

FOCUS

Joel Barlow High School PTSA Newsletter

January/February 2011

Principal's Points

Dear Barlow Community,



Usually, I try to write something that you will find uplifting and

hopeful. For this issue, I would like to share an email I received from a member of the Class of 2011. His words make me feel deeply honored to be the Head of School.

— *Tom McMorran,*
Head of School

Hello, This is Nico, a member of the Barlow Class of 2011, Robert Smuniewski's class. I was sitting in my room, and I wanted to write some things down. I felt it only necessary to share these thoughts with you as you are just as much a part of the family that is Barlow as the students are.

Fellow students of Barlow and my fellow seniors,

We find ourselves in a difficult time. We find ourselves suffering and having to endure a whirlwind of feelings that are completely acceptable to be experiencing. It is hard to believe that the young man,

who brought such joy to all of the faces of Barlow, students and faculty alike, is gone. He will never truly be gone though. His laughter will be heard through the hallways in the form of jokes he had told or even the hilarious things that he did. I can safely say one thing. This school has never been stronger. I know that is how I feel at this time. We have rallied together in one of Barlow's darkest hours and have put aside our differences for the good of our community at Barlow. I hope and pray that this will be how Barlow will stay throughout its years as a dignified school. I am truly proud to not only be a part of the best senior class to have ever spent its four years at Barlow, but to also be able to call myself a student of one of the most tightly-knit school communities.

Robert Smuniewski, you will truly never be forgotten. My fellow students, I implore you all to not just pass this over once all of the ceremonies are over. I ask that we, as a community of strong-willed students, please remember Rob by being kind and courteous to one another. Seniors, finish out the year strong, juniors do your best on your standardized

tests so you can be the next successful senior class, and for the underclassmen, please use our senior class as an example for what it truly means to be a family. No matter what, the Class of 2011, Rob's class, will go down in history as one, if not the, best class to have ever walked the halls of Joel Barlow High School.

— *Nico*



Jottings From Jen

You Asked for It!



A few weeks before

Christmas, I began finding a number of messages in my inbox and on my answering machine – some from folks I know, and some from people I didn't know. It seems you'd read in the New York Times or seen on NBC TV's Today Show notice of a powerful documentary out about the high-pressure culture that's invading our children's lives.

Quite honestly, since I was way behind on my holiday

elf work, I hurriedly ignored the first few shout-outs. But they kept coming. You were contacting me because I'm the PTSA President and you felt it was something I should know about and look into... and so we did.

On February 10 at 7 PM, we are sponsoring a screening of **RACE TO NOWHERE: The Dark Side of America's Achievement Culture** at Barlow, (snow date February 17), (www.RaceToNowhere.com). The movie, produced by a concerned mother turned filmmaker, tackles a prickly subject...the high stakes, high pressure culture that our kids are feeling in and out of school. *The San Francisco Examiner* has called

it “perhaps one of the most important films created in recent memory.”

You can purchase tickets for \$10 online at <http://rtnjoelbarlowhs.eventbrite.com>.

This ground-breaking, grassroots event promises to give us all something to think about.

I hope to see you there.

— *Jen Wastrom, PTSA President*

Newsletter Topics

Principal's Points	1	ELF	5
Jottings From Jen	2	Sign Up for the Listserv.....	6
Mini-grants.....	3	Post Prom.....	7
Noteworthy News	3	Local Gap Year Presentations	7
Upcoming PTSA Meetings.....	3	Check Out the PTSA.....	7
Staff Luncheon.....	3	JBHS Non-Event Fundraiser.....	8
Student Art Docents	4	Results of Fundraiser	9
REF.....	5	About This Newsletter.....	9
Stop & Shop	5	Boys Basketball Games.....	10

Mini-grants

The PTSA recently awarded the following mini-grants for a total grant of \$1,648.88:

- \$500 to Chris Poulos for the Rivera Mural Project
- \$250 to Beth Bailey and Deb Taubner for a Ceramic Mandala for the Sanctuary Courtyard Project/Contest
- \$250 to Jen Desmarais and Mary Pat Hrebin for recycling bins for the Recycling Club
- \$250 for the S.A.D.D. *I Am Dirt* pre-Prom presentation
- \$250 to Maryanne Pieratti for the Student Services Computer Loan Program
- \$54 to Bath Bailey for Mural Club recognition plaques
- \$94.88 to Tom McMorran for software packages for teacher enrichment

Noteworthy News

For information about some of the great things happening at Barlow, see **Noteworthy News** on the Barlow website under **Administration** (www.joelbarlowps.org/Administration/admin.html).

