



The Spectrum



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Acton-Boxborough Regional High School

February 2005

Long Live the (Burger) King!

By MATT PITA
Correspondent

It occurred on a chilly winter night. A seemingly innocuous entry in the Acton police report dated January 9 reports that “[a]t 11:44 p.m. police and fire departments responded to a call reporting smoke coming from the Burger King. Concord police were called in to assist with traffic.”

After the initial call, twenty firefighters came from Maynard, Concord, and Acton to try to stop the fire and keep it from spreading, but there was nothing they could do. BK fought along with the firefighters long and hard, but soon the flames “had it their way,” and the ceiling caved in.

Fortunately, no one from either the restaurant or the fire department was injured.

One of Acton-Boxborough’s own teachers and nearby resident to Burger King, Mr. Bill Seymour, was a witness to the fire.



Students attending the Burger King funeral service on January 16, 2005. Senior Matt Shearer presided over a small ceremony of AB students.
GEOFF BLIZZARD / Correspondent

The night it all went down, his son drove by the smoking, soon to be extinct BK on his way home. After hearing about it from his son, Mr. Seymour began to notice the noises from the scene, which would keep him up late into the night. “When motorists drove by Monday morning, there wasn’t much left to look at,” reported *The Beacon*. Although there may not have been much to look at, Mr. Seymour declares that there was something to smell. “The smell of soot was everywhere.”

Burger King has been here for as long as anyone can remember. Although some things remain uncertain, such

as the cause of the fire, what is certain is that no one around here wanted to see this happen. “It...it’s a shame” muttered Paul Dibona, one of many who had only fond memories of the restaurant and its food. “Yeah, darn right I liked it! The burgers were great. The Whopper deserves all the hype it has received, and oh, the fries, don’t get me started on the fries.” Many can confirm Dibona’s claim, but one cannot just stop with the food, because there is more to it than that. It was the price, so perfect for the student with just a few bucks in his pocket. It was a haven for tired parents too frazzled to cook. And not least of all was the consistently friendly and speedy service presented from the staff. All of this together is what made this fast-food restaurant “king.”

On the Friday following the fire, senior Matt Shearer presided

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AB Seniors Win Prestigious Science Awards

Eugene Dao

By STEPHANIE LI
Correspondent

Say the words “Optical Coherence Tomography” to just about anybody, and the most common reaction would be a blank stare. This is not true in the case of Eugene Dao, a senior at ABRHS. Dao created an ingenious scientific device, which placed him among regional finalists in the Siemens-Westhouse Competition, as well as among semi-finalists in the Intel Science Competition.

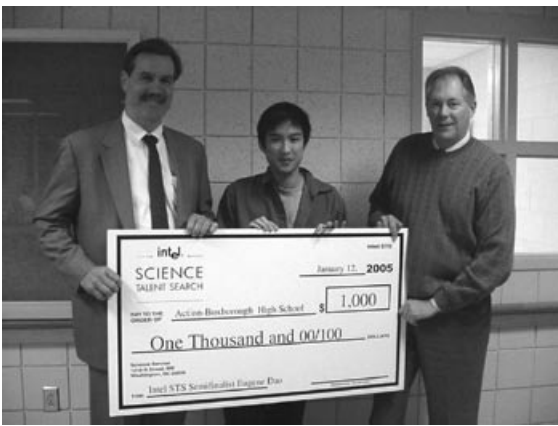
Dao’s device operates “Optical Coherence Tomography” (OCT) sensors. The device is capable of analyzing biological tissue with microscopic detail. Built out of technological tidbits lasers, optical fibers, and parts from computer speakers, the device scans and takes images of material without contact with the material. In the

future, it may potentially be developed into an aid for diabetics by measuring levels of blood sugar without penetration of the skin.

Though Dao’s work is a complicated gadget, building such a device is not outside the range of high school students’ abilities if, as Dao says, “they’re willing to put time and dedication into it.”

Dao learned about the science competitions when his father read about similar contests in a newspaper. He proceeded to do re-

search on his own, making heavy use of the Internet and books from the library. When asked for commentary, his physics teacher



Senior Eugene Dao poses for a picture after receiving \$1000 in the Intel Talent Search.
OLIVER HONG / Spectrum Staff

Mr. McClung stated, “Eugene is a very capable student, and this competition was all his doing.”

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Nikhil Pradhan

By SONG WANG
Spectrum Staff

Senior Nikhil Pradhan was an individual regional finalist in the prestigious Siemens-Westhouse Research Competition. Along with Eugene Dao, Pradhan gave AB an unprecedented two out of the five winners in New England. Pradhan, an exceptional chemistry student, was first drawn into research by an annual high school internship at the chemistry department of Boston University. He was one of the twenty-five students selected and accepted an invitation to continue in the summer.

Pradhan took advantage of the supercomputers at Boston University to model the proteins involved in Alzheimer’s Disease. Using real-life data on how the proteins react, the protein simulation program can accurately show what happens nanosecond by

nanosecond, an otherwise impossibility. He specifically worked with the coil-to-helix transition of the Alzheimer’s proteins, taking into account the properties of molecular dynamics. Molecular dynamics is a hybrid of biochemistry and physics on the chemical level, and it determines how the protein will physically fold and unfold. By understanding what exactly happens to the proteins with the onset of Alzheimer’s, Pradhan hopes to discover a way to reverse the process. In addition to the award Pradhan received, Siemens-Westhouse granted \$2000 to Acton-Boxborough Regional High School for his project.

Pradhan is also the Treasurer of National Honor Society and is currently working on tsunami relief. Nikhil Pradhan has been successful both as a protein researcher and as a student leader.

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News

2004 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results To Be Released

By DEBLEENA MITRA
Spectrum Staff

The results from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey sponsored by The Community Alliance for Youth (CAFY) will be released on February 15, 2005. A panel of community members will be at the ABRHS auditorium at 7:00 PM to announce the final statistics.

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey is sponsored by Emerson Hospital and administered by Northeast Health Resources. The survey is distributed to junior high and high school students in seven different school systems, including Acton-Boxborough; a total of 7,931 surveys were completed in 2004.

The questions, in multiple-choice format, asked about eleven different topics: safety, violence, suicide, tobacco use, alcohol use, drug use, gambling, HIV/AIDS education, sexual behavior, di-

etary behavior, and physical activity. The surveys were in booklet form, and the directions asked



Last year, students were questioned regarding cigarette and alcohol use, among other risky behaviors.
MATT KAGAN / *Spectrum Staff*

students to answer as honestly as possible. Teachers administering the test were encouraged not to complete the survey in order to stay consistent among survey groups.

The goal of the survey was to learn more about students' activities and to release the results to parents, so that any seriously threatening behavior that presents itself as a growing trend can be controlled. CAFY, the Acton-Boxborough organization created to work with the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, hopes that the results will help strengthen a student-parent alliance to prevent risky behavior in youth. Students and parents are encouraged to attend the announcement of the results of the survey on February 15 in the high school auditorium.

Community Citizens Flock to See the New ABRHS

By RASHMI JASRASARIA
Spectrum Staff

On Monday, January 17, while many were at home enjoying the last evening of their long weekend, community members of Acton and Boxborough came out to view the newly finished high school building. Acton-Boxborough Regional High School was open to the general public from 5:00 to 7:00pm on Martin Luther King Day, preceding the annual Community Service Awards Night in the auditorium.

Many parents, junior high students, alumni, and other community members came to the school to take student-guided tours through the newly renovated hallways and large, well-lit classrooms. Superintendent Bill Ryan and Principal Steven Donovan were standing in the lobby, greeting visitors and organizing groups for tours. Several AB students volunteered to be tour guides for the night. Many of them were planning to come later in the evening for the awards ceremony and decided to show up a couple of hours early to help out. Members of the cafeteria staff had hot cider and cookies set up for visitors in the east and west student centers.

In addition to the staff members and tour guides throughout the school, some clubs had booths set up in central locations, either conducting fundraisers or creat-

ing community awareness about their activities. David Emer and Mark Kagan handed out *Spectrum* newspapers to people entering through the school foyer. Set up next to them, the junior class officers, acting with STAR (Students for Tsunami Aid Relief), held a bake sale to raise money for the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund. The table was covered with a diverse assortment of baked goods, donated mostly by members of the junior class. The sale was very successful, attracting a majority of the community

"As a grad of AB, I'm incredibly impressed with the facilities that better serve the students' needs."

-James Eldridge

members. Next to them, Turner Construction set up several tables with construction plans and additional information on the school building project.

In front of the auditorium, ABCO set up "Empty Bowls," a community service project in collaboration with the art department. They sold ceramic bowls that the pottery class had made, and the proceeds went to a hunger organization. Many people could

be seen walking around with their very own "empty bowl." Next to this booth was the ABCO canned food drive. In the commons, Mr. Beck, the speech and debate coach, and some team members were available to share information about their club with visitors, in front of their award-covered table.

Around six o'clock, the east student center came alive, as the cast of *Anything Goes*, this year's musical, performed some selections from some of their tap and singing numbers. All the visitors crowded the walls to view the preview, and tickets were on sale in the lobby.

Clearly, the evening was exciting for community members. They had a chance to see the new school, be exposed to some school activities and enjoy refreshments. Many were impressed by the changes. Alumni were especially surprised. Representative James Eldridge had a look around and was very pleased. "As a grad of AB, I'm incredibly impressed with the facilities that better serve the students' needs. It had to grow because there are so many more students than [there were] ten to twenty years ago." The school is finally finished after four long years of construction, the community, as a whole, embraces its changes.

Gavin DeGraw Is Coming To AB!

By WENXI LI
Spectrum Staff

"I don't want to be anything other than what I've been trying to be lately..." These familiar words, sung to an upbeat melody, comprise one of the most popular songs in the music world today: "I Don't Want To Be" by Gavin DeGraw.

AB English teacher Ms. Julia Buonopane is the grand prize-winner for the Rock & Roll Library Song Lesson Contest. The contest "challenges educators of all grade levels to create unique and effective lesson plans" for Gavin DeGraw's hit single. Her prize includes \$300 and a performance by Gavin DeGraw at ABRHS. Students will also have the unique opportunity to have a question and answer session with this platinum selling artist.

After hearing about the contest from her mother, Ms. Buonopane was attracted to this Rock & Roll Library competition. Her winning lesson plan, "Breaking Free from Conformity - A Study in Modern Day Transcendentalism," was inspired by Buonopane's sophomore class discussion on Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. The transcendentalism characteristics of self-reliance, non-conformity, and staying true to oneself inspired her to play this theme song from the WB TV Show "One Tree Hill" to her English classes. Buonopane told the class that Gavin DeGraw's lyrics seemed to suggest that DeGraw was relating the message of "a modern day Emerson." Her students responded well to this assignment because "they could really relate to the song, and using Gavin's song helped them to understand what Emerson wanted to say in the 1800s to students of today" said Buonopane.

EUGENE DAO/ from page 1
Along with winning an individual award, Siemens-Westinghouse also awarded the high school \$2000.

Indeed, Eugene's independent time and dedication elevated him to a spot as a regional finalist in the prestigious Siemens Westinghouse Competition in the areas of math, science, and technology. Amidst the difficult competition of 1,213 high school students, 257 were chosen as potential regional finalists. On November 6, 2004, Dao and the remaining competitors presented their projects at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. After a 12-minute public report on their projects, they were then expected to answer 12 minutes of private questions before

Gavin DeGraw is a 27-year-old singer, songwriter, pianist, and guitarist. He was anointed as one of New York City's best-kept musical secrets in 1998 by *Time Out* magazine. With the release of his debut album, *Chariot*, in the summer of 2003, his intimate, emotionally intense music has made him the toast of Manhattan's downtown music scene. DeGraw has made appearances on national television as a guest on the *Late Show with David Letterman* and *Last Call with Carson Daly*. In an interview wearing one of his signature hats, he explained that his song, "I Don't Want To Be", was "heavily influenced by the identity crisis right now that exists amongst youth." Ms. Buonopane's interpretation and lesson plan were very similar to DeGraw's original intentions.

As of today, it is not yet known if the entire school or just the sophomore class will be able to attend DeGraw's concert; however, Ms. Buonopane hopes and encourages that the all students will be able to attend this exciting event. It has been suggested that holding the performance on Leary Field would allow the entire student body to attend; however, no actual plans have been made.

Her first year of teaching at AB, Buonopane feels privileged "to share this opportunity with everyone." Ms. Buonopane plans to donate the \$300 prize money to the English department for buying books. A huge fan of DeGraw herself, she is as overjoyed as the students are of the arrival of Gavin DeGraw to AB in the spring of 2005.

Beaming with enthusiasm, Sophomore Mark Amoroso said, "Gavin DeGraw understands the social complexities facing teenagers of today. I can't wait to see him!"

judges. Dao was then chosen as one of only five individual regional finalists.

Equally impressive is the fact that Dao still finds the time to engage in normal student activities. Besides building his scientific device, he also plays keyboard in a jazzy rock band with other students. Matt Shearer, a friend and former band mate of Dao, insists, "Eug's godly keyboarding inspires me to be a better person every day." Apparently, Dao's success is not limited to the field of science. Whether keyboarding or constructing OCT scanners, Eugene Dao provides inspiration to AB students.

News

Students Oppose Bush Inauguration

By TESS O'BRIEN
Spectrum Staff

High schools are often viewed as gossip mills, but the constant interaction, the constant re-mixing and re-conversing of students that happens every day is merely an example of the power of word of mouth. Consequently, rumors can be spread swiftly through the population, but a more positive aspect of this dense clump of chattering students is the fact that messages and information can spread to everyone's ears in almost no time at all. Rarely is this fact taken advantage of.

Sophomore Caitlin Eisenberg, a member of AB's Young Democrats club and the impetus behind the planned inauguration-day walkout, decided early on

that word of mouth was how she would notify the school population of her plan. "I had begun planning a couple of weeks beforehand," explained Eisenberg, "and I kept telling people about it." Clearly, this method was successful: the day before the planned walkout, the hallways were buzzing with talk of the protest the following day. The decision to spread news orally, however, came out of necessity as well as resourcefulness. Posters and PA announcements must be okayed by the administration, and the school was unsurprisingly disinclined to endorse a political action and didn't want students to skip class for a walkout. "It was happening despite the administration," says Eisenberg. "Several of my friends were hesitant due to the threat of truancies and detentions but I, for one, was prepared to accept them. I told them that if you have permission, it's not a protest."

Unrelated to the walkout was the Code Pink demonstration on the same day. Code Pink is, according to its official website, "a women-initiated grassroots peace and social justice movement that seeks positive social change through proactive, creative protest and non-violent direct action." Word of mouth was, again, the critical, though not exclusive, mean of spreading news of Code Pink around the school, and it was responsible for a turnout of pink-dressers rivaling that of Valentine's Day.

There is, however, an obvious negative aspect of word of mouth: miscommunication. Because Code Pink and the walkout

coincided, many students mistakenly associated the two with the same cause; by Thursday, many of the pink-clad students thought that the pink was to show their opposition to Bush, though a few became confused when asked why pink represented their protest. "We should have picked blue for the anti-Bush color," one student opined. "That's the color of the Democrats and also, a lot more people have blue clothes!" Clearly, this student was unaware of Code Pink entirely.

Some students erroneously connected pink with the walkout and dressed up without knowing the significance of the color.

"Several of my friends were hesitant [to walk out] due to the threat of truancies and detentions but I, for one, was prepared to accept them."
- Caitlin Eisenberg

"I think the other students that participated were pretty well informed," one student asserted, "but just as there are kids who love Bush because their parents do,

there are many that hate him for the same reason." Perhaps the misinformation regarding Code Pink was an inevitable side effect of word of mouth, but the grassroots communication was nevertheless necessary, perhaps the only way of informing the school population of the walkout.

The plan for the walkout ultimately did not come to fruition, not because of lack of interest or fear of the administration, but due to the brutality of New England weather. On the morning of the planned walkout, thermometers measured 19 degrees Fahrenheit, six when taking wind chill into account. The initial planners of the protest realized that it was just too cold for students to stand outside, immobile, for close to an hour. Most others agreed, and though many were "really disappointed when it didn't work out," the protesters' message was, ironically, spread regardless. In the words of one student, "I was not protesting the inauguration or the results of the election - though I am disappointed in America's choice. It's not that I think I'm going to change anything; it's that I want people to know that I have an opinion and a voice, too."

So despite the failure of the walkout itself, the students' protest was not feckless; their voices were heard. It was the word of mouth, the prevalence of interest and knowledge of the walkout; it became a mini-protest in itself, the expression of students' feelings of opposition to Bush. At the end of the day, the action itself was unimportant compared to the message.

By JULIA REY
Correspondent

On Saturday, January 29 at 6:45 am, some 50-odd teenagers were voluntarily up, dressed in professional attire and ready to spend the whole day giving speeches, reciting poetry and debating. Even though many of them were holding coffee and complaining about how early and cold it was, they were ready to show the rest of the Massachusetts Forensics League that the AB Speech and Debate Team is a force to be reckoned with.

Once the bus got going, the paper shuffling began. The participants in the Interpretational events began talking to the windows

to practice their pieces. The Extemporaneous Speakers got out their copies of the *Boston Globe*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *New York Times*. The Student Congress members wrote hurriedly and discussed bill order, rules committee, and how the arguments between the two chambers were to be divided

At Newton South High School, Katie Ames, Co-Captain, called everyone in for warm-ups. Over 70 students were magically able to squeeze themselves into a regular-size classroom to prepare for the long day ahead. The warm-ups began with a humorous skit by Susan Yao and Katie Ames, in which they acted out the Speech and Debate alphabet. Tongue-twisters followed the skit and the

BURGER KING / from page 1

over a small funeral service in honor of the fallen eatery. Approximately twenty students attended the service, which took place at the entrance to the Burger King parking lot and was opened with a short eulogy by Shearer. Following the eulogy, Andy O'Donnell trumpeted a particularly melancholy rendition of "Taps." Many students shared stories of their favorite burger joint, with one girl confessing that Burger King was the location of her most recent birthday dinner, trumping classier restaurants such as Bugaboo Creek. Attracting interest from passersby, many cars slowed to a creep in order to catch a glimpse of the funeral. It is safe to say that BK has received the proper funeral it deserves and can now rest in peace.

