent since all students must work together to construct the various projects. For the projects, students will sometimes be asked to build bridges and towers made of toothpicks, which are then tested to see how much weight the structures can hold. When asked about her most memorable expe-

rience on the team, senior Katie Ames responded, "Last year, the tower competition where we had to work on our project the day before, everyone met up during his or her free periods freaking out, but the cramming still got us 4th place. It was a typical experience." Though the experience was obviously stressful and nerve-racking, the team's hard work paid off when they received first place last year against competitive schools such as Concord-Carlisle, Wellesley and Weston.

The team will have its next meet on Thursday, December 16 in Weston.

ACADEC / from page 1  
nagar, Blaise Nothern, and Ankit Chandra all boarded the bus at promptly 7:30 a.m., accompanied by coach Andrew Crick. Also present were alternates Lucy Li, Annie Wang, Damian Ancukiewicz, Eli Ben-Joseph, Andrew Reiter, Andrew Dai, and Stephanie Magnuson. Armed with ten-pound binders and Thermoses of coffee, the team was ready for the annual Massachusetts Large-School Competition, held at Franklin High School.

Depending on the number of A's a student receives in academic subjects, he is placed into one of three divisions: Honors, Scholastic or Varsity. However, Varsity (mostly C's) and Scholastic (mostly B's) students are expected to strive just as hard as their Honors counterparts. "Study Superquiz," ordered Coach Crick the day before. "I expect you all to be monstrous in this subject." And monstrous they all strove to be, in Superquiz (Astronomy this year) and all other tests. In the quiet periods between the furious storms of test-taking, teammates threw verbal grenades at each other to stay alert. The atmosphere was tense. As Valluri discussed the life and death of massive stars with Kuo, Yan rolled her eyes at Kazberouk's comparison of pizzicato (plucking of instrumental strings) and pizza, equally Italian but by no means related. In another corner, Liou attempted to teach music fundamentals to frazzled Jasrasaria and Ben-Joseph, but was steadfastly ignored by binder-perusing Bhatnagar and Chandra.

The frantic studying of the team culminated with Superquiz. Adrenaline filled the Franklin School gymnasium as teams sent their individual students, one by one, to wage intellectual war against competitors of the same division and rank. The difficulty of the material was only compounded by the number of questions; a single question wrong, out of the five asked, would cost

an AcaDecker 200 points. Varsity went up first, followed by Scholastic, and finally Honors. After Chandra, Nothern and Bhatnagar each came up with a strong 600 (out of a possible 1000), Yan and Valluri scored a double-1000 whammy. Later, Kuo, Jasrasaria and Liu individually scored 600, with Kazberouk finishing off with an 800.

Needless to say, Acton-Boxborough won the Superquiz competition and carried the Large-School Competition with a margin of 4,730 points. Individual scores were just as strong. Kazberouk won gold in Art and Literature and Overall Honors Score, as well as silver in Social Science and Economics. Liou took gold in Music, silver in Art, and bronze in Social Science, Literature, Mathematics and Overall Honors Score. Jasrasaria received silver in Literature and brass in Economics, Art and Music. Yan secured silver in Art, Social Science, Literature, Music and Overall Scholastic Score and brass in Economics. Valluri earned silver in Economics, bronze in Language, Music and Overall Scholastic Score, and brass in Art. Kuo collected gold in Mathematics and brass in Literature and Overall Scholastic Score. Bhatnagar won gold in Mathematics and silver in Overall Varsity Score, while Nothern received gold in Music, silver in Literature, bronze in Mathematics and brass in Overall Varsity Score. Chandra won a silver in Economics.

The next step for the Acton-Boxborough AcaDec team is the Massachusetts States Competition. For the past ten years, AB has left its closest rival Weymouth in the dust in the race for the state championship. With this year's national meet in the Windy City, team members are already gearing up for a second round of intensive studying. With hard work and a little bit of luck, ABRHS will hopefully make its way to an eleventh First-Place States trophy.

## Science Team Hoping To Build on Last Year's Success

By RUMYA RAGHUNATH & MARY LI  
*Correspondents*

Acton-Boxborough is famous for its skills in math and science, and the success of its Science Team only confirms its reputation. The Science Team, advised by Mr. Dempsey, competes with other schools in the areas of biology, chemistry, physics and engineering. There are no prerequisites to be on the team (except, of course, a strong interest in science). Competitions range from lab practicals and lab write-ups to normal tests and building events (either constructing models dur-



Science Team members work on a project during practice.

ALFRED DEGEMMIS / *Spectrum Staff*

# Local Politics

## AB Voters Do Their Part on November 2

By IVAN ZLATAR  
Correspondent

On November 2, millions of Americans turned up at the polls to elect a new president. Over 100 million citizens cast their ballots; of these, 21 million were between eighteen and thirty years old. Here at ABRHS, several seniors blessed with early birthdays had the opportunity to vote for the first time and add their names to the American voting population.

Of the voting population, 17% of the 117 million who voted fell into the 18-30 age group, exceeding the previous record for the youngest demographic of voters by 3 million voters. Of this group, 54% voted for John Kerry, while 45% voted for George W. Bush. The only one of the four major age demographics in which a majority voted for Kerry, the youth age group also carried the largest majority and percentage difference in any age group. The differences between the other four demographics (30-44, 45-60, and 60 and older) were minimal, each voting over 50% for Bush, and each voting majority and minority falling within one percentage point of the other groups. Thus, the youth demographic was radically different in

two senses- both for whom they voted, and in what proportions. In Massachusetts, a decidedly liberal area and Kerry's home state, the youth demographic carried the largest majority in favor of Kerry, with 72% in his favor, four percent more than any other age group. On both the national and state levels, and even in an overwhelmingly liberal state, the youth age group still found itself as the most liberal of all four age groups.

What caused this election to be so significant for the youth age group? How did this demographic become so much larger and

more liberal in just one election? This record number of young voters coincides with the recent push in the media advocating greater participation in voting. Two of the larger organizations in this election were MTV's "Choose or Lose 2004" promotion and the celebrity-driven "Vote or Die" campaign. Both of these movements for voting were created by youth-oriented groups and pushed for young people to vote. (In fact, "Choose or Lose" clearly stated a



Many AB students, including senior Laura Hanna, chose to do their duty and voted Nov. 2  
DAVID EMER / Spectrum Staff

goal to bring more than 20 million young voters to the polls.) It appears to have worked. If it can be surmised that these advertising crusades were a primary reason for the sudden 3 million person increase in youth voting, then it's no great stretch of logic to infer that these campaigns, which were associated with liberal, politically active celebrities, and tended to take a liberal standpoint in their advertising, caused the decidedly liberal majority in this age group. Moreover, these campaigns hardly targeted the other three age groups. "Vote or Die" and "Choose or Lose" had their

primary advertising on MTV and VH1, two channels targeted specifically to the youth demographic. However, their advertising was hardly seen on other channels, on the radio, or through any other form of advertisement; the polls showed this, as the campaigns made a great difference in the youth demographic but next to nothing in the others.

But what motivated new voters to get out to the polls on a personal level? Were they inspired by the campaigns, did they want their voices to be heard, or did they simply feel that it was their duty? Senior Laura Hanna said, "I voted because I wanted to say that I took advantage of being 18 and actually voted, because so many young people don't." Charles Fisher-Post, another AB senior, voiced a less active, but nonetheless similar opinion. "I didn't want to wait another four years to vote for the first time. It wasn't hard to vote, so why not do it?" Both seniors expressed that they felt that it was more their duty to take advantage of their newly acquired constitutional right than anything else. However, in response to making a difference with

their vote, Laura replied, "[My vote] didn't matter, the popular vote means nothing." In agreement Fisher-Post added, "Who would possibly think that their vote mattered?" The students also agreed that it wasn't fair that a vote in a clearly pro-Kerry state didn't count as much as one in a battleground state, but they didn't seem to be bothered. "I can't do anything about it," said Laura, "but I still feel it's right to vote." It seems, then, that this youth voting movement stemmed from a sense of patriotic duty rather than a desire to make a difference. Nevertheless, as Fisher-Post stated, "I did feel very empowered."

## From Hypnotizing to Blood Driving: Another Busy Year for the Student Council

By PRASAD PATIL  
Spectrum Staff

The AB Student Council has been very active and effective this year with all of its programs. I was able to talk to Representative Matt Fisher-Post, a senior, about what he and the other members have been up to, and what they may have in store for the rest of the year.

Fisher-Post mentioned that

the Student Council is under new leadership this year, with Erin Mulcahy as President, Marty Benson as Vice President, Katie Peabody as Secretary, and Andrew Poulin as Treasurer. Fisher-Post thinks this new administration has been much more effective and progressive than past administrations. He is also excited about the flow of ideas, and encourages anyone who may have suggestions to please get in contact with

any representative.

Regarding recent accomplishments, Fisher-Post talked about The Hypnotist. The Hypnotist, held on November 5, was very well received by students and faculty. Thirty seniors were chosen to be hypnotized, but only 18 students were able to remain hypnotized throughout the whole event. Even Mr. Montalbano and Mr. Clinton were invited to

See COUNCIL / page 5

## The State of the Town

By EVAN BROWN  
Spectrum Staff

In a town such as Acton, residents are often very involved with local government. In response to this political awareness on the part of citizenry, many towns have begun offering town forum gatherings in which residents can voice their opinions on a variety of important issues. Acton's "State of the Town" meeting on Wednesday, December 1, was an excellent example of such an event.

The meeting was held in the junior high auditorium and began at 7 PM. Dore Hunter, Chairman of the Acton Board of Selectmen, presided over the event. Three topics were discussed at the meeting: affordable housing, property taxes and potential overrides, and solid waste disposal after the termination of the NESWC contract. The format was simple and straightforward. After a topic was introduced by Hunter, the floor was open to feedback and input from people in attendance.

The discussion of affordable housing in Acton focused on the requirements and effects of Chapter 40B, a law enacted "to increase the supply and improve the regional distribution of low and moderate income housing," according to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development. After much input from citizens, the discussion of this topic concluded with an Acton resident noting that there exist "several inherent flaws in the way affordable housing is managed" at the current time.

The focus then shifted to property taxes and the possibility of an override to help cover the ever-increasing cost of the local school system as well as the costs associated with the municipal budget. The exact amount of such an override has not yet been set, but figures as high as \$6 mil-

lion have been suggested. The discussion of the override in relation to the school system revealed the knowledge of Acton residents about such matters. Many parents of students or former students spoke about the schools, often praising the excellent education they offer while criticizing some of the conditions in which students must receive that education. One mother of two children at the high school declared that her senior daughter had taken classes that were "so large that students were sitting on stools," a phenomenon which still occurs in some classes today. Another parent noted that "electives are a necessity" in providing a balanced education. While some at the meeting criticized certain aspects of NARA park and the amount of money spent on that project, Acton resident Bill Mullin defended it, calling it "one of Acton's greatest and wisest investments." Mullin also commented on the dangerous implications of failing to pass the override, stating that "the easy answers are gone."

Not all in attendance supported the override, however. Pat Ellis, the Chair of the Acton Council on Aging, issued a statement on behalf of the council reminding the Board of Selectmen and the voters in attendance that the override would have a pronounced effect on the elderly and others on fixed incomes.

The final topic discussed was the disposal of solid waste after the termination of the NESWC contract, which allows Acton to use Waste Management's North Andover facility for waste disposal. The focus of the discussion was the Life After NESWC Committee, which is overseeing this process. Acton's local Transfer Station, environmental regulations and a December 2003 Town-wide survey on "Trash Disposal and Recycling" were all discussed.

## The Spectrum

Founded 1982  
"ut omnes te cognoscant"

David Emer  
Editor-in-Chief

Linda Yan  
Senior Editor

Jonathan Eisenberg  
Chief Layout Editor

Rashmi Jasrasaria  
Debleena Mitra  
News Editors

Charlotte Bigford  
Features Editor

Brian Callahan  
Sports Editor

Evan Brown  
Politics Editor

Mark Kagan  
Forum Editor

Matt Baskin  
Entertainment Editor

Anu Jasal  
World View Editor

Wenxi Li  
Elaine Kim  
Special Section Editors

Derek Matyas  
Other Side Editor

Matt Fisher-Post - Chief Copy Editor  
Andrew Kuo, Joanna Chu, Elaine Kim - Copy Editors  
Oliver Hong, Andrew Kuo - Senior Layout Editors  
Ian Keyworth, Wenxi Li, Albert Chuang, Bobby Liu, Amy Du,  
Matt Kagan, Niladri Sinha - Layout Editors  
Ning Qin, Dan Kohanna - Business Editors

# Local Politics

## Who Stayed Home?

By EVAN BROWN  
*Spectrum Staff*

Now that the smoke has cleared, and yet another closely contested election season winds down, I've found myself considering the results of the countless races and what they mean. As Politics Editor, I'm fascinated by the complex (and oftentimes absurd) system that chooses our leaders. I learned a great deal about politics by following the elections in newspapers, online, on CNN and local news networks. I owe much of what I know about the election to the media. However, the weeks following the election taught me that the media doesn't always tell the whole story.

Pre-election, everyone wanted to find out whose vote mattered. Ohio, Pennsylvania and Florida were receiving their usual swing-state treatment, while Massachusetts sat back and watched the election unfold across the rest of the country. As the pre-election polls showed the gap between Bush and Kerry growing smaller and smaller in the weeks leading up to November, the 18-25 demographic started receiving more attention. Many experts believed that because phone polls didn't reach people who only use cell phones, a population consisting primarily of youth voters, the

polls might be skewed in favor of Bush. In reality this group never represented a significant number of votes. However, this issue made youth voters a big deal in the eyes of the media and, correspondingly, the American public.

Fast forward to mid-November. Bush is victorious, Kerry is back in Boston and Ralph Nader is a sad and disgruntled old man who can't even say he was a factor this time around. The post-November 2 news coverage was a frenzy of analysis and explanation. Every political analyst, from the CNN big names to the internet bloggers, had their own take on the exit polls, the margins of victory and the official outcomes. Just about every explanation possible was offered at some point, but a recurring theme seemed to focus on an often overlooked demographic: youths. Typically left-leaning, youth voters were considered an important piece of the Kerry-Edwards ticket. It is not surprising, then, that youths were among the first to be blamed for Kerry's loss. However, I was alarmed to hear that it wasn't the candidate whom young people voted for that made everyone so sure it was their fault; it was the belief that they hadn't voted at all. Analysts were commenting on the low turnout among youths. Many liberal publications la-

mented the insufficient help they received from the youngest voting demographic. In my psychology class I learned that the youth vote had "stayed home." I thought about the friends I had who could vote. They hadn't stayed home. Who had?

As it turns out, very few of us stayed home. In fact, the youth demographic had its highest turnout percentage-wise since 1972 and an increase of about 4.6 million voters since 2000. In battleground states, 64.4% of eligible voters turned out. As for the people crediting youth voters for electing Bush, the statistics suggest otherwise. Youth voters voted for Kerry by 9 percentage points. It's interesting to note that this is the only age demographic that Kerry won.

The simple truth is we did go out and vote, and in record numbers. In a society that often criticizes the violent movies and video games that are popular among youths or the musical tastes of our generation, this election showed that we might actually be doing something right. No matter whom you're voting for, your right to vote separates you from a significant portion of the world. It doesn't matter if the media won't acknowledge it. We didn't stay home on Election Day, and we won't in future elections either.

## Regional School Committee Hard at Work

By TIM GLICK  
*Correspondent*

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee has been hard at work since the beginning of the school year. In its first four meetings, three of which have included the five student representatives from ABRHS, the committee has already accomplished a great deal.

Seniors Evan Brown and Steve Scanlon, juniors Marty Benson and Kara Lafferty, and sophomore Doug Breuer were elected last spring to serve as student representatives to the committee. Benson served last year as well, and is the only returning representative.

The first meeting that included the entire committee and the student representatives was held on the evening of Thursday, October 7 in the high school library. Earlier that day, the five student representatives met with Principal Steve Donovan and Superintendent Bill Ryan to discuss the general purpose of the committee and the role that the student representatives play. "It was a very informal meeting,"

noted Rep. Evan Brown, "but it was a good introduction to what we were supposed to be doing."

The October 7th meeting featured several important presentations and discussions. After the student representatives were introduced to the committee and a few opening remarks were made, Bill Mullin gave a presentation for the Friends of Leary Field, a group attempting to have Field-Turf installed at Leary Field. Principal Steve Donovan then gave a report on the state of the high school, commenting on the first day of school as well as the climate of the school with regards to the building project. The building project was then discussed, followed by an analysis of the budgets for 2005 and 2006. The committee agreed that the building project was advancing nicely, and Superintendent Ryan noted that the construction was on schedule to be completed by Thanksgiving Recess.

