

# PTSO News

May 2006  
Volume 19  
Number 8



Newsletter of the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools Parent-Teacher-Student Organization

RPTSO Web Site: <http://abrptso.ab.mec.edu/>

## FROM THE CHAIRS:

Beth Petr – ABRHS Co-Chair

Jan Couch – RJGJH Co-Chair

Our April PTSO Forum was a more casual conversation with High School Principal Steve Donovan, and RJG Junior High Assistant Principal, Larry Fliegelman.

After their usual updates on the schools, a handful of questions asked by parents/guardians on the PTSO email list were addressed. (If you are not on the PTSO list yet, go to <http://abrptso.ab.mec.edu/getinvolved.htm> and sign up!)

Some of the questions were:

### **Q: Why can't students bring copies of their tests home and why does it take so long for them to get their results?**

A: This is partly due to the large team and class sizes we currently have. It physically takes longer to grade 115 tests than it does to grade 90 tests (using a random JH team size for example). Also, many tests are common for the entire class to maintain integrity, and the students don't all test on the same day. It would also be difficult to change some of the tests, year to year, which would be necessary if they were distributed to students. Math is the most rigid as far as consistency, security, and time are concerned.

### **Q: Why is there so much focus on Community Service when I can do that at home with my child, and it sounds like there is not enough time for some of the "basics" like writing and math?**

A: The Department of Education includes "Active Citizenship", "Community Service Learning", and "Surviving in a Global Society" in their scope of learning. Our community also firmly believes it is the "right" thing to do. The Junior High teams participate in these activities at various levels. This is a very active focus at the High School with a Community Service Learning Coordinator. "Individuals can make a difference." is a common theme in our schools.

### **Q: Are string bikinis and bikinis in general appropriate for co-ed swimming in High School gym class?**

A: This has not come up as an issue so far. There is not a specific dress code for the swimming classes, but common sense should prevail. Please speak to the teacher if you have concerns.

### **Q: Is there adequate emphasis at the high school on preparing students for the kind of researching and writing that students will be expected to do in college? I would like to commend Mr. Tobin in the Social Studies dept. who is teaching his sophomore students to write research papers.**

A: Yes, there is great cooperation between the English and Social Studies departments regarding research projects, although it certainly gets more difficult with the increasingly larger class sizes.

Thank you to School Committee Chair, Marie Altieri, who gave us an update on the State funding outlook for next year's school budgets. Thanks for all your hard work, Marie!

**We hope to see you on Thursday, May 11<sup>th</sup> in the RJG Junior High School Auditorium for our last PTSO meeting of the year.** At 7:00 p.m. we will vote on our new Board and budget. At 7:30 p.m. we will present our annual "Surviving the College Search" with a panel of current A-B Seniors and their parents who will share their experiences. This presentation always draws a crowd, so don't miss it!

- Beth and Jan

## **"Surviving the College Search"**

A Panel of ABRHS Seniors and Their Parents

**Thursday, May 11th, 7:30 PM  
RJG Junior High Auditorium**

Are you worried about how you and your child will navigate the college search process successfully? Are there alternatives that you should consider? Does just thinking about it make you anxious? Come meet some of our current Seniors and their parents who have recently completed this process. Panel members, representing a range of experiences and decisions, will share their stories and answer questions from the audience. Students and parents/guardians are welcome.

Sponsored by the PTSO and ABRHS Counseling Department

## The PTSO Board for 2006-2007

Members of the Nominating Committee are looking for people to fill several volunteer positions on the Board for next year. This is a great way to contribute to our schools! If you're interested in finding out more about the available positions, please contact Beth at 978-263-7208 or Jan at 978-263-2118 asap.

The slate will be voted on at the PTSO meeting on May 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the RJG Junior High Auditorium. All parents / guardians are welcome to attend and vote.

