

# PTSO News

November 2005  
Volume 19  
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Newsletter of the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools Parent-Teacher-Student Organization

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

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## **FROM THE CHAIRS:**

**Beth Petr – ABRHS Co-Chair**

**Jan Couch – RJGJH Co-Chair**

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Parents and schools share the task of helping young people learn about the world of work and how to find work that is a good match with one's skills, interests and personal characteristics. There are several programs in our schools that use businesses and other resources to bring career information and awareness to our students.

October's PTSO Forum featured a presentation about school-business partnerships, job shadowing, career speakers, work study, career workshops and other elements of A-B's Career Exploration program. Anne Kingan, systemwide School-Business Liaison; Bruce Oetinger, School-to-Work Coordinator; and Kay Steeves, ABRHS Student-Faculty Support Coordinator spoke about how these programs tie into the academic program and the college planning process, and how students and parents can participate. The point was made that young people learn about careers from their parents, their peers, and "serendipity". Exposing children to new and different careers and opportunities, helps them make better choices as they leave high school and beyond.

In the 1970's the Career Exploration office was funded with federal money. When that funding disappeared, these resources were folded into the High School Counseling Office. These resources include:

### **Career Speakers**

These are community members, parents, guardians, alumni, or other interested adults who describe their career to students in a classroom setting or at one of the Career Breakfasts organized by the Counseling Center. A Breakfast was held at the HS on October 25. Two more will be held on December 15 and March 14. For more information, contact Judi Bowes at 978-264-4700, ext 3556 or [JBowes@mail.ab.mec.edu](mailto:JBowes@mail.ab.mec.edu)

### **Job Shadowing**

Job shadowing is a one-day visit to a workplace, either in groups or one student at a time. The Counseling Department has many adults who would like to share information about their jobs and career paths. Juniors and seniors who participate must do some preparation and follow-up about their visit and may receive academic credit. When visiting an employer, they are asked to consider, "Can I picture myself working here?" For more information contact Kay Steeves at 978-264-4700, ext 3444 or [KSteeves@mail.ab.mec.edu](mailto:KSteeves@mail.ab.mec.edu)

### **Senior Internship**

Students take a half-year course (Senior Seminar) to prepare for this opportunity. They do self-assessments, career research, and job searching. At the end of senior year, they may do a three-week full-time internship. For more information, contact Anne Kingan at 978-264-4700, ext 3498 or [AKingan@mail.ab.mec.edu](mailto:AKingan@mail.ab.mec.edu)

### **Employment Opportunities**

Many students find that part-time or summer work helps them refine their thinking about jobs they might eventually like to do. Over 60 job opportunities are listed on the High School website at <http://ab.mec.edu/cgi-bin/student-jobs>

A work study program exists for juniors and seniors with a serious interest in work. For more information, contact Bruce Oetinger at 978-264-4700, ext 3497 or [BOetinger@mail.ab.mec.edu](mailto:BOetinger@mail.ab.mec.edu)

### **Career-Related Coursework**

ABRHS has a number of courses which enable students to explore career areas while earning high school credit. Some of these are: Child Development (offers Level 1 certification/Pre-school teacher), Radio and TV Broadcasting, Technical Drawing, Computer-Aided Graphic Design (CAGD) and Accounting.

### **School-Business Connections**

Anne Kingan works to develop business connections to our school through the Middlesex West Chamber of Commerce Committee, and other groups. These resources support many of the activities above and more at ABRHS and R.J. Grey JHS. She can be reached at 978-264-4700, ext 3498 or AKingan@mail.ab.mec.edu

Members of the Counseling Department speak to all juniors and seniors during their history or English classes to tell them about these Career Exploration Resources. It is emphasized that students must take the initiative to fill out a request form, schedule an appointment with a counselor, or attend an informational meeting if they are interested in any of these opportunities. While some of the more quiet students may not be assertive enough to do this, the Counseling Department does as much as they can to follow up with students if they express an interest. It is hoped that by presenting this information to parents and guardians and making them aware of these wonderful resources, families can encourage their children to participate and explore some of these career options.

