

CONNECTIONS

The quick details on what's
happening at the Bergen County Academies
Log on to our web site: www.academyppo.com



President's Message

A lot is happening in the PPO, and it's because of **you!** Just last week, the freshman class held its first freshman family social, and you made it happen! Had it not been for parent input at our last PPO work session, we would not have realized the need for more of an outreach to parents, particularly in the freshman year. Based on your suggestion, we took your ideas to the administration, and voila! Flight 2009 took off.

You've also expressed a desire for the resurrection of academy-specific, or program, meetings. This has presented a challenge in the past, since classes and teachers often cross academy lines. No one person in any academy deals solely with that academy and with all aspects of that particular program, so no person can easily address all questions regarding that academy at a program meeting. However, when the PPO executive board approached the administrative team with your request to reinstate the program meetings, the idea of "Ask the PPO" arose. As you'll read in this publication, this is a way for you to submit academy-specific questions prior to our upcoming program meetings. The administration will investigate the answers to your questions and we'll use these inquiries and answers as the basis for our meeting agendas.

Everything the PPO does, everything the PPO accomplishes, stems from you, our members. It's you who drive this organization, and it's you who keep us current. Yes, it's your job to keep us on our toes, to tell us what you need, and to remind us and guide us if we fall short of your expectations.

This year has reminded me of how cooperative a community we are. You, the parents, and we, the PPO, really do have a voice, and by expressing our ideas and by raising our voices in unison we can create a choir that constantly creates new masterpieces. We are fortunate to have an administration that hears our voices, joins in the chorus, and often conducts and leads this community to greater successes.

And of course, it's all about creating beautiful music for our children.

Be well,
Nancy Lagomarsino

Calendar Highlights

- February 17 **ACAHA Chocolate Competition**
1PM, Academy Grill
- February 17-19 **BattleBots**, Harrisburg, PA
- February 20-24 **NO SCHOOL**
- March 3 & 4 **PIPPIN**, 7:30PM, Auditorium
- March 7-9 **HSPA Testing**
- March 8 **PPO Fishbowl** 7:30PM
- March 9 **Half Day** for Students
- March 10 **Battle of the Bands**, 7-11PM, Gym
- March 14 **Half Day** for Students
- March 15 **Sophomore Business Day Luncheon** 11AM-1PM
Senior Experience Meeting 7PM, Auditorium
- March 16 **Fashion Show** 7PM, The Graycliff, Moonachie
- March 22 **Unsung Heroes Appreciation Luncheon**

**Check our monthly calendar
for more times and events!**

Our next issue will be published on March 22, 2006. Please submit all April calendar entries to Amrita Singh at AmritaS2@aol.com or at Amrita.Singh@experian.com & all articles to Barbara Borys at BBB527@optonline.net by March 13. Thank you.

PPO Fishbowl Rescheduled

The PPO parent/student fishbowl meeting, previously scheduled for March 28th, has been rescheduled for **Wednesday, March 8th**, at 7:30 p.m. in the Academy auditorium.

The fishbowl format was a favorite of former BCA Superintendent Dr. John Grieco, and is often our most popular PPO meeting. In the fishbowl parents and students sit side by side for open, honest, reflective discussions of teen issues. This unique structure encourages stimulating discussions for those who want to actively participate, and provides a comfortable venue for those who'd like simply to listen.

Focus on the Faculty

Did you ever throw a party for over 300 people? If you ever did then you know that it is not an easy task and that you need lots of help to make it successful. On Thursday, February 2nd, *Flight 2009...many destinations* departed from the BCA campus with parents, students and teachers on board. Dinner and a video, along with presentations, highlighted this special 9th grade family social. Under the guidance of Diane Valladares and Carol Blakeslee, parents provided a pot-luck dinner for all. From soup to nuts the faculty and students pitched in, with John Branda and Mary Beth Brace providing soup and airplane cookies; Peter Guthrie and Bill Pavlu creating boarding pass invitations, placemats and place cards; Scott Lang working on

the video; Bill Tyndall providing laptops; Steve Danielli helping with sound; the custodians assisting in every possible way; and, of course, the class advisors, Vic Samarakone, Kerri Hubbard, and Giulia Zanoni-Mendelsohn, assisting throughout the event. Even our sister campus in Paramus helped us out by providing balloon centerpieces for the room, as did PPO President Nancy Lagomarsino and her board members, and many upper-class parents who were on hand to help out all evening long. The evening was a success because of the combined efforts of all of these people, and I join with Russ Davis, Linda Eickmeyer, Margaret Haynes and Rona Gabin in thanking all of them.

