

FOCUS Joel Barlow High School PTSA Newsletter



MAY / JUNE 2008

PRESIDENT'S CORNER Nearly Over??

It is hard to believe the school year is nearly over! It sounds trite, but it is so true — it feels like only yesterday when the new school year started. I am sure all the juniors and seniors had a wonderful time at this year's prom, and spent numerous hours figuring out last-minute touches to their outfits. The Post-Prom volunteers were ready for the attendees and assembled an exciting evening for all the students and their dates. Bravo! This is such a wonderful tradition; thank you to everyone who contributed to making this event possible.

The Senior Luncheon has been held and the Teacher Appreciation Luncheon is on the agenda. Anyone willing to lend a hand is welcome!

The 2nd Annual Barlowpalooza was held on May 29. What a wonderful event! Talent abounds at our school and was evident all evening. If, for some reason, you weren't able to make it, check the calendar for next year's Barlowpalooza and save the date. It will make you swell with pride to know the artwork, music, jewelry, community service exhibits, senior experience and recitals come from YOUR students, YOUR community.

Of course, the biggest date on the school calendar ... graduation! It will be held on June 16 at the Western Connecticut State University's O'Neill Center from 5:00 to 8:00 pm. Congratulations to all!

There will be a third vote on the Region 9 budget referendum on June 17. PLEASE, PLEASE go out and vote to support your child's school ... Joel Barlow High School.

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

Join us at our last PTSA meeting this year, Wednesday, June 11 at 9:30 am in the cafeteria annex room. Looking forward to seeing you there!

Best regards,
Melanie Goldstine, *PTSA President*

FROM THE PRINCIPAL ... Exercise and a Lounge Chair

When other kids are watching the third rerun of Sponge-Bob this summer, your kids could be reading. When other kids are hunched over their Gameboys, your kids could be reading. When other kids are idly flipping through various television stations, your kids could be reading. Reading and physical exercise are the two best uses of our students' time during the nine weeks between school years. Having been much in the news over the last few years, due to the Federal Department of Education's focus on reading, many research reports have repeatedly confirmed what any sensible person knows: Reading is the fundamental skill upon which all education is based. This is not to diminish any other discipline.

For instance, let's do some math right now. During the school year a student spends about 35 hours a week at the high school, and he or she should have about twelve to fourteen hours of homework. I recognize that many students attend camp or get summer jobs, but there should be plenty of time for voluntary, sustained reading. If another kid plays a videogame for two hours a day and watches four hours of TV and eats "couch potato" foods, while your kid reads two hours a day, then who will be in a better position to return to school? Obviously, your student.

Our brains retain skills and new learning only after we have had sufficient reinforcement for them to get "imprinted" in our memory. Sadly, when we stop practicing a skill, we begin to lose whatever habits we have acquired in that field. It takes, according to one study I recall from my graduate work (because I read a lot!), about nine weeks for a person to lose whatever hasn't been deeply embedded in our consciousness. So, one summer vacation can wipe out a semester's growth. There are, fortunately, two things that we can do to retain our hard-earned learning and to improve

our brain functions: Have you guessed them? Exercise and reading.

So, as the glorious relief of getting out of school turns into the long-hot days of summer, I will be waging two battles with my children. The same, in fact, that my parents waged with me and my siblings — Go outside and play and/or read a book. The adolescent body is not designed for inactivity, but technology promotes just that. Our kids don't need organized sports all the time. They can orchestrate their own fun. Some kids will be "hanging" and that's cool. Others will be reading and growing their bodies and their minds. Both kinds will be entering the same classrooms next fall. See you then.



Tom McMorran
Principal

Your PTSA Needs Help!

We are looking for a Co-President and Co-Vice President for next year's PTSA. We are also in need of a Post-Prom Chairperson. Please tell anyone interested in any of these positions to email Jill DeSalva at JStryker23@aol.com with any questions. Co-President or Co-Vice President would be an excellent way for freshmen parents to get involved in the high school and meet other parents from each community. These positions would be totally learning positions.

Jill DeSalva
Volunteer Coordinator

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

Does Your Child Take Prescription Medications?

Our School Nurse, Anne Marie Gorman, has indicated that if any student is currently using prescription medication, please call her at 938-2508, ext. 1513 to notify the school of the prescription information. Should an emergency occur (allergic reaction, etc.), paramedics must be notified of any medications that are in use.

PTSA Staff Luncheon Coming Up!

The JBHS PTSA will, once again, sponsor the annual Staff

Luncheon on Thursday, June 12 in the Barlow cafeteria from 10:30 am to 3:00 pm. Would you like to show your appreciation to your student's teachers and staff? Come join us at one or all of the following: set-up, serving, clean-up. Do you feel you're better suited in donations? Then bring along some baked goods for dessert!



The following is a list of items and assistance necessary to ensure the luncheon is a success:

- 12 people to make/donate baked goods
- 5 people to donate a case of water each
- 4 people to donate/make fruit salad
- 2 people to donate powdered ice tea and lemonade mix
- 10 people to assist with set-up / serving / clean-up (three hour shifts available, starting at 10:30 am and ending at 3:00 pm)

All other food is being catered for this event. Any one who would like to volunteer, please contact Lynn Eichhorn at lynneichhorn@sbcglobal.net.

Lynn Eichhorn
Staff Luncheons

Do The New Restrictions Affect Your Student?