Speech and Debaters Capture Third

P-A-R-T-Y chant ended this gathering.

Afterwards, this gathering, the participants were assigned numbers for their schedules. Many were taking part in two events and had to figure out the exact timing in order to be able to switch gears from prose to poetry without any



Senior Ankit Chandra participating in Group Discussion at the "Super Bowl" Tournament.

SNEHA ARJUN / Correspondent

confusion.

By 9:30 the cafeteria of Newton South, where about 400 students had made themselves comfortable, was empty, which meant that the first round had begun. By 11:30 the cafeteria began to fill up again, with students ravenously getting lunch. Mr. Beck, the team's coach, asked everyone how things were going and how they thought they did. He also dealt with some students' nervousness, especially among certain congress members. Two more hours of rounds followed another exodus from the cafeteria at 12:30. At around 4:00, it was announced who broke, or advanced, to final rounds. AB impressively broke 26 of its 78 entries. Unquestionably, Acton-Boxborough has a

very strong and multi-talented team, making it a serious competitor. The students who didn't break either stayed in the cafeteria playing cards and chatting, or went to watch their teammates in the final rounds. The most popular event to watch was Multiple, consisting of a group of students acting out a short, usually humorous skit.

At about 6:30 the finalist rankings were announced: Sophomore Mark Amoroso received first place in Student Congress, Senior Katie Ames won first place in Humorous Interpretation, and Junior Helen Alesbury captured first place in Novice Extemporaneous Speaking. In Varisty Extemporaneous Speaking, Senior Phil Castinguay and Senior Brandon Lemos took fifth and sixth place, respectively.

Sophomore Anna Tarakanva received an Honorable Mention for Group Discussion, and Sophomore Monica Trobagis was named Top Novice and placed second in Declamation. Overall, Acton-Boxborough placed third as a team.

At about 8:00 pm the AB speech members were back at the high school parking lot. They quickly gathered and figured out rides to Chang An, a Chinese restaurant. This trip to the restaurant is a tradition and a great way to end the long day. Congratulations to the AB Speech and Debate Team. Not only does it foster the spirit of teamwork and individual effort, it is also a competitive force to be reckoned with, among the best in Massachusetts.

The first Burger King restaurant was established in Miami, Florida in 1954 by James McLamore and David Edgerton. In those days it cost just 37 cents for a Whopper. Since then the corporation has brought classic sayings such as



Students bid adieu to BK one last time.

MATT BASKIN / Spectrum Staff

"the bigger the Burger, the better the Burger," "Have it Your Way," and of course the most recent,

"At BK, You Got It!" The expansion isn't merely in the size of the food, but in that of the corporation as well: there are now over 11,220 restaurants in 61 different countries, providing jobs for almost 350,000 people and serving approximately 11.1 million worldwide daily.

It's never easy when something familiar goes down in smoke. Everyone can remember a meal or a meeting that occurred at Burger King. Although we might never find out what truly happened that night, we have our memories. In the words of a long-gone French guard, "The King is dead. Long live the King!"

Local Politics

Student Council Rolling Along

By EVAN BROWN
Spectrum Staff

The ABRHS Student Council has had a busy but rewarding month, and the future looks even

and lively music. The cost was \$7 per person, and the event was deemed a great success. "We were very pleased," noted Student Council Treasurer Andrew

raiser to aid in the relief efforts. By collecting spare change from students and teachers around school, the collectors managed to raise \$1087.07. President Erin Mulcahy was pleased with the fundraiser, and at a February 1 meeting complimented the representatives. "Everybody did really well," she remarked.

Closer to home, the council managed to raise a considerable amount of money for their own funds by selling blue foam "#1" hands. The hands were sold at the AB-Bedford boys varsity basketball game on Friday, January 29. They sold out, and \$164 were raised.

The future looks even busier for the student council representatives. The annual Valentine's Day carnation sale will take place this year, at a cost of \$1 dollar per carnation. A poker tournament is being planned for March, and a subcommittee of representatives has been formed to organize this event. Interested students should look for posters and listen to the announcements for more information in the near future. "[We] expect that will be popular," commented Senior Representative David Xiang.

Poulin. "The turnout was great."

The Student Council has been occupied with more than just dances, however. In response to the devastation wrought by the December 26 tsunami that left millions in Asia without food, shelter, or necessary medical care, the council began a fund-



Andrew Poulin (Treasurer), Katie Peabody (Secretary), Erin Mulcahy (President), and Martin "Yeatman" Benson (Vice-President) have provided steady leadership for the Student Council all year.

EVAN BROWN/ *Spectrum Staff*

brighter. Between the January Semi-Formal, the tsunami victim relief effort, and the planning of a future pokernightandotherevents, the officers and representatives have accomplished a great deal.

The Semi-Formal, held January 7th at the Boxborough Holiday Inn, featured dancing

Blue State Fever Strikes AB

By EVAN BROWN
Spectrum Staff

A club devoted to the Democratic Party will soon be a part of Acton Boxborough Regional High School. Founded by junior Natalie Kertzner, the club will be open to all AB students. The first meeting will be February 16 after school in the library.

Kertzner recognized the need for a politically fueled club when she noticed a growing trend of apathy towards politics among her classmates. "Too many kids say they don't

possible visits to the club, and Kertzner hopes a guest appearance will be possible at a future meeting. Michael Dukakis, the former Massachusetts governor and 1988 Democratic nominee for presi-

AB students who will be 18 before the March 29 town election. "We will be actively campaigning in support of the override," noted Kertzner. In addition to these local efforts, the club will also work to raise awareness on a number of global issues.

Kertzner expects a substantial turnout at the first meeting. "I really hate it that a lot of people don't care about politics," she emphasized. "This is a good way for people to learn more about what's going on in the world, [and] a good way to meet people and get involved."



Natalie Kertzner, who volunteered at the State House last summer, will be leading the new AB Dems club.

dent, has also been discussed as a possible visitor, though nothing has been confirmed at this time. The Acton chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW), of which Kertzner is a member, has also endorsed the club.

While the club will certainly feature a good amount of debate and discussion regarding politics, Kertzner is determined to take action outside of the school building as well. The club will do volunteer work such as voter registration, especially of those

PRESS RELEASE: On February 16th, 2005 at 7 PM at the Acton Public Library, in the framework of a regular monthly meeting, the local chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW) will be sponsoring a presentation given by three ABRHS students: Natalie Kertzner, Jocelyn Richard and David Emer.

The presentation, which will include a Q&A session, will primarily address the issues of teen-

Override Talks Kick Into Overdrive

By EVAN BROWN
Spectrum Staff

For years, the Acton-Boxborough Regional school system has been among the best in the state of Massachusetts. In athletics, art, and above all, academics, the schools serving Acton and Boxborough have excelled. However, this excellence has come at a cost, and one that has represented a heavy burden to the taxpayers of the region. With each new school year, the cost of running the schools increases. Fortunately for the students and faculty at ABRHS, the citizens of the region have been very generous, passing overrides that increased property taxes and provided the schools with the funding they required. This spring, the school district will ask for more help from the residents.

The vote for the override is certain; the details of it, however, are not so concrete. In fact, the exact dollar amount has not been decided upon at this point. The Acton Leadership Group, a body that coordinates the schools budget proposals, has suggested a type of vote in which the voters could elect an override of \$3.8 million, \$4.5 million, or no override at all. The vote will take place on March 29 in a town election. The results will most likely be known by the next morning.

Even with the help the schools received from the 2003 override, the financial situation at Acton and Boxborough schools has been difficult. With the rapidly rising enrollments, costly expansion—especially at the high school—has been necessary. With more students, class sizes have been growing steadily, and they will only continue to grow, while the funds available to the school will stay the same. As if these problems weren't enough, state aid to the schools is down 25% from past years, meaning the schools have essentially had to do more with less.

The Acton Boxborough Student Activities Fund (ABSAF) has been a tremendous help in relieving the strains put on the budget. With nothing left to cut in the already tight budget, the school system began looking to

extra-curricular activities that could be reduced or eliminated to save money. ABSAF stepped in and offered to pay for the programs—including freshman and junior varsity sports teams—that would have been removed. This eased the burden on the administration somewhat, but as class sizes grew, it became apparent that there simply was not enough money available to the school system to allow for the schools to continue functioning the way they had. More funding would have to become available, or drastic measures would become necessary.

At this stage in the process of proposing and ultimately voting on the override, administrative officials and residents have hotly debated the necessity of the tax increase. The fact that an override was passed only two years ago has angered some taxpayers, who feel that the town is asking for too much from residents. While some have suggested cutting unnecessary programs at the high school, the administration feels there is nothing left to cut. ABRSD Superintendent Bill Ryan and ABRHS Principal Steve Donovan have both spoken at numerous School Committee meetings during the current school year about the dire condition the schools would be left in without the money from an override. "There isn't much fat to trim [from the budget]," Ryan said at a recent meeting of the AB Regional School Committee. "What fat there was has already been trimmed over the past several years." Ryan estimates that nearly \$3 million dollars would need to be cut from the budget should the override fail to pass.

As with any tax increase, some residents of the area are strongly opposed to the override. "Nobody wants to vote to raise their own taxes," observed Ryan. However, past overrides have also been met by opposition, only to pass when the time to vote arrived. "I think people recognize that the schools are an asset to the community," commented Acton Resident Ellen Boyle. "Sometimes we need to make sacrifices in order to maintain the wonderful system we have."

Issues Faced by Teenage Girls

age girls and young women such as peer pressure, drug and alcohol use, anorexia/bulimia, sex and academic pressure. The presentation, open to the public, is for a mature audience only.

The National Organization for Women is the largest organization of feminist activists in the United States. NOW has 500,000 contributing members and 550 chapters in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. NOW's goal

has been to take action to bring about equality for all women. The organization works to eliminate discrimination and harassment in the workplace, schools, the justice system, and all other sectors of society; to secure abortion, birth control and reproductive rights for all women; to end all forms of violence against women; and to eradicate racism, sexism and homophobia.

Local Politics

The Obligation of Being Eighteen: Selective Service

By DAVID EMER
Spectrum Staff

Charles Fisher-Post turned eighteen on September 24. On his birthday, he registered to vote, bought his first (and hopefully his last) scratch ticket, drove after midnight, and began planning a trip for Montreal. Then, he realized something and he told his brother, “Shoot, I need to fill out that form I received in the mail.”

The form he refers to is his Selective Service form, which all males are required to fill out within 30 days of their 18th birthday.

just put my name and social security number in on the website.”

Fowlkes was not at all fazed by the possibility of being drafted. He said, “I don’t feel that I’ll be called up so I don’t really care. It’s not like Switzerland where you have to serve for two years.”

His attitude is prevalent among most of today’s teenagers despite the multi-front war on terrorism that the U.S. military is currently engaged in. There is little serious discussion about re-instituting the unpopular draft system in the United States. In fact, H.R. 163, a bill that would have set up a draft,

American citizens. Only males on visitor or student visas and males living in diplomatic families are exempt from registering with the SSS and potentially being drafted if a draft were instituted. Charles Fisher-Post said, “Requiring non-citizens to register seems pretty unfair because they could be fighting for a cause supported by politicians who they did not have any power in appointing.”


Another divisive issue over Selective Service is whether females should be required to register as well as males. The Internet form to register with the Selec-

everyone to fill out their forms. He said, “When you turn 18, the reasons for filling out your SSS outweigh the reasons for not filling it out.” Lowe continued, “Not filling it out as a way of protest is only detrimental to you, and by evasion you are only sending another person that you think you’re better than to war in your place.”

Charles Fisher-Post did ultimately fill out his form on time after some deliberation, but did not do it with the assuredness that Lowe had when he filled out his form. Fisher-Post explained, “There seem to me to be some problems with the Selective Service System, but I wouldn’t encourage people to not fill the form out.”

ABRHS Library Featured Books


The Library is currently featuring a selection of books on race, gender and culture. Included are *Face Relations*, an anthology of short stories on color and appearances; *Shabanu, Daughter of the Wind*, the Newbery Honor book on the coming-of-age of a young Pakistani girl; and much, much more. Books can be found at the back of the library, near the computers.



Selective Service System
Registration Form


DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE

1 go on-line




If you can register on-line, don't mail this form back! Go to www.sss.gov to register.

2 or call



If the information below is correct, you may register by calling 1-800-730-9211. Use your PIN:

3 or mail back




If you can't register on-line or by phone, follow the instructions below, tear off this card and mail back with postage.

IF YOU HAVE REGISTERED ON-LINE OR BY PHONE, DO NOT SEND THIS FORM BACK!

DAVID E EMER
20 BLACKHORSE DR
ACTON, MA 01720-2045

4 (optional)



If you are concerned about privacy of your personal data, mail this card to Selective Service in an envelope with postage.

Most males receive this form from the Selective Service System a few weeks before their eighteenth birthday.

The Selective Service System (SSS), a low-budget government department, stores the names of all registered males who are between 18 and 25 in case there is a need to re-institute a military draft in the event of a national crisis. Currently, the U.S. military consists only of volunteers. Failure to register with the SSS, however, is a felony that may result in up to \$250,000 in fines, up to five years imprisonment, or both.

Despite the potential punishments, many teenagers fail to register with the SSS, especially in Massachusetts, which had a woeful ranking of 44th among all states for the percentage of males who fill out their selective service forms. In 2003, only 84% of required males registered with the SSS in Massachusetts. Nevada had the lowest percentage of males filling out the required form with 79% and six states were tied for first at 99% of all males filling out the form.

To avoid breaking the law, males can register by filling out their name, address, social security number and date of birth:

- Online at <http://www.sss.gov>
- By letter (old-fashioned) mail
- At the post office
- By checking a box on the application form for Federal Student Financial Aid (FAFSA form)

While Charles-Fisher Post mailed his Selective Service Form, Senior Wes Fowlkes sent his form in online. He commented, “It was easy. Really, I

was defeated by a whopping 402 – 2 margin in the U.S. House of Representatives in October.

Even though the chance of the institution of another draft is low, the Selective Service System has already developed a plan for conducting a draft. If instructed by Congress and the President to conduct a draft, The Selective Service System would set up a lottery to call young men to service based on their age. The first men called would be those turning 20 during the calendar year of the lottery. The next group to be called up would be men that are turning 21, and then 22, and so forth. Men who would be turning 26 or older in the calendar year of the lottery would not be called up, and men who are turning 19 or are 18 would not be called up until all the men in the 20-25 age group are called.

The Selective Service System plans to avoid lengthy college deferments—a widely abused method that young Americans employed to avoid serving in Vietnam—by only granting college deferments for the remainder of the semester in which a student is drafted. College seniors would be allowed to complete their full final year of college.

While many of the Vietnam-era abuses have been reformed, concerns still exist about the fairness of the system. Some AB students are troubled that virtually all males are required to register with the service even if they are not

tive Service has a box to check off for being a female with a note that reads, “Current law does not permit females to register.”

The 1981 Supreme Court decision of *Rostker v. Goldberg* upheld the constitutionality of excluding women from the draft. Senior Joanna Perry agrees that women should not be drafted, citing men’s bigger physical stature.


Disagreeing with Perry, Wes Fowlkes mentioned the feminist struggle for equality with men in arguing that women should be required to register. He said, “Why not? They want to be equal, and it’s not like they’re going to be put on the front line. They do other stuff like engineering and communications and such.”

Another senior, Katie Goble, explained that she would not personally want to go to war, but said, “...We’re all equal and we should have to serve our country just like the guys.”

Individuals who plan on requesting “Conscientious Objector” status if they are called to service during a war are still required to register with the Selective Service. If called to service, individuals applying for “Conscientious Objector” status must prove that they are intrinsically opposed to war and violence and are not opposing a specific war for political purposes.

Senior Class President Peter Lowe said that he understands that some people are opposed to war in general, but strongly encouraged

Calendar	
February	
11	Anything Goes, 7:30 PM
12	Anything Goes, 7:30 PM
17	Report cards distributed
21	Winter Recess begins
24	Acton School Committee meeting, 7:30 PM
March	
1	PCR Day
2	Spring College Night, 7 PM
3	Regional School Committee meeting, 7:30 PM
8	Band Concert, 7:30 PM
11	Professional Day
15	Career Breakfast, 7:23 AM
17	Acton School Committee meeting, 7:30 PM
25	Good Friday
31	Joint School Committee meeting, 7:30 PM



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Bracelets, Bake Sales and More — What AB is Doing for Tsunami Aid Relief

By RUMYA RAGUNATH
Spectrum Staff

December 26, 2004 will go down in history as one of the greatest tragedies in recent times. On that fateful day, the world's most powerful earthquake in 40 years caused a devastating tsunami

that claimed the lives of more than 200,000 people and left hundreds of thousands homeless. Destroyed communities and food shortages compelled many philanthropic organizations to aid the victims, but it was the striking stories of mass graves, the thousands of orphaned children, and the devastated morale that distinguished this particular catastrophe and the immense relief effort that followed it.

One such relief effort is AB's own STAR Program. STAR (Students for Tsunami Aid Relief) has representatives from the Student Council, ABCO, Asha, and other groups who are willing to help. The first meeting was on January 5, where ideas for fundraisers and for increasing awareness were brainstormed. One of the fundraisers put into action was the junior class bake sale during the AB

Open House on January 17. The bake sale collected \$550 dollars, which will go to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief fund. Another successful event was the change collection drive, whose money will go to Save the Children. Other ideas for fundraising include selling bracelets, holding

was to ask local companies and businesses to match the money raised by the school. An interesting donation plan brought up last meeting was asking adults to donate a day's salary to the tsunami relief fund. This fundraiser has worked before with groups such as Asha, which raises money for underprivileged children in India to receive an education.