— Pat Cosgrove

Program Meetings Back by Popular Demand

On **Tuesday, April 11th**, the PPO will host our ever-popular program meetings. Brought back by popular demand, program meetings provide an opportunity for parents to meet **by academy** to discuss issues unique to your focus group, and provide a venue for parents to meet other parents within your child's academy.

In order to bring to you meaningful agendas and answers to the academy-specific questions you might have, we are in the process of establishing an "Ask the PPO" input mechanism on our website, www.academyppo.com. We encourage you to visit this site and ask your program-specific questions via this window. The PPO, together with the academy administration, will attempt to answer your questions, and will use these questions and answers as the basis for our program meeting agendas on April 11th.

We encourage you to be a part of the academy process and become familiar with the unique features of your child's program. Offer your questions and input, and join us on April 11th.

PPO Picnic is Around the Corner..... Volunteers are Needed

We're starting to plan for this year's PPO Picnic, scheduled for Saturday May 13th. Last year's picnic was a huge success, attended by more than 800 current students and their families, as well as the incoming freshman class and their families, faculty, Academy Administration and Central Administration. A great time was had by all – great weather, great food, games and a great chance to catch up with old friends and make new friends.

We're currently looking for volunteers to help on the day of the picnic with setup, serving, cooking, clean-up and food preparation in the kitchen. This is only a two hour time commitment and is a great way to get involved with other parents. If you can't help that day, but would still like to help out, please let us know – help is needed prior to the picnic as well.

Please email any of the co-chairs, indicating your name, phone number, email address and how you'd like to help out. We can be reached at: Janet Nemeč: jnemeč2@optonline.net or 201-670-1871; or Susan Bromberg: susan@tnovausa.com or 201-573-1459; or Fay Chang at 201-568-7514. Thank you!

BCA to Host "Town Meeting"

On **Tuesday, March 28th**, the Academies will host a town meeting sponsored by the Bergen County Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources, under the direction of the state of New Jersey. Underage drinking will be the topic for the evening, and will be addressed by a panel of experts that will include law enforcement agents and health professionals. The hope is to have an open and interactive discussion with audience

participation and questions. The moderator for the evening will be none other than our own Mrs. Roseanne Colletti-Harris, NBC news reporter and Academy parent.

The town meeting is open to all Academy families, as well as the greater Bergen County community.

More information will follow in the coming weeks, but be sure to save the date now

Class News

Class of 2006:

**The "Under the City Lights" Fashion Show will be held at The Graycliff in Moonachie on Thursday, March 16th at 7:00 p.m. Please see the enclosed flyer for more information. Come out to enjoy a wonderful dinner and support the Senior Class. Tickets are now on sale! E-mail Laura Crane (laucra@bergen.org) with any questions.

Class of 2007:

**The class of 2007 recently hosted a bake sale and raised almost \$200! Thanks to all the bakers and volunteers. **Auditions for the junior showcase will be held early next month. If your son/daughter is interested in performing, have him/her send an e-mail to chrmau@bergen.org. **The class t-shirts were a huge success! Thanks to the students who purchased them. **BCA car decals are still available. Please contact chrhoo@bergen.org.

Class of 2008:

Class Fundraising Update: We would like to take a moment to explain why we fundraise, and what the money goes toward. Money earned through our class fundraisers goes toward a senior class trip and to the junior and senior proms. Project Graduation, the post-ceremony party, is not a PPO sponsored event, and is not something that our funds go toward. Students pay a total of \$200 for Project Graduation (\$100 is collected junior year, and another \$100 senior year). The students have done a wonderful job with their monthly class fundraisers, but since these only generate small amounts, we are behind where we would like to be. We decided that we needed to have an event that would serve the purpose of generating a significant amount of money, while providing parents an opportunity to meet and enjoy the company of other Academy parents. We have decided to have a "BCA Card Party**" on **Wed. April 5th**. It's an event centered around a simple card game where players move from table to table. It's a wonderful way to meet many people in one evening. See flyer for details. We hope that we'll have a great turnout of sophomore parents! You are welcome to bring friends and relatives. We will be raising funds through raffle baskets, a 50/50, etc. **We are asking each sophomore family to donate \$5 toward the purchase of some big raffle items, such as an Ipod. (An envelope for this donation has been provided in this mailing.)** In addition, we would love to have other donations of baskets or individual raffle items and refreshments. All donations would be sincerely appreciated! *Please respond using the enclosed flyer.* Baskets will be on display at school on the day of the event so that students, staff, or people who can't make the Card Party can buy raffle tickets. Please mark your calendars for April 5th, and help us to make