The next meeting was held on October 28th in the junior high library. The main topic was the presentation given by junior

high Principal Craig Hardimon regarding the school's Improvement Plan. The plan discussed school efforts to enhance student safety, improve communication between homes and the school, and the possibility of an Advisory Program at the junior high. The Regional School Committee was not completely satisfied with the plan, but still voted unanimously to accept it as an interim plan and asked the principal and school council to submit an expanded report in January.

The most recent meeting was held on December 2nd at the Boxborough Town Hall. A report was given on the ABRHS Building Project, as well as an update on the status of the budget for 2005.

Although the Committee and the student representatives have already accomplished much, the future holds even more in store. Students and parents are welcome at the meetings, which are typically held on the first Thursday of each month. The five student representative positions are elected each spring, and interested students are encouraged to consider running.

## Calendar

December 2004

- 16 Career Breakfast, 7:23 AM  
Acton School Committee, 7:30 PM
- 24 Winter Recess Begins

January 2005

- 3 Schools Open
- 6 Regional School Committee, 7:30 PM
- 7 Semi-Formal Dance, 7:00 PM
- 11 Volunteer Opportunities Fair
- 12 Volunteer Opportunities Fair
- 13 Math Midyear Exams
- 14 Math Midyear Exams
- 17 School Closed, Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
Community Service Awards Night, 7:30 PM
- 20 Acton School Committee, 7:30 PM
- 28 End of Term 2

February 2005

- 2 National Job Shadowing Day
- 3 Regional School Committee, 7:30 PM
- 9 Science Midyear Exams
- 10 Science Midyear Exams
- 17 Report Cards Distributed
- 21 Winter Recess Begins
- 28 MCAS Re-tests

COUNCIL / from page 4

participate, although neither was able to remain hypnotized. There were students who were asked to pretend to drive in a new car, be a cow, and even dance like J. Lo. When a hypnotized girl who had lost her belly button was asked why she wanted it back, she replied "... Because it's normal!" There was a large turnout, the crowd truly enjoyed the entertainment, and the school made a good amount of money off of this fund raiser. The student council is proud of the success of the hypnotist, and hopes that it will remain a tradition here at AB.

The blood drive was also a success, with many students coming out to donate blood over the course of a day. Fisher-Post is also quite thrilled with the success of this program, astonished at the

number of brave students willing to give, and hopes the program continues, as many seniors who had just turned 17 were eager to give blood. He mentioned that there will be another drive later in the year.

As for plans in the works, Fisher-Post brought up the sug-

gestion of a "quiet room," where students would be able to sleep or study silently during free periods, as an idea that is being discussed. It will be a difficult process to commission a nap room, but Fisher-Post believes enough students would benefit from it that it would be a solid investment. Other ideas include a "Mix-It-Up Day," where students will be told to sit at tables other than those at



The third student union, located behind the counseling center, will become a quiet room that will be monitored partially by the student council.

ALBERT CHUANG / Spectrum Staff

which they normally sit, in an effort to meet new people. The Student Council thinks this is a good way to make the high school environment more comfortable for new students and may result in some new friendships as well.

Lastly, Fisher-Post pointed out that the Semi-Formal dance will be held on January 7 at the Holiday Inn in Boxborough.

It looks like the Student Council has been very busy for the past few months, and will be for the remainder of the year. They have a lot of exciting new ideas this year, so be on the lookout for fun, original activities.



# Is AB a Tossed Salad, Melting Pot, or TV Dinner?

## Tomatoes, Lettuce, Carrots, Peppers, Onions and Croutons: The AB Salad Bowl

By ANU JASSAL  
*Spectrum Staff*

Every year, the AB student body grows more diverse as families of various ethnic backgrounds flock to AB for its high academic standings and achievement. Walking through the crowded hallways, one sees clusters of students talking to each other about assignments and plans for the weekend or for after school. An Indian science geek, a Chinese math fanatic, and a Russian computer-nerd huddle together over a table in the library doing homework while the Brazilian artist sits down with her Caucasian counterpart to talk about the latest art assignment as well as the concert last week. It's very common to see clusters of friends include people of various ethnic and economic backgrounds. But no one ever points out who

is the Asian or the Caucasian or the Latino because they are all talking about the same things and contributing to the conversations taking place. At AB, everyone has an opportunity to be a student and part of the crowd, yet each indi-

vidual is able to remain unique. It is, therefore, somewhat surprising to see the same students

create booths on VOICE Day to educate the rest of the school about their individual cultures. The array of many-colored flags, the savory scents of traditional foods, the sounds of music, the artifacts, and the traditional cloth-

It has become one of the hallmarks of AB that students of different backgrounds can interact freely while maintaining strong connections to their distinct cultural identities. The phrase "tossed salad," indicating an atmosphere in which individuals maintain their differing identities, therefore seems an appropriate description of Acton-Boxborough. VOICE Day gives students the opportunity to share their cultural identities with their classmates; it promotes an environment in which people of different backgrounds can thrive without fearing persecution. What better example of AB students' connection to their cultural identities is there than the annual Diwali dress-up? On this day, Indian students — and a few non-Indians who want to join the celebration — come to school dressed in traditional Indian clothing to share their unique festival with curious and appreciative classmates and teachers. Along

with the elaborate Indian outfits comes the sea of green on St. Patrick's Day, displaying the pride of Irish descendents for their heritage. Other cultures, similarly to these two groups, are proud of their ancestry and often find ways to express their ethnic individuality.

Unfortunately, the tolerance at AB is not present throughout the country post-9/11. Unlike the rest of the country where people of Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern descent were targeted and prejudged, AB is able to maintain respect for them. Just after 9/11, at a time where the pervading sentiment in the US was one of great suspicion towards "outsiders," AB continued to respect and appreciate the many cultures represented in our student body as displayed through the MESA calendar of international holidays. This seemingly inviolable openness and appreciation is a significant achievement for AB.

In short, although throughout the country the tomatoes, lettuce, peppers, etc. are chopped up and put into a melting pot to create a smelly stew, at AB each ingredient is able to maintain its unique taste while contributing to the refreshing flavor of the entire salad.



An immigration model where immigrants blend in with the population, but retain their identity like chicken in a tossed salad.  
NILADRI SINHA / *Spectrum Staff*

## AB is a Tossed Salad

By MARK KAGAN  
*Spectrum Staff*

It was September 1, 2001; I walked into school on my first day of freshman year. I remember the emotions that I experienced that morning: the desire to fit in and the fear of being "different." Throughout my two years at the junior high, I felt a need to hide who I truly was—this made those years miserable. Upon entering my first class at the high school, Mr. Mutschler's Geometry, I noticed a subtle difference. The sophomores in that class didn't all look alike as the freshmen did. Their clothes, their behavior, and the way they talked were all individual. It was on that first day that I realized Acton-Boxborough's acceptance and diversity, which ultimately helped me open up and show my own cultural and ethnic background to the high school community.

Before I came to Acton-Boxborough my ethnicity was always a barrier. The pattern was similar with every person I met. When I first told them that I was Russian, they became mildly interested and asked me to tell them about

the drinking or to teach them to swear in Russian. After a month of knowing me, that interest faded. The question would always come up: "Well, if you live in America, why don't you just become American? Why don't you read American books, listen to American music and just become an American?" Needless to say, the friendships faded after that point.

At the high school, that attitude suddenly changed. It didn't seem to matter if I were American or not. People seemed interested in the fact that I was Russian, but this time it was because they were interested in who I was. When I told them about my background, they in turn shared a bit of their heritage and identity. All around me, people seemed to each have an individual identity; my desire to fit in and hide my ethnicity disappeared. The reason for this acceptance arises from the innate desire among AB students to achieve as much as possible both in and out of the classroom. Xenophobia is not generally accepted at AB because its presence hinders our ability to work together. A close-minded school could not possibly

have accomplished all that we have accomplished in academics with SAT scores 200 points above the national average, in athletics with four straight Super Bowls, and in extra-curricular activities with the top AcaDec and Speech and Debate teams in the state.

On a more personal level, AB's culture has not only made it acceptable for me to show my identity, but it has also encouraged me to show it. Starting sophomore year, I felt proud to be able to show how I am Russian in every possible way. I wore a button-down shirt and a woolen sweater to school, which is what Russian students usually wear unless their school has uniforms. I listened to and sang Russian songs in every corner of the school. I talked to my Russian acquaintances in Russian.

If you know me now, you must be aware of how much I stress my ethnic background. "I am Russian," I say proudly to the people of AB. In return I usually receive a nod or a chuckle. That response is a sign of the acceptance of individual identity at AB; it is what makes us a tossed salad.

By JARED EISENBERG  
*Spectrum Staff*

Many people at Acton-Boxborough love tossing around terms like "melting pot" and "tossed salad" to describe the state of racial integration we have here. Looking around, however, we notice things are a lot more "cliquey" than we'd like to believe.

Look around the cafeteria or the unions and you'll see what I mean. Russians, Asians, and Brazilians all stick with their own, and, with the exception of the Asians, usually speaking their own languages as well. Of course, many minority students completely and seamlessly integrate, but there is still a significant amount of exclusion in certain groups. The existence of this exclusiveness is denied by the politically correct—the administration and student groups like VOICE.

For example, programs like VOICE have visions of the world as a beautiful place in which everyone loves each other, people get along, and cultural segregation is nonexistent. Frankly, this isn't reality. How could it ever be reality in a country where a vast

majority of the population is avidly homo- and/or xenophobic? And honestly, whose opinion, world view, or behavior is actually changed because of something they learned on VOICE day? Life is exactly the same after this supposedly enlightening experience—many gay, black, and Jew jokes are told, and the so-called "TV dinner" situation remains the same. This model is the antithesis of a tossed salad or melting pot, and describes integration as nonexistent—completely segregated, like a TV dinner tray.

The point is, society, or the bureaucrats, or the liberals—any of the former entities fit—are in denial.

We are trying to portray an image of our school that is simply false. Many Asians do play their Magic cards, many Russians do jabber in rapid Russian about the Motherland or molecular biology (I have personal experience with this one), and many Brazilians socialize among themselves in their native tongue as well. Each group effectively excludes outside perforation of their little worlds, except for the occasional whitey



## ABRHS: A Miniature Melting Pot

By SUSAN ZHANG  
*Spectrum Staff*

Four cups of Caucasian, half a cup of "azns," one-third cup of Russian, one-fourth cup of Indian, a tablespoon of English/Irish, a teaspoon of African American, and a dash of Belarus and Polish. Mix well in large bowl and cook on medium fire. Makes one serving of ABRHS.

Yet ABRHS didn't always have so many different "ingredients." AB, like other districts,

at least one friend with an Indian background, and through an inevitable process, that friend's culture has rubbed off on you. Now you have a bit of Indian flavor in you wherever you go!

And what about that Asian influence? The Anime club, for example, has a whole variety of members all affected by the Japanese culture. And card playing? Be it Magic Cards or Chinese B.S., it's not only the Asians who are playing it. During Speech

By MATT KAGAN  
*Spectrum Staff*

Loud chants. A huge mass of uniformly dressed bodies all waving their hands in the air and shouting. As I tear through the crowd, blinded by the surrounding blue and gold shirts of the "superfans," trying to find my seat, I have to remind myself that this is not an angry mob. No, this is the student body of Acton-Boxborough Regional High School, and they have all come to see their football team win the state record. As everyone has probably already heard, over 3000 people showed up to cheer on their beloved sports idols. And this is just one example of how the overall spirit of the school pulls people in to the fads and trends of the community.

The high school community is diverse, no doubt about it. We have people of many races, of many ethnicities, and coming from all different backgrounds. Furthermore, we are all ourselves on a daily basis. We choose what we are interested in, what subjects we take, what we do after school, etc.

But at times, the overall school spirit pulls everyone towards one fad or another. The reason why that happens is because AB cre-

ates an environment where everyone strives to have friends, or at least some sort of companions in life. And when the only thing your friends talk about is the deciding homer that David Ortiz hit last night, it seems like one has no choice but to turn on the television and watch some baseball just to have some-

"And don't be mistaken by thinking the melting pot only includes the students. A lot of teachers walk around in baseball and football clothing and take the time in class to discuss the latest fads."

thing to talk about the next day.

A similar phenomenon happened with the football game. It was obvious that not all of the people who showed up were avid football fans. With the tremendous amount of school spirit, a lot of fans went to the game willingly, to watch the team win. The rest were dragged in by their friends or were persuaded by the amount of people who were going and went "just because everyone else is doing it."

This list mentions only a few of the things that the AB melting pot pulls its members into.

Events like the release of Halo 2 and the recent Super Bowl are also worth mentioning. And don't be mistaken by thinking the melting pot only includes the students. A lot of teachers walk around in baseball and football clothing and take the time in class to discuss the latest fads.

Not everyone, however, gives in to the fads or events into which the melting pot community of AB pulls us. There are plenty of people who refuse to do something just because everyone else is doing it. We call them "non-conformists," and those people are treated well in the AB environment, encouraged to do everything differently from everyone else. What we don't realize is that a lot of times, we unintentionally reject those people. This happens because our ways of relating to them are limited, because they cannot share our excitement over one thing or another. No matter how much we respect the differences between our friends and ourselves, there is still that disappointment when we don't understand why they don't want to be a part of the latest trend, so we do not give them a chance to explain their views.



A model where the population conforms and becomes almost indistinguishable like a stew in a melting pot  
NILADRI SINHA / *Spectrum Staff*

had a large Caucasian majority and little in terms of other cultures. As time passed, however, more and more families of different backgrounds flocked to Acton (and a little even to Boxborough). Nowadays, one has no doubt, just by watching passerbys in the halls, that our AB students are a more diverse crowd. And as one monitor once put it, "It's a lot more interesting now."

That it is. What else could such a large random mess produce? With daily interaction with one another, we can't help but be influenced by our surrounding peers and their cultures. We begin to incorporate their cultures into our own, and ours in theirs - in essence, we are "melting" into each other.

Take, for example, Indian holidays. The one that stands out the most to us is probably Diwali. All of us have surely noticed many of the Indian students dressed in elaborate and gorgeous dresses on this day. Yet if you pay closer attention, you'll notice that it's not just the Indians doing this. (I've seen my own non-Indian friends slipping into Indian garb.) Even if we don't dress up, many of us still acknowledge this holiday, greeting everyone around us and wishing them all a Happy Diwali. We're not all Indian, yet a large number of us AB students treat Diwali as if it were their own holiday. And why is this? Because of our "melting pot" atmosphere. I bet all of you have

and Debate tournaments, I recall frequently seeing a table passionately engaged in Chinese B.S., yet less than half the table on any given day was Chinese. However, thanks to all of us Asians here at AB, many other students have incorporated a 'lil bit of the azn lifestyle into their own, forming yet another strong example of our melting pot ways.

I could go on forever about the influences the different cultures at AB have on us individually. Yet don't think that this "rubbing off" is restricted only to different ethnicities. It applies to religion, age, experiences...almost anything. Our Christian friends urge us to be better people and to cease swearing. We sympathize with those with divorced families and share the pains felt by a depressed friend. Everything and everyone around us makes an impression on us so that we fuse a bit of them into ourselves. We also contribute fragments of our experiences to others. And in the end, all of our knowledge and customs mesh together into one big conglomeration, forming the AB atmosphere as it is today.

Some would say that a melting pot is simply another aspect of conformity, but that's not the way I view it. Individually, we are still our own ingredients, retaining our own unique taste. But once we are all thrown together into a melting pot, our flavors mix with one another, forming ultimately, the most delicious dish--ABRHS. Eat up!

## AB: The Melting Pot

## Acton-Boxborough is a TV Dinner

TV DINNER / from page 6

who likes his Magic cards too.

But for some reason, this reality is denied. It is said that AB is a beautiful example of cultures coming together flawlessly; why can't the rest of the world be

100% politically correct 100% of the time. I'm afraid of feeling awkward in history class because I refer to Booker T. Washington as black, not African American, or feeling tense whenever a sophomore asks about Indians in the West in US I. I want to chal-

lers in an inclusive and caring environment isn't important. Oh, no! What I'm saying is we don't need to go around force-feeding love, sunshine and rainbows to every student in the school.

For example, we all know the rumors and traditions surrounding VOICE Day. People don't love it because it's our chance to celebrate Algerian culture. No, people love it because it's a half-day, and not just any half-day; on this half-day, we don't have a single class! And we mustn't forget the food! Cookies, crackers, candies, and, of course, that delicious Brazilian soda. These are the reasons students celebrate VOICE Day, not because we're overjoyed to celebrate other cultures as the administration loves to believe.

The only "action" that should be taken to fix this tedious situation is either to make VOICE Day optional or alter it in some way that would be more meaningful and effective. But in order for this to happen, people - especially the people in charge - will have to realize AB is a TV dinner, and then come up with ways to fix it.