Joint fundraisers with other nearby high schools such as Concord-Carlisle were also suggested. STAR plans on not only doing fundraisers in school, but also involving the community and parents. These ideas have yet to be finalized in the coming meetings, which will be held every Wednesday after school in room 138S. The goal of STAR is to bring together the school and community to raise a total of

\$5,000, which goes even farther in Asia than it does in America. STAR is not only raising money for immediate aid, but also plans on continuing to raise money, as disease will slowly take a toll on many from the disaster areas.

Erin Mannherz, a Student Council representative who has worked on STAR initiatives, commented, "I believe that if each high school in America does what AB is doing, we can collectively make a huge difference."



Junior class officers, on behalf of STAR, held a bake sale during the community open house Monday, January 7 that brought in \$950 for the American Red Cross disaster relief fund.

JONATHAN EISENBERG / *Spectrum Staff*

a community fair, and getting local businesses involved. Ideas ranged from holding a pillow fight to a school-wide talent show.

No idea is off the table. Selling bracelets is an idea that is expected to collect lots of money, given the recent popularity of the Livestrong and breast cancer bracelets. School groups such as the Recycling Club will be sought after for the bottles and cans they can potentially collect in exchange for money. Another idea

Foreign Exchange No Longer an Option at AB

By SUE ZHANG and OLGA
GUZOVSKY
Spectrum Staff

As senior Ankit Chandra puts it, "There has been a lack of hot foreign chicks lately here at AB." And though not everyone sees it from Ankit's point of view, his statement definitely brings up an interesting issue: Why aren't there any foreign visitors anymore? Why has AB's foreign exchange program become extinct in the past few years?

Foreign exchange programs are enlightening, for both the students that actually travel to a different country and those that receive exchange students. Such a program provides students with the chance of interacting with teenagers their age of different countries and cultures. The school sends a few AB students to a different country for a number of weeks, admitting some foreigners to our school in exchange. AB students are able to experience life in a new country, living with a local family and attending school for a couple of weeks. The student is able to learn first hand what it's like to live somewhere other than America. "It was an incredible experience," said a student that wishes to remain anonymous.

Meanwhile, the students at home are able to enjoy the company of exchange students from a different country right here at Acton-Boxborough. These foreigners can teach us a variety of things, injecting a bit of their customs into ours and providing us with new outlooks on American life. It's not just the students who can benefit from such a program; parents acting as hosts are able to enjoy the presence of a foreign student in their household as well.

Yet despite all the privileges that an exchange program offers, AB currently cannot afford to have one. Yes, as with the many other changes that are currently being established, the reason is primarily financial. As we all probably know from previous issues of *The Spectrum*, AB is already in debt and having an exchange program would add more financial stress to the school. At a time when AB is

already struggling with growing class sizes, unsupervised study areas, and constantly increasing prices for the senior parking lot, an additional expense simply cannot be tolerated.

Another factor in the removal of the program has to do with the trouble of setting up an exchange—the hassle of contacting a school in France or Spain to arrange the tradeoff, and making sure students have no trouble crossing the border, etc. It's too much of a nuisance for the administration and teachers to go through right now when they're juggling other issues—like their over-packed classrooms.

Surprisingly, however, a factor that did not play a large role in the cancellation of the program is the new harsher immigration laws that took effect after 9/11. As Mr. Riley said, immigration laws are the same for foreign exchange students as for any other student, and thus the new stricter regulations would not have had too large an effect on the termination of the program. Instead, it's only the financial obstacle and the troubles that come with the program that makes setting up an exchange "not worth it right now," according to Mr. Riley.

However, this does not mean that AB is suffering too badly from the lack of such a program. As mentioned in the previous issue of *The Spectrum*, AB already has an extremely diversified group of students. And while perhaps this may not be enough to suit Ankit Chandra, we can all learn much about foreign cultures simply by speaking to our own friends right here at AB. Furthermore, the lack of an exchange program does not necessarily have to deprive AB students of all opportunities of going abroad. Each year, there is at least one excursion to a foreign country organized by teachers here at AB. Last year there was the trip to Greece and Rome, and this year, history teachers Mr. Green and Ms. Drowne are organizing another trip to the Mediterranean during April Vacation. Students interested in travel may join such an excursion or do so independently.

Natural Phenomenon: The Science Behind the Tsunami

By WENXI LI
Spectrum Staff

The energy of 23,000 of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima. Speeds of 1000 kilometers per hour. These astonishing numbers barely do justice in describing the effects of the devastating tsunami that wrecked havoc in the Indian Ocean region on December 26, 2004. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, a 9.0-magnitude earthquake caused a tsunami that hit a range of nations from Southeast Asia to the western coast of Africa.

Although tsunamis occur most frequently in the Pacific Ocean, they can occur wherever large bodies of water are found. The earliest known tsunami dates back to 1650 B.C. when the vol-

canic island Santorini erupted and caused tidal waves that crashed into the coast of Crete. The Southeast Asia Tsunami has caused such uproar in the global community because it has a death toll amounting to over 220,000 people. This does not include the tens of thousands of people reported missing or the millions of families. The Indian Ocean tsunami is considered the deadliest tsunami in recorded history.

Have you ever wondered where the word "tsunami" comes from? The term means harbor and wave in Japanese. It came about when Japanese fishermen, after returning to port, found the area surrounding the harbor devastated while they were unaware of any wave in the open water. This characteristic of tsunamis is pos-

sible because they have smaller waves offshore. The actual height of a tsunami wave is less than one meter high. This allows it to be practically unnoticeable to passengers on ships, producing only a "hump" as they pass through the ocean. However, despite this deceptive trait, the energy of the tsunami can pass through the water to depths of 4000 meters and below. Tsunamis also can travel at high speeds and great distances with very little energy loss. Damages of the tsunami can be seen thousands of miles from its origin, sometimes affecting locations on different continents.

The tsunami waves are created by disturbances that can displace a large amount of water, such as an earthquake, landslide, or vol-

See TSUNAMI / page 7

Glenn Rosenberg, Owner/Director

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World Reflections: Holi, Xin Nian, and Rosh Hashanah Too

By SUE ZHANG
Spectrum Staff

When I browsed through the AB school calendar for the first time, I noticed right away the line under a seemingly random day in September, marking it as a holiday. Upon closer examination, I realized the day was marked Rosh Hashanah. Another holiday nearby was marked Yom Kippur. I was overjoyed. At my former school, we were only given the "normal" holidays off--Veterans Day, Good Friday, Martin Luther King Day, etc.--so I was ecstatic to learn that at AB, not only would I get the usual holidays off, but a few Jewish holidays as well. The fact that I wasn't even Jewish seemed to make the deal even better. Later on in the year, I realized that I was also exempt from homework during Passover as well, just for living in a town with a sizeable Jewish population. It was a fact that I flaunted constantly to my old friends, unfortunate to not live in Jewish-inhabited areas.

However, later on in the school year, I began to want more than just the extra Jewish holidays. The thought came right after a Chinese New Year party, which had the misfortune of falling on a school night. Coming into school the next day, I met with a few of my Chinese friends, many of them looking just as sleepy as I was. Someone then mentioned how she wished we had the Chinese New Year off too, so that she could have slept in instead of

functioning the next day on only four hours of sleep. And that's when my thoughts started. I began to wonder, if we have Jewish holidays off, how come we don't have Chinese holidays recognized as well? After all, a large chunk of Acton and Boxborough happens to be Chinese. And the thoughts didn't stop there. Why doesn't the school calendar recognize Russian holidays either, like the Russian Easter Orthodox? Or Indian festivities, like Holi?

After long consideration and a short trip to the counselor's office, I was able to answer my own ponderings. First off, I realized how impractical it would be to have a holiday off for every culture, considering the large diversity of ABRHS--we'd end up having a day off practically every week. Also, after talking with a counselor, I became enlightened about the procedures of the town regarding school holidays.

Each new school year, the APS/ABRSD (Acton Public Schools/Acton Boxborough Regional School District) school committee looks at the school calendar and decides how practical it is to have extra holidays without causing a major effect in school length. The committee then issues an online survey, asking the towns of Acton and Boxborough to vote on which holidays should be included in the school calendar. Thus, the extra holidays on our calendar are a reflection of the town's opinions on the matter, a fact that easily deflates any cries of "unfair!"

The lack of recognition of Russian, Chinese, Indian, or any other holidays on the calendar does not mean that the town is not taking into consideration Acton and Boxborough's diversity at all either. Pages 21 and 22 of the Student Handbook state that the AB School Committee recognizes that our AB community is comprised of diverse individuals, and that it is their intent to "be respectful of the beliefs and practices of all our school community" by "[accommodating] individual differences in religious observances." This means that, if your family celebrates a religious holiday that isn't observed on the school calendar, you as a student can receive extra time to complete any assignments that came into conflict with said holiday, thus guaranteeing that students won't feel as if their education was getting in the way of their native practices.

Taking all that into consideration, there really is no justification for crying unfair about the school's policy regarding religious holidays. By putting the issue to a vote and recognizing it in the School Committee Policy, AB shows that it has engaged in careful steps to ensure that no one feels ostracized as a result of his or her cultural differences. And so, with that knowledge, I think I'll just sit back and keep rubbing it in to my poor out-of-town friends for not having the luck of living in such a diverse area as we do.

Intolerance and Ignorance at AB

By KELLY KRISTL
Correspondent

"Go back to Africa!" sounded a distinct voice in the crowded gymnasium, as I was walking to my fourth period class. I turned around and saw a boy standing in the middle of the gym, in a crowd of at least a dozen people who were passing the time before class by shooting hoops or talking to one another. Instead of choosing one of these activities, however, the boy was engaged in making ugly racist comments to a black girl. Nobody seemed to be doing anything, or even aware that the situation was taking place. As I approached them, I tried to catch the boy's eyes to glare at him. He caught my eyes, but missed the message that they were sending.

"Go back to Africa," he said again to the girl. Then he turned to me. "Shouldn't she go back to Africa?"

I must admit that I was somewhat shocked by his audacity. There I was, glaring at him, and he asked me to join in this dreadful behavior. Caught off guard by his daring behavior, I stammered a comment that I'd been mentally preparing, about how his remarks sounded similar to Marcus Garvey's Back-to-Africa movement. This had been one of the early Black Pride movements in the early twentieth century. I'd hoped to use my comment about it to let him know that I was not on his side. Based on his daring move, however, I don't think that he

was used to hearing this message from other students and probably didn't understand what I'd said.

To some people, this article may feel like a stale repeat of something most of us have heard through most of our lives. VOICE member Julia Rey summarized the scope of intolerance at AB very well. While it does exist, she explained, it is not a 'problem' in the way that drugs or violence would be a problem. "People learn to live with it," she said, something that I believe is true in the majority of cases, based on what I've seen and heard. But that doesn't mean that it's time to stop the struggle against intolerance and ignorance.

Some forms of intolerance are particularly common, although many students here don't see them as such; it is very common for one person to call another person a "retard" or "SPED" after he or she makes a mistake or says something that doesn't make sense. This behavior is not a sign of hatred or hostility towards the mentally disabled, but rather is an indicator that the name-caller doesn't really understand how the real issues of mentally disabled people affect them and those around them. Most people don't recognize how this sort of language creates a painful stigma around those with academic obstacles and hands a largely silent population of our school a weighty cross to bear.

Gay students as well may feel alienated and unsafe in the community, where insults such as

See RACISM/ page 9

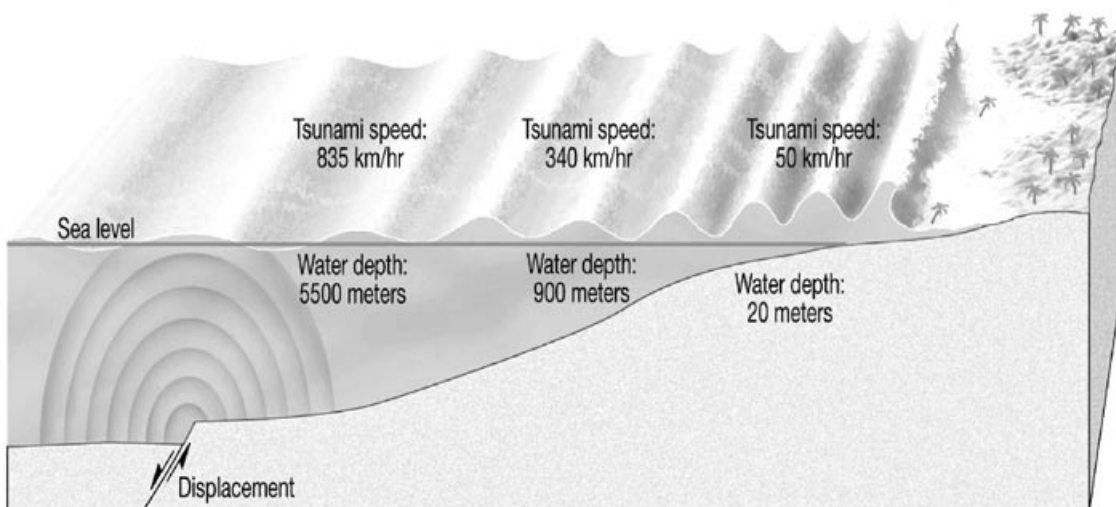
TSUNAMI/ from page 6
canic eruption. The most common cause of a tsunami is in the form of an undersea earthquake. Small earthquakes, too minor to directly cause any harm, trigger undersea landslides that often create a tsunami. The force of the tsunami does not hit all at once, so the second or third wave does not arrive until more than an hour later. As waves approach land, the waves lose some of their momentum as the sea shallows. This causes them to "pile-up" onto each other, creating steeper and taller waves. Near land, however, the ocean line begins to recede. The waves are not symmetrical, which causes them to be much stronger in one direction than another.

Unfortunately, most of the people who were affected by the tsunami did not know the science behind it, and ignorance proved destructive. One reason the Indian Ocean tsunami was so destructive is due to their rare occurrences in that region. The last tsunami that occurred in the Indian Ocean was the 1883 Krakatoa eruption that

killed 36,000 people. Since most tsunamis occur in the Pacific area, the citizens of India and Sri Lanka were uninformed and unaware of this natural occurrence. An alert system was never set up.

the most vulnerable to tsunami waves. The receding ocean gives people as much as five minutes of warning to escape to higher ground. Fortunately, the inhabitants who saw the signs of trouble

have been enough time for many of the people who were killed by the 2004 tsunami to save themselves, if only they knew what to do." In situations like these, knowledge can save lives.



A tsunami is caused by a displacement in the sea. Tsunamis can reach speeds up to 835 km/hr and its power can even be felt in water depths of 5500 meters.

Most people were unaware of the characteristics and strength of a tsunami. This lured many curious people to the water's edge, where the receding ocean made them

urged people to get to higher elevations and were able to save themselves and their neighbors. In its January issue, National Geographic states that there "may

There are other ways to prepare for a tsunami. Although tsunamis can cause detrimental effects, many countries have found methods to soften their blow and

prevent unnecessary damage. Countries that have a high risk of tsunamis, such as Japan, use tsunami-warning systems to forecast tsunamis and to warn the general public. Warning signs on the west coast of America, where tsunamis are prone to occur, advise people where to run in the event of an incoming tsunami. Japan has also implemented an extensive program of building tsunami walls and floodgates, which will protect seaside towns and redirect the incoming water. However, fourteen-foot walls and channels are often not effective enough when they come against such a natural catastrophe.

As residents of Massachusetts, we are unlikely to face a tsunami. We can sleep with a peace of mind knowing that tsunamis will not hit Acton in the near future. In the last 100 years, only one tsunami was recorded along the coast of the Atlantic Ocean. Although New England is safe from tsunamis, we cannot forget the devastation of that which struck in southeast Asia.

Forum

Is the Six-Month Rule Necessary?

Six-Month Rule: Not So Absurd

By MARK KAGAN
Spectrum Staff

I remember well the day when the first person in my group of friends got a license. At the end of the school year I came out with hopes of going out somewhere or at least getting a ride home. Those hopes were crushed when my friend told me about the six-month rule, which forbids drivers under 18, other people without six months' experience after getting a driver's license. About six months later, I took a driving lesson for the first time. After the first half-hour, the instructor started making conversation. Moments later, he had to press his brake. "Don't you see where the curb is?" he said. At that point, I realized that I got so distracted talking that I was only half-watching the road; my mind was focused on the conversation. At that moment I understood the purpose of the much-maligned "six-month rule." Despite the frustrations it causes, the rule is in place not only for the benefit of the community, but for that of the teenagers it restricts.

There is a reason why the six-month rule only applies to teenagers. We all know how short our attention span can be. We can barely sit through a 47-minute period without zoning out. If a distraction is provided, we jump on it immediately. High school students live to talk and to have fun. Therefore, it is at first unnatural for us to keep our focus on the road; we have to force ourselves to do so. It takes a decent amount of driving experience for driving to become second nature. *That* is what the six-month rule is for.

It makes a lot of sense to provide sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds with this half-year of learning. The truth is, one doesn't have to drive too much to get a license. In Europe the driver's education programs last much longer and require much more

from the student. The written test consists of fifty multiple-choice questions instead of twenty, and the road tests are much more extensive. Here, I have known of people who passed their road test by making a turn and parking the car. On the other hand, the speed people at which people drive is much higher in the United States than it is in Europe, Germany's famed Autobahn notwithstanding. The road conditions during the winter, especially in suburban and rural areas, are often worse. Therefore, it makes sense to give teenagers six months to drive alone with no one to distract them.

The six-month rule has other uses. It actually discourages students from getting drunk at parties. The six-month rule makes the concept of "designated drivers," often used by adults, impossible for teenagers. Thus, when a student goes to a party, he realizes he will have to drive himself home. This responsibility discourages students from participating in excessive illegal drinking at parties.

Many say that the six-month rule is useless because it is poorly enforced. Even without sufficient enforcement it gives benefit. Whenever a student breaks the law and gives his or her friend a ride, he or she becomes more alert watching out for police officers. Since breaking the six-month rule is a secondary offense, the student knows he cannot be stopped for it, so he or she becomes extremely careful not to break any other rule. Therefore, a student that breaks the six-month rule drives more carefully, and the roads are safer.

