

Vol. 9, No. 1

PPO

September 2006

CONNECTIONS

The quick details on what's
happening at the Bergen County Academies

Log on to our web site: www.academyppo.com



President's Greeting

Welcome back! For parents and students alike, this is a time to embrace old friends and to introduce yourself to new ones. I am really excited about some of the changes that are already in the works for the PPO. One of our first major efforts has been to get the PPO Family Directory out sooner. We know that the directory is of great value to parents, students, teachers, and especially to incoming freshman families. In order to make this happen we have invested a significant amount of volunteer time in developing a new PPO membership database that is now being used to maintain information for the directory, volunteer sign-up lists, and the PPO's e-mail blast list. Already we are able to issue volunteer lists to the Committee Chairs so that planning and work on upcoming PPO events can get started.

This year the PPO has worked to establish a Buddy System, pairing up freshman families who have asked for a buddy, with upper-class families who have generously volunteered their time to be one. We have tried our best to match families by academy, and when possible by town and language preference. We hope this program will become a new tradition at the Academies, and the freshman families will "pay forward" in future years by becoming buddies to incoming families.

Of course the PPO has continued its tradition of events to honor, support, and assist various members of the Academy's community. We have already held the annual Back-to-School Faculty Breakfast and the Freshman Parent Orientation Meeting, and planning has begun for October's International Dinner. With the help of Mrs. Pat Cosgrove, we have been able to clean-up, re-paint, and re-organize the PPO office and lounge at school so that it provides a pleasant space for volunteer activities, and can serve as a home-away-from-home for PPO parents who want to meet with their buddy, or just stop by for a cup of coffee and informal conversation.

I'm proud of the work and effort by the Board, Class Parents, Committee Chairs, and all the Parent Volunteers who are helping to make the PPO more inclusive and more inviting to all members of our Bergen Academies community. Again, thank you for your support, and welcome to another great year at the Academies!

All the best,
Shiaoling Paxson

Calendar Highlights

- Sept. 27-29 **Frost Valley Experience**
- Sept. 28 **PPO General Meeting, 7:00PM**
Auditorium
- October 2 **NO SCHOOL** (Yom Kippur)
- October 6 **Homecoming Dance**
Gymnasium
- October 18 **PSAT Testing**
PPO Newsletter Mailing
- October 20 **NO SCHOOL** (Curriculum Day)
- October 21 **Homecoming Football Game**
- October 21 **International Dinner, 6:30PM**
Gymnasium
- October 22 **4th Annual BCA Math Competition**
- October 25 **HALF DAY**
- October 25 **Back-to-School Night, 4:30-8:30PM**
- October 26 **Brother/Sister Admission Meeting,**
7:00PM, Cafeteria
- October 30 **PPO Afternoon Work Session,**
1:00-2:30PM

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

Our next issue will be published on October 18, 2006. Please submit all November calendar entries to Amrita Singh at AmritaS2@aol.com & all articles to Marianne Bente at CM2D@optonline.net by October 9th. Thank you.

PPO First General Meeting

7:00 pm on Thursday, September 28,

in the BCA auditorium.

*If you can, please come by at 6:30 pm
for refreshments and a chance to say
hello before the meeting starts.*

Welcome

I hope you are aware that for me it is both an honor and a privilege to be the principal of the Bergen County Academies. Your children help to define and give life to the Academy community. Our community, comprised of students, parents and faculty are connected through a web of communication. Central among the many communication devices employed is our Academy website, which is maintained by our Technology department and provides a wealth of pertinent information for you to access. By visiting www.bergen.org and following the many links available you can keep abreast of Academy activities. Whether it be my *Wondering About the Week*, College Visitations or the PPO page, I am confident that you will find this website most useful during your child's stay at the Academies. Please be sure to visit this site often for the latest news and information.

I look forward to a rewarding school year and will see you at the next PPO meeting on September 28th.

— Pat Cosgrove

Many thanks ...

to Mrs. Pat Cosgrove, Ms. Rona Gabin, Mr. Russ Davis, Mrs. Maria Careri, and SPARK students for their informative presentations at the Freshman Parent Orientation Meeting held on August 30th.

On behalf of the freshman parents, we also want to thank everyone who helped prepare the new **Freshman Parent Handbook** that was distributed at the meeting.