TV Dinner: An environment where each ethnic group is separated like the compartments in a TV dinner.

like us? What I'm afraid of is the over-emphasis on political correctness in this country. I'm afraid of someone accusing me of being a bigot because I'm not

challenge the holier-than-thou attitude some Actonites possess due to the aura that programs like VOICE spread around the school. I'm not saying that valuing oth-

# Forum

## Should Graphing Calculators Be Allowed on Tests?

### Graphing Calculators Should Be Allowed on Tests

By SUE ZHANG  
*Spectrum Staff*

There Joe is, whizzing confidently through his math test, happily punching number keys, when suddenly, he's confronted with his worst nightmare; in bold, math teacher scribble, are written the words: Show all work to receive full credit. "Dang it," he thinks, staring at the graphing calculator in his hands. On the screen of his TI-83 Plus are the values for X, Y, and Z, but what it doesn't show Joe is how to get there. Well, there go 20 points for that section.

As you all well know, graphing calculators are extremely commonplace at ABRHS. You see them in the cafeteria, hidden under the desk in English class, in the library and in the commons, in the hands of bored students competing against each other at Tetris or lazy students who refuse to do matrix arithmetic by hand. The calculators come in different editions, different colors and can graph  $y = 4\cos x$  in the blink of an eye.

This last characteristic is where the controversy comes in. These graphing calculators can literally dispatch all varieties of math computations, leaving little manual work for the student. Since calculators are also more error-proof than the human brain, those equipped with graphing calculators are able to compute numbers on tests faster and with more accuracy than students solving the same problem the old-fashioned way. Yet, though some may claim calculator use on math tests unfair, I myself can see no argument for foul play. Teachers in our school make sure that, during tests, the playing field is as level as possible. They are not ignorant to the advantages and disadvantages of graphing calculators; as a result, they take the technology into consideration before making a test, implementing certain "checks and balances" to make sure our enthusiastic calculator use doesn't get out of hand.

For example, people claim a disadvantage in testing with graphing calculators is that students spend time memorizing a sequence of buttons rather than learning practical methods of approaching and working through a problem. To counter that obstacle, teachers grade work. It's not just the answer that counts, but how you got there. So for people like Joe, learning only the powers on the calculator won't help him to pass the test with flying colors. Instead, he would be forced to learn the material in order to receive the 20 points he would have missed for that section. Also, teachers of-

ten divide certain tests into calculator and non-calculator sections. By restricting the use of calculators on a portion of the test, teachers are able to isolate problem areas and grade the student's ability to think on his own. This serves as an assurance to the teacher that each student is, indeed, learning.

Another seeming disadvantage of graphing calculator use is the

of students, who fumble slowly with the buttons? No, it wouldn't. Starting in Algebra II, all students are given a few quick lessons on how to use their graphing calculator to suit their basic and immediate needs for math class, so as to set all students on the same starting plane. And even though it is true that more familiarity with the instrument would result in fewer



Many students today rely on graphing calculators to do their math  
JONATHAN EISENBERG / *Spectrum Staff*

cost. Graphing calculators, sold from \$80 and up, are not affordable to all students. So how is it fair to allow their use on tests when some students may not even have access to one? If a calculator is truly unaffordable for a family, speaking with a counselor to arrange financial aid will help settle the issue. There are also many algebra teachers who have their own stash of TI-83's available to loan students, guaranteeing that all will have something to work with come class or test time. As for math courses higher than Algebra II, a graphing calculator becomes a required instrument, as much so as notebooks or pencils, making their purchase a necessary expense. Since they are likely to be used all the way through college, graphing calculators prove to be well worth their money. The school's ability to help a student in financial need, along with the high practical value of the calculators, refute the argument that money is an issue in this debate.

Finally, the "experience" factor comes in as a possible variable to upset the leveled field. I'm sure you all know someone who is a TI expert, someone who can program anything onto his or her calculator to make computation faster or can punch the keys at the speed of lightning. Thus, wouldn't the use of calculators on tests be more advantageous to these "experts" rather than the majority

calculating errors, let's be realistic here for a moment. When was the last time you saw a bored calculator geek practice matrices on his calculator? My point exactly.

Now that it's been established that graphing calculators create no substantial disadvantage for anyone within AB, let's now examine the advantages associated with incorporating technology into our studies. For one, it's time efficient. As long as you've learned the way to accurately approach a problem, it's much easier to just make the calculator do all the busy work after you've set up the problem yourself. Also, extra practice with and knowledge of technology is never a bad thing. Who knows? Your high school TI-83 or -89 experiences may come in very handy in a finance course in college.

So let's admit it - graphing calculators will always be a part of the culture here at AB. Because of our teachers' wise foresight, no student has been proven to be at a disadvantage due to the use of the instruments. And whichever way you look at it, these graphing calculators do complete busy work for students and could prove very useful when pursuing advanced math courses at MIT. With more advantageous traits than disadvantageous, there is no reason why these tools should not be allowed in our classrooms and on our tests. With that said, let the competitive Tetris commence!

### Graphing Calculators Should Not Be Allowed on Tests

By JI XIAO  
*Correspondent*

It's finally test day. As students rush into their math class, ready to tackle their overrated Trig test, they find these words nicely printed on the very top of the test: "NO graphing calculator allowed." Instantly, groaning and complaining can be heard throughout the room. As they look at each other in despair, the students shake their heads helplessly and slowly pick up their pencils to begin working. While I admit that I am among these students, I say that the teachers are right — they have legitimate reasons for not allowing the use of graphing calculators on tests. Graphing calculators do not benefit us; rather, they create an unfair environment for test takers.

With the advancement of technology, many students have started relying on newly invented devices to

do their work--the most common kind being the graphing calculator. Teachers limit the use of graphing calculators on tests so that students can learn independent of technology. When this happens, however, students argue that graphing calculators save time, especially during an advanced math test in which time is severely limited.

An obvious reason why graphing calculators should not be allowed during tests is that they create an unfair advantage against students who can't afford graphing calculators. A standard TI-83 Plus calculator costs \$80 in stores such as Staples and CompUSA; not every student can afford to buy one. Now think about it: it would be unfair for most students to use a graphing calculator if even one has to settle for a scientific.

The biggest reason why students want the use of graphing calculators on tests is because they can store programs. Although graphing calculators come with many useful programs that can solve a complicated quadratic equation in the blink of an eye, students are still not satisfied; many download more sophisticated programs onto their calculators. This creates another unfair situation: those with extra-helpful programs on their calculators can take the same Trigonometry test more quickly and more easily than those without the same programs.

You may wonder why not everyone can get the same programs. While this could theoretically solve the problem, in reality it is virtually impossible to accomplish. How can the math teacher make sure that everyone has the same programs--no more, no less? Lots of online sources can provide programs and many students have graphing calculators; teachers cannot monitor everyone.

There are also disadvantages to becoming too attached to your graphing calculator. In Trigonometry, students deal with lots of graphing and solving. By using a graphing calculator, one problem can be solved in just minutes, but does that help students at all? The point of taking a Trigonometry class is to learn the way of solving the problem, not to learn how a graphing calculator solves it. If you rely on a graphing calculator too much, what happens when you don't have one? One scenario is that you can forget to bring your graphing calculator to the test center when taking the SAT subject test, Math IIC. If you are dependent upon your graphing calculator but you forget to bring it to your SAT II, you are likely to fail the test. Clearly, it is important to understand how to solve a problem; teachers can make sure of that by not allowing us to use graphing calculators on tests so that we are forced to learn how to solve the problems on our own.

Some students out there are very skilled at using high technology devices; it's a piece of cake for them to use a graphing calculator. But there are also students out there who are not as familiar with the tools of technology. For them, it is more difficult to learn how to use graphing calculators. During a test, it may take them five minutes just to remember how to graph a quadratic function while other students would finish three problems using the same amount of time. This is inevitable because it can be difficult to master the complicated instrument that is the graphing calculator. A test allowing graphing calculators evaluates not your understanding of a specific concept but rather your capability to use a technological device.

While new technology on the market benefits society, it also has drawbacks. More and more students are becoming dependent on highly advanced devices; they can no longer do the work themselves. Because there is so much unfairness relating to using graphing calculators on tests, it would be best if we are not allowed to use them at all.

# Forum

## Tests Overrated and Overused

By SARAH ZHANG  
*Correspondent*

You sit down to a history test and you're stumped by an impossibly hard question — but you know that the answer is on page 253, paragraph 4, line 3 of your history textbook. Unfortunately for you, you have not the faintest idea what is on page 253, paragraph 4, line 3, even though you can recite lines 2 and 4 by memory. Now every time you finish a problem, you go back to this impossibly hard question to ponder the answer. With ten minutes left, you finally realize that the answer is Pachacuti, but now you need to write the essay that's worth half of your grade. As you're furiously scribbling your second paragraph, the bell rings and you hand in your test unfinished; this is an experience altogether too familiar for many of us.

The purpose of tests is, of course, to test us — but what, exactly, are they testing?

As a high school student (i.e. professional test taker), I find that acing a test is about 70% knowing the material and 30% knowing how to take a test. While you may be able to rattle off your geometry theorems backwards and forwards during passing time, it is an entirely different situation during a test. Have you ever

panicked at the sight of an impossibly complicated proof? Ah, the fatal moment — you second-guess, blank out and erase correct answers. Tests do not test your knowledge; they test how well you can spit out facts in stressful, time-crunching situations.

Not only are tests ineffective gauges of information learned, they are also terrible at allowing you to retain any of the wonderful information you are tested on. Tests prompt lunchtime cram sessions that can be great for a test next period but ineffectual come June and final exams. Anyone remember who Pachacuti is?

The real problem with testing is that it encourages memorization rather than understanding. Our minds have been trained to cram facts and spit them back out onto a test paper in an almost mechanical manner. I rarely feel the need to actually think about and synthesize information during a test; the most thinking I do is while inventing answers to questions that I don't have a clue about. Other than that, taking tests is essentially a mental copy-and-paste from my brain to the test paper. The flaw of tests lies in their exact function; they are supposed to test what you know, which translates to what you have memorized. Dates, verb conjuga-

tions, formulas — they are easily memorized or stored in a graphing calculator (if you're sleazy enough) and rewritten onto a test... as long as you make sure to cram.

Tests may be the most time-efficient evaluation and the easiest to grade, but teachers ought to place less emphasis on test scores and find other ways to evaluate students instead. In most classes, the emphasis on tests is so strong that one poor test grade can doom a student for the entire term. We spend much time practicing test-taking skills, but do they have important real-life applications? Class presentations and essays, which practice useful skills like public speaking and writing, are a fitting alternative. Since tests aren't going to magically disappear, however, we should instead change the structure of tests. Rather than consisting only of question-and-answer type problems, tests ought to be more thought stimulating; they should include application and analysis questions, original math problems and essay questions. After all, isn't there much greater satisfaction in knowing that you, not your textbook, are correct?

By the way, Pachacuti was a legendary Incan emperor, and yes, upperclassmen, we did indeed learn this in history class.

## Kagan's Komments: AB Campus Policy Too Strict

By MARK KAGAN  
*Spectrum Staff*

One day during sophomore year, my friend and I needed to go home and get a project. As we walked off the campus, a monitor spotted us and called us back inside. "You guys sophomores? Come back in two years; you know the rules," he said as we walked back in without our project and with nothing to do for the rest of the period.

Throughout my high school career, I kept wondering about this strange regulation in our school. I remember how four years prior—in Russia, in a city, and in elementary school—I was allowed to go anywhere during my breaks even though it was much more dangerous. We were younger, yet there were no rules limiting my freedom. "It must be a cultural phenomenon," I thought, and accepted the rule the way it was.

However, the rule has nothing to do with culture. In Brookline, only 20 miles from Acton, an "open campus" policy is instituted; as long as a student maintains at least a 2.0 GPA, he or she may freely leave campus starting with second term freshman year. Brookline is less prosperous, more urban, and thus less safe than Acton. Furthermore, the green line that goes to Boston runs right by the Brookline high

school; students can go to the city, even though it's one of the most dangerous places in the region.

The question then arises, Why does Acton-Boxborough run such a strict policy when schools in more urban regions do not? A



logical reason would be the suburban character of Acton-Boxborough; because there is less to do in Acton and Boxborough, students here are more likely to drink or do drugs in their free time. Furthermore, since everything is so far apart, students are much more likely to drive here than are students in areas with public transportation, and this puts their lives at much higher risk.

Why, then, are seniors allowed to leave while freshman, sophomores, and some juniors are not? Seniors are much more likely than underclassmen to drive and put themselves under those risks. Every other day I see seniors in the student union whose behavior all but indicates the presence of certain substances in their bloodstreams. On the other hand, sophomores are not allowed to leave school to walk home and get their homework or

project. I understand that seniors deserve more freedom because they tend to be more mature, but I disagree that sophomores should be denied that same freedom—especially since this freedom is less dangerous for sophomores, who would not be able to drive.

The open campus policy can have its benefits. It can especially reduce the level of stress at the school. It is difficult for a student to relax before a test in the same building where he will take that test in a half an hour. The feeling of being trapped inside school also does not help. The school is well suited for learning and tests, for which this kind of atmosphere is okay; it is not the best place, however, for students to do homework, hang out, or especially sleep. I know of some seniors who will go nap at their houses if they have two free periods. That liberty is not given to juniors, who are often much more stressed and need that half-hour nap to be able to pay attention in chemistry the next period.

When the principal of Brookline High School was asked about the policy at his school, his answer was that with democracy, one has to accept a degree of chaos. I cannot help but agree. If the administration wants to be fair, reasonable, just, and reduce stress level, it ought to institute a similar policy.

## Silent Victories at AB

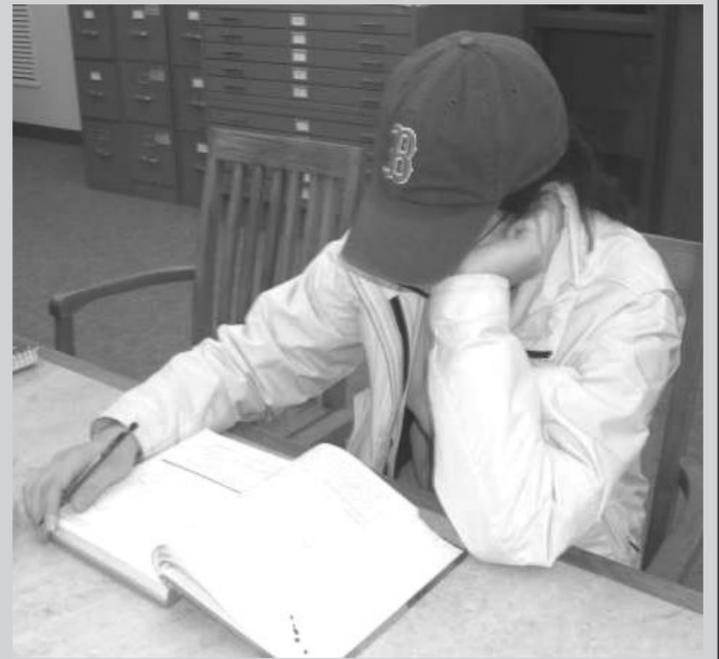
By KELLY KRISTL  
*Correspondent*

I took my siblings to Oktoberfest this year. Having already scoped out the area for delicious treats, they drew me directly to the sports teams' fundraisers, which were selling candy from neatly organized boxes. Despite having promised to fill their pockets with sugar, I told them, flatly, no. I would buy candy, I explained, if the proceeds might go toward buying new books to replace the Academic Support Center's tattered copies, or perhaps to fund a bonus for our overworked janitorial staff. Sports seemed less important when compared to these needs.

Sports are valued highly here at AB. We love our football stars, our field hockey talents,

spect than the junior in CP-level classes who finally earns his or her first B for a term grade after months of academic struggle.

I am certain that many victories will go unnoticed this year. Someone will pass all of his or her classes for the first time. A freshman with a learning disability will transition successfully to high school. A sophomore with abusive parents will make the difficult and frightening first step of calling a hotline. A senior will quit drinking. A junior will free him- or herself from a boyfriend or girlfriend who seemed nice but turned out to be mean and controlling. An upperclassman will learn English, enabling him or her to participate in school activities more fully. Society will benefit most when the teenager with anger



A student working hard to succeed  
MARY LI / Correspondent

and our baseball wizards. Their triumphs are a matter of school-wide importance, their failures also mourned in common. They have plenty of school spirit because the school has given them so much. They certainly deserve to be recognized for their hard work, commitment, teamwork, and maybe even for their skill. But their celebrated victories and high status always make me uncomfortable because they make me wonder what other successes are being overlooked in the process.

Talent and outstanding achievement in general has high value at Acton-Boxborough. Honor roll students, sports stars, and people with the "perfect" appearance are our role models and our most honored friends. I challenge the notion that only certain kinds of successes are important. The triumph of hard work to overcome a challenge is one that our society lauds itself for valuing most, but the honor roll students receive far more re-

management problems learns to cope with rejections. These are victories for the individual that benefit society as well.