### **Proposed PTSO Board 2006-2007**

Co-Chair (HS)	Mary Ann Ashton
Co-Chair (JH)	Jan Couch
Secretary	Janet Chinitz
Treasurer	Caroline Crosby
Directories (HS)	Judy Peters
Directories (JH)	Patti Babcock
Alumni Liason	Carol Jette
Gardening	Subha Thiagarajan
Interscholar Council (JH&HS)	Joyce Musacchio, Patty Flanagan, <b>OPEN</b>
Membership (HS)	Holly Ben Joseph
Membership (JH)	<b>OPEN</b>
Newcomer Welcome (HS)	Sue Hart
Newcomer Welcome (JH)	Bonnie Maserang
Newsletter	David Gerratt, Beth Petr
Nominating	<b>OPEN</b>
Project Graduation	<b>OPEN</b>
Publicity	<b>OPEN</b>
Volunteer Coordinators (HS)	Celeste Margolius
Volunteer Coordinators (JH)	Debbie Clough

THANK YOU to everyone who responded so generously to the recent PTSO dues reminder letter. The \$25 annual family dues is our only fundraiser. \$10,000 was collected as a result of the letter. \$3,400 of this has been given to Junior High Principal Craig Hardimon and \$6,600 has been given to High School Principal Steve Donovan. They are very grateful for these donations!

### **ABRHS School Council Openings**

There are three openings for parents/guardians on the ABRHS School Council for 2006-2007.

The School Council meets monthly in the evening and acts as an advisory body for the principal. The School Council also has responsibility for approving a School Improvement Plan each year and monitoring progress against the plan.

Any parent or guardian interested in running for one of these positions should forward a brief statement (5 or 6 sentences) about his or her background and interests to Beth Petr at [BPetr@verizon.net](mailto:BPetr@verizon.net) or call 978-263-7208 by May 10th. Ballots will be included in the June issue of the Newsletter with a voting deadline of mid-June.

The R.J. Grey School Council election occurs in the Fall.

**Thank you for \$10,000!**

# ABRHS NEWS

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## FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

### Steve Donovan

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During April the department leaders and I have been busy interviewing candidates for the new teaching positions that have been authorized as well as to fill positions created by retirements and other departures. We look forward to welcoming many exciting new members to our faculty.

While some of our students and teachers traveled abroad during April vacation, we have several international initiatives afoot at Acton-Boxborough. On April 27 we will host a group of Kuwaiti education officials who are visiting the U.S. under the auspices of the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government. We have also been approached about an exchange which would take some of our students and staff to China this summer and would bring a Chinese group here next year. We hope to have details to share with students and their families in early May.

### Recognition

Our Science Team took first place in the Massachusetts Science Olympiad for the second year in a row and will compete in Indiana at the Nationals in May. Members of this group, coached by science teacher Brian Dempsey, are Eli Ben-Joseph, Samarth Bhargava, Sroian Borissov, Anna Tarakanova, Arolyn Conwill, Patrick Wu, Yi Zhang, Kostya Kashin, Alex Kazberouk, Anton Li, Scott Chen, Prabhat Putchakayala, Andrew Reiter, Paul Sountsov, Anandh Swaminathan and alternates Cathy Chen, Dipal Savla, Kathleen Ho, Michelle McInnis and Rebecca Wang.

Six members of our Speech and Debate Team have qualified for the national competition to be held in Milwaukee in May. They are Mark Amoroso, Stephanie Li, Ian Keyworth, Wenxi Li, Dave Estabrook and Susan Yao.

The ABRHS Math Team placed second in Massachusetts among large schools at the state competition in March and is scheduled to participate in the New England competition on April 28. Members of this group are Alex Kazberouk, Anandh Swaminathan, Anton Li, Patrick Wu, George Hong, Bob Liu, Feiqi Jiang and David Corwin.

The Academic Decathlon team, having won the state championship as described in the last newsletter, is scheduled to participate in the national competition in San Antonio, Texas at the end of April.

Our delegation to the Massachusetts Future Business Leaders of America conference in April brought home eight of the twelve available awards. Students placing in the competition were: Cathy Chen, Tina Sun, Max Tabachnik, Lijian Zhou, Stephanie Li, Jiang Zhang, Dianne Xiao and Daphne Xiao.

Seniors Lee Dietterich and Rashmi Jasrasaria were named semi-finalists in the U.S. Physics Team Search. They were among the 205 top scorers in the country on the selection exam.