Upcoming PTSA Meetings

February 8 – Stressed Out Teens...Help! with author expert Roni-Cohen Sandler.

This meeting will feature author and speaker Roni Cohen Sandler on the subject of Stressed Out Teens. We are extremely lucky to be able to have Roni come and speak to us and it promises to be a interesting and helpful program followed by time for Q & A. Please note that although she writes and speaks primarily about issues with girls, this program is

appropriate for parents of boys as well.

Roni Cohen-Sandler, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist, author, consultant, and lecturer who specializes in the issues of women and girls, parenting adolescents, mother-daughter relationships, and learning disorders. She is the author of three books, numerous scholarly articles in professional journals, and chapters in books on parenting.

More information about Roni can be found at <http://www.ronicozensandler.com>.

Other upcoming meetings:

March 8 - College 101: Panel of Moms Who've Navigated These Scary Trenches.

April 12 - Prom Safety.

May 10 - Gap Year...Taking a Year "On" After High School.

June 14 – Head Of School: "Looking Back, Looking Ahead."

Staff Luncheon

The PTSA will be providing a Winter Staff Luncheon on Thursday, January 20, from 12–3 PM during mid-term week.

Student Art Docents Give Tour

If you had the pleasure of attending the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum on December 16, you may have been a part of conversations starting with statements like, “How does this work make you feel? Why? Would you hang it in your home? Or, what does this work remind you of?”

The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield hosted a docent training programs for ten Barlow students. It spanned over six weeks of training, culminating with a visit to the museum where they gave tours to participating visitors from the community including students and teachers from the school.

Ninth grade visitor Aaron Hurwitz said, “It was eye opening to see what some people consider to be art.”

Andy Kearney recalled how unique an experience it was. “It wasn’t like any art museum I have ever been to. The combination of the museum atmosphere, docents, and their way of communicating with us was awesome.”

Visiting teacher, Sandra Van Ausdal added, “I thoroughly enjoyed the docent experience. The students were quite polished and professional. They seemed genuinely invested in the particular



Back row: Taylor Eden, Margot Feroletto, Sophie Ota, Emily Ross, Nathaly Flores. Front row: Marina Boccarossa, Emily Downer, Emily Carpenter, Phoebe Hart. Missing from photo: Christina Wade.

work of art they led us to. I particularly appreciated their approach which was completely “observer-centered.” They guided us with thought-provoking questions and never once imposed their views or personal critique. Everything was validated, even differing opinions, which allowed me to draw other insights. What a great program created for them...it’s real, meaningful, and steeped in beauty!”

Joel Barlow hopes to continue its relationship with the museum, starting a new training session for interested high school students in the spring. Any students that think they might be interested can visit Mrs. Bailey in the art department for more

information and to sign up.

*— Beth Bailey,
JBHS Art Teacher*



Redding Education Foundation



Happy New Year! The Redding Education Foundation (REF) has its end-of-year newsletter available on its website (<http://www.reddingeducationfoundation.org/assets/images/FallWintREFNews.2010.pdf>). Check it out to see some of the highlights from the year and the grants given. For the full list of grants, click **grants funded**. Be on the lookout for information regarding new and exciting programs and initiatives in 2011!

Our Mission

The Redding Education Foundation is dedicated to mobilizing and enhancing opportunities to promote educational excellence so that the Redding community may better experience the fulfillment of learning at every age.

Our Vision

Partner to Promote

Educational Excellence Through Innovation—REF will partner with schools, community members and local organizations to achieve a shared vision of educational excellence through innovation. REF will invest in community, educational and cultural arts initiatives that go beyond the scope of town budgets.

Inspire the Joy of Lifelong Learning—REF investment in intellectual and technological innovation will make learning more effective and efficient across generations while celebrating our respected educators' passion and professional excellence.

Informed and Responsible Steward—REF works diligently to be informed about the best and latest research and educational practices nationwide to responsibly allocate funds where they will have greatest impact.

Garner Community Trust—Through strong partnerships, responsible and informed investments, and tangible benefits for the community, REF seeks to attract its abundant resources and expertise for its community initiatives. REF is an all-volunteer board of community members who contribute their time, talent and treasury to support REF's work.