this event a big success! If you have any questions, please contact Mary Wright at 201-848-8982 (Malarky@optonline.net) or Donna Gormley at 201-847-0351 (Djgorms@aol.com).

**The Valentine's Day chocolate rose sale was a success! 150 were sold and delivered. **Thank you to everyone who donated food & beverages for the Valentine's Day bake sale. **The Dodgeball Tournament was a great time for all the students who attended, and earned \$200 for the class. A group of students are making a DVD of the event, which will be available for purchase beginning February 13th. Interested students should contact Peter Todd, Cory Mayer, or Adam McNicholas. All proceeds will benefit our class. **Frosh Madness 3 vs. 3 student basketball tournament will return again this March as Soph Madness! **Sophomore Semi-Formal will be held at the Princess Chateau in Lodi on Friday, April 21st. We need to sell 200 tickets in order to hold the event, so we hope you will encourage your student to come.

Class of 2009:

**On Thursday, February 2nd, the Freshman class had its first student/parent social. Mrs. Cosgrove responded to parent requests to increase communication by coordinating and funding our potluck social. What a great event! The students created the "Flight 2009" theme. The evening started with a slide show of school pictures and a video. Each Academy participated by organizing a booth to show parents some of the activities going on at the Academy. Finally, we had our potluck dinner which included many very generous entrees and desserts brought in by the freshman families. Thanks to all who made this such a successful night! **The Freshman class is conducting a contest to design stickers and/or magnets for the BCA. The winners will be chosen by the end of March and the stickers and magnets should be available for purchase sometime in April.

Student Council:

**Student Council will sponsor the Battle of the Bands on March 10th. All clubs wishing to fundraise at the event please contact Kameron Rezzadeh at kamrez@bergen.org. **If you have any creative school-wide event ideas (either events for our school community or fundraising events), please contact Kathy Barasch, Student Council secretary, at katbar@bergen.org. **Congrats and thanks to all student council members, and especially to our advisor, Ms. Mansfield, for an impressive first half of the school year, completing events such as 9/11 assembly, Homecoming, Pep Rally, Hurricane Katrina relief effort (which raised over \$6000 thanks to all Bergen Academies students and parents), Spirit Week, Veteran's Day postcards, guest speaker Kevin Wanzer, and Holiday gift drive for families.

PPO Executive Board Candidates Wanted

The PPO Nominating Committee is seeking candidates to fill executive board positions for the 2006-2007 school year.

The positions are:

- ◆ **President** - oversees organization as a whole.
- ◆ **First Vice President** - oversees all standing committees and fills in for President, if necessary.
- ◆ **Second Vice President** - oversees special committees (e.g. picnic, international dinner).
- ◆ **Corresponding Secretary** - liaison between PPO board and community.
- ◆ **Recording Secretary** - takes minutes at Executive Board meetings and PPO meetings.
- ◆ **Treasurer** - handles finances for the organization.

If you are interested in serving, or would like more information, please contact any of the members of the Nominating Committee.
(Please note: Serving on the board requires daytime availability.)

Nominating Committee:
Mary Wright 201-848-8982
Amrita Singh 201-933-8240
Maria Ackerman 201-599-0343

SAVE THE DATE...