Senior Rashmi Jasrasaria was awarded the Massachusetts Good Citizen of the Year Award after being named the recipient of the local award (through the Concord DAR Chapter) in the fall.

Congratulations to all!

### Upcoming events

Our sophomores will be involved in several days of MCAS testing during the week of May 22 and and juniors taking U.S. History will take an MCAS exam on May 30. We appreciate the support and cooperation of students and parents during this activity, which necessitates many changes in our routine.

We are looking forward to our traditional lineup of senior activities in May leading up to graduation on June 2. Parents of seniors should have received a separate letter with important dates for seniors and their families. This and other information is also available on our web site. We invite anyone interested to join us for the Scholarship Ceremony for seniors on May 30 as well as for graduation. These events are celebrations of our students, of their achievements and of the families and communities which support them.

– Steve Donovan

### Final Examinations

The end of the year schedule, given the two snow days that we have taken, calls for June 13 to be the final day of classes for underclassmen and the last full day of school. Final examinations are scheduled for June 14 through June 19, all half days.

<b>Examinations:</b>	<b>Date</b>
English (during English classes)	June 12 and 13
First & Second Period Classes:	June 14
Third & Fourth Period Classes:	June 15
Fifth & Sixth Period Classes:	June 16
Seventh & Eighth Period Classes:	June 19

We request that you make every effort to avoid or resolve any conflicts with this schedule.

If an emergency situation exists, or a serious conflict that cannot be resolved, the parent/guardian may request permission for the student to take examinations early. This request should be addressed to JoAnn Campbell, Assistant Principal, and should clearly state the student's name, grade, why the student is unable to take examinations as scheduled, the date of the student's last day at school, and the final examinations (classes and teachers) that will be affected.

All requests for change in exam schedule must be received by May 26.

## **From the Academic Support Center**

Our many wonderful **Peer Tutors** have worked diligently with students during the third term in the Academic Support Center. Their sense of humor, positive attitude, enthusiasm and commitment to their tutees and other students in the program is greatly appreciated. We recognize and thank: Gregory Barr, Chris Bees, Kate Brady, Eric Carlson, Kathryn Corcoran, Lee Dietterich, Kendall Downer, Nick Dreckshage, Jared Eisenberg, Mike Engber, Matt Fisher-Post, Laurel Geist, Ari Gimbel, Matthew Goodnow, Carrie Halloran, Anat Hochberg, Rashmi Jasrasaria, Laura Jenkins, Harsha Krovi, Anton Li, Lucy Li, Wenxi Li, Zack Luz, Sam Matson, Jim McSweeney, Beth Morris, Kent Owen, Kyle Pochini, Nikhil Pradhan, Prabat Putchakayala, Danielle Raad, Emily Reuman, Daniella Sasson, Alexandra Sweeney, Caroline Tulp, Patrick Wu and Sarah Zhang.

These tutors are available to work with students on a short or long term basis. Now is the perfect time for students to stop by the ASC, located in Room 242S, to receive assistance with assignments or to prepare for an exam.

– Jacalyn Starr, Academic Support Center

## **Policy Reminders for Parents and Students**

### **Absence Policy**

Parents are to notify the Main Office of all student absences. Please call (264-4700 ext. 3500) on the day of the absence. If parent notification is not received, the absence will be recorded as unexcused. An unexcused absence will be defined as a truancy and the student will be required to serve an after school detention for each truancy recorded. If the detention is not served within the specified time, three points will be deducted from the student's term average in the class the student was truant from.

In accordance with the school policy, each student shall be granted an opportunity to earn full credit for any course as long as his/her total absences (excused and unexcused) do not exceed 20 days per full year course, 10 days per semester course, or 5 days per semester course meeting on alternate days.

### **Tardy Policy**

School starts at 7:23 A.M. If a student comes to school later than that, he/she must sign in at the Main Office. Students arriving late to school in excess of three days per term will be required to meet with their Assistant Principal before gaining admittance into class. Students chronically late to school will be assigned detention. If a student is late to class during the day, the classroom teacher may require the student to attend after school detention and /or reduce the student's class participation grade for that day.