If you are interested in sharing information about your career with some of our older high school students, please contact the appropriate person above. With approximately 900 students who are juniors or seniors at AB, there is a wide variety of interests and abilities. Your experience and expertise are very valuable!

We hope to see you at the next PTSO Forum on Tuesday, November 8 at Noon in the Acton Memorial Library. Superintendent Bill Ryan will be our speaker.

Beth and Jan  
PTSO Co-Chairs

### **ABRHS Alumni Association and the WINNER is.....**

Congratulations to **Andrew Coull, AB Class of 1977**, who won the Bose stereo in the recent AB Alumni Association drawing. Andrew sent in his registration information in response to our mailing last Spring. If you forgot to join, please send your name, address, phone, email, and Graduation year to:

[Connect@ABAlumni.org](mailto:Connect@ABAlumni.org)

or ABAA, P.O. Box 912, Acton, MA 01720

Carol Jette and Suzanne Brozek

A-B Alumni Association Co-Chairs

### **HABITAT TOOL DRIVE**

#### **November 19 and 20 at Ace Hardware**

Students from the high school's community service club (ABCO) are working with Ace Hardware, Habitat for Humanity and Volunteer Families to hold a tool drive on November 19 and 20. The drive is to help Habitat as part of its efforts to build its first home in Acton. All are invited to participate in this drive in the following ways: on November 19 and 20 at Ace Hardware you can donate money toward the purchase of a gift certificate that will be used by Habitat for Humanity to purchase supplies for building the Acton home; you can donate used tools in the collection boxes that will be placed at Ace Hardware; you can donate your time to volunteer for this event. Note: Habitat is also still looking for the donation of a piece of land. For more information or to volunteer, contact: Phyllis Procter, ABCO advisor at 978-264-4700, ext. 3499, or Selina Oppenheim, Volunteer Families at 978-266-1142, or Janis Raguin, Habitat for Humanity at 978-635-9596.

# ABRHS NEWS

## FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Steve Donovan

### Back to School Night

It was good to see so many of you at Back to School Night. I hope that those of you who attended were able to get a good feel for the courses your son or daughter is involved in this year and to meet the teachers and other school staff.

### November 18 Early Release Day

On November 18 students will be dismissed at 10:45, and faculty will spend the remainder of the day working on curriculum issues and other school improvement projects. A second early release day is planned for April 7.

### National Merit Recognition

Six members of the senior class were recently named semi-finalists in the National Merit Scholarship Competition. These semi-finalists are: Emily Breslin, Lee Dietterich, Alexander Kazberouk, Theresa O'Brien, Danielle Raad, and Leah Wibecan.

In addition to the semi-finalists, the following members of the Class of 2006 have been named as commended students in this program. They are Daniel Barabash, Samarth Bhargava, Victoria Blancha, Michael A. Brown, Anna Christo, Jonathan Coldwell, Arolyn Conwill, William Cronin, Andrew Dai, Alfred DeGemmis, Robert Duggan, Jared Eisenberg, Shaina Haber, Brian Herdeg, Jonathan Ho, Hannah Holbrook, Rashmi Jasrasaria, Monica Jimenez, Matthew Johnson, Ian Keyworth, Shawn Kilpatrick, Brian Kim, Ariel Klein, Mark Kohls, Eli Kozukhin, Harsha Krovi, Marja Kunz, Lucy Li, I-Chian Lin, Kevin Liou, Derek Matyas, Eric McCann, Anisa McCree, Catherine Omstead, Kent Owen, Samantha Pappin, Katherine Peabody, Kyle Pochini, Travis Porth, Michael Probst, Andrew Reiter, David Riley, Matthew Ryan, Michael Ryan, Timothy Sullivan, Pavel Suntsov, Lauren Wolahan, Chris Wu, and Jeffrey Yates. ABRHS also had one student recognized in the National Achievement Program, Daniel Meister.