Although the six-month rule is hated among the student body, in reality it causes no real harm. The inconvenience of not being able to get a ride is far less important than the risk of distraction when driving. Besides, isn't it nice to have some time alone to think in our intense high school lives?

By JI XIAO
Spectrum Staff

Joshua is feeling frustrated. He took the road test three times, yet each time making some trivial mistakes that resulted in his failing. Last Saturday he finally passed the road exam. The taste of success was overwhelming for him. Immediately, he decided that he wanted to drive a few of his close buddies to school. However, his parents stopped him. They

age 18 is in the vehicle (other than the driver or an immediate family member,) unless he/she is accompanied by a person who is at least 21 years old and has at least 1 year of driving experience and holds a valid driver's license from Massachusetts or another state, and is occupying a seat beside him/her."

The six-month rule is inconvenient at best. Passing the road test is not easy; when you do, it means that you've accomplished something meaningful and difficult.

parking permits than the number of parking spaces available for them. As a result, they expect students to carpool. That way, not every senior with a parking ticket would rush into school expecting a space. However, the six-month rule often gets in the way, since many seniors get their licenses over the summer and can't drive others. If the six-month rule is eliminated, the parking problem will cease to exist, and the high parking costs will be a lesser burden when carpooling students start to chip in. At the same time, it is safer when students carpool during New England's bad weather. With fewer student drivers on the road, fewer accidents will happen.

Without the six-month rule, many students would be able to get rides from their friends to and from the school. That way, parents wouldn't have to come to school and pick up their kids who stayed after school for sports; it makes everybody's lives much easier. As a result, parents wouldn't be hurrying all across the area to pick up their kids. It would make their lives safer and less stressful.

Furthermore, this rule should be abolished because it's really difficult to enforce. It's unlikely that the police officers will stop every single car with a driver and a passenger looking like a student to see if he or she has passed the six-month time window. A good number of young drivers simply ignore this rule. Since it is not effectively enforced and causes so many inconveniences, why not just get rid of it?

Why has such an unneeded law created so many inconveniences? I say that the six-month rule should be eliminated. Without it, our lives—as well as those of our parents—will be much safer and less stressful. The convenience aspect alone makes a change worthwhile.



A junior driving home alone, obeying the six month rule.
NILADRI SINHA / Spectrum Staff

warned him that the six-month rule prohibits him from doing so. This brings us the obvious question, is the six-month rule really needed? I believe that the rule is simply unnecessary. Finally getting the license after taking the road test over and over again is certainly something worth celebrating. Some even say the turning point in high school is when they pass the road test. Wouldn't it be great if you could offer a ride to your fellow friends who still can't drive? It's the best way to make friends. But the six-month rule makes it illegal. It states that "one may not operate a motor vehicle within the first 6 months after receiving one's Junior Operator's License while any person under

The test is designed to verify your driving skills. One simple mistake can result in failing. Someone failed the road test just because he forgot to remind the officer to put on his seatbelt. On average, it takes at least two tries to pass the road test. Once you do, it proves that you can be a safe driver. Parents argue that the regulation is necessary for the safety of the passengers. That's not a legitimate reason; if an individual does not feel safe being the passenger, he or she won't take the risk.

Eliminating the six-month rule will help solve the parking problem at our school. We all know that there is a parking space shortage for the seniors in our school. The school sells more

Lost? Tormented? Distressed? Ask Advice Anna.

I am usually a pretty good math student. Last year I had no problems whatsoever getting A's, but now I am doing horribly. It's not with class work, or even homework; I understand the stuff we do. It is the tests that are the problem — I get C's, D's, and sometimes even F's. I get really upset because I am usually a good student. I always hand in my homework and I never misbehave. This is really affecting me and I am constantly worry-

ing about it at night, especially when I do my math homework.
- Just Want To Get It!!!

Dear Just Want To Get It—
You may want to talk with your teacher. Many people have something called test anxiety; you may have that, too. Many teachers are understanding of this and may offer alternatives to sitting down and taking the tests. You may want to try some relaxation techniques as well. You could also pretend

that it is a worksheet so you won't freeze up at the time of the test.

--I have friends who I hang out with but the only problem is that they enjoy drinking and I really don't. They have been pressuring me to try drinking for a really long time, though I always strongly say "No!" Suddenly, they have stopped calling me and I don't know why. I did not do anything to make them mad. They like to drink, but I feel that

I can wait longer in life to start. Why do my friends not want me hanging out with them anymore? Also, why do I feel the need to not drink and my friends do?
-Sober and Confused

Dear Sober and Confused—
The first thing that you have to do is look at your "friends." If they were really your friends, they would respect your decision not to drink. They obviously show you little to no respect; anyone

who would just ditch you because you don't agree with something that they think is "cool" is wrong. Talk to them about it; if they don't answer you or refuse to give you the respect that you deserve, then it would probably just be best if you find some real friends.

--Where do you draw the line between having fun and studying? The case is that some of my

Kagan’s Komments: Too Few World History Courses at AB

By MATT KAGAN
Spectrum Staff

Which of the following people headed the Resettlement Administration and was also part of FDR’s Brain Trust?

- Raymond Moley
- Rexford Tugwell
- Adolph A. Berrie Jr.
- John Steinbeck

This question was sitting before me on a recent history test. Luckily, I was able to skip it; however it prompted me to ask myself a different question. Why do students at AB learn

in 1.5 social studies courses per year, according to Green.

Another problem that causes people to take fewer World History courses is that there are simply fewer of them offered, and fewer offered at a level that most people would be willing to take them. Many students do not take the AP Euro class not because they are not interested in history, but because it takes more time and effort than they can or are willing to give. Offering a lower-level European History class sounds like a good solution; however, as Green said, “Some of the things [taught in the



The American flags in every classroom are an obvious reminder of why we study American history, but that does not mean AB students do not need to be well-versed in world history as well.

NEETHU YARABOULU / *Spectrum Staff*

who Rexford Tugwell was, but miss out on large portions of ancient and modern history of the world beyond the United States?

The answer, of course, lies in the lack of time that an average AB student spends on studying world history. Although the school requires only one World History course and one US History course, most people end up taking two US History courses anyway. Thus, most students spend two years studying US History, which encompasses roughly 350 years, and one year studying World History, which ideally should encompass anywhere from 1500 to 3000 years. The amount of detail covered in the two respective areas of historical study clearly cannot be equal with the disparate amounts of time devoted to them.

I am not alone in seeing the lack of World History courses at AB as a problem. I interviewed Mr. Green, who teaches both AE World History and AP European History. His take on the history department’s view of the issue is, “Ask anyone in the department, and they will agree that we don’t have enough world history classes.” However, like many problems here at AB, this problem lacks solutions because it lacks funding. The social studies department already offers a very broad variety of electives. In fact, these electives are so popular that on average a student is enrolled

class] are so complicated and convoluted that I would not be able to teach them at a lower level.”

There are several solutions that can work without damaging the budget or creating too much strain on teachers. The first is offering AP Euro to both juniors and seniors every year. If this would happen, the US II History course would be regarded as an “elective” course just like AP Euro which would raise enrollment in the AP Euro class.

Another solution, offered by many other schools in the region, is to have the sophomore year split up into two semester courses: one of World History and one of US History. That way, most people would spend the same amount of time studying world history as they would studying US history. Also, students could then freely reserve their senior year to indulge in the various electives that AB has to offer, without forfeiting the important knowledge of World History.

Of course, many people say that it is very important to know the history and the laws of our own country. However, in a community that is rapidly becoming more diverse, it is essential to know the history of what goes on beyond our borders. We cannot claim to be a multicultural community if we ignore the history of those cultures.

RACISM / from page 7

“you’re so gay” and “fag” are quite common. Though these sorts of events are ‘just words’ used in ignorance, students in the groups mocked by these comments can read them to mean that the community is not willing to accept them. They go a long way towards contributing to the silence of students who are wondering whether or not to talk about their sexual orientation or identity. Even in the more familiar fields of positive race relations, there remains plenty of work to do. Junior Laura Press says that she commonly hears AB students at her workplace speaking sarcastically or mockingly about the Brazilian immigrants who work there, because they often do not speak English with complete fluency. This is not the sort of attitude that we want as a model in the community, especially given the growing population of recent immigrants in Acton.

Interested to find out the position of the administration on these issues, I interviewed Ms. Atwater-Rhodes, vice principal and faculty overseer of VOICE, to get the administration’s take on the problems of intolerance here at AB. She stressed the desire of the faculty to deal with these issues when they do arise, through education and disciplinary measures as the case may dictate. Although targeted attacks against specific groups are rare here, she told me, ignorance is not. New students who have yet to be fully integrated into the school culture are the most susceptible to intolerant treatment. Most of the time, the students who behave intolerantly simply don’t understand what it means to be gay, Asian, or Jewish, and don’t anticipate the discomfort and pain that their words inflict on others. Other times, they

ADVICE / from page 8

friends tell me I study too much and don’t have fun. But when I have fun (going to parties), my parents and even some of my other friends tell me that I have to work hard in studies. What should I do?

—Once an Honor Student

Dear Once an Honor Student—

Everyone knows the notorious expression “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.” Well in this case, it is true. You should realize that school is very important, but what also keeps people enjoying life is kicking back, relaxing, and having fun. As long as you keep up with your studies, there is absolutely no reason why you shouldn’t relax once in a while. You may want to create a schedule for yourself where you can prioritize both work and time to do things you enjoy. Enjoy high school but also keep in mind where you’ll be at graduation and beyond.

are trying to find a way to react to personal problems, and their behavior will often stop when their own needs begin to be addressed.

Though intolerance is a problem at AB that needs awareness, there are already many coordinated efforts underway to address it. Many projects and organizations exist in this school to help combat ignorance through education and experience and to make students who are likely to be targeted by intolerance feel welcome and safe. Several years ago, the English department responded to a spate of racist comments by inviting students to speak about their experiences with racism in class. One African-American student spoke to classes about how, one night, he’d been trying to enter his own house when a police officer stopped him on the suspicion that he was trying to break in. The response was one of surprise and enlightenment; many students wrote after this presentation that they’d never realized the scope or effects of the problems of intolerance even in our sheltered community.

Student groups such as VOICE, MESA (Multi-Ethnic Student Alliance), the Common Ground gay-straight alliance and the New Students organization, work to provide support and resources to students. The Common Ground Coffeehouse was begun as an experiment to bring gay and lesbian students into the mainstream in a way that didn’t involve lectures or handouts, but rather allowed any student who was willing to expand their horizons to come and munch on snacks while listening to peers perform. The “Best Buddies” program works to pair up mentally disabled students in the Occupational Development Program (ODP) with students in the main student body. They participate in entertain-

ing weekly activities that break down barriers and help integrate mentally disabled students, who could otherwise be isolated, into the general population. VOICE Day devotes one day a year to celebrating the growing diversity of our school with organized activities, such as culture booths and classes in previous years.

These efforts effect a tremendous difference in making our school an open and friendly environment for everyone. Many students and members of the administration have taken the initiative to heal intolerance and ignorance with education and experience. They send a powerful message to the community at a time when some high schools still actively discourage gay-straight alliances or even teach civil rights from the point of view that Martin Luther King, Jr. and his contemporaries were social agitators rather than revolutionary heroes in American history.

One message that we could all stand to hear again, however, is that of our power as high-school students. Because we’re all teenagers, we’re all experimenting with new ways to act and actively listening for signals of approval from our peers. The ability to give or withhold approval gives us all a great deal of influence over the choices of those around us. As Ms. Atwater-Rhodes said towards the end of our interview, the administration has a certain amount of power at AB, but that is easily surpassed by the will of the 1800 students who roam this school. Our teachers can give us advice and information, but only we can give the social cues as to whether or not these halls will be equally safe and friendly to everyone who visits them.

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A Free Period: Where Should I Go?

A Quiet Library: Too Much To Ask For?

By ROSANNA XIA
Spectrum Staff

Since the beginning of the school year, there has been much tension between the students and librarians here at AB. Many students disagree with the library's policies and consider them unreasonable. Some of these policies include the "160-student max" rule, "the four to a table" rule, the rumored "black list," and the newly established rule (as of the beginning of January) that the whole library is a quiet study area. "There is no significant volume difference between four people and five people. If someone is going to talk, they'll do it regardless of the number," comments a junior. Another student explains, "People need to work in the library, but if they do not get to the library early enough in a period, they are not allowed in." Freshman Yi Liu believes that for the 160 max, "the students are denied access not because of a space issue, but based on whether or not the student made it in the library before the last 20 minutes of the period." Some students also disagree with the silent study rule. Many discontented students ask, "What

happens if you wanted to have a study session? You can't exactly go to the commons and have a study session." If the policies are as unreasonable as these students believe, why are there so many strict library policies this year?

Although the new and strict policies seem unreasonable to

ies and other high school libraries, the library at ABRHS should not even be considered a library. "AB's library policies are understated compared to other high schools. At the beginning of the school year, we understood that the commons weren't ready and furnished for use yet, so we tried

there are other places to go to talk and socialize. We decided in January that the library will be all quiet so it can be as productive as possible," explains head librarian, Ms. Renee Voorhees. Voorhees explained that, "I am obliged to the parents and taxpayers of Acton for maintaining such a magnificent facility. I am personally and professionally committed to providing the most productive environment for student learning." The decision was not made alone. The four teachers who help the librarians during their lunch periods support the decision as well. As for the maximum capacity rule, the fire safety code is to blame; the librarians cannot do anything about this policy. Mrs. Voorhees also clarifies that the rule preventing students from entering the library during the last 20 minutes of the period does not exist. However, the library "usually reaches the maximum capacity 20 minutes into a period," said Mrs. Voorhees. "We understand that some students need to get work done. We do try to accommodate students. If need be, we even let students work in our offices or in the library workrooms."

There is a rumor floating

around about Mrs. Voorhees's "black list." The rumor is that if a student has been on the list three times, he or she is banned from the library for a period of time. Mrs. Voorhees laughs when she learns about this rumor. "Yes, I do keep a list," said Mrs. Voorhees, "but it is to help me learn names and get to know individuals. It is very hard to be new to a school with so many students. I keep a list to remember an individual. As for getting banned from the library after being put on the list a couple of times, if I've actually taken the time to write down the name of a specific individual and what he or she has done at the end of the day, then the student may be referred to an assistant principal. I see 5,000 students a week. Since the beginning of the school year, I have had to refer six students to an assistant principal."

One of the leading arguments students have against the "quiet" rule in the library is how study sessions could be possible elsewhere. "Where would they go if the library does not allow stu



A student waits anxiously to enter the library despite the fact that the library has reached its maximum capacity of 160 people.
OLIVER HONG / *Spectrum Staff*

the students, the librarians have good reasons for putting them in place. The truth of the matter is, a library is supposed to be quiet. Compared to public librar-

to accommodate every student at the beginning of the year. We had a quiet section and a section where students could work together and talk quietly. But now,

Monitors: Curse or Blessing?

By JARED EISENBERG
Correspondent

Coming face-to-face with the dreaded "Closed" sign on the library door, Jane Doe moans and wishes she hadn't wolfed down her lunch so fast. "Oh no," she thinks, "Now where can I study for that test next period?" Shrugging, she plops herself down in a quiet corner by the door. Halfway into her notes, a large pair of feet clomps to a halt in front of her. A sonorous voice informs her that it's against the rules to sit outside of the library. A cricket chirps in the silence. Waving her notes, Jane stutters, "B-b-but I'm not disturbing anyone!" Nevertheless, her plea is unanswered and Jane is thrust into the Hinterlands of Distraction.

Where is this poor girl to go? The places suggested by these uninformed feet and idealistic voices—the student unions and cafeteria—are completely unsuitable for studying. Monitors and new arbitrary rules are severely limiting where students can study or do homework.

Some may argue that monitors serve a big role in school safety and enforcement of equality. In a nearly tragic incident, a student not paying attention was nearly hit by a bus. Had it not been for the monitors there, a calamity traged-

dy might have occurred. Monitors also help keep situations in check, breaking up fights in the cafeteria by arriving first on the scene. Most important, they provide the peace of mind that someone will be there when an incident arises.

But these assignments, as important as they are, do not require so many monitors. It seems that many of these monitors merely roam the school, yelling at kids to stop sitting on the walls in the student unions and enforcing other arbitrary rules. One must keep in mind that we have one janitor less in order to hire more monitors. At this moment in time, we have one monitor for every 140 students. This is a poor use of the school budget, which decreases year after year. Students are in classes most of the time, and they are not bent on evil and destruction during free periods. The campus could be well-monitored with fewer than twelve monitors.

Monitors are able to provide the school administration with the assurance that students will be provided with some supervision during their free periods. With almost 1800 students enrolled at AB, the monitors' presence does help to supervise situations. However, as important as monitors are for school safety and for making the school run smoothly, do we really need all of them?

By JITA RAY
Correspondent

One consistent factor in the life of an AB student is the knowledge that the cafeteria will always be there when he or she needs it. However, in the last few years, many changes have been made to improve the cafeteria. Two of the most evident changes have been an increase in space and a broadening of food selection. However, another change is looming in the horizon—higher food costs.

Dealing with construction has been a major part of our daily school life during these past four years. Many new spaces have been added to our school including a new section of the cafeteria. Formerly housing the Counseling Center, it is smaller than the other two commons. However, the farthest right common provides more room for people to stay and eat in. While it was difficult before to find room in the cafeteria because of the lack of tables, this new area provides more space for everyone to fit into.

Students use this new area just like they do with the other

commons. Yet the size of this new section allows more peace, quiet, and privacy than the larger commons. Many students occupy this new location to do their homework, driven by the library edict and the siren cry of the cappuccino machine. Students can be found during third period munching on a bag of cookies or a doughnut while studying for a history test with their friends.