There are also other triumphs that most of us will make at some point, that directly help our communities. This year, a freshman will take a stand against racism and make the active choice not to be a bystander. A junior will spontaneously decide to donate half of his or her paycheck to charity. A senior will vote. Someone will befriend a teenager with a social disability. Someone will take a volunteer job. Someone will help a friend.

I do not believe that this editorial will magically transform AB into a place where hard work is valued more than success every time, or where a victory for society is valued over a flashy performance. It will, however, give recognition where recognition is long overdue: to some of the people whom we live and work with, who are the least appreciated but might work the hardest.

# Days of Our Lives

## A Day in the Life of a Frosh-person: Starting the Grind

By ALEX AZZOLINO  
Correspondent

My typical day as a freshman begins like everyone else's: way too early. I arrive at school tired, and remain half asleep in English class. Unlike the other grades, though, freshmen are still getting accustomed to what high school classes are really like: the tests, the teachers, the expectations, and all the accompanying minutiae. Unfortunately, freshmen still have to be in study hall. Absolutely no talking is allowed, and students must always have something in front of them to do. I usually just sit and read, or try, inconspicuously, to talk with my friends. The concept of a "study hall," which tends to be annoying rather than helpful, is completely new to us. Like other ninth graders, I have great anticipation for the upcoming third-term "frees."

Biology is next, and is one of my classes with sophomores as

well as freshmen. Even though the majority of the class is ninth



*The 250% Rule*  
NINA YI / Correspondent

graders, it gives me an opportunity to interact with other grades.

Gym follows, although we don't actually get exercise anymore.

Freshmen sit through Health, which is okay, but seems to be the same information from previous years of health classes. This is the third time we have gone through this material—only this time we are actually getting certified for our knowledge.

In World History, I'm always hungry. The comforting thought of having lunch next period is enough to help me make it through that period. I feel really sorry for those poor kids with seventh

lunch.

Lunch! What a change from

junior high! Last year, we had to eat in less than 20 minutes; by the time we arrived at the cafeteria and got our food, it was more like 10 minutes. Now, being in high school, I can eat at a leisurely pace and actually talk without choking on food. Of course, 47 minutes is too long for just eating, so the commons and the library become the "places to go" after we finish.

Afterwards, I have eighth period French. It's a pretty easy course for me, and the supplementary vocabulary packets that my teacher hands out really help to make it more challenging and interesting.

My day does not end at the end of the school day, though. I have a piano lesson on Friday afternoon for an hour and a half, and Student Council meetings on Tuesday nights. Last season, I was on the freshman girls volleyball team. It was extremely fun and I met many new friends. We had

a great season, ending with a 6-7 record.

As a freshman in the huge AB high school, I thought I would feel small and insignificant. The school did seem foreboding and intimidating the first day and I have been lost countless times. However, after the first week of school, I always knew exactly where I was going.

Many things changed for me as a freshman. The best thing about the high school is the fact that I am allowed to use my cell phone in the halls and commons if I don't have class. Although many people laugh at my elation over this, it is a new privilege I feel would have been nice to have in the junior high as well.

It's already term two. In two more terms, the year will be over and we will no longer be freshmen. Soon, the class of 2008 will be sophomores looking down on the new freshman to come.

## A Day In the Life of a Junior: The Beginning of the End

By IAN KEYWORTH  
Spectrum Staff

My name is Ian Keyworth. I am a junior here at AB, and this is a day in my life.

I wake up at about 6:00, although I actually get up about fifteen minutes later. Once at school, I may occasionally stop by Mr. Green's room to say hello to him, steal a couple of his tissues, and say "hi" to any friends who come to his Euro class early.

I have English first period, which can be tiring due to second-hand fatigue, since most of the class isn't awake yet. Next I have French IV, which is fun because the class can be one big conversation — as long as we're speaking French! Madame Arnoldy has a rule: for any English spoken in class, forgetting homework, or other misbehavior, students receive a mark known as a "Zût!" that counts against them. With three "zûts," a student receives a detention. Luckily, I have yet to earn a detention!

Third period, I have US History II. This class can often generate interesting conversations, although note-taking isn't fun.

I have fourth period lunch. Many hate having lunch that early, but I don't mind since it means that I eat every four hours (breakfast, lunch, snack, dinner). I sit with a bunch of my friends, many of whom will graduate at the end

of this school year. For the rest of the period, we either attempt to get work done in the library or study hard for the AP Chemistry test we have next period.

AP Chemistry is both my hardest and most fun class. I actually learn things during labs and the tests make sense. However, it's a real challenge to get above a C+ on them. The next period, I either have Photography or a free period. Photography is great, even though we need to buy our own film and paper. Besides, it's a nice break from thinking hard about academics.

This semester, I'm taking Political Science during seventh period. This is sadly my only link to current events. I get the newspaper every day, but I'm generally too busy with homework, too busy goofing off, or too tired to read it.

I have Honors Trig eighth period, which is a fairly relaxed class, and a good way to end the school day. It's especially useful because — being a person of substance rather than speed — it allows me an extra ten minutes or so on Dion's long tests.

I rarely take the bus home since I almost always have something going on after school. Mondays, I'm at the Junior High helping to coach the Speech team there. It's a lot of fun, and I get a sneak peek into the future of my beloved Speech and Debate Team at our school. Tuesdays are often

when Idiosyncrasy meets (when it meets, and if I have time to go). On Wednesdays, I volunteer at the Science Discovery Museum until about 6:30, and it's a lot of fun playing with the science-related toys all around the museum with little kids. The Recycling Group meets on Thursdays, and even though it's tedious to separate bottles and paper, it's an excuse for me to talk with friends I don't normally see.

Fridays are High School Speech and Debate practices, at which I try to help and to improve as much as possible for upcoming tournaments.

When I get home I generally grab a snack and check email first, then relax for a little while before starting homework. I try my best to sneak onto AOL Instant Messenger for at least 30 minutes or so — even while doing homework — just to say hello to friends and unwind a bit from a trying day. After that, it's bedtime, and I get to start all over the next day.

As a junior, I feel like expectations are slightly higher than last year. Even though many of my senior friends have just been

through hell applying for college, I feel like college is near enough to worry about, but too far away to think about.

However, I feel like I should have started thinking about colleges, so I wouldn't be so overwhelmed with the various career speakers and college representatives. Oh well. However, this nonchalance is challenged by the annoyances that are SATs. To im-



*Stimulating Coffee Republics*  
NINA YI / Correspondent

prove my chances of doing well, I plan on taking both the old and the new tests.

It is, however, fun to be a junior. It's great to finally be an upperclassman and have more authority over the lemming-like freshmen. Although complaints have risen from my friends that this class of freshmen is the worst batch ever, I think it's just that

a new understanding and grasp of power comes along with becoming an upperclassman. Silly froshes!

I'm glad to be a part of the class where there are no distinctive cliques and people can interact and be friends with whomever they choose. The students of my grade interact with each other in such a way that most kids know more than at least a third of the class more than just by name. AP and CP kids mingle together, and a jock could be best friends with someone on the math and science teams. It's an enjoyable atmosphere, and I'm really glad to have made some friends even just this year, due to the openness of the junior class.

More than anything, though, I feel that junior year signifies the beginning of the end of high school. Although I'm only slightly past half way through my high school career, I feel like it will end in only a year from now, when I apply to college. In addition, I often feel like it will end in June, because I will lose over half my friends to everything from Ivy League to local state schools. I love my friends more than anything, and will hate to see them go. For now, all I have to worry about is homework, finding time to talk to friends, and snowplowing the masses of brainless freshmen into the walls of the East Wing in order to get to English on time.

# Days of Our Lives

## A Day in the Life of a Sophomore: No Piece of Cake

By OLGA GUZOVSKY  
Correspondent

My blaring alarm clock, especially on Monday mornings, serves as more than just an annoying demand to get out of bed, but also as a reminder of how ridiculously early school starts. As I throw my arm across the bed and let it fall heavily on the "snooze" button, I wonder how many more mornings like this I will have to go through, before I am finally accustomed to it.

Trying to focus on more pleasing thoughts, such as the call that I received at midnight, the night before, from a friend in California who had once again forgotten about the three-hour time difference, I crawl out of bed and prepare to go to school. School. A word that is inevitably associated with homework, tests, and essays. Most of all, school is associated with stress.

Being a sophomore at AB does not exempt me from the general

statement above. There is an endless cycle of homework and tests. Students must read countless pages in textbooks, solve numerous problems, and basically give up their whole life to learning. While this may suit someone who is interested in knowing the atomic radius of Selenium and what the Aztecs ate for breakfast, the average teenager's active character prohibits him or her from enjoying this learning environment.

All sophomores have a least favorite subject which hangs over them at all times and prevents them from having fun. My personal day at school begins with a wonderful class of Chemistry, which serves its purpose in keeping me sufficiently confused for the remainder of the day. As I drift through my schedule, going from English to Spanish to Math, I simply cannot seem to get the thought of Chemistry out of my head. The fact that I have to read yet another 20-page section from the textbook haunts me through-

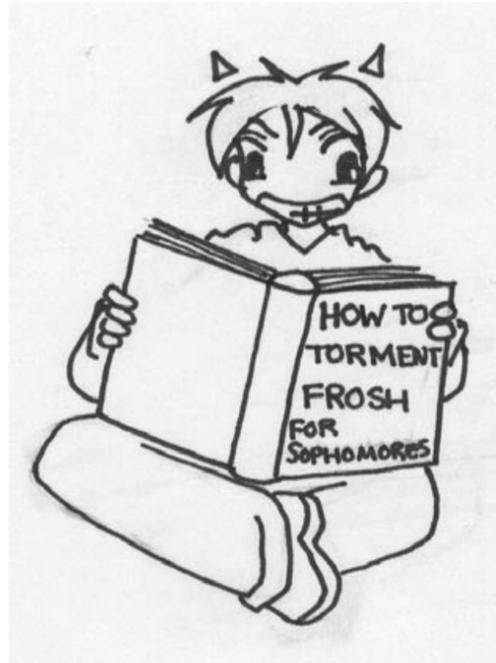
out the day.

Additionally, the stomach pains that so many students, including me, suffer from, become increasingly strong as the hours go by. While the simplest solution would be to reach into my backpack and pull out a granola bar, the ugly gray sign by the door of each classroom prevents me from satisfying this desire.

The workload that a sophomore struggles under is unbelievable. Even if I do happen to finish my homework before nine o'clock,

there's always my piece for Speech and Debate to practice,

Idiosyncrasy to research and write articles for, piano pieces to learn by the next lesson, and of



Sophomore With Annual Bestseller  
NINA YI / Correspondent

stress, and so much more. Additionally, there is always the comforting thought of MCAS, which awaits us in March and May and serves as yet another factor adding stress to our lives.

There are many things that spice up our school year and prepare us for the life to come. The weekly fire drill that sends us shivering into the snow is surely meant to build up our endurance and survival in the wilderness that is life. The sprints to the bus that we have to make every morning because school starts so early surely serve some purpose. The countless books that the teachers insist we carry to and from school every day, seem to be designed not only to bore us to death while reading them, but also to break our backs while carrying them.

Hopefully, my junior and senior years will bring relief from these grievances, although after reading the articles next to mine, I'm not so sure.

## A Day in the Life of a Senior: ### Days Left

By SUSAN MA  
Spectrum Staff

BEEP BEEP BEEP!

Oh no, make it stop . . .

BEEP BEEP BEEP!

With a deep breath, I make a huge effort and lunge for the alarm clock. Hitting the "snooze" button, I am tempted to stay in bed for just a little bit longer.

Sleep . . . shower . . . sleep . . . shower . . . SHOWER!! It seems the desire to be clean has won. I go shower.

Then, it's downstairs for a BIG cup of coffee. Yes, coffee is a staple in the AB student's diet. You simply do not function after only a couple hours of sleep a night without it. While I drink my coffee, I usually get that sinking feeling in my stomach; you know, the kind that you get when you know there's something that you should have done but didn't.

Fortunately, I have the entire bus ride to try to remember which homework assignment I forgot to do (rarely does any senior remember what he missed until two minutes before the period when

he has to hand it in). Too soon, it's off the bus into our wonderful, newly renovated high school. As a senior, you get to share the lovely green wing with such famous figures as Mr. Noeth, Mr. Marshall, and Mr. Dempsey; not a day passes without a freshman being terrorized by at least one of these three.



Free At Last, Free At Last  
NINA YI / Correspondent

Although I am personally against torturing freshmen, my feelings are not the norm. I have not had a single day without hear-

ing 10 or 20 freshmen jokes being thrown around by both teachers and upperclassmen (a piece of trivia: literally all of my teachers make fun of freshmen). Needless to say, my classes are made much more interesting with all the frosh commentary. For some reason, it always seems so much funnier when the jokes come from teachers; it may be because no matter how liberal the teachers are, we still have that old fashioned notion that they aren't supposed to do that.

The courses that I take are wonderful. You have a great deal of liberty within some advanced placement courses, such as no homework checks, since they are supposed to mirror college courses. College courses are more or less sink or swim. So, if you fail, it's your fault--drop down a level.

For most seniors, the foremost issues on their minds are the looming college deadlines. This means, in essence, no slacking off in class, good attitudes at all times, and long hours on the computer trying to depict yourself as a noble, intelligent, creative, and all-around talented individual. Of course, the reality doesn't exactly match the theory. I, for one, have fallen asleep in class in spectacularly obvious ways. Nonetheless, for many ambitious seniors, relaxation--better known as the se-

nior slide--is not on the horizon.

Other than college, every student of every grade has a collection of smaller worries to deal with throughout the day. Seniors that are going through a lot of stress will sometimes have emotional breakdowns, although we try not to show them. Sleep deprivation causes short tempers and many petty, useless fights. But fortunately, most seniors have found their own style and niche in the school community in order to cope. Of course, it helps that we're at the top of the food chain.

I am one of those students who is compulsively active and prone to over-scheduling. I usually have my week packed full of extracurricular activities, volunteering, paid tutoring, and babysitting for my siblings. I am active in six or seven clubs, which constantly keep me busy after school. I run my own volunteering program tutoring children of low-income families, and recently got a paid job tutoring a freshman in Biology. Needless to say, with such a list, keeping up with schoolwork is tough.

And it's not just me; all students have this problem. Whether it's participating in clubs, playing sports, or horseback riding, most students have something consuming their lives in addition to their schoolwork. Not least are

the dreaded college essays, which have been slowly taking their toll. The victims can already be seen in almost every class and the symptoms are all the same: glassy eyes, fingers tense as if preparing to type, and a blank expression that simply cannot escape the teacher's notice.

At the end of the day, I have to say that with all the different stresses in our lives, the biggest will still be college admissions. After all, it is the major crossroad in a teen's life. You will be paying anywhere from \$10,000-\$40,000 a year to leave your friends and the life that you've always known. I want a guarantee to end up at a college where I can enjoy my life, leaving behind the rat race of high school.

While we all wait for the acceptance letter, we seniors will continue staying up late (doing homework and chatting online), dozing off in class, and overloading our schedules. We will also continue to complain about the competitiveness of the school even while contributing to it by trying to be active in the school and community and maintaining good grades. After all, at this point, what choice do we have? Luckily for the seniors, we can always look forward to college parties, a life without parents, and of course, the infamous senior slide.

# Entertainment

## Politics, Coffee, and Music: Jamnesty and Coffeehouse

By HEATHER MCCORMICK  
*Spectrum Staff*

It's funny how the mind-numbing predictability of suburbia breeds musical talent. In a town where the most sophisticated form of genuine entertainment is a dilapidated Bowladrome, it's not surprising that Acton lays claim to so many incredible bands. After being here a few years, I've grown to love the mainstays—the bands we all count on to put on a good show and save us from the unconquerable boredom of a cultureless town. This fall's Jamnesty, however, shone most when it exposed the new and unknown—a breath of fresh air, so to speak.

One such band was the Crosstown Paper Boys, who opened up the afternoon. Their energetic and engaging brand of ska (a twist on reggae that toes the line between punk rock and swing-music) was just the opener Jamnesty needed. Their cover of the Mighty Mighty Bosstone's "The Impression that I Get" was so crowd-pleasing that not even the informative torture victim alert announcements could put a damper on the audience. (Sorry guys, but it's true. Nothing kills a mood at a school concert faster than tales of forced abortions and political prisoners.) Another newcomer, at least to our school's concert scene, was STFU. Are they kidding with their heavy metal growling and flying V guitars? One would hope, but their act was relatively straightforward and unapologetic. The band's ability to convincingly scream Metallica songs without provoking the entire room to hysterical laughter was impressive enough in itself; but the fact that there were about fifty kids with their fists hoisted proudly in the air by the end was a truly remarkable feat.