### Grade 9 Elections

At the end of September our freshman class elected officers and Student Council representatives. These include: Andrew Morrison, president; Connor Finnegan, vice president; Lama Bitar, secretary; Tina Sun, treasurer and Ankit Gupta, Amrita Mehta, Lawrence Xia, Stephen Upham, and Shiva Devarajan, Student Council representatives.

— Steve Donovan, Principal

## FROM THE ACADEMIC SUPPORT CENTER

The Academic Support Center thanks the following peer tutors for their valuable contributions to the A-B community during the first term. They have committed to working with other students during their free period, and have provided assistance with assignments and study strategies. We are very grateful to these peer tutors: Alexandra Azzolino, Victoria Blancha, Isobel Brown, Sam Burke, Varun Chalupadi, Albert Chuang,

Lee Dietterich, Matt Finley, Stefan Gentile, Molly Greene, Alison Herdeg, DeDe Horvath, Diane Hwang, Jyoti Jasrasaria, Rashmi Jasrasaria, Laura Jenkins, Val Kravis, Anton Li, Jeffrey Marrion, Garry Margolius, Kelsey Meidell, Andrew Musacchio, Hilary Nicolson-Gross, Matt Nittman, Louisa Paine, Kate Pellegriti, Danielle Raad, Jeff Rautiola, Emily Reuman, Jeff Shane, Jessica Shen, Ben Taylor, Alan Wang, Rebecca Wang, Ty Wilson, Patrick Wu, and Sarah Zhang.

### 2005 – 2006 ABRHS MUSICAL

The ABRHS musical this year is “42<sup>nd</sup> Street.” Set in 1933 in Philadelphia and New York City, this is a backstage musical about a cast working on a new Broadway musical. It is a big show with a cast of about 40, many parts, great songs, and lots of dancing. The musical will be directed by Linda Potter, with musical direction by Jeanie Furlan, and choreography by Melinda Samperi. Performances are the last weekend in January and the first weekend in February.

All ABRHS students are invited to audition. Auditions will be held on November 2, 6, and 7, with callbacks on November 9 and the first rehearsal on November 14. Rehearsals will generally be held on Monday and Tuesday evenings, and Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday afternoons. Most cast members will be required to rehearse three or four days a week. Interested students can sign up for auditions beginning October 17 at the School Store. There will also be many opportunities for students to participate offstage. Interested students can also sign up at the School Store for these crews.

Parents and other adults who are willing to help are needed. Set building, sewing, writing articles, preparing food, and selling tickets are only a few of the tasks requiring adult help. There will be a meeting on Thursday, November 17 at 7:00 p.m. in the high school cafeteria for those who are interested in helping with any of the various crews and committees. Parents and other adults can also provide support by joining Friends of Drama.

More information about the musical, about preparing for auditions, and about Friends of Drama is available on the website (<http://www.abdrama.org>).

### STUDENT PHONE BOOKS

\$3.00 each



GET ONE AT THE SCHOOL STORE! (Open Mon-Fri 7am-3pm)

# RJGJHS NEWS

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## FROM THE JUNIOR HIGH ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

### Larry Fliegelman and Megan Hatt

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8 Gold and 8 Orange have each climbed Mt. Wachusett in this annual team building field trip. 8 Green cleaned up sites around our towns in their annual Community Service Day, and 8 Red will visit the Maporium and the Mary Baker Eddy museum in November. The entire eighth grade visited Minuteman Technology High School to learn about the school's programs and course offerings. Each of the seventh grade teams has visited the Christa McAuliffe Center at Framingham State College where they participated in a simulation of a mission to the moon and attended a show at the planetarium.

On September 30<sup>th</sup>, we held our first eighth grade dance of the year. Student Council, Parent Volunteers, and Staff Chaperones did a wonderful job and well over 230 students danced, ate, and socialized. The first seventh grade social is scheduled for October 28<sup>th</sup> at 2:30. Considering how fantastic this class is, we are expecting a wonderful turnout.