Golf Outing

to benefit "Class of 2007"
May 1st 2006
Bergen Hills Country Club
River Vale, New Jersey
(Minutes from the Palisades Parkway)

- * A chance to spend the day with fellow Academy parents
- * Golfing at a historic golf club in the heart of Bergen County
- * Chance to win prizes

What we are looking for now:

Volunteers • Door Prizes
Event Sponsorships • Golfers

For any of the above or more information
contact

Sabrina Ganz
Email: SABSTG@AOL.COM
Phone: 201-358-6501

PPO Bylaw Amendments

At our January 18, 2006 General Meeting of the PPO, Mr. Rich Askins, member of the PPO Bylaws Committee, read several proposed revisions to the existing bylaws.

The purpose of the first proposed amendment is to create new officers, designated as First Vice President and Second Vice President. These shall replace the current Vice President and shall effect a redistribution and reconfiguration of the duties presently discharged by the Vice President.

Therefore, in Article 5, Section 2, the number of elected officers is changed from five (5) to six (6). Further in the first sentence, "Vice President" is deleted and is replaced by "First Vice President and Second Vice President."

In the first sentence of Article 6, Section 1, "Vice President" is deleted and is replaced by "First Vice President and Second Vice President."

In Article 6, Section 2, the second sentence is deleted and is replaced by the following:

"The First Vice President shall preside at all meetings in the absence of the President; shall be responsible for overseeing, communicating with and coordinating the operations of all Standing Committees; and shall perform such other duties and act in such additional capacities as the President may request.

The Second Vice President shall preside at all meetings in the absence of the President and the First Vice President; shall be responsible for overseeing, communicating with and coordinating the operations of all Special Committees; and shall perform such other duties and act in such additional capacities as the President may request."

Additionally, a revision to Article 13 was read by Mr. Askins. The purpose of this amendment is to allow bylaw adoptions, amendments, or replacements by a two-thirds vote of the "Members of the Corporation" rather than by a two-thirds vote of the "Board of Trustees."

This represents a desire to place the responsibility and ownership of the PPO in the hands of its members rather than in the hands of a subset of the organization.

The aforementioned proposed bylaw amendments will be reread at the next general meeting of the PPO and will be voted upon at that time.

For additional information regarding these proposed amendments, or for a copy of the existing bylaws, please contact any member of the PPO Executive Board

Math Team Boosters

On January 31st the American Mathematics Competitions Contest A was administered. An unprecedented number of BCA students participated. Over 90 of them qualified to advance to the American Invitational Math Exam. AMC Contest B, given on February 15th, provides a second opportunity for students to qualify for the AIME.

The buzz of "practice test" activity every weekend -- in Room 138, in neighboring classrooms, even spilling out into the hallway -- paid off in a remarkable showing in this prestigious national competition. Of course, hats off to Mr. Holbrook for coaching the team!

Andre Negut continues to lecture on Saturday afternoons. We are fortunate to have him enlightening our students in areas of higher level mathematical theory. Many thanks again to Mr. Negut.

BattleBots Alert

The Titanium Knights Robotics team is working hard on preparations for the 2006 national event. This year's event has been scheduled for April 26th-30th in Miami, Florida. As you may know, BattleBots IQ is a competitive physics robotic sport in which high school students learn about science and engineering through a six month robot building project. These teams design and build robots to compete against each other in the official BattleBox arena at locations around the country. The program has the ultimate goal of creating more and better future engineers by generating excitement in engineering and making science and mathematics fun. Every year, financial assistance is needed to fund this beneficial endeavor. Unfortunately, reduced donations from corporate sponsors and minimal success at this year's fundraising activities have limited our options. Any help would be greatly appreciated. Besides monetary donations, BattleBots accepts donations of certain types of building materials, sheet metal, power tools, batteries, and specialized hobby and robot components. If you think you can help out, contact the BBIQ Program Coordinator, Joe DeFalco, at 201-343-6000 x2211 or jdefalco@bergen.org. Donations by check can be made directly to the Student Activities Account--BattleBots and mailed to the Hackensack campus. For more information, visit <http://www.bergen.org/BattleBots>.

The BA Student Council Sponsors...

BATTLE OF THE BANDS

Friday, March 10th
From 7:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m.
In BCA Gymnasium

Tickets will be sold: Feb. 27th - March 9th

*Ticket Price: \$8.00 in advance;
\$10.00 at the door*

*Incredible performances by bands from
inside and outside Bergen Academies.*

Which band is going to win
this year's Battle?
Come and find out for yourself.

For more information, please contact:
Skyler Ahn at donahn@bergen.org

BCA Class of 2008 presents...