2East was another band that

many kids may not have known before, but judging by the plethora of green band t-shirts that have been floating around school, they clearly struck a chord with the audience. (Gratuitous pun, but c'mon, it was so easy.) They were good, pure and simple, because they obviously had a ton of musical experience under their collective belts.

But still, the well known bands certainly held their own. Sometimes, in the case of WCS, consistency can be awesome-



Metallica cover band STFU rallies the crowd at Jamnesty  
MATT BASKIN / *Spectrum Staff*

ly enjoyable. They didn't fool around, playing their usual blend of Thursday-esque hardcore and screamo Thrice covers, but they were completely in their element. Their vocals, especially, have improved so much over the time they've been a band. And Marmalading, with their impossibly awkward and ridiculously entertaining jazz fusion music performed flawlessly, added to the show with a team of special guests. Other bands, such as the Jooberry Muffin Man, Not the Brodericks, Ennisis, and Tuesday Memo brought even more musical diversity to the lineup.

So I say, down with predict-

able. Jamnesty has shown our school that creativity can coexist with a town whose personality resembles a mayonnaise sandwich. Its success, with nearly \$200 worth of profit, proves that AB is ready and waiting for something new.

At the Common Ground sponsored Coffeehouse, the mood was a bit lighter, but the motivation was just the same—not just to make a few bucks for Common Ground, but to provide good bands, good food, and the electrically-charged aura that only coffee can supply. The lights were certainly dimmer and the noisy clamor that usually accompanies school concerts was noticeably absent, but the trade-off was a good one. The show started off with Downbeat, AB's resident a cappella group, with an awesome rendition of Eagle Eye Cherry's "Save Tonight." Clearly in Downbeat's case, a group didn't need to be plugged in in order to make a substantial noise. On the other hand,

rock bands WCS, The Crosstown Paper Boys, and Kid Korea all pulled off strong, fast-paced performances. Other bands, such as Not The Brodericks, simply made it up as they went along—and that, perhaps, was the best performance of the afternoon. Junior Maryn Jones said it best: "A fully enriching and educational experience, both in the areas of music, as well as skanking. Very cool..." No matter which band had taken the stage, what style of music was playing, or what everyone was munching, Coffeehouse 2004 was a major success.

## The Cult of Neil

he has legions of scarily obsessed and intensely loyal fans. So why has nobody at AB heard of him?

He is most famous for his *Sandman* graphic novel series for DC/Vertigo, an immense story that begins with the character Morpheus, or Dream, and centers around him and his siblings. These characters, called the Endless, collectively comprise what *The Guardian* calls "a pantheon created from human visions of universal forces"; namely, Despair, Death, Destiny, Destruction, Desire, and Delirium. *Sandman* became the first comic ever to win a literary award when it won the 1991 World Fantasy Award.

But other works stand out, too. Well before *Harry Potter* hit the presses, Neil wrote *The Books of Magic*: its protagonist, Tim

Hunter, is "a small dark-haired boy with big round spectacles—a 12-year-old English boy—who has the potential to be the most powerful wizard in the world and has a little barn owl." Hm.

Neil also wrote the novel *Neverwhere* and a BBC mini-series of the same name, about a bizarre world called London Below where rats speak and the places have names that correlate strangely with real places like Night's Bridge for Knightsbridge, Blackfriars, and Earls Court.

*Coraline*, which was published under the guise of a children's book, is the kind of story that amuses and entertains little kids but frightens adults to the point of nightmares. I, for one, will never again be able to look

See NEIL / page 13

## 10 Things: So Beyond!

By ESTHER PARK  
*Spectrum Staff*

*10 Things I Hate About You*, starring Julia Stiles and Heath Ledger, is no doubt a favorite flick among many of the students at ABRHS. What better than to take it to the stage for this year's fall play?

*10 Things I Hate About You* is based on William Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*; Proscenium Circus performed a condensed version of this work prior to and during the intermission of *10 Things*. The "Shrew Crew," as they affectionately dubbed themselves, delivered an outstanding performance. The actors—or should I say actresses, as almost all of the characters were played by girls—performed brilliantly, making it easier for many people to understand the complex Elizabethan language. *Taming of the Shrew* is about two sisters—Katherine and Bianca—and their dealings with prospective husbands. Bianca has two suitors, but the sisters' father, Baptista Minola, demands that Katherine marry before Bianca. To complicate matters, though, Katherine does not want to marry, thus branding her with the epithet of "shrew." Bianca's first suitor, Hortensio, wanting to find a husband for Katherine so he may pursue Bianca, tells Petruchio, a

brash man in the hunt for nothing more than a woman with money, about Katherine and convinces him to court and marry Katherine. Meanwhile, Bianca's other suitor, Lucentio, tries to woo

Bianca by acting as a tutor. Af-

ter Petruchio and Katherine are wed (against Katherine's will), Petruchio goes about the task of "taming" the "shrew." Bianca marries Lucentio, and Hortensio ends up marrying a widow. While the three former bachelors and Baptista are talking, they decide to have a contest to see which of the three men's wives is the most obedient. The usually feisty Katherine comes when Petruchio calls her, thus proving to the others that he has tamed the shrew. To the chagrin of feminists everywhere, Katherine closes the play with a speech in support of male spousal dominance.

*10 Things* is quite parallel to

*Taming of the Shrew*. In *10 Things* we see two sisters, Katarina ("Kat") and Bianca Stratford, in a modernized version of the same situation. Well...make that modern minus a few years. The story takes place in Padua high school, epitome of all things 80's, which is fitting for a play set in 1987. Bianca, a popular sophomore, is eager to date; however, her father, a gynecologist who has seen more than his fair share of teenage pregnancies, is concerned for her safety, not to mention chastity, and won't let her date until Katarina does. It seems hopeless to Bianca, as her sister, "the shrew," is a stubborn, badly dressed feminist who, in a predictable act of rebellion, refuses to date. Cameron, a North Dakotan who is new at Padua, is "hungry like a wolf" for Bianca. With the help of his friend Michael, he works out a deal with Joey, a senior who is also after Bianca. Michael tells Joey that if he wants to go out with Bianca, then he has to get Patrick Verona, an outcast "screwboy" who has a reputation for "thriving off of danger," to go out with Kat for a considerable amount of money. Of course, as in all love stories, Patrick and Kat actually do fall in love with each other and Bianca, who really wanted Joey at first, realizes that she is much happier



Actresses decked out in 80's garb for this year's Fall Play "10 Things I Hate About You"  
SNEHA ARJUN / *Correspondent*

with Cameron and abandons Joey.

The cast of *10 Things*, directed by Stephanie Hoban, delivered a great performance. Freshman Maya Cookson delivered a smashing and very

convincing performance as

Kat Strat-

ford. Other cast members included Russ Viola as Patrick, Angela Powell as Bianca the "bodacious beauty," Alex Eksir as Cameron, Marty (Gomez) as Joey, Sarah Donahue as wannabe Chastity, Matt Baskin as Michael, Lauren Brooks as the relentlessly energetic Ms. Perky, and Andrew Emerson as the hilariously uptight Bogey Lowenstein.

A totally retro set, groovy costumes, and awesome music including a great live band performance made the audience feel like they were right back in the 80's. To summarize, *10 Things I Hate About You* was more than a success. It was so beyond.

# Entertainment

## Halo 2: Natural Selection

By THE FISHER-POSTS & NICK JESSOP  
*Spectrum Staff*

November 8, 2004. 11:59 p.m. We had stood in line for thirty minutes, but we'd been waiting 30 months. It was the most anticipated premiere in the history of premieres, yet there was neither red carpet nor Joan Rivers. Children and adults alike counted down the minutes as midnight approached, school and work equally forgotten. Across the country, thousands waited as we did, filled with a restless energy. To an outsider it was just a videogame release. To us, it was the cusp of a dream fulfilled. We had not come for a game. We had come for *Halo 2*. But we're getting ahead of ourselves. Let us start this tale at the beginning.

Since the early 1980s, video games have slowly gained acceptance as a legitimate form of entertainment. However, as the "other" sibling of cinema and popular music, gaming was often associated with idle teenagers and pathetic, immature adults. In late 2001, the title that would change everything arrived relatively unnoticed on the videogame market. Produced by little known Bungie Studios, *Halo: Combat Evolved* emerged to capture the minds and thumbs of mainstream America like no game before it. Videogames were a hobby; *Halo* became a way of life.

*Letting out a deep sigh, you examine the scene before you. It is 5:36 a.m. on a Sunday morning. Amid the wreckage of Pepsi products, worn furniture, and processed food crumbs that litter the carpetscape, clods of flesh and pillow emit wheezy groans resembling snores. Your limbs ache in angry protest of the abuse that they have endured. They begin to rebel in silent anatomical mutiny. "Tired" is a laughably inadequate description of your physical state. Though your eyes have shriveled to the point where their once jelly-like corneas have passed "raisin" and are closing in on "turkey-jerky," you cannot take your attention away from the inviting glow of the screen beckoning you to play one more game. Or two. The only consolation that your worn out body can take, if indeed it is consolation, is in knowing that you will not be asked to do this again for another six days. You have loved every minute of it.*

It's called *Hele* (HAY-lay), and, for the past three years, it has been a way of life for gamers throughout the world. It is a phenomenon that has brought the term "LAN Party" into the mainstream. Well, almost. If you've played a significant amount of

*Halo* you probably have your own translation for the expression. But the fact is, the "local area" is the least important network created by the experience. While *Halo* is a game about conquering foes in combat, the experience that it provides is really a reaffirmation of friendly competition—a competition that has swept across Acton, Boxborough, and the United States alike. This influence would not have been possible if not for the unmatched excellence of *Halo* and its recently released sequel.

*Halo* wasn't revolutionary in its content or style, and neither is its sequel. They're not the first games to give the player a first-person perspective as he wanders around shooting enemies to reach his objective. They're not the first games whose central theme is to kill aliens. And finally, they're not the first games to incorporate a multiplayer aspect apart from the single player campaign. So, then, what makes the games so exceptional? Well, simply put, *Halo 2*, following in the footsteps of its predecessor, is the most flawlessly conceived video game—ever. If it's not a revolution, it's certainly the pinnacle of an evolution in gaming.

Part of the experience of *Halo 2*, as with all good games, is the numerous cool features with which it is endowed. *Halo 2* has large, open, and interesting stages ranging from the futuristic streets of the Earth city New Mombassa to wide open alien terrains full of strange buildings with complex architecture. Multiplayer levels range from rugged grassland canyons to indoor office buildings. The game, like its predecessor, also incorporates vehicles, allowing the player to drive himself and sometimes teammates around the large environments in rides that vary from a multi-passenger ATV to a single-seat, cannon-equipped hovercraft to an alien flying machine. For weapons, the game features traditional, realistic weapons such as a rocket launcher, a shotgun, and a sniper rifle, along with creative alien weapons such as a plasma rifle, a laser-like gun, and an energy sword.

In the campaign mode, the player journeys to different worlds fighting alongside marines to rid the galaxy of the aggressive Covenant alien races. In multiplayer modes, combatants

can either play traditional games where the object is to collect the most kills versus opponents or instead engage in team-oriented matches in modes such as capture the flag, king of the hill, or assault the base. However, all of these features could be expected from a good video game. *Halo 2* and its forerunner, however, are great games, nay, special games. Remarkably, it is not what Bungie puts in that makes the games so

if any of the players could do this, the game loses its intensity as the challenge is no longer present with one team having a distinct advantage over the other. In other words, it is the presence of rules and structure, in addition to the concept of competition itself, that makes the game of basketball fun for so many.

So it is with *Halo* and *Halo 2*. The creators at Bungie Studios had no shortage of creative ideas. However, they knew when to limit them so one player or team could not gain an unfair advantage over another. That *Halo 2* has many cool features, and yet remains completely fair and balanced, is the substance behind its unique status in the gaming world.

These are the reasons we play. *Halo's* unprecedented influence on the ABRHS culture is a direct result of its unmatched excellence. We do not play *Halo 2* as a pastime. We play it because we were meant to play it. It brings out our true nature as human beings in the same way as do basketball, and war, and Monopoly (in that order...). It is the ultimate arena for the animalistic

instincts of humans to be played out, that of fighting and surviving and demonstrating one's superiority as the "fittest." Honor is won, glory is attained, and the enemy is vanquished. Or bitter memories haunt us until we meet again in the field once more.

*Check the ammo. OK, good to go. Deep breath—MOVEMENT. Was that blue or red? Do I follow? C'mon, be the hero—NO! Tie game. Next kill wins, you don't wanna be the final kill. YOU DO NOT WANT TO BE THAT GUY. Just let your team pull it out. But ohhhh, mmhhhh, if I took this brother out I could salvage some dignity—GO. GOGOGogogogo. There he is! SO easy. This is cake! Oh man, he's just standing there! I smell a noob. One... TWO... THREEE! AHHHHH! Ahahaha-haAAAAAHHHHHH shotgun AHHH, oh noo, ohh NOOOOOO I'm SO GONE!! NOOOOOOOO! WHAHAAAAA!!! ... Oh ... my ... God ...*

A triumphant figure rises above my crestfallen comrades. Despite his tousled hair and chocolate-stained teeth that betray his poor hygiene, my enemy has earned my respect tonight. "OOOWW-WNNED!!!" His warrior cry pierces the raging cacophony of sub-machine gunfire and vehicular rampage still ringing in my ears. He pauses.

"... One more game?"



*Halo 2* has become a phenomenon at AB, providing all the entertainment necessary for many a weekend gathering  
ALFRED DEGEMMIS / Correspondent

good, but rather, what is left out.

When people play video games, they're looking to immerse themselves in the artificial world and to challenge themselves in a competitive atmosphere. A good video game is one in which the player can completely lose himself in the role of his or her character and the challenges he faces. All aspects of the game must contribute to the competitive experience, and if anything detracts, the experience is tarnished if not destroyed. In a perfect videogame, as with the finest literature and art, no aspect of the creation detracts from the experience, and all that is left is the game itself—competition in its purest sense.

In *Halo* and *Halo 2*, Bungie Studios demonstrates that they understand that what makes a video game great is not always flooding it with cool, innovative elements, but rather reeling in all the various aspects and making the gameplay balanced. People play video games for the competition—for the chance to prove their ability against adversity. People play sports for the same reasons. When someone plays basketball, for example, he enjoys the intense experience of trying to get the ball through the goal while defending his own goal from enemy assault. Interesting aspects such as the three-point line add new elements, yes, but the game can still be summed up very basically. Now, admittedly, if someone were able to fly with the basketball from one end of the court to the other and score uncontested, it would look pretty cool. However,

NEIL / from page 12  
at buttons or marbles without a shiver. The acclaimed writer Philip Pullman, who named *Coraline* one of his favorite books in 2002, writes that "[*Coraline* has] one of the most sinister introductions I've ever read...terrifying."

But Neil's most ambitious and most acclaimed novel to date is the recently published *American Gods*, an incredible story with a preposterous-sounding premise: an enigmatic man who calls himself Mr. Wednesday hires the despairing Shadow to help him recruit ancient, lost gods to fight against the new gods of technology and industry. As Wednesday (an alias for the Norse god Odin) and Shadow travel across America, they encounter the gods that have been forgotten by immigrants over thousands of years, from the mischievous Mr. Nancy (Anansi), the mortician Mr. Jaquel (Anubis), and the deceitful convict Low-Key Lyesmith (Loki) to an Arabic ifrit and a German kobold. The multiple strands of the story come to a climax at a literal gotterdammerung in Rock City near the end of the novel. It is the kind of book that becomes more complex and

enthraling the more you mull over it (yes, I mull). *American Gods* has won countless awards; upon winning the Hugo for best novel, Neil famously summed up his reaction in his acceptance speech: "F\*\*\*. I won a Hugo!"

Soon to be released is Neil's film *MirrorMask* from Sony Pictures. *MirrorMask* is a story he created with artist Dave McKean about Helena, a girl who "dreams that she is in a strange world with two opposing queens, bizarre creatures, and masked inhabitants." Beyond that, there's barely a hint about the film except for a very cool and completely unenlightening trailer on the film's site.

So who is Neil Gaiman? His genre is, er, fantasy-cum-scifi-cum-mythology. He has written comics that women like (gasp!), children's books meant for adults, and the English translation of a cult Japanese film. Among other things. If all this sounds very peculiar but strangely intriguing; well, that's just Neil Gaiman.