### School Activities/Clubs

The following activities have already begun:

- AB Blueprint
- Adopt-a-Grandparent
- Art Club
- Chess and Board games
- Dungeons and Dragons
- Interscholastic sports teams (e.g. cross-country, field hockey, soccer)
- Jazz Band
- Math Counts
- Musical
- Science Olympiad
- Student Council
- Speech and Debate

As the year goes on, we expect many more activities to be added, such as the musical and the yearbook.

With so many activities and clubs each week, we needed one more way to inform students of all the news. So, with co-funding from Student Council, an electronic message board was installed in the cafeteria. Students now enjoy seeing each day's birthdays, along with most of the messages that were included in the morning announcements. Any parents who want this same information can either look at the Announcements link on the RJ Grey web page (<http://ab.mec.edu/rjweb>) or contact Marcia Charter to sign up for the principal's email list ([mcharter@mail.ab.mec.edu](mailto:mcharter@mail.ab.mec.edu)).

Since October is the Month of the Young Adolescent, Initiated by National Middle School Association (NMSA), we thought that we'd present some of the MOYA resources.

([http://www.nmsa.org/moya/moya\\_2004/presskits/articles\\_parents.htm](http://www.nmsa.org/moya/moya_2004/presskits/articles_parents.htm))

One of our favorite articles from NMSA is Tips for Parents ([http://www.nmsa.org/moya/moya\\_2004/related\\_parenttips.htm](http://www.nmsa.org/moya/moya_2004/related_parenttips.htm)). Here are two that may be of interest:

The first tip is think ahead...One of our best tools as parents is being prepared. As your son or daughter gets to the middle school years, get ready for at least occasional conflicts. Think through what is truly important to you. Is the youngster's hairstyle as important as homework? Isn't curfew more of a concern than crabbiness? Obviously, dawdling is a lot easier to accept than drugs. As these give-and-take situations start, know ahead of time what areas you are willing to negotiate and what areas are absolutes.

Be willing to listen; but don't poke or pry. Kids this age value independence and often seem secretive. Keeping to themselves is part of the separateness they are trying to create. Let them know you'd love to help them, but don't push them into a defensive position.

If you have any questions about what is happening at RJ Grey, please do not hesitate to contact either Larry Fliegelman or Megan Hatt ([lfliegelman@mail.ab.mec.edu](mailto:lfliegelman@mail.ab.mec.edu) or [mhatt@mail.ab.mec.edu](mailto:mhatt@mail.ab.mec.edu) or 978-264-4700 ext 3303).

### PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROJECT (PIP)

PIP will be hosting a Sci Tech Fest November 10<sup>th</sup> Open House from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the R.J. Grey School. This Sci Tech Fest will be an interactive fair of science and technology demonstrations, showcasing projects from community members as well as students in grades 8 through 12. Students in grades 6 through 12 are invited to participate in the demonstrations. For details please contact Carlie Krakoff at 978-263-9071 ([carliesgk@comcast.net](mailto:carliesgk@comcast.net)) or the PIP email at [actonpip@yahoo.com](mailto:actonpip@yahoo.com)

### LUNCH TICKETS AVAILABLE AT RJG

Parents interested in this program should send a check with their child in even increments of \$2.00 for a lunch. These funds can only be used for a \$2.00 lunch. Students will not be able to prepay for snacks or a la carte items, which will require cash. Checks should be written to the Acton Boxborough Regional School Lunch Program and brought to Kitchen Manager Elaine Livermore in the Food Services office (across from the kitchen entrance) between 7:15 a.m. and 7:30 a.m.

### GET INVOLVED – BE AN RJG VOLUNTEER

Throughout the year volunteer opportunities (several in the next few weeks) will come up that were not included on the volunteer form which many parents have already filled out. Openings for various coordinator, steering committee positions and interschool representatives will also be distributed to the e-mail list in the upcoming weeks. To hear about these opportunities and other reminders, please sign up for the PTSO e-mail loop by going to: <http://abrptso.ab.mec.edu/>.