Community of Excellence—REF's vision will enhance Redding's reputation as a preferred community in which to educate and live.

Serve Beyond our Borders—REF aspires to be a model for other communities seeking to promote educational excellence.

Learn more about REF at www.reddingeducationfoundation.org.

Stop & Shop

Do you shop at Stop & Shop? You can earn cash for JBHS. Due to the generosity of Stop & Shop, a portion of the cost of your groceries can be awarded to Joel Barlow High School for educational needs. For more information, see the flyer on the Barlow website. You do need to register for this program each year.

Easton Learning Foundation

The Easton Learning Foundation's annual Trivia Bee is Thursday, May 19, 2011, 7-9 PM. It's not too soon to start thinking about putting a team together.

For more information about ELF and these events, go to www.eastonlearningfoundation.org.

Sign Up for the Listserv

Are you receiving emails from JBHS and the PTSA? Not sure if you are signed up for the listserv?

Sign Up for the JBHS Listserv

To sign up to receive emails from Joel Barlow High School or ER9:

1. Go to <http://phplist.fandotech.com>.
2. Click **Subscribe to Easton, Redding, Region 9 and/or Central Office Listservs**.
3. Follow the instructions for signing up. Fill in the form and click the schools that apply: **ER9 - Central Office and Joel Barlow High School** (plus, any of the lower schools if applicable to you).
4. If you want to unsubscribe

from receiving emails from the schools, click **Unsubscribe** at the bottom of the form.

Sign Up for the PTSA Listserv

You can sign up for the PTSA listserv when you sign up or renew your membership with the PTSA. To sign up to receive emails from the PTSA (or if you are not sure if you are already signed up), contact Anne Andrews at andrews1@optonline.net.

About the PTSA Listserv

Generally, the JBHS PTSA sends two announcements per month via the listserv: one to announce the monthly PTSA meeting and one for other PTSA related activities.

Please keep the following deadlines in mind

for upcoming listserv announcements:

- Friday, January 21
- Friday, February 4
- Monday, February 14
- Friday, March 11
- Friday, March 25
- Friday, April 8
- Friday, April 22
- Friday, May 6
- Friday, May 20
- Friday, June 3

If you have relevant information that you would like included in an upcoming PTSA listserv announcement, contact Anne Andrews at andrews1@optonline.net.

Post Prom Friday, May 13, 2011

The Joel Barlow Post Prom provides our sons and daughters with a fun, safe, chaperoned and alcohol-free destination after the formal Prom. Last year we had over 420 attendees.

This year's Post Prom will be held Friday evening, May 13, from 11:30 PM into Saturday morning, May 14, ending at 3 AM. Volunteers are needed in the following areas: Chaperoning, Decorating, Set-up, Food, Prizes, and Clean-up. If you would like to help out, or have any questions, please contact Wanda Augustyn by phone at (203) 938-3859 or email Wanda at acesaces@msn.com.

Local Gap Year Presentations

Dynamy Internship Year and Thinking Beyond Borders, two regional programs that provide gap year opportunities, will be teaming up to provide parents and students with options to consider after graduation. The presentations will be held on the following dates/locations:

Monday, January 24, 7-8:30 PM at Conard High School in West Hartford, Connecticut

Thursday, January 27, 7:30-9 PM at Darien High School in Darien, Connecticut

If you would like more information about these

specific events please contact Kathy Cheng, Director of Admission at Dynamy Internship Year, at kcheng@dynamy.org or by phone at 508-755-2571 ext. 18.

Also note that the topic of the May 10 PTSA meeting will be gap year opportunities.

Check Out the PTSA Web Page

For information about the PTSA, check out our page on the JBHS website (go to www.joelbarlowps.org, then click **PTSA**). Check back frequently for information about:

- upcoming PTSA meetings
- meeting minutes from past PTSA meetings you might have been unable to attend
- contact information for the PTSA officers and committee chairpeople

Important websites to visit:

- www.er9.org
- www.joelbarlowps.org
- www.joelbarlowps.org/Communications/PTSA/PTSA.html
- www.reddingeducationfoundation.org
- www.eastonlearningfoundation.org

Joel Barlow High School's 1st Annual Non-Event Fundraiser

You Are Cordially Invited To a One-Of-A-Kind New Years Eve Celebration !

... Already have News Years' plans?
No worries.
 ... Don't feel like getting dressed up?
Not a problem.
 ... Champagne gives you a headache?
Feel free to say no, thank you.