The State of Connecticut Dept. of Motor Vehicles has recently issued new restrictions for both learner's permit holders and newly licensed drivers. We have decided that all parents need to be aware of these new restrictions and are happy to reprint the following particulars from the government:

NEW PASSENGER RESTRICTIONS FOR LEARNER'S PERMIT HOLDERS

Effective August 1, home-trained 16 and 17-year-old learner's permit holders and the parents or other adults training them will be restricted on passengers allowed in the vehicle while the permit holder is driving except when actually receiving instruction during a driving school or driver education lesson.

The learner's permit holder is trained to drive through a driving school, home instruction or a combination of the two. These new restrictions apply in any situation when the learner's permit holder is receiving any kind of training by a parent or another adult.

During the first three months: the learner's permit holder may not have any passengers in the vehicle except for:

the permit holder's parents or legal guardian, any of whom must have a valid motor vehicle operator's license, who is doing the training

or

one person who is providing instruction and is at least 20 years of age or older, has held a license for four or more consecutive years prior to training and whose license has not been suspended during the four years prior to training.

NOTE: The only persons who may be in the car during the first three months is **EITHER** one or both parents **OR** an adult trainer. The exception is the specifically allotted lesson time that the permit holder is in the company of a licensed driving instructor from a commercial driving school or driver education program and for the purpose of driver training.

During the second three months (months four through six): the permit holder may transport only members of their immediate family and the only other persons who may be in the vehicle is **EITHER** one or both parents **OR** an adult trainer.

As noted earlier, these restrictions do not apply during the actual time when a learner's permit holder is receiving specific instruction from a licensed driver instructor from a commercial driving school or driver education program.

Failure to follow the passenger rules pertaining to learner's permits may result in a permit revocation of the learner's permit. Since a learner's permit holder can never drive alone, parents, legal guardians and driving instructors are also responsible for enforcing these passenger restriction laws.

RESTRICTIONS FOR NEWLY LICENSED 16 AND 17-YEAR-OLD DRIVERS

If you have your learner's permit, be aware of the **passenger restriction laws for learner's permit holders.**

After obtaining a driver's license, 16 and 17-year-old drivers may always drive alone. The law limits passengers during the first six months of holding their license. In addition, other restrictions apply until a driver is eighteen years of age.

- 1. Passenger restrictions during the first three months:** Only parents or a legal guardian (at least one of whom holds a motor vehicle operator's license), or not more than one passenger who is a driving instructor licensed by the DMV, or a person 20 years of age or older who has held a license for 4 years and has not had his or her license suspended during that four year period.
- 2. Passenger restrictions during the second three months:** The **ONLY ADDITIONAL** passengers allowed are members of the teenage driver's immediate family.

The restrictions concerning passengers will carry a penalty for a violation, which will be an infraction and fine. In the case of a driver who is convicted of a second violation, the law permits the Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles to suspend the license of the driver until he or she is 18 years of age.
- 3.** Until their 18th birthday, teenage drivers may not transport more passengers than the number of seat belts in the vehicle.
- 4.** Until his or her 18th birthday, a driver may not operate any vehicle that requires a public passenger transportation permit, or a vanpool vehicle.

5. Any driver issued a motorcycle endorsement may NOT transport a passenger for six months after obtaining the endorsement.
6. Driving is prohibited between the hours of midnight and 5 am unless the individual is traveling for employment, school, religious activities or for a medical necessity, or if the individual is an assigned driver in a Safe Ride program.
7. Until their 18th birthday, teenage drivers may not use cell phones (even if they are "hands-free") or mobile electronic devices while they are driving.

A "mobile electronic device" includes any hand-held computer or other device with any type of video display.

These restrictions do not apply to persons who are active members of a volunteer fire company or department, a volunteer ambulance service or company, or an emergency medical service organization who are responding to an emergency call or carrying out their duties as an active member.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT

www.ct.gov/dmv

Why Would You Want a Grocery Gift Card???

In every issue of the *FOCUS* newsletter, you have seen reminders that Grocery Gift Cards are available from Carol Emanuel at JBHS. Who would purchase a Grocery Gift Card???. And why would anyone want to use one???. Why are they even offered at Barlow? Let's see if we can help answer these questions.

Joel Barlow PTSA purchases these cards from both Caraluzzi's Market and Stew Leonard's at a discounted price. When we sell these at face value to the parents and others at Barlow, the PTSA benefits by recouping the cost of the card AND the percentage that was discounted from the price. A \$100 card buys you \$100 of groceries, and you pay \$100 for it, and the organization benefits. How easy is that?

The card essentially costs you nothing, so think of it as a prepaid grocery card and happy shopping!

Reflections from Recent Reflections Winners

Two of our recent Reflections winners, junior Daniel DeSalva and junior Lukiana Pilyugin sent the *Focus* newsletter their thoughts on this year's theme and their respective entries:

LUKIANA PILYUGIN:

When I drove up to the Connecticut PTSA awards night, I noticed that many students referred to actual physical actions pertaining to the theme "*I can make a difference by ...*" Originally, I also wanted to paint a universally accepted action; such as improving the environment or helping the underprivileged, but in the end I changed my mind and instead painted the actual thought that comes before any action. Although it may not seem very important, just thinking about someone else can make a difference.

DAN DESALVA:

I generally get my inspiration from other artists. I'll be listening to my music and think, "Why didn't they go this way with the song?" Then I'll play on the piano what I would have done and a whole new song appears.

Again, a huge congratulations to all the Barlow winners and recipients of the Connecticut PTSA Reflections contest in 2007-2008.

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