# Regional School Calendars

## High School Dates of Interest

Nov. 4 End of Term 1  
Nov. 4&5 Cabaret Night, Parker Damon Building, 7:30 p.m.  
Nov. 5 SAT I & II  
Nov. 10 Jamnesty, student bands performing, 2:30 p.m.  
Nov. 11 No School – Veterans Day  
Nov. 14-18 MCAS Retests  
Nov. 15 Job Shadowing Kickoff  
Nov. 18 Early Release Day for High School Students  
Nov. 21 Report Cards Distributed (tentative date)  
Nov. 23 Fall Recognition Assembly/Early Dismissal  
Nov. 24&25 No School – Thanksgiving Recess

## Junior High School Dates of Interest

Nov. 2 Student Council Meeting, 12:22 p.m.  
Nov. 4 End of Term 1  
Nov. 8 School Council Meeting, 7:00-8:30 p.m.  
Nov. 11 No School – Veterans Day  
Nov. 18 Grade 8 Dance, 6:30-8:30 p.m.  
Nov. 23 Early Dismissal, 11:00 a.m.  
Nov. 24&25 No School – Thanksgiving Recess

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## SCHOOL COMMITTEE NEWS

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### FROM THE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

**Michael J. Coppolino, Chair**

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The Regional School Committee received recently an in-depth report on the status of ABRHS from Principal Steve Donovan. Increased class size in not only honors, but also other levels, continues to be a major concern of administrators and teachers, yet achievement is still rising, as evidenced by A-B's recognition as the high school in this area with the highest SAT scores. Our kids also continue to have a high state ranking in terms of MCAS results, on which Assistant Superintendent, Susan Horn, reported. School Committee members asked Steve a variety of questions, which were answered adeptly, including: a) class sizes, b) possible later start time for the school day, c) the Day of Silence and d) the possibility of increasing the number of Choice students next year to augment revenue.

With 1,849 students, including fifty-two Choice kids, A-B is one of the largest high schools in the state and despite this fact, the number of discipline referrals during the past five years has declined steadily. Steve believes this is due to two changes that were implemented several years ago: an additional assistant principal, and most importantly, off-campus privileges provided to juniors, in addition to seniors. The latter conveys the seasoned principal's philosophy that "if you treat kids with respect and give them responsibilities,

they will respond positively." This insight, along with a committed and caring staff, is the main reason the sizable school runs as smoothly as it does.

In light of spiraling utility costs, school and town officials have appealed to our State legislators for relief due to a projected deficit of some \$700K in the utility budgets of the local and regional schools, and the Town of Acton. Additionally, your elected officials attended a statewide "Listening Tour" in mid-October, sponsored by the Massachusetts Legislature's Joint Committee on Education and voiced reasons, along with officials from many other towns, for the State to increase its Chapter 70 funds. Those funds are the primary source of revenue that the State provides to its 351 cities and towns.

Our next A-B Regional School Committee meeting will be December 1, 2005 at 7:30 p.m. in the R.J. Grey Junior High School library. Please contact me, as well as other school committee members, via phone or e-mail at any time. All of our contact information can be found on the District website at: <http://www.ab.mec.edu/about/members.shtml>.

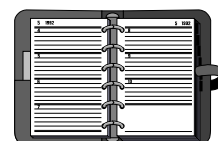
– Michael J. Coppolino  
Chairman, Acton-Boxboro Regional School Committee

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

Tuesday, November 8<sup>th</sup>  
PTSO Forum  
  
**Superintendent**  
**Bill Ryan**  
  
Noon  
Acton Memorial Library

## **PTSO CALENDAR**



November 2 7:00 p.m.

**PTSO Board Meeting**  
ABR High School Library

November 8 Noon

**PTSO Forum**  
Superintendent Bill Ryan, presenter  
Acton Memorial Library

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

THE DEADLINE FOR ARTICLE SUBMISSION FOR THE DECEMBER/JANUARY NEWSLETTER IS NOVEMBER 10.

This issue is scheduled to be mailed to families on November 17.

Articles for consideration may be sent to [BPetr@verizon.net](mailto:BPetr@verizon.net) or [JCCouch@comcast.net](mailto:JCCouch@comcast.net).