"Capture the Flag"



Card Party

Wednesday, April 5, 2006
7 PM in the Academies Gymnasium

**All parents, students, teachers, staff,
family and friends are welcome!**

Come join us for an evening of cards, delicious refreshments, raffles, and prizes. We'll play a simple, sociable card game round-robin style. You'll learn the game on the spot and get to meet others in our Academies community.

Cost is \$10 per person.

See the enclosed flyer to register by March 22.
Info also at www.academyppo.com

Cultural Connections...

Theatre Arts News



While much of what we do in the teaching and learning of theatre arts at BCA should be and is devoted to the “process” of creating theatre, there are numerous opportunities for students to engage in a wide variety of performances and productions.

The freshmen just wrote, directed, and performed modern morality plays as a part of their unit on Medieval Theatre in Theatre History I. Sophomores are developing an original director’s concept for a scene from a play by Shaw or Ibsen that they will perform as a part of their Realism project for Theatre History II. Freshman acting class is intentionally process-oriented, but in each succeeding year AVPA: Theatre students perform a variety of scenes and monologues each trimester.

In Acting Methods, an elective open to all students except AVPA: Theatre, students are currently putting the work of the trimester together in scenes that they will perform in class at the end of the trimester.

Today is the final day for auditions for our spring Main Stage production, Moliere’s *The Miser* (production dates June 9th & 10th), and seniors are currently preparing for the auditions that they will conduct on March 6th and 7th for ten student-directed one act plays to be performed on May 19-21st.

Our Main Stage production for trimester II (the BCA musical, *Pippin*) is right in the middle of its rehearsal period. Victoria Pero gives you a glimpse behind the scenes of *Pippin*:

Pippin is a humbling experience. One is humbled by

PAPA Updates

The Performing Arts Parents Association looks forward to the upcoming production of *Pippin* on Friday and Saturday, March 3-4, at 8:00 p.m.

- * Please ask your family and friends to join you for two delightful evenings of musical theater when Academy students present *Pippin*. They’ve “got magic to do, just for you” so don’t miss it!
- * We remind our gracious volunteers that the traditional Dress Rehearsal Dinner for the hardworking people who have devoted their time to *Pippin* will be held on Thursday, March 2nd from 4:30 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. Please deliver your tasty treats to the lower cafeteria by 3:30 p.m.

these students - by their bravery, ingenuity, tirelessness, flexibility, and deep intelligence.

Yesterday I turned the rehearsal over to the kids. Our terrific musical director wisely requested a rehearsal on stage, full cast, with the actors singing all their music while moving through the somewhat rigorous choreography in the first act. The cast of 73 sounded like Broadway stars in the confines of Dr. Finley’s choral room, but the vocals would fall apart with the physical challenges of climbing ladders, kicking feet, full-out slow motion fight scenes, et al.

I was not available to run the onstage call. It would be up to the students – up to my student musical director, student directors, and student choreographers and EVERY actor on that stage, to work productively and creatively for two and a half exhausting hours, to behave at the top of their maturity, to serve something larger than themselves, in order to creep another step closer to a celebration of ideas we can all be proud of. And they did just that. In their own elegant way - they held a rehearsal, allowing the Musical Director, Hanne Dolasse, to do her job in the most professional way possible. When I came downstairs at 5:45 I felt that wonderful feeling when you walk into the house and the babysitter has tidied up, put the kids to sleep, and even thought to turn the casserole on. Wait till you see what these kids have cooking. – Victoria Pero

Remember to mark your calendars NOW for *Pippin*, **Friday and Saturday, March 3rd and 4th at 7:30 p.m.**

— Dr. Rebecca Strum, Performing Arts Coordinator

- * Remember to visit PAPA’s refreshment tables each evening where you may also purchase *Kisses for the Cast and Crew* and floral bouquets which may be pre-ordered from Gloria’s Flowers at 1-800-536-2056.
- * *New this year*, professional photographs of the cast, crew and orchestra will be on display in the lobby both evenings of the performance. Please take the time to browse and place your order for this lasting keepsake.

All of our profits support BCA’s performing arts programs. For further information, please contact Kathie Ventura at kav23@optonline.net or 201.930.9247.

— Michael Lemma