### **Dismissals**

If a student needs to be released early, he/she must bring a note signed by a parent or legal guardian to the Main Office prior to third period, on the day of the dismissal. In the event

of an emergency, parents may call the Main Office to have their child dismissed on that day. Students returning to school must check in at the Main Office when they arrive. Students leaving campus without following the proper dismissal procedures will be considered truant from any class missed. Notes excusing trancies due to the student's failure to follow the dismissal policy will not be accepted. Upperclassmen with privileges are expected to follow the same dismissal procedures.

# RJGJHS NEWS

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## FROM THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

Larry Fliegelman and Megan Hatt

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- **Registration Process**

Our seventh grade students have begun to register for eighth grade courses this month. Team teachers have completed level recommendation forms, which were mailed to parents/guardians at the end of vacation week. Signed forms must be returned to homeroom teachers by Wednesday, April 26. Course override forms must be completed by Monday, May 8 for seventh grade students. Seventh and eighth grade placement request forms

The eighth graders have completed the registration process for ninth grade. Override forms for any High School courses must be returned to the Junior High Counseling Office by April 28. During the week of April 10, Student Council representatives accompanied the administrators and World Language teachers on visits to the elementary schools to talk to the sixth grade students and their teachers about the Junior High.

Parents and guardians of sixth grade students are invited to attend a presentation about the Junior High on Wednesday, April 26, in the High School Auditorium.

- **Community Service Learning Projects**

7 Red has been busy organizing two field trips. They will be going to work at a community garden that grows food for people who are hungry and visiting a farm that works in a different way to alleviate hunger in the United States and throughout the world. To prepare for this day, they will be reading about exploring the ways that other people have made a difference in a community. They will also explore their own actions as good citizens. Through these discussions and their service learning day, they will learn that they too can be heroes and that there are many ways “to make a difference.”

7 Gold did a service project through an organization called The Lowell Wish Project. The Lowell Wish Project is an agency that collects goods for 74 social service agencies in the greater Lowell area. 7 Gold students collected backpacks, fleece blankets, socks, underwear and cosmetics to make backpack kits to be given out to teen street homeless in Lowell. They collected and filled 38 backpacks. They also delivered boxes and boxes of toothpaste, toothbrushes and

deodorant that they did not use in the backpacks. The backpacks will be given directly to homeless shelters. It was a great teen to teen project, and the kids helped out with every phase - advertising, collecting and packaging.

- **Spring Athletics**

Our spring sports teams have begun their seasons with try-outs and practices. These sports include baseball, coached by Bill Maver; softball, coached by JD Head; and track and field, coached by Frank Calore, Lilly Green and Jim Goodemote. Over 200 students are participating in these sports.

For the ninth year the students at the Junior High School participated in Club 110. Twenty eight students participated in this program, sponsored by the Boston Athletic Association, and coached by Scott Biron. Three 10-player relay teams were involved in this exciting opportunity, which introduces young people to the sport of running. After several weeks of training and learning about the Boston Marathon, the team traveled to Copley Square Park on Saturday, April 15, to participate in the Relay Challenge. At the conclusion of the races, all runners received medals and ate lunch at the BAA tent. We are fortunate to be one of the 30 schools participating in this program. 900 runners were involved this year as the event is the kick off to marathon weekend.

# Regional School Calendars

## High School Dates of Interest

### MAY

- 1–12 Advanced Placement Exams
- 1–19 Senior Internships
- 2 Spring Concert, 7:30 p.m.
- 3 Awards Night , 7:00 p.m. Auditorium
- 6 SAT Administration Date
- 12 Interim Reports for Term 4 issued (grades 9 – 11)
- 16 Student elections (grades 9 – 11)
- 17, 18 Class plays, 7:00 p.m.
- 18, 19 English finals for seniors
- 19 Last Day of Classes for seniors
- 19, 20 Madrigal Dinner
- 22-25 Senior finals
- 22 School Council Meeting , 6:00 p.m.
- 23–26 MCAS Testing – grade 10
- 26,30,31 Graduation rehearsal
- 27 Prom (juniors and seniors) Park Plaza Hotel, Boston
- 29 Memorial Day - no school
- 30 MCAS Testing – grade 11 - history
- 30 Scholarship Ceremony, 7:00 p.m. Auditorium
- 31 Senior Class outing

