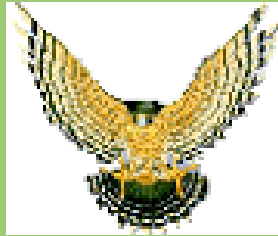


Focus

Joel Barlow High School PTSA Newsletter



FEBRUARY / MARCH 2008

PRESIDENT'S CORNER Spring is Here!

Hello to all! Just think, we have turned the corner from winter to spring and flowers, trees and shrubs will be in bloom shortly. April break is coming in a few weeks, which leads me to a few items of interest.

Did you see the article in the Redding Pilot and Easton Courier recently about the new school calendar? If you remember, the PTSA sent around a survey to everyone on our email list. The results of that survey were considered, as well as the staff survey results and all the other surveys from the schools in the districts. The biggest concern was to get an earlier dismissal date for the final day of school, since the heat can get so oppressive in some of the schools.

Also of note on the calendar is the change in next year's February break. It is no longer a full week of vacation. To see the updated school calendar, please click on the link below, which will take you to the Easton/Redding/Region 9 website:

<http://tinyurl.com/3dgy77>

The new and improved Academic Lab is now open for business! Our students now have a sofa, loveseat, coffee table, end tables and a rug, as well as three tables to sit at and be able to spread their work out on. Ken Crow is looking for volunteers to come in for the 9:15-10:15 am time slot. They are needed to lend general assistance to the students. Ken can be reached at 938-2508, x. 1506.

The PTSA has begun its work for this year's Post Prom, with this year's theme of **That's Entertainment!** This after-prom party has been a Barlow tradition for many years and students comment time and again on the thrill and excitement of attending this safe in-school event. After the prom, the students return to Barlow, where they have fun in the participation of all sorts of games, refreshments and light snacks are supplied, and enjoy raffles which give them the opportunity to win one of many donated prizes (a sampling of last year's prizes: dorm refrigerators, iTunes gift cards, limo service).

In order to offer another stimulating evening for our children, we need your help. The annual Post Prom Event is done in order to keep our children safe by keeping them close to home and off the roads. Although some work has begun, we are still in need of a Committee Chair, as well as many volunteers and donated items for the raffle. Our next meeting is April 11

Questions? As always, feel free to call me at 938-0694 or email at m2cgold@sbcglobal.net.

Looking forward to another enjoyable Post Prom Event by following the old adage: *Many hands make for light work*. Please join us this year in giving our students yet another spectacular event!

Best regards,
Melanie Goldstine, *PTSA President*

FROM THE PRINCIPAL ... Driving and Its Challenges

It's not just drinking and driving that isn't safe for teens. Driving all on its own poses many challenges.

The greatest danger to our teenagers is sitting in the parking lot. A modern car, with its well-developed safety features, is ironically a greater invitation to reckless driving than one that lacks airbags and crumple zones and anti-lock brakes. Having worked closely with teenagers for two decades, I know how "teen logic" works. An adult will think, "Hmmm, maybe this car has all these features because it poses a danger to me, so I had better drive carefully." A teenager will think, "Hey, this car will protect me from pushing its performance, so I can take that corner a bit faster than I should." Nationwide, our country will lose 6000 teenagers to car accidents, and although many will be due to abuse of alcohol or other controlled substances, some will just be due to inexperience and lack of caution. Another frightening fact is that 300,000 teenagers will be injured.

Governor Rell's concern for our teenager drivers led to her forming a task force of educators, police, and community members. Based on their findings, Rell has introduced legislation to stiffen the penalties for underage drinking and driving.

According to an article on her website, There is absolutely no excuse for anyone to get behind the wheel if they are under the influence," Governor Rell said. "We need to do a better job of getting that message to sink in with our youngest drivers. The accidents we have seen in recent years involving young people drinking and driving have been utterly tragic. To me, these accidents show that simply talking about the problem is not enough anymore. We need to put teeth into our laws that will deter those who even consider drinking and driving from doing so."

Generally, a letter from the Head of School to the PTSA should be worded carefully so as not to alarm the

readers. I believe that the seriousness of this issue warrants a more forthright tone. What I am calling for is ongoing and open conversations between parents and teens.

Here are a few suggestions: First, don't buy your kid a three-thousand pound ground rocket. Adolescence is a wonderful time of life, and I love working with teens because of their idealism and their zest, but a high schooler doesn't truly believe that he or she will be caught in an accident. They think someone else will. When your child is ready to drive, let it be with the family car.

Second, talk to your kid about where he or she will be going. A statewide survey of health conducted by Connecticut in 2005 showed that parents can reduce the chances of their kids taking foolish risks by fifty percent simply by asking their children where they will be.