We'll make a toast for you - and to you. All you have to do is write a check. Its as easy as watching the ball drop from your favorite comfy chair.

Ring in the new!

Your gift will help fund special grants to teachers to enhance the future at Barlow. Here is a confetti-like smattering of some of the New Year's Resolutions for 2011 put together by the faculty and administration...but they all need money to make them a reality.

- a new science research elective class
- color printer & poster-sized printer for presentations at school competitions
- keyboards for the Music and Art computer lab
- funding for the installation of a Diego Rivera mural in a Spanish classroom, to cultivate an appreciation for the arts while advancing individual levels of language proficiency

Any amount and all donations are so greatly appreciated...and needed. Please accept our invitation to participate in this spirited event, and **Thank You In Advance For Making The New Year A Much Happier One At JBHS!**

Joel Barlow High School's 1st Annual Non-Event Fundraiser

- \$10** "Confetti & Streamers!"
- \$20** "Party Hat & Noise Maker!"
- \$30** "Bottle of Vintage Bubbly!"
- \$50** "Times Square for the Ball Drop!"
- \$100** "An Eiffel Tower Toast!"
- \$?** "Fireworks over Sydney Harbor!"

Name: _____

Please make your tax-deductible check payable to JBHS PTSA and send to: JBHS, 100 Black Rock Tpke., Redding, CT 06896 or drop in our New Years Bash Box in the main office.

Please remember corporate matching funds! Donor names will appear on the PTSA website THANK YOU PAGE
 *a portion of the cost of this fundraiser has been generously sponsored by a private benefactor



Results of 1st Annual Non-Event Fundrasier

Happy New Year!

It's starting out to be a successful one, thanks to the 20 or so families who responded to the first ever PTSA non-event fundraiser.

So far we have made just over \$2,000!

Although January 1 has passed, it is not too late to participate in our New Year's non-Celebration. Your tax-deductible donation to the PTSA will fund teacher mini-grants, scholarships, student activities and will directly enhance the quality of life experienced at Barlow every day. These activities are not funded through traditional district resources.

Thank You

A special thank you to this year's donors thus far:

- The Agress Family
- The Aris Family
- The Augustyn Family
- The Barickman Family
- The Bindelglass Family
- The Cohane Family
- The DeVoto Family
- Mr. Raymond Fagan
- The Falcone Family
- The George Family
- The Harder Family

- The Harvey Kramer Family
- The Kulawitz Family
- The Richard O'Brien Family
- The Pantalena Family
- The Powell Family
- The Pronovost Family
- The Robey Family
- The Steve Smith Family
- The Van Camp Family
- The Walsh Family
- The Wargo Family
- The Wastrom Family

About This Newsletter

The FOCUS newsletter is a bimonthly publication of the JBHS PTSA. Email notification is sent to those who have registered to receive information from the PTSA. We welcome submissions from the JBHS community. To submit articles for consideration, please email submission to Lisa DeVoto at lisadevoto@optonline.net. Previous issues of the FOCUS can be found on the JBHS website at www.joelbarlowps.org/Communications/PTSA/Focus.html.



2010-2011 Season

come cheer us on!

Monday, Jan 10	Oxford away, 7:00pm
Tuesday, Jan 11	Kolbe Cathedral at home, 7:00 pm
Friday, Jan 14	Brookfield away, 7:00 pm
Tuesday, Jan 18	Notre Dame at home, 7:00 pm
Friday, Jan 21	Masuk away, 7:00 pm
Tuesday, Jan 25	Oxford at home, 7:00 pm
 Friday, Jan 28	Bethel at home, 7:00 pm Halftime activities!
Tuesday, Feb 1	Immaculate away, 7:00 pm
 Friday, Feb 4	Stratford at home, 7:00 pm Halftime activities!
Tuesday, Feb 8	New Fairfield away, 7:00 pm
 Friday, Feb 11	New Milford at home, 7:00 pm Redding v Easton 8th Gr. Boys game at halftime!
Tuesday, Feb 15	Bunnell away, 7:00 pm
Friday, Feb 18	Pomperaug away, 7:00 pm
 Monday, Feb 21	Newtown at home, 7:00 pm Senior Night Ceremony and halftime activities!
 Wednesday, Feb 23	Weston away, 7:00 pm
Sat. Feb. 26, 2011	SWC Quarterfinals



Calling all Barlow Fans!

www.BarlowBoysBasketball.com