To read Neil's blog, check out: [neilgaiman.com/journal/journal.asp](http://neilgaiman.com/journal/journal.asp)

To find out more about *MirrorMask* (what little there is) and watch the trailer, go to [Mirrormask.com](http://Mirrormask.com)

# Features

## AB: A Top Notch School of “High-Achieving Super Kids”

By HELEN ALESBURY  
*Spectrum Staff*

That's it. The secret is out. Our cover is blown. The greater Boston area has finally unearthed the secret that AB is actually a mass group of robots. Every single one of us has engineer parents, every single one of us has straight A's in AP classes, and every single one of us is a track star, or a football star, or great at something. Sounds preposterous, right? It sounds like an overgeneralization mated with some sweeping observation of AB. Douglas Belkin's article, "Where Brawn Meets Brains," in the October 7 edition of the *Boston Globe*, is just that.

Belkin rants and raves about how the AB student body is composed of hundreds of sports and academic superstars that are, in turn, offspring of hundreds of genius engineers. The article claims that AB "has a culture of high expectations—particularly in math and science," suggesting that our high school environment is entirely made up of math and science nerds. "Okay, so I do realize that my parents are engineers and that I am in honors math and [run] track, but I definitely don't think we are like robots!" says AB junior Katie McManus.

It doesn't seem to make any

sense. Why would this article spring up out of the blue? What have we done to bring the spotlight on us? In short, it is credited to our football team, which proudly has 50 consecutive wins to its credit. The football team's great feat attracted the attention of the media, who noted that we actually have some sports stars that are doing as well in school as they are on the field (or court, or water, etc.), which tends to go against the stereotype of a "jock." This is not necessarily a bad thing, but it may be more accurate to say that many of our AP students are also involved in sports, instead of over-generalizing and putting every student into the category of "child genius." Moreover, this label may disconcert an AB student who is extremely involved with sports but does not take high-level courses, or one who is in all honors classes but chooses not to be involved in athletics; suddenly he or she is seen as not abiding by the "culture and environment" of the school. This should not be a student's mind set.

If, perchance, a student takes interest in something other than sports, math and/or science (maybe you are a master artist, or you can write a mean English paper), that in no way means that he or

she is a lesser being than someone who does. A student doesn't have to conform to the idea that one must be a super child to succeed at AB; nor is it important that both of the student's parents be engineers. There is no doubt that AB is indeed a school with extremely talented students, but the article's lumping of the student body into one group of "hyper-achieving super children" is simply an exaggerated stereotype.

To be sure, AB does have many academic and sports stars, but that does not mean that we all are. Sappy as it may sound, we are all individuals and one must not judge oneself by another's standards. While we are lucky to have the opportunity to learn in such an academically challenging and well reputed school, a good education ought not require our involvement in subjects that don't interest us—regardless of how AB may be perceived by outside residents. If you like something that is different from the norm, go for it. And if you do like math and science, that's fine, too, because AB needs people to carry on the engineering population. In the words of a certain "Life is Good" t-shirt: "Do what you like. Like what you do."

## Living Strong

By CHARLOTTE BIGFORD  
*Spectrum Staff*

Recently, it seems that the glow of yellow rubber bracelets that worn by growing masses of AB students and people all over the United States is some sort of timely fashion trend. However, unlike Abercrombie and Fitch jeans and Ugg boots, the Live Strong bracelets have a deeper meaning. They symbolize the union of millions of cancer patients and survivors (along with their families, friends, doctors, and caregivers) creating a community dedicated to providing counsel, motivation, and information for all people affected by the deadly disease. Their main purpose is to educate the public on how to survive cancer and its repercussions.

The bracelets were the idea of cancer survivor and six-time Tour de France winner Lance Arm-

ing [pertaining to the public and health officials], programs, policies, and infrastructure [aiding patient and survivor rights], and access to quality care and services [for all patients and survivors]."

As a way of advertising the work of the LAF community, Armstrong designed the Live Strong bracelets, which are manufactured by Nike Wear, as a form of long-distance unification of patients, survivors, and other people affected by cancer. Walking past a bracelet-wearing stranger on the street, you feel comfortable and smile to them as though to say, "I may not know you, but we have something in common. We're both united in the fight against cancer," and for most that is enough to make the world seem like a better place. Junior Alicia Donovan says, "When I see people wearing Live Strong bracelets, it makes me feel like there's an extended family of people everywhere I go who share similar experiences with cancer." Sure enough, all over the country people feel connected to others who proudly wear "the yellow," regardless of who they are beyond the effects of cancer. Their medical history is



A student wearing a Live Strong bracelet  
NATE FRANZ / Correspondent

## Cheating the System

By CHARLOTTE BIGFORD  
*Spectrum Staff*

Cheating. We've all witnessed it, perhaps even practiced it. The internal debate of whether or not to cheat is a terrible, tempting, and trying battle that everyone must face. But why cheat when we know the consequences?

With movies such as *Cheaters* and *The Perfect Score* released to a whole generation of test-taking, grade-stressed teenagers, it is easy to fantasize about what it would be like to get a 1600 on the SATs or a 100 on the next chemistry test. In an October 2003 National Public Radio discussion, Dr. Fred Goodwin shared his knowledge about cheating. "Four out of five high school students admit to having cheated at some point," said Dr. Goodwin, who also listed possible influences causing students to cheat. First, there is a sense of "moral relativism"

in highly competitive schools. People cheat if it advances them positively and beneficially. In addition, the media portrays some of our nation's most rich and famous as high school cheaters, who later achieved a successful life by breaking the rules.

History teacher Mr. Calore commented, "I think it is a symptom of academic pressures and societal breakdowns; we do things if we can get away with things, even if we know it is wrong. I really question people who don't think

it's wrong, the people who are successful because they cheated on the path to accomplishment."

Even the New York Times' own staff writer, Jayson Blair, 27, plagiarized other news sources, fabricated quotes, and made up events in over six hundred articles. He lied to his bosses, telling them that he had graduated from the University of Maryland, while he had never actually finished his coursework in time to graduate with the rest of his class. During his work at the Times, he covered such highly important stories as those of Iraqi prisoner-of-war Jessica Lynch and the Washington, D.C. sniper. "There is no room in our profession for those who betray both their fellow journalists and the readers and viewers they serve," said Contrace Pressley, the president of the National Association of Black Journalists. With evidence of his fraud, Blair resigned his position at the internationally recognized newspaper on May 1, 2004.



Students cheating on a test  
NITHYUSHA YARUBOLU / Correspondent

all that binds them in a national neighborhood of supporters and counselors.

Over ten million Americans have cancer or are in remission and countless more know or love someone who has it. Armstrong hoped to make five million dollars by selling five million Live Strong bracelets at one dollar each. They can be purchased in packs of 10, 100, or 1200 at the LAF web site-- <http://www.livestrong.org>. LAF perfectly sums up the impact of the bracelets on the community: "Live Strong understands that cancer is more than a medical experience; that's why we offer survivors a complete approach to survivorship by recognizing that cancer will not only affect a survivor in a physical sense, but in emotional and practical ways too. Live Strong enables survivors to communicate with their health care team, family, friends and caregivers more effectively throughout all survivorship challenges."

# Features

## Budget Projections Could Lead to Further Cuts

By AMY DU & JITA RAY  
*Spectrum Staff*

Some students have wondered how the school can afford an expensive construction project while barely being able to pay the necessary teachers to fill the new classrooms. The reason for this phenomenon is that the two-thirds of the budget for the construction is paid for by the state, making it a separate pool of funds than the operating budget that pays for staff salaries. While the construction project will be completed regardless of the current fiscal difficulties, class sizes will become significantly larger if the high school does not receive more funds from an override vote that would raise property taxes in order to maintain school services.

Fortunately, the \$54 million construction budget can be used to cover the cost of some new necessary equipment such as the science laboratory apparatus and a "much needed" extra snow blower to keep the enlarged sidewalks free of snow for this coming winter, but it does not cover the day-to-day running of the high school, such as the staff salary and activity expenses.

For these expenses, there are three main sources of income. The majority of the income comes from the appropriated operational budget, which is voted on during town meetings. This budget grants \$28 million to the junior high and high school. From this amount, over half is given to the high school. The second source of income is activities fees that range from football game gate receipts to individual payments for sports, clubs, and performing arts. Money is also earned from school store profits, summer school programs, senior dues, and fines for parking and other school violations. This income covers some monitor salaries and is used to support the band, the yearbook, the senior class, the National Honor Society, the Spectrum, the student council, and Common Ground. The third source of income comes from the Acton-Boxborough Student Activities Fund (ABSFAF), which funds the salaries of 25 of the staff advisors for these activities. ABSFAF has already donated over \$100,000 to the school this year.

As a result of the budget cuts, higher fees and fines have been placed upon the student body this

year. There has been an increase in the parking fines, and parking fees for seniors have gone up by about \$100 so that the monitors, whose salaries recently got cut from the budget, can get paid. All the freshman and junior varsity sports programs have been eliminated from the budget due to the lack of funds, causing higher sports fees (\$100 to \$160). There are no color printers in some parts of the schools and computer availability is limited. Finally, one class section has been eliminated from the World History, US History, English I and II, Algebra, and special education programs. The section cut saves a total of \$68,117, which is almost equal to two new teachers' yearly salaries. Clearly, a diminishing school budget has had striking effects for students.

The tight budget situation is projected to become even bleaker. Next year, there could be \$1.2 million cut from the pending budget, which will place the students into more economic distress. Students will most likely have to pay a fee for sending transcripts to their desired colleges. This change will help pay for secretarial assistance. A tuition fee will be considered on students that come to Acton-Boxborough from surrounding communities via the School Choice program. In the near future, it is expected that the parking prices will continue to rise. The ALG (Acton Leadership Group), a group of Acton town officials including the superintendent, is doing what it can to make sure the school gets the funding it needs.

These future budget cuts will only become a reality if the town does not pass an override for the following fiscal year, 2006. Fiscal years last from July 1 to June 30 of the following year. If an override does not pass, several million would need to be reduced from all of the current proposed budgets. At least 10 teaching positions could be eliminated at the high school.

Already, many students have noted budget cuts, and many people are upset that fees have increased while certain choices such as taking extra classes and elective courses have been cut. However, it is clear that the administration is doing its best to keep as many programs as possible running through these difficult fiscal times.

## You said it The Spectrum Photo Poll

What do you think of the school's new food and drink policy?



Anisa McCree (11) - While I understand the necessity of the no-food-in-class rule, many people are upset because it often causes people to go 5 or 6 hours without anything to eat.



Ankit Chandra (12) - This no food and drink policy is like asking a one-legged man to riverdance. In other words, Insane!



Ben Wilcox (10) - Huh?



Lydia George (10) and Deepti Kalluri (10) - It's not fair at all! The new policy leads to 5 stages of hunger:

1. hunger
2. funny stomach noises
3. pain
4. fainting
5. death!



Jeff Liu (9) - I believe people, especially at this level, are sensible enough to properly maintain the classroom and should be allowed to have food and/or drinks in the room, unless otherwise restricted by the administration. We are responsible (kinda).



Ji Xiao (11) and Elizabeth Malin (11) - I don't have a preference. I still have teachers who let us munch in class.



Katie Neville (11) - It sucks! Expecting some kids to make it to 7th period lunch without eating is ridiculous.



Casey Hsiung (9) - They want us to go on a diet and get skinny.



Manasa Jayanthi (9) - I hate it! It's cruel and mean! 7th period lunch is no fun! We have enough starvation problems in this world already!



Mark Amoroso (10) - Hunger cramps are at an all time high.



Matthew Johnson (11) - It's horrible.



Susan Yao (12) - It's really inconvenient. I get really hungry during classes but I can't eat.



Sophia Chang (12) - Hm... it sounds reasonable. People are messy and janitors' lives don't revolve around us all the time.



Stanley Yi (9) - I think we should have it because I get hungry



Yi Liu (9) - It sucks!!

# Features

## So You Think Harvard Is Your Safety School?

By WENXI LI & HELEN ALESBURY  
*Spectrum Staff*

Even as juniors we can feel the burden of college applications bearing down on us. At AB it seems that the college application process has been elevated to an even more stressful level than normal, where the question is not "Are you going to college?" but rather "Where are you going to college?" No doubt, it is a fashion must-have to own a hooded sweatshirt with the emblem of your college-of-choice plastered on the front, as if to broadcast to the entire student body that "Yes, thank you very much, I am going to college." And so it has become set in our minds that we must pressure ourselves to the edge of sanity in the college application process.

To add insult to injury, according to some college newsletters, it has become increasingly difficult in the past five years to be accepted by many schools, a trend said to be increasing until around the college application season of 2008 (Good luck Frosh!). This then begs the question, "How do I make sure that I get in to my top-choice schools? What do I have to do in order to make sure that I never have to say that I am simply taking a year off between high school and college, but not by choice? The answer: the safety school, the parachute to make sure you don't fall flat on your face.

First of all, everyone needs to understand that a safety school is not always academic, it can be for financial reasons and may be a good idea to have at least one when applying. Schools have become increasingly expensive and parents would probably like to have their children attend a good, but not necessarily costly, school.

However, for those of you who are looking for a way to pick a safety school regardless of financial worry, you can do a few main things to secure a school and make sure you can get that fancy sweatshirt. First, you should look at the grade point averages (G.P.A.s) of the students who were accepted there. You can usually find this information in those massive college books, on college web sites, or even in the College Action Report 2004 section of the AB counseling office's web site.

Once you get this information, check the average G.P.A. against your own average and if it is lower than yours, you may have an upper hand in being accepted by your choice schools. Be aware of your standings in your chances of being accepted. Are your report cards good enough? Do you have the essential number of credits and the right résumé of completed courses? A note of caution though: Make sure that you would be comfortable attending your safety schools so that you will not be disappointed if you decide to attend one of them. It is important that you make sure you can get in, but it is of paramount importance that you make sure you like the facilities and the programs that they offer.

The number of safety schools that you choose to apply to can vary from person to person. It depends on how realistic your chances are that the other schools you are applying to would accept you, in addition to your financial situation and the total number of schools you are applying to. Normally, you should pick between two and three safeties out of the six to nine total schools you are applying to. According to the College Application Summary for 2004 (that you may inquire about in the counseling office), of the 128 AB students that applied to UMass-Amherst, 118 were accepted. This means that it was the most commonly applied-to school and for many students acted as the financial safety school (UMass-Amherst, a state school, is cheaper for Massachusetts residents). So keep UMass-Amherst in mind, as it is a very good school and tends to accept many AB students.

In the end, you should make absolutely sure that at least one of the schools you are applying to is a done deal. In general, you should have two to three reach schools, four to five realistic schools, and two to three safeties. Of course, there is absolutely no law stating that you HAVE to apply by these rules, or even that you need to go to college, though it is a good idea to follow them if you do. Keep in mind that, if in the chance you do not get accepted, the world does not end. College is not a necessity and, granted, though you won't get to strut around in your college sweatshirt, it is not a MUST in everyone's life.

Hopefully this has been some help to juniors entering the college application process. Good luck, and look forward to seeing a sea of college brand sweatshirts when admittance letters are received. (Oh, and feel free to come give us presents for helping you get in!)

## Is Doubling Courses a Good or Bad Idea?

By ROSANNA XIA  
*Spectrum Staff*

Many students at AB take more than one course per year in Science, Math, Social Studies, or World Language. Popular options include taking both biology and chemistry, while another often-explored option is taking both geometry and Algebra II during sophomore year. One can also double-up after failing a class. Doubling-up in a subject is stressful at times, and the amount of homework per night is obviously increased. However, there are still many students at AB who double up in a subject. Why are students making this choice?

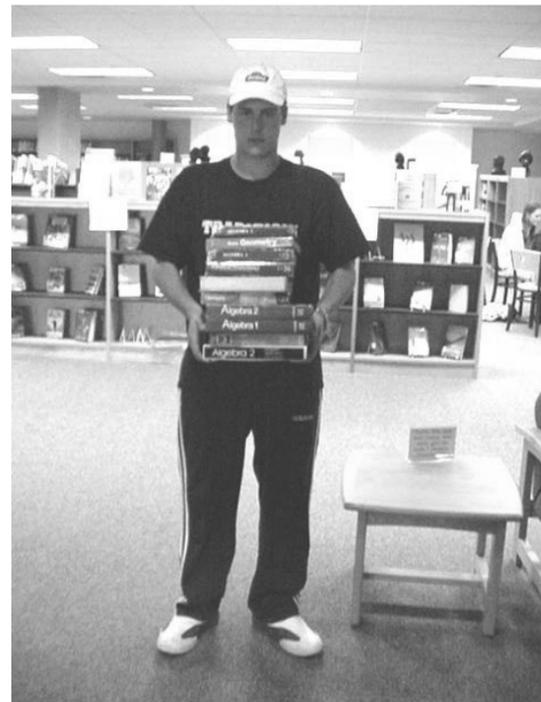
Part of the reason why many students double-up is from "the academic pressure at AB—you have to do whatever it takes to get into the highest classes," says one student, who doubled-up in math sophomore year and is now doubling in science. She continues, "For example, because I took geometry and Algebra II sophomore year, I am now able to take calculus. Taking calculus makes me look smart and the colleges like it." So many students double-up in order to have better chances at getting into colleges, but it is not necessary. Students should not use college acceptance as an excuse for doubling up. "There are so many good colleges out there, students really shouldn't stress themselves out and take on too much just to get into [one]. Finding the right college for a student is more important," says Mr. Chicko.