Students eating in the new cafeteria.
NEETHU YARUBOLU / *Spectrum Staff*

Other students are able to talk with friends or play cards, which seems to have become a trend during lunchtime and free periods.

As for the food, there has been a large increase on the variety of choices at AB. Students can buy pizza, have their choice sandwich made, snatch a hot dog or fries, or take advantage of the

daily menu choices. The Snack Bar is open during the first three periods of the day when lunch is not served, with a "Good Morning Breakfast Special" (two sausages, home fries, and scrambled eggs) for two dollars.

Students, however, are faced with the problem of a price increase. Most food prices have gone up by at least twenty-five cents, which make many students

unhappy. The reason behind the increase is the corresponding increases in the cost of ingredients like tomatoes. Therefore, students are required to pay more. In the upcoming years, there may be additional issues with food choices. According to the cafeteria personnel, the state of Massachusetts now wants school lunches to become healthier to combat rising obesity statistics. This may result in stricter regulations for lunch choices.

Whether good or bad, changes have occurred and are likely to continue occurring. However, one can always count on the fact that the school store will always be there to fill up any empty stomachs with candy and Combos.

See LIBRARY/ page 13

Features

A Change of Perspective

By ABBY NOURSE VAN
METER

Correspondent

Can you imagine an Acton-Boxborough where the school wasn't constantly under construction, when Acton was just a cow town and students were actually silent in the library? That is the AB that Ms. Drowne, a member of the class of 1993, knew.

Ms. Drowne has been working at AB for four years in the Social Studies department, teaching World History and United States History I. Before becoming a teacher, Ms. Drowne attended the University of Missouri. Then she moved back to

dent at AB. Ms. Drowne said that she participated in music as well as in athletics, and was a member of the chorus, marching band, and the volleyball and track teams.

However, it was AB's excellent reputation that stuck with her after high school and made it her first choice when looking for teaching positions. As well as its reputation, Ms. Drowne also said it was important to her to be part of a strong school system with adept administration.

Upon her return to the AB community, she adds that the population has grown a lot since her high school years, such as the addition of the wing that joins the halls of AB. Ms. Drowne adds that the community also seems significantly wealthier; she says that the house she lived in with her family in the early 1990's was one-fifth the cost of the houses currently being built in Acton and Boxborough.

Since seeing the school from a teacher's perspective, Ms. Drowne says that she is much more aware of the little things going on at AB, such as the construction and things happening within the administration. When asked what she would most like to bring back to AB, Ms. Drowne sighs and states, "A truly silent library."

By HELEN ALESBURY
Spectrum Staff

Unfortunately for the Chem Corner Classic, the "chemistry corner" is now occupied by a playground built recently for the child development preschool. It has been over 25 years since the preschool was first integrated into the high school, but for most high school students, its presence has only just reemerged with its relocation. The preschool for three- to five-year-olds is a self-contained preschool program that also allows high school students to work with young children and learn the science of child development.

It is hard to imagine that there are preschoolers inhabiting the high school, but they are here each and every school day, starting at 9:30 and ending at 12:30 (periods 3 to 6). The preschool is divided into two different groups based on age. There is a Monday-Wednesday-Friday class and a Tuesday-Thursday class. The three-day class is for the older children, while the two-day class is designated for the younger ones. The classroom is filled with all of the great things of preschool: a circle-time rug, blocks, and even a dress-up area, along with an endless supply of puzzles.

The child development course allows high school students to use

the preschool as an interactive environment for the advancement of their child studies. It is a full-year, five-credit course offered by the school, taught by Mrs. Debra Alesbury, the head preschool teacher. The preschool allows students to



work with the kids and observe different social and behavioral activities throughout the year. Senior Kim Lambert commented, "I chose to take Child Development because I was interested in working with children. The course made me realize how much I enjoy working with preschoolers."

Sophomores, juniors, and seniors spend three periods per week helping the teachers (Mrs. Alesbury, Mrs. Hermann, and Mrs. Ray) with different activi-

ties. The high school students are also responsible for writing journal entries about their experiences and observations each week. They take turns doing different projects with the kids and form friendships with them, observing how they become more comfortable in a school setting as they prepare for kindergarten, and seeing how they change as they grow.

Just as the preschool is set up in two different groups, so is the child development class. The lab class, which meets during periods 3, 4, and 5 all year, involves daily visits to the preschool to interact with the children. The lecture class focuses on the scientific development of young children and meets every other day for 2.5 credits. It has all of the typical elements of "textbook" classes (tests, projects, note-taking, etc.) and focuses on the development of a child from a fetus to an eight-year-old. The class examines everything from brain development and cognition to the way they form social bonds and certain age-linked behaviors.

If a student takes two years of the lab class and one year of the lecture class, he or she receives an OCCS (Office of Child Care Services) certificate after graduation. This certificate increases the chances of getting a job in

See PLAYGROUND / page 12



History teacher Ms. Drowne is a member of AB's Class of '93.

ALFRED DEGEMMIS / *Spectrum Staff*

Boston and worked in the Department of Justice before teaching special education in Newton.

Enthusiastically describing her wide involvement in extracurricular activities when she was a stu-

Back in the Day at AB: The Mr. Green Experience

By KALIE BUTTON

Correspondent

Have you ever wondered what AB was like over a decade ago? Maybe not, but now that you're thinking about it, would you expect everything to be different? I interviewed Mr. David Green, a former student here, to see what it used to be like for a teenager living in Acton or Boxborough. Besides the obvious physical changes the school has gone through, there have been many changes altering the whole atmosphere of AB and the town—but maybe not as many as you might think. Bickford's may no longer be the "it" spot for Acton kids to hang out and socialize, but you may be surprised to see that the seemingly extensive gap between then and now isn't so wide after all.

Button: So I've heard that you used to go to school here. What year did you graduate?

Green: I graduated in 1991, but my family moved to Acton in 1980.

B: I'm sure a lot of things have changed since you were a student here. In your opinion, were social groups as defined as they are now?

G: I feel that social groups were much more rigid when I went to AB. For example, it felt like "jocks" hung out with other jocks. The drama people

only shared company with other drama folk (and maybe the occasional band kid). Nerds hung out with nerds—that was my group! Only by senior year did these lines seem to blend. Now, as I look at AB students, it seems like the lines blur earlier on, perhaps even during freshman year. I truly wish it had been like that when I was a student.

B: What types of things did students at AB typically do in their free time? Was there a particular place in town where a lot of kids would hang out?

G: Ah... good old "action Acton." Well, we certainly went to Bickford's of course. Much of my time was spent hanging out at various friends' houses, watching movies, playing video games, and even cooking the occasional ethnic meal.

B: What types of extracurricular activities were you involved in?

G: I worked for *The Spectrum*, was in several plays, wrote for the literary magazine, joined what was then called the International Club, and was vice president of the National Honor Society.

B: The Acton-Boxborough school district is well-known for its studious and hardworking students, as well as for the high level of stress among students.

Were students more laid back when you went to school here?

G: It was still very stressful then, but I think perhaps for a smaller group of people. My peer group in 1990 reminds me of what I see on a larger scale today at AB.

B: How seriously did you take



Mr. Green was a member of the class of 1991 at AB.

NILADRHI SINHA / *Spectrum Staff*

your studies while in high school? What was your favorite subject?

G: I was extremely serious about studies. My favorite subjects were anything related to social

studies (of course!) and biology.

B: The school has obviously gone through some drastic physical changes since you graduated. Can you tell me what you remember about how the school used to look and what aspects stick out in your mind as being the most different?

G: The school was very beaten up but quaint. I love the new renovations, but I miss the more intimate, "well-loved" feel of the old school.

B: Are there any teachers in high school that greatly influenced you and your desire to teach? Are there any that are particularly memorable?

G: Mr. Noeth and Ms. Lynn were two huge influences on my life. Mr. Noeth, despite his numerous neuroses, demonstrated that math can be fun, can be doable, and can actually be explained clearly. As much as I enjoy making fun of him, Mr. Noeth was one of the best teachers I have ever had, including college. And no, he did not pay me to say this. As for Ms. Lynn, the impact was huge as well. She opened up the world of psychology to me and did so with such enthusiasm that I decided to take it on as a major. She and I often talked after class and after school about various social stud-

ies topics; she even introduced me to obscure Russian composers. I still have my completely intact AP Psychology notebook.

B: What made you want to come back to AB and teach history? Did you ever think that you would end up teaching here?

G: I never dreamt in a million years that I would teach here. The stars just kind of aligned such that it happened. I have always wanted to teach. At first I imagined it happening at the college level, and then I realized that secondary school teaching was much more in line with my values and professional goals.

B: Overall, (and give me an honest answer here!), did you enjoy your high school experience?

G: My freshman and sophomore years were hard. I was a little different in a school where it wasn't entirely okay to be different. However, as I mentioned before, the social lines began to blur, and by the time I graduated, I definitely felt nostalgia toward the school.

Well, however pleasant or unpleasant his high school years were, we're glad that Mr. Green's AB experiences stayed with him for long enough to influence his much appreciated teaching position held here today.

Features

A Community Characterized By Service

By RASHMI JASRASARIA
Spectrum Staff

On January 17, 2005, Acton-Boxborough students celebrated Martin Luther King Day with a

alphabetical order. Mr. Donovan, Mrs. Alesbury, and Mr. Chicko congratulated students as they walked across the stage, and certificates were presented to the students as they came back to their



Senior Dave Shi talks about his experience in a Latin American village during the Community Service Awards Night.
JONATHAN EISENBERG/ *Spectrum Staff*

special awards ceremony, honoring the many students involved in community service. The auditorium was full of students and parents; 468 students, 27% of the student body, received awards this year. Together, they completed a total of 48,607 hours in 2004. The staggering statistics show that community service is a regular part of student life at AB.

After some welcoming comments from high school principal Mr. Donovan and superintendent Bill Ryan, the ceremony began with a video presentation created by Mr. Drinkwater, honoring Martin Luther King, Jr. Next, ABRPTSO co-chair Ms. Beth Petr spoke about service within the community. For the past year, she has been organizing the LTC Dad Project, whose members come together to send boxes of goods to soldiers in Iraq. They also put together backpacks for Iraqi children to take to their new schools this past fall. Ms. Petr was very thankful to community members who had helped her with the project and congratulated all the students who were being awarded that night. Junior Jacky Mozzicato spoke next about her involvement with in-town community service as well. She talked about being a student coordinator for the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life and being president of Best Buddies. Community service has meant a lot to her, and she enjoys doing it. She encouraged other students to get involved, because there are always things to help out with, even here at the school.

After these opening speeches, Mrs. Steeves, the student and faculty support coordinator, called up the award recipients by category

seats. 219 students received local awards, which were given for 25, 50, and 75 hours of community service during the year. After these were given, Rachel Shirron, an AB junior who has been doing community service since she was very little, talked about starting her own community service project of making bookcases for Minuteman ARC. She said that doing something on her own brought her an even greater enjoyment than working on someone else's project. Then, the 249 presidential award recipients were called up to the stage. To get a presidential award, students under 15 had to complete over 50 hours of service, and students 15 years or older had to do over 100 hours within the year. The process took a long time, as so many students had logged hours over the year. To close this section, AB senior Dave Shi talked about his life-changing experience of doing service in a Latin American village.

Finally, Mr. Donovan presented the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards to the two most deserving high school students. Qualifying students filled out applications describing their activities and self-created community service projects. This year's winners were Katie Ames, who created, organized, and now coaches a junior high speech and debate team, and Susan Ma, who organized a tutoring service for underprivileged children. Mrs. Steeves then closed the ceremony by asking students to continue their wonderful service in the year 2005.

Given the many students involved this past year, it is clear

See SERVICE/ page 13

By WENDY SHUNG
Correspondent

What's the main privilege you receive when you turn sixteen? Driving (legally) and getting a driver's license, of course! However, it's not as easy as you may think. In order to obtain a flimsy little plastic card less than three-and-a-half by two-and-a-half inches, you have to fork over at least forty dollars, put more than a few gray hairs on your parents' heads, and spend hours learning the rules of the road so that you can operate a car without crashing it into your neighbor's mailbox.

Although you can get a permit when you turn sixteen, the preparation for getting a driver's license does not begin right then. Before taking the permit test, you should have \$30 handy (and perhaps another \$30 in case you fail), and you ought to have studied the entire road rules provided in the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles Driver's Manual. Then bring a permit application, your social security number, your parents' signed consent form, a valid passport, and a birth certificate to a Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) office. There, you can take a permit test.

Distributed electronically, a permit test is composed of twenty multiple-choice questions, fourteen of which you need to answer correctly to pass. Rohin Jaiman, a senior who just got his driver's license last year, remarked, "The test is pretty intuitive. If you're halfway intellectually capable, you shouldn't have a problem."

Once you pass the permit test, the RMV center gives you a plain-looking paper that states your name, birthday, social security number, and the date of expiration, and includes a black-and-white picture of you. This permit gives you the wonderful privilege of legally driving with any licensed person who is at least twenty-one years old and who

has had his or her license for at least one year. If you're under the age of eighteen, it also restricts you from driving between the hours of midnight and five am.

After receiving your permit, it is a good idea to take driver's education. Although it is not required to get your license, driver's ed helps you become an awesome and safe driver and also reduces insurance rates if your insurance company is informed of your graduation from driver's ed.

The driver's ed classes provided at AB after school and during the summer do not require you to have a permit in order to take the course. (Check the Community Education website or the Interaction magazine sent out seasonally for more information.) Their only requirement is that you be at least sixteen years old by the time the classes end.

Once you have your permit, before or after taking driver's ed courses, you can start to learn how to drive. It is suggested that you first take lessons from a trained teacher (such as those provided by your driver's ed school) and then start learning from your parents. In Massachusetts, in order to take a road test (the on-road portion of the driver's test), you have to have six hours of in-car driving experience with a driver's ed teacher, six hours of observing another student drive, thirty hours of classroom education, and twelve hours of driving with one of your parents while they clutch their seatbelts and the emergency brake. Once the thirty classroom hours are completed, your driver's ed teacher will administer a written exam that you must also pass in order to get credit for taking driver's ed.

After six months of having your permit, if you feel that you are prepared to take a road test, you can call the RMV telephone center (1-866-MASSRMV) to schedule a time and date to be tested. Some driver's ed schools may call and schedule an appointment for you

when you hand in your forms and a card citing every road and classroom hour that you completed.

Before going to the test site, be sure to have a car that has an updated inspection sticker, a sponsor (at least twenty-one years of age with one year of driving experience), an emergency brake between the two front seats, and \$30. Depending on which school you take driver's ed, the school may allow its teachers to act as sponsors and let you use their driver's ed training cars for the road test. During the actual testing, it may seem intimidating to have a state trooper with a loaded gun in his pocket sitting right next to you, but you shouldn't stress out—it's common to fail a road test the first time. In fact, people commonly fail multiple times. There is no guaranteed way of passing a road test the first time around, but it would behoove you to know how to start a car, perform three-point turns, do your hand signals, and all of the other basics.

If you do pass the road test and are between the ages of sixteen and eighteen, you will receive a Junior Operator's License (JOL), also known as your ticket to freedom. But, then again, it shouldn't quite be called the ticket to freedom. First of all, for the first six months of having your license, you aren't allowed to drive anyone under the age of eighteen without a person over the age of twenty-one—who has had a driver's license for at least one year—with you in the car. And, similarly with having your permit, you aren't allowed to drive alone between midnight and five AM. But, despite these restrictions, driving can give you lots of independence and freedom to go places without your parents acting as chauffeurs.

To receive more information about obtaining your driver's license, email Mr. Calore, the AB driver's ed teacher. Good luck, and for you upperclassmen, drive safely!

PLAYGROUND / from page 11
childcare after graduation. Lambert adds, "Because of the Child Development course, I now work at a preschool and I'm pursuing child development in college."

In the end, the preschool provides not only a wonderful place for young kids, but also for teenagers who want to get hands-on learning experience in how kids interact. Goodbye chemistry corner—you were sacrificed for a worthy cause.

For more information about this course, contact Mrs. Debra Alesbury at dalesbury@mail.ab.mec.edu. You are also required to get permission from your counselor to be in the lab class and work with the preschoolers.



Students observe preschoolers as part of the Child Development class.

LIBRARY/ from page 10

dents to talk? The commons are not a good place to go to have study sessions,” said one student. But what many students are not aware of is that there are two conference rooms in the back of the library that students can use to hold study sessions. Teachers reserve the conference rooms occasionally, but when teachers are not using the conference rooms, “students are free to use the rooms for study sessions. All you need to do is ask,” said Mrs. Voorhees. Besides the two conference rooms, the counseling center also allows students to work and talk quietly. Therefore, the library is not the only place students can turn to for a study session.

Students at AB who disagree with the library policies take different approaches in voicing their disagreement. During periods in which the library is closed off because of the maximum capacity rule, some students who are not admitted into the library can be found outside the library door, sometimes being slightly disrespectful to the librarians. “There was this one day where I saw a guy being obnoxious and holding

a sign right outside the library that said ‘no library, no peace’” said one student. Other students have tried talking to the librarians about these policies. The Student Council plans to propose a resolution that would please both the library staff and the students. The group plans to speak with the librarians to discuss possible changes and to understand the reasoning behind the new regulations.

When considered carefully, the librarians’ expectations are not as unreasonable as many people believe. Many students at AB do understand and agree that “libraries are meant to be a quiet place to work in” as one senior states. Since January 3, when the entire library became a quiet area, “there has been a spirit of cooperation unfolding. If we [the librarians] do have an issue with students, it’s with the same ones everyday” said Mrs. Voorhees.

Students are beginning to accept the library policies. In the long-run, students will appreciate that if they ever need a quiet, productive place to study or want to get work done, they can turn to the library.

SERVICE/ from page 12

that community service has become ingrained in Acton-Boxborough student life. When the program started in 2001, 150 students received awards, last year 361 received awards, and this year, there were a record of 468 student recipients. When asked to comment on the constantly increasing number of students

involved in community service, Mrs. Steeves smiled and said, “When people ask me how we get so many students involved in community service, I say it really has become a part of the culture here, and it’s great to be part of a school where community service is something so many students are involved in.”