Third, if your kid has a cell phone, make him or her call and ask permission to get into a car with another teen, or to give another teen a ride. With friends in the car, a cell phone, and a radio, the driver could be giving the road only a quarter of his or her attention.

Fourth, require your child to contribute to the cost of gas or insurance. If you don't want to ask for money, link access to the car to chores or grades. Don't make the car a reward for good school work; make good work a pre-condition for access to the car.

Fifth, don't let your child drive the car if you are out of town. I knew a kid who drove his mother's leased Jaguar onto a muddy field late one night while she was away. It took a tow truck to get it out.

Finally, be a good model to your kids when you drive. Always wear your seat-belt and don't talk on the cell phone, if it isn't hands-free.

Most importantly talk with your kids daily.

Tom McMorran
Principal

**The next meeting of the
2007-2008 PTSA
will be held on
April 9, 2008
from 9:30 am - 11:00 am
in the
Cafeteria Annex Room
at Joel Barlow High School
Please join us!**

Reflections Competition Winners Announced

The winners of the 2007-2008 Reflections competition have been announced. The following students will receive plaques, distributed by Mrs. Mary Pat Cieri and Mrs. Cornelia Hurwitz at the annual JBHS Awards Evening in the spring:

Video

1st: Olivia Hurwitz
2nd: Daniel DeSalva

Music

1st: Daniel DeSalva
2nd: Olivia Hurwitz, Kelly Gilleran
3rd: Lukiana Pilyugin, Katie Cieri, Jilian Saber

Photography

1st: Matthew Berry
2nd: Allison Griffith
3rd: Peter Mattson

Literature

1st: Olivia Hurwitz
2nd: Scott Sherman

Visual Arts

1st: Lukiana Pilyugin
2nd: Tyler Bakanas
3rd: Matthew Berry

Pat Berry
Reflections Committee

**Grocery Gift Cards are here!
Stew Leonard's and Caraluzzi's**



**Support the JBHS PTSA
Purchase a gift card for
your next shopping trip
while helping your school!**

**Contact Carol Emanuel
at 938-0967**

Keller Presents Spring Musical At Barlow



Helen Keller Middle School's Drama Program will hold its annual Spring Musical on Joel Barlow High School's auditorium stage. This year's show is **Seven Supermans**, which features the seventh and eighth grade students of Keller in colorful costumes and utilizing dramatic set designs. Dates for the program will be Friday, March 28 and Saturday, March 29. Both shows will begin at 7 pm.

In a mythical land, the Farmers are in trouble: the Evil Bandits loot their land, take their food and generally wreck their lives. Fed up with bowing meekly in the face of oppression, the Farmers go to the Big City in search of Supermans, a dying breed of men and women in blue tights and red capes who *really* know how to save the day. The Farmers find the seven Supermans they need to ward off the Bandits, but they get a lot more than mere bodyguards. This is a 23rd century tale of courage and service, while finding the Superman within.

Tickets for the **Seven Supermans** are still available and will be offered at the door each evening. Both cash or check (payable to *HKMS Activities Fund*) are accepted and all tickets are \$8.00 each. A snack bar will be open during both nights' performances.

For more information, please call Margot Abrams at 459-4759.

Mark Your Calendars ...

BARLOWPALOOZA

IS BACK!!!

MAY 29, 7:00 - 9:00 PM

Musical Talent, Senior Recitals,
Student Artwork, Community Service Dis-
plays, Senior Experience and so much more!

ERCC Notes: Family as Factory

According to Virginia Satir, the family is the factory where a person is built. The adults in the family are the people makers. The four basic aspects of the family the builders struggle with are:

SELF-WORTH: The feelings and ideas one has about himself/herself.

COMMUNICATION: The ways people work out to make meaning with one another.

RULES: The way people should feel and act, which eventually develop into what is called the family system.

LINKS: The way people relate to other people and institutions outside the family, which become their links to society.



Bill Gillotti
ERCC President

Post Prom Committee Needs Your Input!

Your child may not be a junior or a senior, but the Post Prom Committee still needs your help! We're looking for volunteers to help with all aspects of this year's Post Prom event. **That's Entertainment!**, the theme for this year's event, will encapsulate television, movie and music subject matter for its decorations, food

and activities.

The Food and Decorating Committees need aid with phone calls for donations, organization of delivery and drop-off of items, ideas and assistance with past decorations and props, set-up of decorations and creative ideas for the evening.

Even if you're able to offer just one hour of your time, the much anticipated after-prom evening would benefit from your help. Please consider calling Melanie Goldstine at 938-0694, or email at m2cgold@sbcglobal.net.