Nina Xue, a sophomore who is now doubling in math agrees with that statement by saying that "...very ambitious, driven students" who double-up in math sophomore year "are able to take calculus senior year." A student who is taking AP Psychology and Politi-

cal Science finds the two courses very interesting and go well together. Another such student is freshman Ashwin Suresh, who is taking both biology and chemistry this year. Ashwin is doubling courses this year because he can, as he puts it, "take full advantage

free period or the opportunity to take any electives. An extreme example of how doubling-up is a burden on one's schedule is if a student takes both chemistry and physics in one year. Both courses require two days of lab out of every six-day schedule in addition to the regular daily period of science, so doubling-up in chemistry and physics alone can take up to four periods of a student's schedule per six-day cycle.

On a more positive note, doubling-up does have its advantages. It gives students more insight into career options along with sparking interests. Ashwin believes that doubling up in biology and chemistry will pave the way for "internships or work with willing companies and/or professors." Doubling-up also gives students a stronger grasp of a subject. For example, "if



Many AB students have chosen to take two math or science courses during one school year.

NITHYUSHA YARUBOLA / Correspondent

of what [he] can do." By taking an extra science course, Ashwin says that he has "more immersion in science," his favorite subject.

There are, of course, less appealing aspects to doubling-up in a subject. It increases the amount of homework a student has and requires a lot of work. "Sometimes I worry about the anxiety [from the amount of stress in taking an extra course] that goes overboard" says Mr. Chicko. Discipline and dedication are extremely helpful if a student wants to double-up. "We must keep in mind that doubling-up is only appropriate for some students," he adds, "It is not a good idea to double-up if the talent, ability, interest, and work ethic [aren't] there."

Aside from the increase in amounts of homework and stress, doubling-up also fills up a student's schedule—it takes away a

you're one math level advanced, you'll have a better advantage on the SAT I and SAT II," says one student. Doubling-up is a good option for students who don't feel challenged enough in the courses they are currently in. It is great, says Mr. Chicko, "if you want to push yourself. Some students should be challenged. By being challenged students work harder, form study groups, go to extra help, or get tutors. By being challenged, students learn 'survival study skills'—skills which most students will likely need once [in] college."

Doubling-up is not the right choice to make if the student is only doubling-up to look better to colleges. It is, however, a great option for students who want to further explore their interests or desire a challenge.

### CHEATING / from page 14

Technology makes cheating even easier. Students can now use easily accessible sources, such as the Internet or cell phones, to plagiarize or cheat on papers or tests. But now teachers are fighting back, creating web sites that are made to detect plagiarism. A teacher can enter a suspicious line or phrase from a student's writing into the web site, and its database will list every other piece of

writing in which the same line or phrase was used.

At AB, the consequences for plagiarizing or cheating on a test, project, or essay are a zero on said work. In addition, the principal, school administration, the student's counselor, the National Honor Society, and the student's parents are informed of the misdemeanor. Cheating can tarnish one's school record and create a reason for colleges to automatically reject the student.

In NPR's October 2003 show, John Hockenberry stated, "In the landscape of American culture, you can find cheating all over the map. Cheating is that place between triumph and immortality, between out-of-the-box thinking and exploitation of the unsuspecting. The cheat-free similarly inhabit a murky place between naïve stupidity and sainthood." One is left to wonder, Is cheating simply a way of life?

# Sports

## Four in a Row is the Way to Go

FOOTBALL / from page 1 man year—a game they didn't start), and it was clear that AB would hold the advantage in this game. The only other thing the skeptics could say was that the team that beat the Abares in their first game was, indeed, the Chelmsford Lions. Three years, 49 wins and three Super Bowls later, who else would the Abares rather beat in their last high school game than the team they lost to in their first?

And for a storybook ending, the game itself was certainly one to remember. It had everything: long touchdown rushes, game-breaking receptions, relentless offensive drives, and unyielding goal line stands. With reckless abandon, the Colonials dominated a Chelmsford team that just didn't have the spark, strength, or sheer desire to put the ball in the end zone. Bobby Abare ran for 143 yards on 10 carries; his counterpart, Bobby Gill of the Lions, ran 137 yards on a whopping 32 carries. That's 14.3 yards per carry for Abare, an average almost 10 yards higher than Gill's. Abare's smashing success can be attributed to the offensive line and pluggers of AB that included Nate Crutchfield, Eric Gargiulo, Alex Scheier, Ben Larkins, Joey O'Brien, Jim DeCristofaro, and Brett Manning. The linebackers, who, throughout

the night, included Andrew Sides, Bobby Abare, Pete Rankis, Larry Abare, and Tim Lieto, all helped

Crutchfield ran for 47 yards on nine carries, many of which were key first down runs. For pass-

in a minute and a half, testament to the great backfield as well as a great offensive line that con-

it's a question that cannot really be answered now, it must be remembered that despite the dire predictions of media and opponents alike in years past, AB has always prevailed. However, it seems that the team just won't lose. As quoted in the *Beacon*, coach Maver had this to say about the ongoing success of the AB Football program, "We've always been pretty fortunate to always have a good group of seniors in this program and this year was no different. Many of them have come through when we needed them most. They stepped up to replace graduating seniors from last year and helped us win." Indeed, the graduation of this year's seniors does not seem to guarantee the end of The Streak, which could remain for years to come. The only candidate likely to surpass The Streak would have been the Everett Crimson Tide, yet sadly, superstar quarterback Matt Nuzzo couldn't muster the



AB rushes to take the field to take yet another Super Bowl title.

hold Gill back and didn't allow him to break a big play. The AB defense also had two goal line stands — an amazing feat due to Chelmsford's strong running game in each drive. The running game had been a constant on offense all season, yet that night the passing game also came alive. Bobby Abare, as mentioned before, ran for 143 yards, and

ing, quarterback Dave Crocker was three for four for 77 yards, and Bobby Abare passed to Larry Abare for 38 yards late in the first half on a fullback option pass, a combined total of 115 yards in the air. One drive, at the very end of the first half, took only 35 seconds, and the next drive, at the beginning of the second half, took only 56 seconds. That's 14 points

sisted of Larkins, Matt Clancy, DeCristofaro, and O'Brien, with Sides, Rankis, Scheier, and Doug Mahoney at tight end. Although the Chelmsford line outweighed ours by 50 pounds, the Colonial line didn't let size get in the way as they plowed their way for 200 yards on the ground.

So now what is in store for the AB Football Colonials? Though

will to win on Super Bowl Saturday as he failed to get off a play during the final seconds, resulting in a one point loss by his team to the Brockton Boxers, who won their first Super Bowl since 1996. And so, with another AB football season coming to a close, both players and community can rest content, as the Colonials are yet again number one.

## A Historic Run for AB Soccer

By BRIAN CALLAHAN  
*Spectrum Staff*

It had been eight years since the varsity boys soccer team had even reached the Division 1 North Final. After defeating Medford 1-0 in the Final, this year's soccer team was able to do one better. They were able to call themselves Division 1 North Sectional Champions and advance to the 2004 MIAA Division 1 state semifinals at Boston University as one of the top four teams in the entire state of Massachusetts.

Getting there wasn't as easy as it sounds; the soccer team (17-4-2 on the season) had to defeat two incredibly tough teams in defending sectional champion Medford and 17th seeded Beverly. Against Beverly in the sectional semifinal, AB was pushed to the brink of elimination as they were forced to go to a sudden death shootout after tying their counterpart for regulation and two overtime periods. Junior goalie Ben Knight came up big in the shootout, recording two

saves to clinch the victory and appearing in the sectional final for the first time since 1996.

If anyone thought that the sectional final against Medford would be anticlimactic, they were sorely



Captain Steve Scanlon, a senior midfielder, dribbles past a BC High defender  
JONATHAN EISENBERG / *Spectrum Staff*

mistaken. After the first half, AB and Medford were caught in a 0-0 deadlock with neither team being able to get anything going.

Fortunately, in the early minutes of the second half, junior forward Kendall Crouch was able to delay any thoughts that this game would end up as a reenactment of their duel with Beverly. Crouch scored on an assist from senior forward Danny Salvo, giving AB the 1-0 lead it so desperately needed. Behind their stifling defense led by goalie Knight, AB was able to hang on to the slim lead and ensure the historic victory to move on to the Division 1 State semifinals.

In their semifinal matchup, AB faced South sectional champion BC High, which was led by senior midfielder Greg O'Neil. AB fought incredibly hard throughout the game, displaying the defense and mental toughness that they displayed throughout their entire season. However, O'Neil's two goals in the semifinal were too much for AB to overcome, as they would

fall 2-1, despite playing BC High as tough as anyone could have



AB Coach Mr. Baumritter gives instructions to the team during a timeout.  
JONATHAN EISENBERG / *Spectrum Staff*

expected. The fact that BC High would go on to tie in the state championship to share a piece of the state title shows just how good a team they were—AB was more than up there with the best

season will be remembered more as a victory; they proved themselves to be the best AB soccer team in the past decade and right on par with the greatest teams in AB soccer history.

# Sports

## AB Basketball: Ready to Roll

By BRYAN SHAFFER & HARSHA KROVI  
*Spectrum Staff*

Last season, the varsity boys basketball team clinched a DCL title en route to an appearance in the Division 1 North Final. Despite losing key seniors from that team in Henry Morris, Kiel McQueen and Alex Mitchell Hardt, the team looks ready to go on another run deep into the state tournament.

Up for the challenge is a strong senior class that is hungry for the chance to compete in their final season for AB Basketball. The class is one of AB's strongest in years and features Joey O'Brien, Peter Rankis, Mike Horan, football

standouts Bobby and Larry Abare, as well as soccer players Danny Salvo, Chris Martin, and arguably the best basketball player in the DCL in center Kyle Jackson. Jackson is not only a force in the paint but can be lethal behind the arc, making himself a rare double threat for a player of his size. Juniors Will Cronin and Alex Scheier will also figure into the mix and play a larger role on the team this season with expanded roles created by the loss of last year's seniors and their varsity experience. The athleticism of this team should be a huge factor in games throughout the year, as AB will

have to rely on its speed, quickness and endurance to overcome teams with more size.

On the upcoming season head coach Rick Kilpatrick has nothing but optimism. "I'm looking



Potential members of the varsity team pose before the 12/7 scrimmage that will determine who gets cut

ALBERT CHUANG / *Spectrum Staff*

throughout the year, as AB will

forward to it," says Coach Kilpatrick, "There are a few veterans coming back for leadership and overall, they are a good group of guys." His faith in the team and extreme passion for the game provide the necessary spark plug that this team needs to defend its DCL title. Coach Kilpatrick does have some concerns, however, about the health of the team: "We have to stay competitive all season long and also remain healthy. I am concerned that injuries will slow us down because currently we have three starters on the Injury List and that could be a problem for us." Kilpatrick's concerns about

the injuries extend to the fan base as well. Says hard core "Colonial Crazy" Dan Crowley: "We have a great gang this season. Finally, the pieces have all fallen into place, and we look like a team that could win the DCL. But now the team has a new obstacle to overcome in the injuries. Sure, I'm as optimistic as the next fan, but when you've got three stars on the IL at the same time, you can only lie

in your bed and pray that it will not lead to a complete collapse of the best AB Basketball team in my lifetime."

Despite the injury concerns, Coach Kilpatrick remained optimistic about the season, "As long as they work hard, I'll be happy. It'll be a slow start because of the injuries, but as they say, patience is a virtue and we will tough it out." With that said, it wouldn't be a stretch for the team to surpass last year's state tournament run and advance to the Fleet Center in the hopes of capturing its first State title since 1972.

## AB Boys Winter Track Team Ready For Another Run at the DCL Title

By DAVID RILEY & KYLE POCHINI  
*Spectrum Staff*

There is a different mood in the air these days for the AB Boys' Winter track team. From day one, Coaches Ammendolia and Ivanov have preached hard work and dedication in order to achieve the ultimate goal of a DCL Championship. Despite losing key athletes to graduation such as Brian Wilson, Pye Russell, Tyler Webster, Ed Monk and Alden Gassert, this year's squad is confident that they will exceed the accomplishments of last year's team.

Anchoring the sprint group will be senior captain Chris Eckersley, who has a strong chance of capturing the DCL crown in the 55-meter event. Junior John Chou will look to improve on last year's solid performance in the 400-meter run, while sophomore Ryan Evans hopes to continue the success of his freshman-year campaign.

The distance crew will be led

by junior captain Zac Del Nero along with XC captain Marty Benson, who is participating in his first year of winter track after swimming for two years. Often unnoticed XC standouts are seniors Matt Shimizu and Lester Li, junior Mike Airosus, and ris-



Coach Ammendolia looks on as his team practices.

ALFRED DeGEMMIS / *Spectrum Staff*

ing sophomore Keon Reed, who will look to solidify the distance group.

In the shot put event, the heavy lifting will be done by senior captain Kevin Cobb, who is looking

to surpass his throw of 37.5 feet at the Dual County League meet last year. Also pitching in is junior utility man John McCoy, who has been a solid contributor in both the shot put and high jump.

With the absence of Brian Wilson, McCoy will step up in the high jump along with sophomore David Lowe. Chou will be called upon to lead the long jumping crew. Senior Tom Egge and sophomore Kevin Sun will pair up to fill the void left in the 55-meter hurdles by Tyler Webster.

Though there are many new faces in this year's squad, the commitment and will to win that is fast becoming the trademark of AB winter track is in no way lacking. With strong senior leadership and a work ethic to match, expect to hear big things from this young and talented team.

## Fall Season Wrap-up

By JEFF CRIMMIN  
*Spectrum Staff*

### Field Hockey

The varsity field hockey team showed amazing grit and determination this year under the guidance of second year coach Mrs. Shoemaker, and captains Mariah Baxter and Liz Stanford, a DCL All-Star for goalkeeping. The team advanced to the Division 1 North Final at North Andover High School after beating Methuen 1-0 in the semifinal thanks to a first-half goal by Baxter. Against Reading in the final, the team lost by a score of 1-0 in overtime although their defense shut out Reading in regulation. In the end, they just couldn't muster up enough offense and fell victim to a late overtime goal. The Colonials ended their season with a stellar record of 13-4-2. They had DCL All-Stars in forward Katelyn Tulp, midfielder Jenny Raftery and defensive standouts Kiara Blough and Allison Potter.

### Girls Swimming

Unsurprisingly, the girls varsity swim was very successful the past fall. Led by Coach Jeff Johnson and Captains Cecilia Jenkins, Katie Niro and Megan Maddaluno, the team ended the season placing second in States. The 200 free style relay also achieved success, winning states and setting the

sectional state record.

### Girls Volleyball

Despite a record under .500, the girls volleyball team showed great improvement this season. With a 4-7 record, they were able to succeed in large part to the outstanding leadership provided by Coach Jim Rey, and Captains Yike Jiang and Rebecca Berger. Jiang, along with sophomore standout Stefanie Turner, will be back next year as captains and contribute to the solid core of talent that should keep them strong in years to come. Off the court, the girls were just as strong, receiving a Sportsmanship Award that has only been awarded to three other AB teams in the past.

### Girls Soccer

The varsity girls soccer team recently completed a respectable season with the help of captains Caitlin Berry, Nidhi Tripathi, Lauren Tracy and Emily Traversi. The Colonials offense was carried by the impressive goal-scoring of sophomore Natalie Crutchfield. Much of the team's protection on defense was provided by Ann Kyzer, who was ranked number two in the DCL for goalies. The girls ended their season with a record of 2-8-4. As head coach Tom Cronin liked to say throughout the season, the team was "Sometimes beaten, but never defeated."

## Welcome to the Jungle!

By HARSHA KROVI  
*Spectrum Staff*

It's that time of year again or, as I like to call it, the Road for 17 (the 17th Championship) for the Boston Celtics. The Celtics are back in action this season with a rejuvenated offense and a run-and-gun attitude. Doc Rivers, the sixteenth head coach of the Celtics franchise, has instilled in these young and new Celtics the concept of fast-break offense and the importance of defense. Their goal is to win the Atlantic Division and, as the other teams in their division battle injuries with their key players and are just plain awful, it would not be that big of a stretch if it actually happened. Winning the Atlantic Division would guarantee the Celtics one of the top three seeds in the playoffs and also home court advantage, which could prove crucial in games when the Celtics welcome teams to The Fleet Center, affectionately termed "The Jungle."