ANDREW KUO ‘05
Recognized for his work as an outstanding peer tutor in the ASC.

SUSAN YAO ‘05
Recognized for her participation in school activities and for her efforts to raise awareness about cultural issues at ABRHS.

ANDREW POULIN ‘05
Recognized for his positive participation and leadership in school activities.

LEE DIETTERICH ‘06
Recognized for his contributions in organizing musical performances for Minuteman ARC and other local organizations.

You said it

The Spectrum Photo Poll

What do you think could be done to make the towns of Acton and Boxborough more interesting?

Elizabeth Alonzo (11) - “I think we should add a movie theater somewhere and take out some hair and pizza places.”

Avanti Golikeri and Mounica Manchiraju (10) - “Everyone should wear a toga at least once a week. It’s a lot of fun.”

Andy Sermos (11) - “Take all the monitor money and make the gosh darn skate park already. There are 11 tennis courts and 0 skate-parks.”

Maya Kim (10) - “We need a mall or a shopping center where we can hang out and shop.”

Nate Garvin (11) - “Stop the monitors from being creepy and taking pictures of me. That’s just weird.”

Ken Attor (9) - “They should stop taking away snow days from summer vacation.”

Aneil Tripathy (9) - “I believe that we need to raise town taxes to pay school sports. My children need the best education.”

Varun Chalupadi (9) - “We should get movie theaters and places to go during vacations, and we need bigger libraries.”

Alice Chuang (9) - “We should watch more *Indiana Jones* and *Star Wars* to get that adventurous spirit that we’re surely lacking.”

Alexa Booth (10) - “We need somewhere to go to hang out with friends like a mall or movie theater.”

Katie Ames (12) - “Make better photo poll questions.”

Kate Brady (10) - “Everyone should wear a toga at least once a week. It’s fun.”

Becca Maitland (12) - “We shoudn’t have school.”

Suny Jassal (9) - “We need a place to hang out.”

Morgan Adams (10) - “Get rid of friggin’ football.”

Photos taken by SNEHAARJUN / Spectrum Staff

Entertainment

Anything Goes

By MAGGIE DUFFY
Spectrum Staff

The twenties were just so hep that they seem to be in constant revival in one medium or another. 2004 brought “De-Lovely,” a film about the life and music of Cole Porter. This year, the roarin’ revival of the era has come to AB, with the school’s production of “Anything Goes.” I had the luck to see the show in one of its final

love is rekindled. But wait—there’s the archetypal British fiancé and gold-digging mother to be dealt with! Meanwhile, a famous lounge singer, a minor gangster, and his lady sidekick try to finagle the marriage from occurring. Several confused identities and musical numbers later, everything is entertainingly resolved.

I should qualify this review by saying that I am not a huge

guessed that Tom Gibbons could sing, dance and act? Just kidding—he was stunning as ever.

While the dramatic main characters were diverting, what made the show such a sizzler were the many different comic talents. Elly Burke positively glows with seven men in tow. She works her perfect timing and physical comedy to full effect. Junior Eric Bell delivers a



Billy (played by Senior Thomas Gibbons) and Hope (played by Junior Anisa McCree) gaze at each other fondly.

SNEHAARJUN / Correspondent

dress rehearsals, and it was full of smoothly assembled sequences and surprising performances by newcomers, as well as boatloads of talent from some of the varsity members.

The songs of ‘Anything Goes’ are written by Cole Porter, and the show is set aboard a luxury liner in the twenties. Like any good musical, the plot revolves around trouble, love, crime, and racial profiling. For those who don’t know the story, it’s one of those boat stories where something’s bound to happen – you’ve

got a bunch of wacky people in tight quarters, and the only place to hide is the boiler room. When failing bondman Billy Crockett (Tom Gibbons) finds society girl Hope Harcourt (Anisa McCree) aboard the same liner, their old

fan of musicals myself. But personal biases aside, I was very impressed by the talent I saw in the show, especially in some of the

hilarious performance as Evelyn, the British fiancé, whose shtick is to constantly garble American slang and spout his new phrases

at indelicate moments. Kate Rosencrantz as Mrs. Harcourt takes the cake in the facial expressions department. And speaking of which, Brian Herdeg has the most aggressive smile in the entire show, including the Angels Dance Corps, who do a mean flapper grimace as they fly through their complicated routines.

As Reno Sweeney, the head of the angels’ act, and celebrity friend of the protagonist, Juliana Potter is fun and personable. She exudes a casual wit and a charm which helps the show along just as it threatens to drag. Although



Eli Whitney (played by Junior Robert Duggan) sings a solo number in the musical *Anything Goes*.

SNEHAARJUN / Correspondent

newcomers to Proscenium Circus. Anisa McCree, to my surprise and delight, has a delicate and very pleasing singing voice, which, paired with her understated acting style, masterfully completes the role. And who would have

Saturday Night Fever

By HEATHER McCORMACK
Spectrum Staff

It’s Saturday night, and I’m supposed to be at Axis in Boston, singing along to the riotous punk rock covers of Me First and the Gimme Gimmes with a crowd full of fist-pumping pseudo-anarchists. Instead, I’m sitting in the auditorium, waiting for the real show to begin. Although the Hawaiian shirts and coordinated crooning of the Gimmes are noticeably absent, in its place are the genuine performances of some truly talented high school bands. I am at Danny’s Juice II, and I couldn’t be more excited.

The show begins, and the kids rush to the front. A throng of students up against the stage sing along and dance wildly while the bands chug guitars and wail earnestly from donated microphones. For a second, it seems like I could be at Axis, minus Fat Mike, the unmistakable bassist for Me First. For one thing, there is definitely no shortage of cover songs. Concord’s Make Your Own do the emo thing, covering an obscure Movielife song that maybe five people (okay, one person—yours truly) recognized. However, their heartfelt vocals and unstoppable energy definitely scored them points for exuberance and originality. This Meuxn, featuring AB alum Alex Gaynor and senior Eoin Bohnert, also get the crowd going with their ambitious rendition of Coheed and Cambria’s “A Favor House Atlantic.” This display of controlled and highly difficult vocal styling was especially refreshing, as they attempted (and succeeded) to emulate lead singer Claudio Sanchez’s impossibly high-pitched melodies.

The Crosstown Paper Boys also do a cover. With their impeccable performance of Streetlight Manifesto’s “Everything Went Numb,” the ska-punk sextet electrified the audience and got plenty of people dancing. With lights flashing, kids skanking, and the mosh-pit

roaring (much to the chagrin of the distressed parent chaperones), the Paper Boys’ excitement and consistency would have moved even the most cynical of Axis dwellers. Additionally, Kashmir Funk’s cover of The Roots’ “The Seed 2.0” masterfully combined the soulful emotion of R&B with the severity of rock and roll.

Not to say that the whole show was completely rock-centric. Danny’s Juice II had plenty of groups that broke the mold. One such band was Tuesday Memo, with AB’s Matt Sirois, Alex Schwartz, and Echo Bein. Their light-hearted John Mayer-meets-Hawaii luau performance served as a welcome deviation from heavy guitars and screaming vocals. They too worked a cover song, doing “Perpendicular Teeth” with such good-natured audacity that the crowd couldn’t help but sing along.

Other bands, such as jazz group Marmalading and piano-rocking 2East, relied on their own personal ability and creativity to make substantial noise at the Juice. Their songs brought freshness to the show and exemplified the dedication of these local bands. The best moments of the night, however, were when the bands were able to simply jam and have fun. Emesis, for example, relied not solely on the members’ remarkable talent, but also on their ability to improvise as they went along. Their skill at cooperating so effortlessly as a group made them extremely captivating and explained why they walked away as the night’s best performance.

So, I didn’t get to see Me First and the Gimme Gimmes. Instead, I spent my Saturday night writing notes and watching garage bands in my high school auditorium. There were no matching outfits or crazy onstage stunts, and Fat Mike wasn’t playing bass. And yet, Danny’s Juice II was everything I could have asked for and more.

Potter has had notable roles in many PC shows, this seems to be the first one in which she has really found her talented voice.

One element of the show seemed awkward to me, and that was the two less-than-converted Chinese caricatures. They begin as scurrying followers of the missionary played by Phil Castonguay, but a plot twist removes him early in the show. So these two, adorned with Chinese straw hats, become obsessed with gambling and, for the most part, have little purpose in the play beyond whacking each other from time to time and shouting in Asian accents. PC? ...I think not! Whether or not you find it funny, it does date the play (written in

1934) in a fairly obvious way. Interesting that the directors couldn’t find any actual Asian students volunteering for the roles.

The show was, on the whole, a rousing success. The dance numbers were slick and filled with so much energy that a good deal of the play resembles a well-choreographed dance party. It almost makes you want to jump up out of your seat and join them, but luckily I was able to restrain myself, this time. The singing ranged from good to bodacious, and there were some hilarious moments. PC musical productions always exceed the average, and even with the high precedent they set for themselves, the play was very well done indeed.

Entertainment

Hot Hommes and Flashy Femmes

By MICAH LITANT
Spectrum Staff

The word "fashion" implies an aura of criticism and contradiction. Although everyone would like to believe that he or she is an individual in terms of dress, all styles eventually become indistinguishable. Take, for instance, the trend of torn clothes. In general, the torn jeans and frayed t-shirts look is a style that points to a rebellious high school learner. However, when the same idea is perpetrated by brand-name labels with pre-torn jeans and logo-adorned hats whose brims have been intentionally frayed and sheared, the look has gone from punk to preppy. The reality of this phenomenon is that the line between fashion and status has blurred.

In another example of opposite styles mimicking each other, many different patrons of an Acton-Boxborough education simply adore boots. Black combats are the fashion demand of the punk rockers. However, no kids stick on their boots and then just leave their jeans to waggle around down there; it is absolutely necessary to roll up the trousers to the top of the boots for maximum efficiency in looking cool. But just when we all thought those crazy anarchy kids had their look mastered, everyone's new favorite boots stepped on the scene and devoured the style. Uggs have become all the rage with the popular femmes on-campus and with them, the exact same style of rolling the jeans. It would be quite the faux pas to have such fashionable kicks stuck to your legs without at least a good two inches of jean turned up against the plush suede of the boot. Although these particular boots are commonly worn in pale shades of pink and yellow in contrast to the stark black of Doc Martens, both sets of kids simply love to sport their stomping gear, even when it is sunny and dry outside. Punk or princess, you better get yourself some boots before kids are all up in your face screaming, "Yo, that's whack."

In the widely accepting era that we dwell in, it seems as though anything that would be traditionally criticized has become the coolest thing you could possibly wear. Hats seem to be just one of such a trend sweeping the school at the moment. The best you can do in the head-gear department is to find yourself the most garish, large, poofy, and hideous cap that you can and cram it onto your head. A favorite among skater boys, snowboarder chums and gals, and preppy jocks alike, is the knit-cap with the ear-flaps. Maybe it even has a little pom-pom plopped on top, like some kind

of strange eyeball, staring at you from its fortress of cloth. Even when we are sweating it out due to the poorly regulated heating system of the school, the fashionistas are still sitting pretty in their caps.

On the subject of caps, mesh seems to have made a comeback



A girl sporting the popular Uggs boots footwear of the punk and popular alike.
NATE FRANZ / Correspondent

as well. Although I will always associate mesh with creepy van-driving types from the 1970s who frequent gas stations and diners, these lids seem to have permeated all kinds of social cliques. The two-tone color schemed varieties are commonly worn backwards by those skater fellas while the sport-os usually prefer straight-brimmed basketball or baseball caps. Hats are escaping the social boundaries in which people themselves are forced to reside.

The largest fashion trend of all, however, seems to be the "psyches" that many of AB's various teams wear on the day of a big game. Although sometimes the girls field hockey team likes to devilishly throw us off by instating some radical dress such as army fatigues or guy's clothing, it seems as though all the psyches for all the teams are all exactly the same, all the time, every week, since the beginning of known civilization. These young lads and lasses are capable of playing through grueling and skill-demanding matches in their respective clubs; yet when it comes time to dress up, all they can think of to wear are khakis, a dress shirt, and a tie. When we break it down, what are we even doing anymore? Well, it's a psyche, so I suppose the whole purpose is that someone's going to get scared and then someone is going to burst into their face and scream "Psyche!" and cackle at them. That is what a psyche is, by elementary school definition. Maybe we're simply trying to psyche ourselves up and raise our spirits so that we can win a match. But I can't bring myself to believe that, because if

I were going to try to raise spirits I'd wear a space suit. We're all in high school, taking tests, completing SATs, applying to college, and potentially facing a slogging life of being pigeon-holed into horrible little office jobs. I think the last thing we need to see every single day is kids, desperately clinging

to their youth yet molding themselves into adorable little adults.

However, there's nothing wrong with any of these fashions. The only thing that is wrong is if you dress to impress. It's all passion, not fashion, and in the words of my friend Patrick Hanlon, "Never be afraid to do your own thing or just be whoever you are." Until the day of the psyche, simply just kick it with the most unique individual style you can!" All we can do is find who we are and embrace our niche. Fashion determines social status too much sometimes. But really, in the end, who cares what you are wearing if you have nice eyes or some sharp hair-do? Or a hovercraft?

With the Lights Out: A Look Back at Nirvana

By TRAVIS PALANO
Spectrum Staff

In 1985 one of the most important and influential phone calls in the history of rock and roll took place in a small house in Seattle, Washington. Kurt Cobain called Krist Novoselic and asked if he wanted to be in a band. Novoselic said yes, Nirvana was born, and the rest is history. They would go through a few different drummers until 1990, when Dave Grohl, currently of Foo Fighters, joined. This trio became the voice of Generation X. Their hard-edged punk rock mixed with a breed of heavy metal and soon became known as grunge, often referred to as the "Seattle sound." Other bands would emerge from Seattle, including Pearl Jam and Soundgarden, but none quite as noteworthy as Nirvana. Then, in 1994, the music world was rocked: Kurt Cobain killed himself with a shotgun in his Seattle home. Fans were heartbroken, with nothing left of their icon but his tragically sparse, discontinued catalogue.

Eleven years after Cobain's death, Nirvana is still an extremely popular band. The music and lyrics relate to all types of people and problems. Recently, Novoselic and Grohl have compiled a box set of mostly unreleased songs and recordings. This box set, entitled *With the Lights Out*, is a very comprehensive view of Nirvana, from their early days right up until Cobain's death. The set includes three CDs, containing a grand total of sixty-one songs. It also has a DVD of sets from different shows, early recording sessions, and some candid shots of the band having fun. The CDs go

in chronological order based on time of recording. Each one is excellent. The first CD opens with "Heartbreaker", a Led Zeppelin cover taken from their first live show. Other notables are a live version of "Downer," an oddly humorous song called "Beans," and solo acoustic versions of "Polly" and "About a Girl." The second CD has a radio recording of Lithium, an acoustic version of "Where Did You Sleep Last Night," in which the singing seems to come straight from Kurt's heart. It also includes an early demo version of "Smells Like Teen Spirit," "Aneurysm" and "Drain You." The third CD has two versions of "Rape Me," the first a demo recording and the second an acoustic solo. It also contains "Jesus Doesn't Want Me for a Sunbeam," an acoustic solo of "Do Re Mi," my personal favorite, and a very fast-paced acoustic version of "Pennyroyal Tea." With the *Lights Out* closes with an undated version of "All Apologies," the final song on Nirvana's final album, *In Utero*. In this implicitly sad song, the emotion drips from Cobain's voice, reminding fans of the passion with which Cobain lived and played.

This box set is not for the casual Nirvana fan since it includes many B-side tracks with exceedingly poor sound quality. However, for a devoted fan, this collection is perfect. New takes on familiar songs and unpredictable jams make for an incredible listening experience. All in all, this is a great comprehensive look at Nirvana and the years that they dominated the world of rock and roll.

Killing Me Softly With Their Songs

By PETER AHERN
Spectrum Staff

Do you enjoy songs of jealousy and paranoia? About murderers and stalkers? Sounds dark and dismal, right? Well, have no fear. The Killers, a new group straight out of Vegas, has transformed these seemingly depressing topics into an amazing combination of high-style rock and 80s pop that is like nothing heard in years, on their debut CD, *Hot Fuss*. Characterized by lightning-fast beats and sharp lyrics, the band's overall sound, though difficult to categorize, resembles an odd combination of The Strokes, The Cure, and Oasis blended with the Hackers soundtrack. Addictively good, there is not one less-than-stellar track on *Hot Fuss*. While an excellent tribute to big 80s bands like Duran Duran and Simple Mind,

The Killers are not to be mistaken as an ironic throwback band, a la The Darkness. They have been keen to add their own dose of rock to give their already-kicking sound a definitive bite. Recently, their songs "Somebody Told Me" and "Mr. Brightside" have been playing on Boston alt-radio stalwarts WBCN and WFNX, and the group is gaining some serious media coverage. They were named the "Hot Band" in *Rolling Stone's* "Hot Issue"; they have been featured in *The New York Post* and *Newsday*, as well as on MTV; additionally, they have made the covers of NME and Spin. The Killers are four guys, all in their early twenties, who play guitars, drums, bass and... synthesizer! Don't laugh. Though not typical in today's rock bands, the synthesizer is what defiantly

makes The Killers stand out. Combined with their engrossing lyrics and offbeat vibe, The Killers manage to be unique in a much-needed way, differentiating themselves from the trite, recycled songs currently polluting the mainstream. First brought to the attention of the London-based independent label Lizard King, the band was quickly signed to Island Records and the members soon started touring the UK, where they currently seem to play most of their shows. Even when they're not in the States, The Killers' songs most definitely are. So if their sound seems at all appealing, listen to a sound clip, check them out online, buy *Hot Fuss*, turn on your radio or just download their songs. Do whatever it takes to hear The Killers. You won't regret it.