### JUNE

- 1 World Language Awards Night and Honor Society Induction, 7:00 p.m.
- 2 Graduation, 5:30 p.m. Edward M. Leary Field
- 4 SAT Administration Date

- 7 Summer Volunteer Opportunities Fair
- 12,13 English finals (in class)
- 14 Finals for first and second period classes (7:30 and 9:15)
- 15 Finals for third and fourth period classes
- 16 Finals for fifth and sixth period classes
- 19 Finals for seventh and eighth period classes

## Junior High School Dates of Interest

### MAY

- May 2 Grade 8 Class Picture
- May 3 Student Council Meeting, 12:22 PM
- May 5 Grade 7 Dance, 6:30-8:30 PM
- May 9 School Council Meeting, 7-8:30 PM
- May 15 June 2 MCAS Testing, Grades 7 & 8
- May 16 Spring Choral Concert, 7:30 PM
- May 23 Spring Band Concert, 7:30 PM
- May 24 Student Council Officer Elections, Grade 7
- May 24 Midterm Reports Mailed
- May 26 Great East Music Festival
- May 29 No School- Memorial Day

### JUNE

- June 2 High School Graduation
- June 7 Student Council, 12:22 PM
- June 7 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Social, 7-8:30 PM
- June 13 School Council, 7-8:30 PM

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE NEWS

### FROM THE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

**Michael**

**J.**

**Coppolino,**

**Chair**

Thank you to the citizens of Acton for approving both the regional and local school budgets on April 3 at Town Meeting. We are hopeful that our friends in Boxborough will do the same.

At its March meetings, the Regional School Committee completed its first readings of all proposed policies and procedures, with a final vote of approval likely to occur no later than June. Additionally, we were given a presentation by Acton and Acton-Boxborough's Nursing Staff. Their presentation gave the School Committee and audience members greater insight into the many important activities these professionals are responsible for. Our students are truly lucky to have such caring individuals seeing to their health and well being.

The House Ways and Means Committee released its proposed budget just before Easter, and the news is quite promising. State funding for Acton's local schools would increase per the ALG (Acton Leadership Group) plan, up approximately 15% over last year's state aid. There's even better news,

potentially, at the Region where substantially more money is proposed, an increase of some \$1.2M over last year that equates to almost a 36.5% increase. The House is recommending a five year implementation of a new Chapter 70 formula, as was proposed by the Dept of Education for the Governor's budget. The House Ways and Means budget also recommends phasing in a "funding floor" equal to 15% of the foundation budget. This would be equivalent to about one-half of the "floor" that Acton is proposing, but it is a start. The Senate still needs to submit its budget and then debate will occur, but these projections could mean that the need for an operating override in Acton for '07-'08 is substantially lessened, based on the Governor's and House budgets.

The next School Committee meeting will be May 4th at 7:30 in the RJG Junior High library. Please contact school committee members at any time with questions or comments. Our contact information can be found on the District website at: <http://www.ab.mec.edu/about/members.shtml>.

– Michael J. Coppolino, Chairman, ABRSC



**June 2, 2006**

**Roche Bros. Fundraiser!**

Roche Bros. is sponsoring the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Receipt Collection Day on **Friday, May 5 from 4-7p.m.** Project Graduation will receive 5% of all grocery receipts (we do not take your credit card receipt – just your grocery receipt) collected by our volunteers. Roche Brothers now sells gift cards! *Please consider buying gift cards that come in denominations of \$10, \$25, \$50 and \$100 for future shopping* - this is where we benefit the most. They can be redeemed at any time. Gift cards can be ordered in advance (see form below). Questions can be directed to Debbie Clough at 978-266-0153 or [Debbie\\_clough@verizon.net](mailto:Debbie_clough@verizon.net)

**Celebrate Schools Week at O’Naturals!**

Please join us for “Celebrate Schools Week” at **O’Naturals in Acton**. This fundraiser will run from **Monday, May 8 through Sunday, May 14 from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.** Join us at O’Naturals for great food made from natural and organic ingredients all served in a great atmosphere. O’Naturals will donate 10% of all receipts collected during that time to Project Graduation. Please also consider buying a gift certificate (redeemable at anytime) which would also benefit us. For more information, please contact Janaki (Jana) M.Subramanyam at 978-635-0165 or [Jdsubramanyam@comcast.net](mailto:Jdsubramanyam@comcast.net)

**Project Graduation Open House**

The public is invited to an open house at the High School on **Friday, June 2 from 8:30-9:30p.m.** for a special one-hour viewing before the new graduates arrive. Please join us - we are sure you’ll be amazed!