With off-season acquisitions Gary Payton, aka "The Glove," and Tom Gugliotta finally getting into the flow of things, the Celtics should be able to break away from the rest of the teams in their division this month. They are starting to gel and the final pieces of the

winning puzzle are finally coming together. Ricky Davis is playing less selfish basketball after all the criticism he suffered last season; he is happy with his role of the Sixth Man and is the holder of the best field goal percentage on the team. If he keeps these numbers up all the way until April, he could be an important contender for the Sixth Man Award. Guard Jiri Welsch is also playing great ball and is a big force behind the unveiling of Danny Ainge's master plan. Welsch, the key guy for whom Antoine Walker was traded last season, is starting for the C's and his mid-range jumpers are phenomenal. It would be quite a surprise to see him miss 18-foot jumpers during a game because he always knocks those down. And then, of course, we have our man who just recently reached the 20,000 point plateau, Gary Payton. He is fifteenth in the league in assists per game, which is impressive since he is 37 years old. His quick passes and his accuracy with his left hand proves the age-old saying "Old is gold." The Glove, as he is called, disrupts the offense of the opposing team because of his quick hands and the fact that he always gets in the passing lanes, leading

See CELTICS / page 19

# Sports

## Callahan's Corner: Dream On

By BRIAN CALLAHAN  
*Spectrum Staff*

If you didn't find this past year in sports highly enjoyable, extraordinary, and life defining, then stop reading this article now. I mean it. Change the page, get out of the sports section, and get out of town — or the country, for that matter. Still here? Good, now let's get rolling.

The year started out with the New England Patriots in the playoffs, gunning for their second Super Bowl in three years. After two epic performances in snow and ice, the Pats shut down both of the "MVP's," made Peyton Manning look like Ashlee Simpson on *Saturday Night Live*, and paved their way to a Super Bowl Showdown with a Carolina Panthers team that many thought looked like the Pat's first Super Bowl Champion team. But that team went up against Mike Martz. The Panthers faced a reincarnation of Vince Lombardi. When it was all said and done, the Pats won a thrilling game decided by surprise, an Adam Vinatieri field goal and the clutch play of Super Bowl MVP Tom Brady. After going over 20 years without a World Championship, the Pats won their second in three years. And it was only February.

During this fall, the Patriots continued to roll, setting the NFL all-time record for consecutive victories. But there was an even more impressive football streak, and it was right in our hometown. The Acton-Boxborough Colonial football team wasn't thought to be big enough to go undefeated for another season and were picked to lose every week this season by The Boston Globe (AB losing to Bedford? Is it just me, or is that a lame attempt to make a joke that is just not funny? Give me a break). Instead, they happened to break a state record for consecutive victories that had been around for over 50 years and went undefeated again, in the process capturing their fourth straight Super Bowl.

But the year 2004 will forever be defined as the year that the Red Sox won their first

World Series in 86 years. In the offseason, they signed Curt Schilling and Keith Foulke and named Terry Francona the new manager to replace the lowly Grady Little. They placed Manny Ramirez on irrevocable waivers but no one would bite. And they desperately tried to trade brooding shortstop Nomar Garciaparra in the hopes of acquiring Alex Rodriguez—only to see their efforts halted by the Player's Union and end up seeing A-Rod in Pinstripes. The Yankee-Red Sox rivalry was at an all time high, but by the time the All-Star Break rolled around, it looked like it would be the same old story for the Sox: a season that



would fail to meet the team's high expectations. But it was during that All-Star game that the "curse" began to be reversed. Roger Clemens, the starting pitcher for the National League squad who was representing his hometown Astros, got smoked by John Kerry's favorite player Manny Ortiz and others on the American League team, giving the AL homefield advantage in the Series.

Now you may all remember Clemens as the bonehead who wouldn't pitch in Game 6 of the '86 World Series and left the Sox in the "twilight" of his career—only to go on to win four more Cy Youngs and join the Evil Empire where he won a World Series title. The fact that two Sox players were able to own Clemens and give Boston eventual homefield advantage in the Series is enough to rid Clemens from the memories of Sox fans. But right after the All-Star game, the Sox didn't roll immediately. First, Theo Epstein had to make one of the big-

gest trades in Boston sports history and ship Nomar Garciaparra, who was becoming a hampering team poison, in a three-way deal that would give the Sox shortstop Orlando Cabrera and first basemen Doug Mientkiewicz (yes, I spelled that right on the first try). This was undoubtedly the turning point in their season. After this, the Sox sizzled in August and September—with the Major League's best record in that time span—to clinch their second straight Wild Card. In the third game of their opening series against the Angels, the new Mr. October David Ortiz ended the Red Sox sweep with a towering moonshot over the Green Monster. But nothing prepared us for the ALCS against the Yankees.

Everything in Red Sox history seemed to lead up to the point where the Sox were down 3-0 to their hated rivals, just one game from elimination after a 19-8 thrashing the previous night. But somehow, some way, they were able to rally. A Dave Roberts steal, two walk off hits by Ortiz, an indefatigable bullpen, a hobbling yet somehow amazing Curt Schilling, a Derek Lowe gem on two days rest; the Sox were able to pull everything together and make an improbable climb on a uncharted route over a mountain that had been haunting them for such a long time. The Yankees had just completed the biggest meltdown in the history of sports. Alex Rodriguez was crying. Heaven had come to earth. Scissors beat rock. Rock beat paper. Charlie Brown had finally won a game. And any worries that the Sox would ease up and lose in the Series were flushed away almost as soon as they were said as the Sox completed a clean sweep of a mighty Cardinals team that held the major's best record during the regular season. Pandemonium ensued in Sox Nation; the Curse was history, the 1918 chants were history, and now the Sox could finally become a normal franchise and usher in a new era. In the end, 2004 was more than just a great sports year—it was a year in which The Impossible Dream had become not only possible, but a reality.

CELTICS / from page 18 to easy steals. He is a great addition to our squad, especially if the Celtics want to go all the way this year.

Finally, we come to the superstar of the team, none other than Paul Pierce, or as some like to call him, "Sweet-P". His mastery of jump shots from all over the floor and also the way he always goes to the hole is what makes him so intimidating to his opponents. If someone looks at the number of free throws made and the number

of free throws attempted in every season since 2001, Pierce is sure to be in the top two in both the categories. He is a franchise player, but now that he has finally bought a house in Boston, it seems more believable that he truly does want to play in Boston till the end of his days. Although he is still haunted by being stabbed in a nightclub two years ago, Pierce's gritty determination and sheer will to be the best is living proof that he is one of the best players in the

league. The Celtics should be able to roll through the regular season now that they have had some time to get their chemistry working and have had quite a few learning experiences in closing out games better in the fourth quarter. Paul Pierce, Gary Payton, Ricky Davis, Raef Lafrentz and the rookies should be able to come together for a run to give yet another championship to most storied franchise in NBA history.

## AB Hockey Gears Up For Another Season

By SCOTT LABENSKI &  
*Correspondent*  
BRYAN SHAFFER  
*Spectrum Staff*

When it starts snowing in early November in New England, it can only mean one thing: Acton-Boxborough's hockey season is just around the corner. The hockey team hopes to improve upon the mediocre varsity season of 2003-04 in which they went 7-13. The hockey team just needed to add 3 more wins to their win total last year and they would have propelled themselves to the state tournament. With a few new faces and a few new strategies, the boys varsity hockey team appears solid enough to make it over the edge into the state tournament.

Head coach Dan Fontas, returning for his second season, along with his assistant coach and brother Mark Fontas, who runs the defensive show, hope to use what they learned from coaching their rookie season to improve the team as a whole. Along with seasoned veteran, assistant varsity coach, and junior varsity head coach Wayne Caldwell, the coaching staff hopes to develop the young junior varsity players into varsity standouts. Senior Brendan "The Gymnasium" Agrillo complements this very talented staff by saying, "They are a very experienced group of guys; they all played a lot of hockey including college and/or professional level. I just hope their guidance and experience will help us achieve the ultimate goal of winning the state tournament."

Some returning players from last season include the three captains: senior goalie Marc "The Brick Wall" Emond, senior center Mark "Graz" Grazewski, and junior left-wing Robbie "The Body" Trainor. These three players have enough familiarity with the varsity level to transfer it to the younger players. Freshman right-wing prospect, Jeff "J-Rat" Rau-

tiola, expresses his feelings about his three role-model captains: "I just really look to these guys, you know. They are always there for me when I'm feeling down and don't understand a play or situation. I'm hoping their guidance will rub off on me and strengthen both my emotional and physical skills towards this awesome game of hockey." Other freshman prospects are not so optimistic. Freshman goalie Erik "The Hammer" Tugal says, "I'm very intimidated by the varsity team. They all just have solid and well-built bodies that translate into wicked hard shots on me. Plus, I also don't know where I fit into the puzzle among these varsity beasts."

Contrary to public belief, hockey is not just a game for Canadians fooling around on the ice; it is a game of hard work and conditioning. All of the varsity players have been training all off-season to get into top shape for the upcoming season. Seniors Agrillo, goalie James Kohout, and junior defenseman John Webster know what it takes to get in shape. Webster talks about his workout routine: "I've been hittin' up Gold's [Gym] two times a day before and after school every day, sometimes three times depending if I have any free periods. When I get there, Kohout already has a pre-made protein shake ready for when I'm done working the quads. If I need a spot on the bench, I can expect to find 'The Gymnasium' [Agrillo] around training, who is at the gym three maybe four times a day. All this hard work lifting iron gets my body in great shape for both practical and cosmetic reasons. What can I say? The ladies love it."

Overall, the outlook for the 2004-05 season appears very promising. Given that the AB squad is able to stay healthy, it should plan on vying for a playoff spot. Agrillo sums it up best: "You mess with the best, you end up with the rest."

Glenn Rosenberg, Owner/Director

the

**LEARNING PLACE**

411 Mass. Ave.#303 Acton, MA 01720 Phone: (978) 635-0088

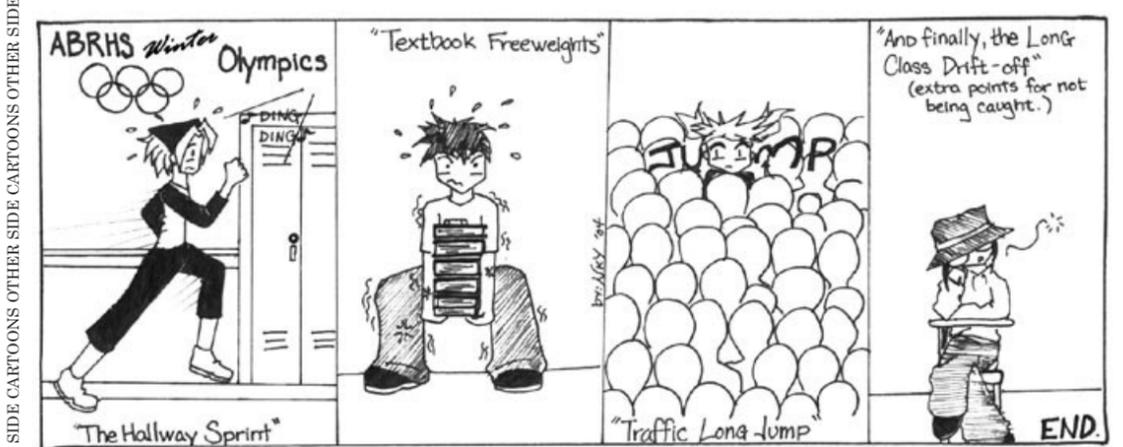
• Language Arts	• Vocabulary/Spelling
• Beginning Reading	• Math
• Reading Comprehension	• Homework Support
• Writing	• PSAT/SAT Preparation

Now Enrolling

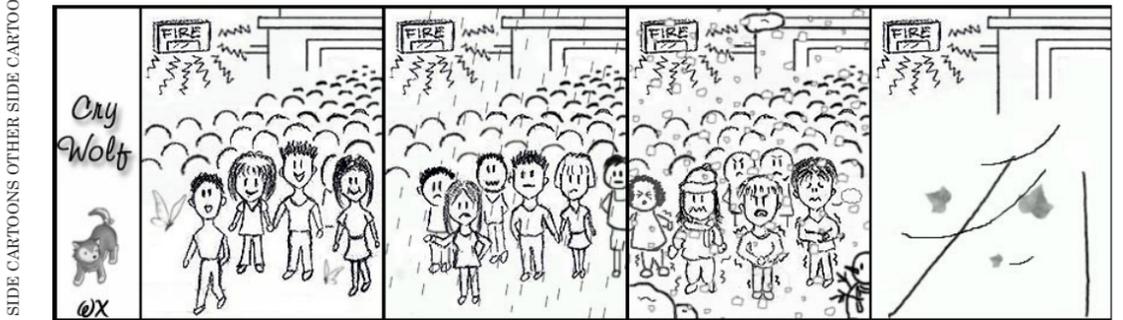
# GO AB!!!!

# The Other Side

CARTOONS OTHER SIDE CARTOONS OTHER SIDE CARTOONS OTHER SIDE CARTOONS OTHER SIDE CARTOONS OTHER SIDE CARTOONS



NINA YI/ CARTOONIST



WEN XIAO/ CARTOONIST

CARTOONS OTHER SIDE CARTOONS

## SPOUT-OFFS

- Why have benches in the front of the school if you get yelled at for sitting in them?
  - What is the deal with the statues in the Library? Were those people beheaded?
  - Why do the teachers wear black? Is it because school is like a funeral?
  - What is the deal with teachers? They tell us not to drink in the classroom, but of course the next day they hand back quizzes with mocha latte stains.
  - If there are three flag poles why fly only one flag?
  - Monitors should take afternoon naps.
  - Every freshman should have a noisemaker to drown out the constant fire alarms.
- These 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.

## The Keys to Becoming a Teacher's Pet

Disclaimer: Guide written, but not practiced, by OLGA GUZOVSKY

### Police Logs:

A resident of Windsor Avenue reported an elderly woman in his yard talking to a sick crow. The bird was removed and the woman went home.

Suspicious activity reported on Meadow Lane [on November 2]. Caller reports approximately 12 high school-aged youths trick or treating door to door. Parents advised to keep the kids in until the end of the party [and to demonstrate use of a calendar to the youths.]

Suspicious activity was reported on Massachusetts Avenue. It turned out to be a man using a phone.

An officer responded to reports of a tree blocking parts of Route 2. The officer was unable to locate the tree.

A Musket Drive resident requested removal of lawn signs that are unwanted and unauthorized. The resident was unable to bend over to remove them.

Officer stopped a suspicious person on Codman Hill Road who was taking video of roads and bridges in Boxborough. The person in question was returning home to Brazil and was taking movies for his family.

A school employee reported a man was swinging his arms on a hill near the McCarthy-Towne School on Charter Road. An officer spoke to the man, who was exercising.

An officer responded to a report of a sick raccoon on Heritage Road. The animal was escorted back into the woods.

Officers responded to Main Street for reports of a possible car accident. The reporting party seemed unsure whether she'd been in an accident.

An individual on Charter Road reported a suspicious youth walking towards the schools. An officer responded and reported that the youth was walking to school.

As most of you no doubt realize, all teachers have their favorites; the students that will get the A's. The factors influencing the selection of these lucky students vary somewhat from teacher to teacher, but you can work the system in your favor. If you're willing to invest the energy cultivating such a relationship, you will reap the rewards by the end of the term.

There is nothing that aggravates a teacher more than students who flaunt their intelligence. After all, a teacher's job is to educate us, and to do this, we must be dumber than they are so that we have something to learn. Teachers need to believe that they are smarter than their students, whether this is true or not, and demonstrating their superior intelligence will occasionally work wonders.

You'd be surprised by how simple this can be. By appearing helpless, you can make the teachers feel that their work actually has an impact on people's lives. Ask questions regularly and pretend that you don't quite understand the answers. Be careful not to overdo it and annoy the teacher. You should seem to understand the overall concept but be a little confused by certain details. It is easy to go too far here. You don't want to give the teacher the impression that you didn't pay attention in class or suggest that he or she is a poor teacher, both of which would hurt your image greatly. After class, ask if you can come by later for extra help.

During this extra help, be sure to constantly nod your head and act enlightened. Your teacher, amazed at how quickly you got the hang of the idea, will credit his or her own talents for your success. Clearly, your difficulties were the result of not having enough one-on-one time in the classroom. This is the fault of too many kids per class, and the two of you are comrades in the battle to overcome this hardship. He or she will subconsciously begin to like you because you, unlike the other students, took the effort to get extra help, in the process emphasizing the great impact he or she has had on your life. Again, you should be sure that you don't go overboard here. It could easily backfire if you monopolize the teacher's time and become a pest. Two or three times a week should be plenty.

All teachers are human (yes, even "so and so"), and as such they require praise and thanks every so often. Fill this crucial role in their lives by thanking them for every single little thing that they do. Don't waste the time to decide



Senior Rohin Jaiman practices his new religion based on Mr. Green. DAVID EMER/ SPECTRUM STAFF