Entertainment

Now Playing in a Classroom Near You

By NICK JESSOP
Spectrum Staff

Judging by the turnout, it would seem that the first, second, and third rule of the AB Film Club is “You do not talk about Film Club.” At times, it seems as though not even Brad Pitt himself would be capable of generating any buzz around the little-known assembly. Launched this past fall by seniors Eugene Dao, Prasad Patil, and brothers Charles and Matthew Fisher-Post, the brilliantly conceived experiment of the Acton-Boxborough Film Club has delivered mixed—and somewhat disappointing—results.

Every Tuesday, after the final bells have rung and the roar of the exiting masses becomes the gentle hum of activities hour, the pilgrims make their weekly visit to room 154W. With visions of snacks and Spielberg drifting through their tired brains, they patiently wait for the lights to dim and for the sounds and colors of cinema to transport them to a homework-free land of relaxation. They are the regulars, and their dedication to the Film Club has been its most valuable asset. It is not hard to see

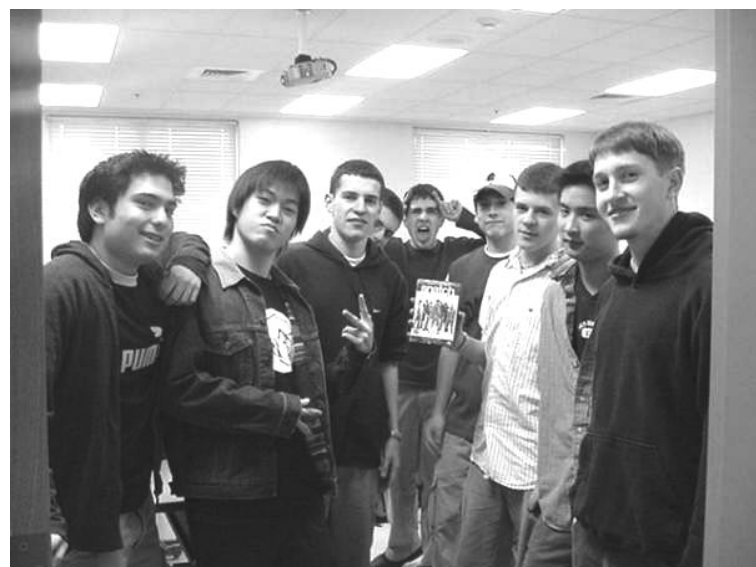
why the club can be so enjoyable. As one of the only extra-curricular activities that provides food, the Film Club has perhaps the most pampered members in all of AB. In addition, the relaxed and informal mood of the club provides relief from the stresses of AB’s high-octane education. The Film Club is not for watching movies; it is for enjoying them.

Despite having garnered a loyal core of enthusiasts, the club continues to lack one crucial aspect: diversity. Founded by four seniors, the club has, at times, resembled the TD’s checkout line during lunch hours. In the past month especially, underclassmen have been shying away from the ’05-dominated meetings. This is not to say that the club has become an exclusive senior hangout. Co-founder Charles Fisher-Post remains baffled at the waning youth presence. “We had so many kids sign up early on and even donate money towards food and movie costs. Now, those same people don’t even stop by to see what’s playing.”

Perhaps the loss of interest can be attributed to the club’s inauspicious premiere. The inaugural

meeting was attended by nearly 30 bubbling students, many of whom had their enthusiasm flattened by the poorly received Sci-Fi film *Bladerunner*. Despite critical acclaim, the somewhat dated Ridley Scott flick alienated many casually invested members. Many unimpressed moviegoers departed before the picture had even ended, prompting Co-founder Prasad Patil to plead with the remaining few: “We’re really sorry; we don’t know what that was. We promise it will never happen again.” For the most part, this promise has been upheld. Other than a technical snafu that marred the viewing of *Schindler’s List*, the club has operated smoothly.

However, if this first installment of Film Club is to have a sequel, underclassmen involvement is essential. So, if you are interested in enjoying the simple beauty of movies, or even if you’re just looking for a place to kick back and enjoy the simple beauty of Cheez Puffs, Film Club is dying to make your acquaintance. If not, then simply spread the word. Remember, though, you didn’t hear it from me.



Members of the new AB Film Club, which meets every Tuesday in room 154W.

MARY LI / Correspondent

Napoleon Dynamite: A Cinematic Waterloo

By MATT BASKIN
Spectrum Staff

Call me old-fashioned, but when the little colored sticker on the package of a movie reads “comedy,” I don’t think it’s all that unreasonable to expect that movie to be funny. Unfortunately, *Napoleon Dynamite* has turned my theory upside down. Lacking plot cohesion, character development, and other concepts you might associate with a decent film, this paradoxically popular cult hit does for comedy what *Battlefield: Earth* did for sci-fi.

Released in the summer of 2004, *Napoleon Dynamite* has gone from indie obscurity to blockbuster fame, going so far as to land its own top-ten slot on Letterman. Set in the small town of Preston, Idaho, the brittle storyline focuses on a ridiculously exaggerated high school nerd named Napoleon Dynamite and his efforts to get his sole friend, Pedro, elected class president. In a daring subplot, Napoleon must cope with the annoyances of an equally nerdy brother immersed in an online relationship and a freakishly nostalgic uncle who still pines for his glory days as a high school quarterback. All this happens while Napoleon is jockeying for the love of Deb, whose side ponytail radiates the sort of subtle irony that is best left to Alanis Morissette. Long story short, this movie goes out of its way to be obnoxious. However, the phantom plot and odd, yet trite, characters don’t eradicate the possibility for humor. In fact, they may even enhance it. After all, *Seinfeld* did it for years. Why can’t a ninety-minute movie do it?

Then again, *Seinfeld*’s primary writer was a professional comedian. *Napoleon Dynamite* was written by Jerusha Hess, wife of director Jared Hess, proving the evils of nepotism. Furthermore, Jerusha Hess is credited not only as *Dynamite*’s writer, but its cos-

tume designer as well. One has to wonder if the film’s small budget necessitated multi-tasking. Any opportunity for a clever line or funny image is disregarded in favor of the utterly strange or utterly predictable. In an example of the former, we’re treated to an apparently improvised dance executed by Napoleon following Pedro’s tepid election speech. Apparently, this passes for humor. An example of the latter is the first real-life meeting of Kip, Napoleon’s brother, and his online girlfriend. Early in the film, Kip describes her as a blonde, implying that she’s white. But Hess throws us a curveball. As Kip’s net wench steps off her bus, we see that she’s actually black! Clever, no? This is the sort of humor relegated to movies such as *Anchorman* and *White Chicks*. When found in an indie, where one expects a certain degree of sophistication, this fails to amuse. In the case of *Napoleon Dynamite*, it clunks along through a witless series of absurd stunts and foregone conclusions.

And yet, *Napoleon Dynamite* is wildly popular. “Vote For Pedro” t-shirts, as worn by Napoleon himself, are in wide circulation. In high schools across America, students shamelessly reference lines so pitiful that they make “One time, at band camp...” sound like a stroke of comic genius. At AB, senior dress-up day featured a posse of *Dynamite* impersonators reenacting a particularly sordid scene in front of the entire senior class. Nonsensical as it may be, people love this movie with a passion, too caught up in its popularity to consider its actual quality. *Napoleon Dynamite* is not good; it’s just a passing trend, hankering for its fifteen minutes of fame. With any luck, it will meet the same fate as flash mobs and trucker hats. Until then, I cross my fingers and hope that my next rental with the “comedy” sticker on it comes as advertised.

Reality TV: Fired or Fired Up?

By ELISABETH MALIN
Spectrum Staff

Self-serving alliances that disintegrate into backstabbing; inflated egos that disguise insecurities; brawn without brain; arrogance in place of competence. These are the common ingredients in today’s fattening diet of TV reality shows. Add to these a dash of dare, a pinch of idiocy, a teaspoon of tastelessness, a tumbler of titillation, and an overflowing cup of pander, and you’ve just identified a mainstay of American culture.

The question that begs attention is this: Are reality shows really “reality” or are they, in fact, well-edited fast-food entertainment for a nation flabby-minded from its desire for empty calories? Are they primitive fare for simpletons super-sized on tawdry talk shows and salacious soaps?

We can only wonder: How resourceful are those purposefully stranded on an aboriginal plain or

in a dense jungle? How delicate are those Beverly Hills flowers when transplanted to the farms of America’s Heartland? How well-grounded, self-respecting, and admirable are those couples who disappear to an oasis of temptation to test their “strong” relationships?”

However, amongst these, there is one guilty pleasure that stands out: The Apprentice, an invention of master chef Mark Burnett (*Survivor*) and billionaire real-estate developer Donald Trump, a.k.a. “The Donald.” Spiced with equal amounts of moxie and mayhem, guts, gumption, and gusto, this is a sure palate-pleaser featuring attractive, youthful, ambitious contestants with educational backgrounds as diverse as Harvard Business School to the School of Hard Knocks, all vying for the entrepreneurial prize of employment on Donald’s team. Sixteen lucky men and women are selected for the show, then split up into teams. In their

teams, they tackle tasks familiar to the corporate world, such as product placement and ad design.

This year, by aligning its case-study assignments with the big-budget advertising capability of a leading toy corporation and the flagship jean manufacturer, The Apprentice has repositioned itself from mere “reality” to “reality advertisement.” Some may consider this move clever. Others may view it with cynicism. Either way, The Apprentice cooks up a suspenseful concoction with a big following.

In the end, there are meaty lessons to be learned from The Apprentice. From the inner workings of The Donald’s boardroom to the resourcefulness and talents of the contestants, the intrigues of their team-building, and the anticipated two-hour grand finale crowning the contestant sly enough to claim “The Donald’s” heart, we can watch secure in the fact that when we turn off the tube, our bellies will be full.

Sports

Just Another Day at the Office for AB Basketball

By HARSHA KROVI & BRIAN CALLAHAN
Spectrum Staff

The basketball program here at AB has been stronger than ever. With a record of 11-1, the boys' basketball team got off to a fantastic start this season. Coach Rick Kilpatrick has done what

Kilpatrick, known for his modesty, responded, "It [the 100th win] felt good, but I owe it all to those guys out there because they are the reason I am where I am today. I am fortunate enough to coach good players, and I consider myself lucky to coach where I do."

The success of their coach, however, is not all that the

needs him the most. Besides those two, the Colonials have several key players, such as Juniors Alex Scheier, Will Cronin, and Bobby McLaughlin, and Sophomore Pat Morris, who play a pivotal part in making the team what it is right now. Freshman Peter Tongo is a rare case of a player making the

varsity team as a freshman. More astounding is how well he has played and developed through the first dozen games of the season. Even with all of this talent, Kilpatrick insists, as any true coach must that there is room for improvement. "You can't be satisfied by how you look on paper. I want my players to simply improve in practice. The bottom line is that it's necessary." Playing in their last year at AB, Jackson and Salvo and other seniors including forwards Mike Horan, Chris Martin, and Pete Rankis, and guards Joey O'Brien, Ted Keith, and the Abare brothers are trying their hardest to make this season their finest so they can leave AB with pride. "This has been a very fun year for me, especially because I've got a good group of guys to work with," Kilpatrick said. It will be sad when the year ends, but the team still has business to take care of and

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The boys basketball team goes to work.
ALFRED DEGEMMIS / STAFF

he does best: to win basketball games. Kilpatrick recently earned his 100th win against Lincoln-Sudbury and after a very successful seven years, he deserves at least a pat on the back for this achievement. When asked about the accomplishment,

Colonials have going for them. They have two great scoring options in senior captain Kyle Jackson, who leads the team with about 25 points per game, and Dan Salvo, who has impeccable shot selection and always seems to come through when his team

AB Winter Track Rounds Out Another Impressive Season

By KYLE POCHINI & DAVID RILEY
Spectrum Staff

The AB Winter Track team has experienced a season full of many hard-earned victories and heart-breaking defeats. However, the resolve of the team has not been shaken. The boys' team posted a solid 5-3 record in the DCL this year. In the final DCL meet of the season, the boys' team beat Bishop-Fenwick 64 to 30, falling just nine points short of Westford Academy.

While the boys' team also suffered losses to Wayland and Newton South, they were able to take down perennial DCL powerhouse Lincoln-Sudbury in an upset earlier this season. Leading the boys' sprinting corps is senior captain Chris Eckersley, whose 55-meter sprint of 6.80 seconds is top in the league. Eckersley also demonstrated his versatility

by earning much-needed points in the 300-meter dash with a personal best of 36.90 seconds. Not far behind is junior John Chou who posted personal records in both of his events in the final league meet with a 38.30-second 300 meter and a long jump of 18'8.5". Senior Tom Egge and freshman Chris Diaz have been



the leading point-takers in the 600-meter dash. Raising the bar in the high jump is junior John McCoy and sophomore David Lowe, with jumps of 5'5" and 5'7", respectively. McCoy's

contributions to the team have been invaluable, as he and senior captain Kevin Cobb have both thrown over 42 feet in the shotput.

Matt Shimizu, in his first year of winter track, has made a strong case for Rookie of the Year by running a 2:49.30 in the 1000-meter race. Vaunted junior captain Zac Del Nero has been a solid leader in the distance crew, doubling up in both the mile and 2-mile with a personal best of 4:43.00 and 10:09.00, respectively. Sophomore Keon Reed and Mike Airosus have also posted 5-minute miles, and Airosus has helped to set the standard in the 2-mile event.

With the DCL Championship meet on the horizon, the boys' team is preparing for what is sure to be a hard-fought battle. Win or lose, one thing is for certain: they will give it their all, just as they have at every meet throughout their exceptional season.

Boys Hockey Team Sticking Together

By BRYAN SHAFFER & SCOTT LABENSKI
Spectrum Staff

It didn't take long for the AB boys hockey team to get on a roll this winter. The team holds a 5-2-2 record through their first nine games, a more than respectable record in light of their tough Division I competition. The "hard work and no play" attitude that the varsity team embodies has propelled the team to be among the elite regiments in the DCL/MVC (Merrimack Valley Conference).

One of the traits the team possesses that has helped them succeed is the excellent guidance given by the veteran company. All three captains, Mark Grazewski, Mark Emond, and Robbie Trainer, have not only been inspiring to the other players but have also motivated their teammates to be all that they can be. Grazewski is best-known for his speed and blistering shots, but he also has a way with words in the locker room. Goalie Emond has

been known to be "the glue" in the locker room by ending arguments and disputes, bringing the team closer in the process. "I just try and make everyone feel good. If two guys are on the verge of a fight that may compel them to use their fists, I sit them each down and ask them a couple simple questions. 'Is he worth it? Is this best for the team?' This can end any confrontation, and I hope that it brings us closer in the process." Junior John "Great Wall" Webster has been an exquisite leader on the brutal (in a good way) defensive front. Webster captivated the team with an inspirational speech during intermission when he said, "You gotta look at the guy across from you. Look at the fire in his eyes. He wants this win real bad. You know what I'm saying? We've worked way too hard this season to let it all slip away now."

Now let's bring a victory home, boys, for the fans, for the ladies, for yourselves, for the coach, but most importantly, for the team. Now let's show Arlington what it means to be a Colonial!" With inspirational speeches of such a high caliber, one can see why the defense is in a class of its own.

Not only have the captains led the team, but the role players have also stepped up to the plate. Junior Kevin "Sik Wit It" White commented on his strenuous work ethic throughout the year: "Those long, sweaty summer days on the treadmill at Athlete's Edge are starting to pay off with the tournament in sight. I just hope I can continue this physical play for the remainder of the year." Many of the other players had a similar regimen to his, and it is starting to show in their impressive record. Senior Andy "Boy-Boy Rubix" Christmas spoke about the im-

pressive season so far when he said, "I was not at all surprised that our team had such sweet beginnings."

We have a nice blend of veterans and young talent, and all of us work very hard. I think that our team has enough skill to win the DCL/MVC, and I would not be at all surprised if we did just that."

This hockey team appears to be one of the best that AB has seen for at least five years. If the players keep up their hard work on and off the ice they could have another State Championship under their belt, provided they don't suffer any setbacks from injuries. Senior Brendan Agrillo summed it up the best with, "The season is not a sprint, but a marathon in which one must overcome his lack of endurance and suck up his pride and do the best he can over the long run for his team, a word that contains no letter 'I.'" With a clear team-first attitude, it would be no surprise if AB were able to walk away this season as number one.

GO
COLONIALS!

Sports

Reilly Heads to US Special Olympics in Nagano

By LINDA YAN
Spectrum Staff

On February 26th, Melissa Reilly, a senior at ABRHS, will represent the United States in the 2005 Special Olympics Winter World Games in Nagano, Japan. Special Olympics was founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, who was inspired by her sister, Rosemary Kennedy. This organization, as stated on their website, is "an international organization dedicated to empowering individuals with intellectual disabilities to become physically fit, productive and respected members of society through sports training and competition." Currently, Special Olympics spans 150 countries and includes almost 1.4 million athletes. Just like the Olympic Games, the Special Olympics alternates between Winter and Summer Games, in four rotations.

I sat down with Reilly, one of the two Massachusetts alpine skiers in the United States delegation. Back from a December training session, Reilly was energized and "counting down the days" until competition.

Reilly will compete in two events—the Slalom and Giant Slalom. Both courses are along a zigzag path, laid out with markers. However, the Giant Slalom generally has a longer and steeper course. Asked about ever being scared of the height and steepness, Reilly just smiled and said that she's "not too scared...I just go down and keep on skiing." On the slope, Reilly is a cautious and sensible skier, although she does admit to a desire to go "just a little bit faster."

As with many athletes, Reilly started off young. She was born into a skiing family and was also enrolled in a special skiing school with one-on-one instructor-student interaction. When asked what she loved best about skiing, Reilly answered, "Just going out and doing my best."