**The Junior Trunk**

Help us create “**The Junior Trunk**”, a trunk containing dorm room essentials-towel, sheets, bathroom carrier, gift cards, etc. With your help by purchasing store bought gift cards or items, we will be able to raffle off this trunk to a Senior at Project Graduation. Interested in contributing items for the Junior Trunk? Please contact Michele Adelman at [adelnet@comcast.net](mailto:adelnet@comcast.net) or at (978)264-4002.

**Project Graduation Website**

Want to learn more about Project Graduation? Visit our website at [www.abprojectgrad.org](http://www.abprojectgrad.org).

**Volunteers and donations are still needed**

Project Graduation 2006 is well underway, but we still need your support. Please consider volunteering your time with this wonderful and fun event. Donations can be made using the form below: Please make checks payable to:

**Project Graduation, c/o ABRPTSO.P.O Box 912, Acton ,MA 01720**

For Project Grad information, contact **Shaila Golikeri at 978-635-9867 or [ABProjGrad06@gmail.com](mailto:ABProjGrad06@gmail.com)**

**Project Graduation Volunteer Form**

- |  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Set up        | <input type="checkbox"/> Challenge games         | <input type="checkbox"/> Lighting           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food Serving  | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> Theme Design/Decorating | <input type="checkbox"/> Crafts             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Casino        | <input type="checkbox"/> Chaperone     | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography             | <input type="checkbox"/> Junior Trunk Items |

**OR**

- No preference, just want to help out.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this form to: Project Graduation, c/o ABRPTSO, P.O Box 912, Acton, MA 01720.

**A CORI FORM ON FILE AT ABRHS BEFORE MAY 12th IS REQUIRED TO VOLUNTEER ON JUNE 2 – Please complete a CORI form in the presence of Deb Trentsch at the High School Main Office (photo id needed) 7:00am-3:30pm on weekdays!**

**Roche Bros. Gift Card Order Form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail your check, payable to Roche Bros. and dated 5/5/06, to: Project Graduation, PO Box 912, Acton, MA 01720. **Checks must be received by 5/4/06.** Gift certificates over \$100.00 will be hand delivered.

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Permit No. 25  
Acton, MA 01720

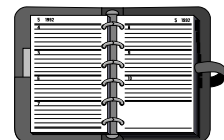
**PTSO News**  
**Acton-Boxborough Regional High School**  
**Acton, MA 01720**

**Thursday, May 11<sup>th</sup>**  
**7:30 PM**  
RJG Jr High Auditorium

**”SURVIVING THE  
COLLEGE SEARCH”  
Panel Discussion**

(Note: new date & location)

## **PTSO CALENDAR**



- |        |           |   |
|--------|-----------|---|
| May 11 | 7:00 p.m. | <b>PTSO Annual Business Meeting (open to all)</b><br><b>RJG Junior High School Auditorium</b>   |
| May 11 | 7:30 p.m. | <b>“Surviving the College Search” Presentation</b><br>with panel of AB seniors and a parent/guardian<br>sponsored by ABRHS Counseling Dept and PTSO<br><b>RJG Junior High School Auditorium</b> |

**JOIN THE PTSO EMAIL LIST! Sign up at <http://abrptso.ab.mec.edu/>**

THE DEADLINE FOR ARTICLE SUBMISSION FOR THE MAY NEWSLETTER IS MAY 12.  
This issue is scheduled to be mailed to families on May 26.  
Articles for consideration may be sent to [BPetr@verizon.net](mailto:BPetr@verizon.net) or [JCCouch@comcast.net](mailto:JCCouch@comcast.net).