"I've been in the Special Olympics for ten years," reminisced Reilly. "It's been really nice." Not only does Reilly compete in winter sports, she also swims freestyle, backstroke and relay for the Summer Special Olympics. "I like swimming because I like being in the pool," said Reilly. She also cycles for the Special Olympics August tournament. All in all, Reilly is a four-sport athlete, also doing track. She is part of the AB Cross-Country and Spring Track teams and competes regularly, a system of integration that she very much enjoys. "My team is so nice," says Reilly. "I like them very much." Her favorite track event is the 100-meter run.

In December of 2004, Reilly and the USA team convened in Copper Mountain, Colorado. For five days, athletes worked hard at training and connecting with one another. "My coach is from Anchorage, Alaska, where my brother lives. So I talk to her a lot," explained Reilly.

Reilly was "very excited and a little nervous" about the upcoming world-wide competition in Nagano, Japan. However, she was relaxed enough to joke about eating sushi. She plans on leaving on the 20th, with the rest of the athletes from the Northeast.

See REILLY / page 19

Alpine Ski Team Starts Out Solid on the Slippery Slope

By MARK KAGAN
Spectrum Staff

Injuries, frigid cold weather, and conditions ranging from melting slush to solid ice are just a few of the challenges that the AB Alpine Ski team had to face this season. Despite all those ob-



The ski team huddles up during a practice session.
MARK KAGAN / Spectrum Staff

stacles, the team has performed just as well as they have in prior years—perhaps even better.

The boys' team has had more than a solid start. With many experienced racers that have been on the team for four years, as well as some talented newcomers, they have dominated the slopes. So far, the boys' team has placed first in both of the giant slalom races, and second in the slalom, only one point behind rival Westford. Senior Co-Captain Jake Segal has consistently won all his races with an impressive two-second margin.

Fellow senior co-captain Alex Bender has also done extremely well, placing in the top ten in every race. Seniors Matt Melander and Mark Kagan, junior Andrew Gruet, and his freshman brother Mike Gruet have all contributed points as varsity racers. Sophomore Sam Lewis and senior Darek

ing in third in the two giant slalom races and tying for second with Lowell in the slalom. Individually, Junior Catie Bender and Sophomore Anna Tarakanova both consistently placed in the top ten throughout the year. Sophomores Eugenie Amarangu, Emma Crocket, Holly Richardson, freshman Eliza Holbrook, and junior Cathy Ward contributed points to the team as varsity racers. Ward was able to impress everyone even more by winning the junior varsity slalom race by a large margin.

With two more races left in the season, both teams are looking forward to State Competition in February. In the past years both teams have made it to the State Finals and have done fairly well. The girls team has had a five-year streak of going to the States as a team, while the boys team

saw their streak end last year when they came in third in the league, missing the cutoff by one spot. This year, their aspirations are high. The boys team, currently first in the league, is well on their way to the State Finals. The girls team holds third place, and with two more races ahead, they have a good chance of catching second-place Lowell. With the stakes this high, we can only expect to see even more spectacular performances from AB's skiers.

Lisowski also served the team well by placing first in junior varsity slalom and giant slalom races. The girls have had an even bigger challenge to face this year. Graduating four out of last year's six varsity members, they started out with only three experienced racers. In addition, due to an unfortunate turn of events, Seniors Sarah Nasznic and Lauren Tracy both got injured during the first two weeks of the racing season. Despite the setbacks, the girls' team came out quite strong and impressive on the course, com-

AB Girls Indoor Track Picking Up The Pace

By LAUREN LIUZZO
Correspondent

On December 1 the Girls Indoor Track Team met together in the upper gym for their first practice. There were twenty-one new faces on the track team and all showed anticipation of what was to come of the winter season, especially the team's Senior Captains, Allie Schneider, Katy Agule, Becca Maitland, and junior captain Kara Lafferty. The first practices before the first meet were difficult, but everyone on the team showed great effort and dedication.

As the team walked into Reggie Lewis Athletic Center in Boston, they faced Newton South and Boston Latin. Kate Warwick, a freshman, ran the mile for the first time on the high school team and placed first against both

teams. Rookie sophomore Natalie Crutchfield had an outstanding performance in the 55m dash, where she not only placed first but broke the school record as well.

Freshman Casey Hsuing also competed in the 55m dash and picked up some points for the team. Cara Shorey, also a freshman, showed great speed when she placed in the 300m dash and Senior Amelia Lindgren, returning from an injury, had a solid run in the 600m race. In the field events, Sophomore Katie Blancha and Junior Jessica Faraci placed first

and second in the shot put, with Junior Lulu Elterm close behind. In the end AB came out on top and defeated perennial powerhouse Newton South, and DCL cup-

cake Boston Latin. "Every point is key," said Senior Captain Katy Agule. "No matter what event you do, one point could make all the difference. Although running is very individual, it is the overall team performance that builds up to great achievement. We couldn't have beat Newton South and ended their thirty-nine wins streak without every athlete's effort and support."

The second dual meet took place on January 3 and was also a challenge, but AB pulled through and was able to beat both Notre Dame and Lincoln-Sud-

bury. Both Junior Captain Kara Lafferty and Junior Sam Pappin showed great determination when they ran the 300m race. Fellow Junior Katie McManus ran her fastest 200m split and helped her 4 x 200 team run a great overall time. Junior Brittany Ford and Freshman Gayarthi Prabhakar competed together in the junior varsity 55m dash; both putting up great times. Junior Laura Thistle ran in the 600m race and showed great improvement from the beginning of the season. Senior Captain Allie Schneider ran the two-mile along with Sophomore Lecie Houston, who ran her best two mile of the season.

In the third dual meet on January 14, the girls competed against Weston and Wayland once again



Senior Katy Agule prepares to run during a recent team relay.
ALFRED DEGENIMISI / Spectrum Staff

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Sports

Callahan's Corner: Party Like It's 1999!

By BRIAN CALLAHAN
Spectrum Staff

Let me get this straight. The Red Sox won the World Series, the New England Patriots are an NFL dynasty, Phil Mickleson won a major, and the top level of professional hockey in this country still playing is the AHL? If I said this would happen two years ago you would have called me crazy. If I said this in 1999, you would have called me Steve Callahan. Steve, my older brother, who loved writing about the Red Sox winning the World Series come every new season, was *The Spectrum* sports editor at the height of the Evil Empire. In order to fully appreciate the sports facelift the New England region has gone through in the past several years, I believe it is only fitting to call upon the man who served us when the going was tough.

Steve is currently in his senior year at Wake Forest University enjoying the first-class basketball provided by Chris Paul and the preseason No. 1 Deamon Deacons. I called him up to get the full scoop of what his reign as the former *Spectrum* sports editor was like.

Callahan's Corner: Hello, Steve. Would you like to answer some questions for an exclusive Callahan's Corner column?

Steve Callahan: Alright man. First question.

CC: You served *The Spectrum* for quite some time, what was your most memorable moment?

SC: Hmm, let me think. Well, the golf team winning the DCL title when I was a senior would have to be up there. Field hockey was always pretty big when I was there. Actually they won the state title my junior or senior year.

CC: Now, the sports scene at AB may have been strong, but we know that it wasn't all peachy for the Red Sox and other pro teams in the area. Care to delve into what it was like writing about them?

SC: I remember they were a

frustrating team to watch, which should come as no surprise to longtime fans. My most memorable column was definitely on how Steinbrenner and the Yankees seemed to have paid off the umps in 1999. You remember that play when Knoblauch missed the tag, and they still called our guy out? I think it was Varitek.

CC: Yeah it was. I think I went to that game. Still brings back nightmares.

SC: Well I wrote a column about how Steinbrenner paid off the umps, it created quite a buzz in New York, and I had to hire extra security for myself and my staff.

CC: Sources tell me your yearbook quote was of A-Rod. Care to explain yourself?

SC: That was before A-Rod joined the Evil Empire, and I be-



lieve it was "Enjoy your sweat, because while hard work doesn't guarantee success, without it you don't have a chance." That quote really spoke to me because as is true in most things in life, there are no guarantees and if you put in the time, at least you might see your dreams come to fruition.

CC: I see. I have heard from many that your antics have become the stuff of legends. Any comment on those?

SC: Ha ha, yeah. I remember this one time, we were having a hard time getting the final layout of the paper put together and I put in a picture of myself having deleted all my hair and making myself look older. Under-

neath it I put the caption, "Your sports editor, 50 years later." When the *Spectrum* finally came out, it created a big scene and I actually came to blows with another editor over it.

CC: Oh, wow. Have you continued to write since leaving *The Spectrum*?

SC: I have done a few small sidebars. I've been working on two screenplays, some short stories and am trying to get my first novel out there, but really *The Spectrum* marked a time of peak performances in terms of my writing. It was like The Beatles, Led Zeppelin, Gandhi, Steve Callahan at *The Spectrum*.

CC: Good call. Do you have any advice for aspiring *Spectrum* sports writers?

SC: Absolutely: learn the alphabet, it could come in handy when you're writing.

So there you have it, the original Callahan of AB in an up close and personal interview. During times like these, when you can actually say Boston is a city of champions without getting a laugh in return, you really have to appreciate the fact that there were darker times before, and that there were people who had to write about them. Today when you hear commentators and national columnists, they seem to be constantly complaining about the "state" of professional sports. Whether it be Randy Moss fake-mooning a crowd, Terrell Owens on a "racy" Monday Night Football promotion, or college football coach Rick Neuheisel gambling on the NCAA Basketball tournament, the media loves to create controversy. The great thing about Steve was that he could have resorted to what the media does so often these days, but instead, he did what columnists and all media personas should aim to do: he made sports fun to follow. In the end, *that's* what matters.

CALLAHAN'S OTHER CORNER

The time has come for an expansion to this column, which will start running in the next issue of *The Spectrum*. The premise is simple. For you readers out there who have questions or comments and would like to see them answered right here in your favorite newspaper, then you won't need to look any further than Callahan's Other Corner. If you have a question or comment about sports (for relationship questions, Dave Emer is the man you want to contact) and would like it answered, just email me at callahansotcorner@hotmail.com and leave your name, or no name if you'd rather go anonymous.

REILLY / from page 18

"I'm okay with changing time," said Reilly, apparently not worried about the long plane ride to Nagano. Reilly's simple and dynamic attitude toward doing well at such a high level is "just going out and trying [my] luck, and trying to win gold."

Very intense, Reilly finished with the Athlete's Oath, which seems to sum up her determination: "Let me win. If I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

Indoor Track

TRACK / from page 18

defeating both teams, bringing their record to 6-0. Junior Elizabeth Alonzo and Sophomore Bridget Decesar ran together in the mile and both knocked more than twenty seconds off their previous times. Junior Melissa Gorman also ran the mile and finished with a great time that qualified her for states. In the sprinting corps, Freshman Jill Crowley had an excellent run in the competitive 300-meter dash while Freshman Courtney Boland and Sophomore Amy Curtis ran well in the 600m. Junior Jenny Rafferty ran the 1000m for the first time this season and grabbed some points with a state-qualifying time.

The final dual meet held Thursday, January 27 determined who would wind up being the DCL champions as the girls competed against Westford Academy and Bishop Fenwick. They ended up beating both teams, winning the DCL for the first time for a decade. The team would not have its massive success without the effort and support brought on by the entire team. Freshman Cathy Deng

tried a new race, the mile, and ran a time fast enough to qualify her for states. Juniors Rachel Adgate and Brittany Ford, Sophomore Laura Adelman, and Freshman Erin Murphy all worked together to run a great 4x200m race. In the shotput, both Sophomore Lauren Levine and Junior Alicia Mueller had their best throws of the year. Sophomore Shannon Forbes and Junior Nale Hwang ran their best times and both placed in the 55m hurdles. In the 300m dash Sophomore Rosanna Xia showed strength and ran her personal best of the season. Agule ran an exceptional two-mile where she placed first overall and achieved her best indoor time.

The girls team has been working hard and their undefeated finish in the DCL leaves high hopes for the future of the girls indoor track program. With a team that will be returning most of its key runners next year, and will continue to develop solid young talent, the girls winter track team should continue to have many successful seasons in the future.

Basketball

BASKETBALL / from page 17

can't get caught up in what may or may not unfold in its future.

The girls' basketball team had a phenomenal start as well, going 11-1 in the first two months of the regular season. The team suffered its only loss in a nail-biter on February 1 against Wayland, losing a heartbreaker

contributions from junior Jill LaForest and sophomore guards Gabi Fox and Erin Cartwright. LaForest has given the Colonials another size presence down low to aid Tindal and Nagle, while Fox and Cartwright have given AB a vaunted backcourt presence. After beating undefeated rival Lincoln-Sudbury on the road



Olivia Nagle and Liz Tindal have led the girls basketball team to an amazing season.
JONATHAN EISENBERG / *Spectrum Staff*

by two points at the buzzer. Led by senior captains Liz Tindal and Olivia Nagle, who will be playing at Harvard and Wagner respectively in college, the girls' team has otherwise coasted to its nearly perfect record. The girls' team has also had key

during a tough three-game stretch, there is no question that they are the team to beat in the DCL.

If the two teams can continue the great success they've had thus far, Acton-Boxborough has much to look forward to come tournament time.

The Other Side

Sitting Moratorium



Cartoonist / NINA YI Inspired by / ALISON RICHARDSON

What Did Teachers Do on the Snow Day?

By WEN XIAO
Correspondent

1. Mr. Mutschler, Geometry Honors teacher, spent his time by using all the properties in the Geometry book to prove why two snowflakes are never congruent. Of course, he had a plateful of cheese on his desk. Sources conflict on whether it was sharp cheddar, Monterey Jack or Muenster. His cow took a nap.

2. Mr. Dempsey, with the help of various Science Team members, collected 250 snowflakes for the study of their chemical structures. However, the high temperature in the school melted their precious findings before they could analyze them. Mysteriously, a pile of ashes was found near the entrance. On closer observation, one scrap bore the words "the theme of family can be...proven...allusion to the...the author's tone is very sa..." We do not suspect foul play.

3. Dr. Williams spent the day out in the snow measuring the temperature. After near-frostbite and four cups of hot chocolate, she waved her arms and proved that the ideal gas law is accurate even under -20 Celsius.

4. Mr. Steege decided to write a research paper on the history of snow days in AB. However, he had trouble writing his paper because we've only had five snow days in the past century. He got down four pages before he ran out of words for snow.

5. Ms. Reynolds wrote a sonnet called "Snow Day" at AB. Unfortunately, critics say it resembles Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" in its obvious fantasy. Their claim is that AB does not give out snow days.

6. One monitor came to school to check if there were any students wandering in the hallways. Although he did not find any students, he did find several frozen rats lying around the hallway.

7. Mr. Martin spent the day outside

in the cold, using his new digital camera. An eyewitness claims that the shoot was interrupted by an involuntary slide down a hill. There were no snowballs. I repeat, there were no snowballs.

8. Mr. Beck used the time off in debate with Mr. Donovan about whether we should have another snow day or not. It wasn't a debate really, because Mr. Donovan had all the decision-making powers, but Mr. Beck almost won with the power of his big black coat.

9. Mr. Noeth came to school anyway, ignoring the snow day sign. He told his wife that he *had* to come to school, because he needed to wash all the boards. The math department came back to very clean boards and a large pair of snow boots in the department center.

10. Mr. Green, after the heinous attack on his person (pictured below), spent the day polishing his podium and withholding treats from his cat. Green 1, Snooty 242.

Acton and Boxborough Police Logs

By DEREK MATYAS and
TESS O'BRIEN
Spectrum Staff

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

- Resident of Main Street reported multiple gunshots in the area. Maynard was hosting a fireworks show.

- 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.
- Report of a mattress on Main Street.
- Resident of Inches Brook Road reported a baby squirrel had spent the day in a nearby tree crying. Animal control was notified, but they do not handle this sort of call.

- Cortland Lane resident reported hearing shots fired. It was the backyard neighbor, thwarting deer.
- Two men came into the lobby to report that, while using metal detectors at Nara Park, found what appeared to be a grave.
- Caller reported finding a threatening note taped to his car while it was parked at Codman Hill Road. The officer who responded found the note unthreatening.

To the Dean of Admissions

By MAGGIE DUFFY
Spectrum Staff

Dear Sir,

With the most sincere wishes that my application to your college provides a full and accurate sense of who I am, I have assembled several supplementary materials for the committee to review. They are by no means the full extent of my rigorous extracurricular endeavors but have been compiled to represent the most significant activities in my life. The items I have chosen demonstrate my great musical and artistic aspirations, my inventive nature, and my devotion to improving the world for others. They are included as follows:

1. The manifesto and official insignia patch for my self-founded school club, the Future Weathermen of America (FWA).
2. A portfolio of photos taken of every person whom I've encountered in high school who has used the phrase "Party like it's 1999".
3. A comprehensive collection of

locks of my hair from every dye job since November 1997, arranged in rainbow sequence.

4. A flask of mulled wine made from my self-designed home distillery (winner of the eighth grade science fair).

5. Photographs of my extensive creepy crawlers collection.

6. A collection of my sonnets about pogs, two of which are devoted exclusively to slammers.

7. An essay explaining my six months of absence spent in the United Arab Emirates and what really happened to my kid brother, Steven.

8. And finally, a cassette recording of my musical interpretations (humming) of the themes to the movies *Mrs. Doubtfire*, *Braveheart*, and *Gone with the Wind*.

If the committee members have any questions about my supplementary materials, I urge them to call me at home. I am available at practically any time, except for Wednesday evenings from six-thirty to ten o'clock. Wednesday is pog night with the boys.

Spout -Offs...

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

Too much speedball is bad for you. Can we petition for a marathon eating class?

I was going to get some Advil for my headache, but then I looked at a wall in the East Wing and passed out.

My Chapstick costs more than my lunch.

Candy canes are scary.

Why is it that we need new vending machines? I'm not going to pay \$0.85 for a bag of chips, even if I were starving to death!

My cousin laughed at me when I told her that our library has bouncers.

We need more famous musicians playing here. Oh wait! That is actually happening.

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

ABRHS Crimewatch



Two very brave miscreants make away with Mr. Green's beloved podium as he lies behind his desk, overwhelmed and unconscious.

IAN KEYWORTH / Spectrum Staff