International Dinner 2006

Date: Saturday, October 21

Time: 6:30 PM

Place: Academy Gymnasium

This annual family event, sponsored by the Academy PPO, is open and free to all PPO dues-paid members and their families.

See the enclosed flyer and attendance/volunteer form for more information.

Any questions?

Contact Lalitha Ramakrishnan at ramakrishnan.lalitha@gmail.com or Roseanne Colletti Harris at roseanne.colletti@nbcuni.com.

Brother/Sister Night

On the evening of Thursday, October 26, the Academy will hold our annual Brother/Sister Night. This is a program for the siblings and parents of current or previous students. The program is designed for the eighth grade student who is thinking about applying here, although bringing a seventh grader would not be inappropriate. In it we will try to explain the Academy experience in a way that will be useful to people who already know the basics of our program.

We start off with everyone together in the cafeteria. Dr. Ostfeld, Director of Admissions, will say a few words and we will then separate the parents from the prospective students. Students stay in the cafeteria, where they circulate and talk to current Academy students about their overall experience as well as their particular program. Parents go to the Academy Grill, where Dr. Ostfeld will talk for about 20 minutes and then answer parent questions for about 40 minutes.

The program has proved useful in the past because it allows us to address the points which are of interest only to people who already know our program. Some very interesting questions will be asked at the parent Q&A. However, this also means that the program is not appropriate for a friend or neighbor who wants a head start on the admission process (which this is really not). Every year we have parents walk away puzzled because we didn't deal with such questions as "Is there a sports program?" or "How much is the tuition?"

So please come, but don't bring your friends.

— David Ostfeld

Please Note:
A revised **School Closing Procedure Flyer** is included in this mailing.

Class of 2007:

Thank you to all who helped with refreshments for the Senior Awards for the Class of 2006.** **Thank you** to the many parents who volunteered and helped with refreshments for Graduation for the Class of 2006.** Kids Stuff coupon books should have come home by now (if not, please ask your child where it is). The cost of the book is \$25.00 with **50% of the profit going directly to defray the cost of your child's prom bid**. You can purchase more books as needed. There is an order form inside the bag. If you do not want to purchase a book, please return it to school or we will be charged.** *Save The Date* — Friday, November 17th is the Art Auction. This year some of our students are donating their artwork for auction. More info to follow.** **Open House Bake Sale** is Sunday, November 5, 2006. This is the first Open House and usually well attended. As always we need your delicious baked (or store bought) goods. Anyone interested in helping or donating please contact us. Baked goods can be dropped off in the office on Friday (11/3/06) or brought to school Sunday morning to the upstairs cafeteria. All monies earned will go directly to Senior Activities.** We are looking forward to an exciting year — Mary Ann Hoogerheyde (rmcjj1@optonline.net) and Hope Anne LoGalbo (sunlover4@aol.com)

Class of 2008:

It's hard to believe that our students are now upper class-men! We are looking forward to a great year.** On the fundraising front — we will host another Card Party in the spring, which will be our main fundraiser for the year.** We are always open to hearing new ideas for smaller fundraisers, so if you have any suggestions, feel free to contact the class parent liaisons, Donna Gormley and Mary Wright (djgorms@aol.com and/or malarky@optonline.net).** Do we have your email address? Throughout the year, we email updates to keep parents abreast of what's going on with the class. If you did not receive these last year, and would like to, please send us your email address and we will add you to the list.

Class of 2009

We're off to a terrific start for our big fundraising year! (See our ads below.) If you were not able to join us for either of our Class of 2009 parent meetings (9/19 or 9/22), please e-mail us. We would love to get to know our fellow class parents and grow our class community. Please contact your Parent Liaisons: Sharon Pierson at SPcreates@aol.com or Carol Blakeslee at bbester8@optonline.net. We're eager to hear from you.

Sleep Tight!
 Black & Gold Flannel
PJ Bottom Sale!
 Top quality flannel PJ bottoms imprinted with white BCA on the pant leg! Available in adult sizes (small, medium, large & extra large)
Great Gift Idea!
 Look for our order form in this mailing or see Ms. Hubbard in guidance!
 Sponsored by the Class of 2009

**RECYCLE YOUR
 INK & TONER
 CARTRIDGES!
 HELP THE
 CLASS OF 2009
 EARN MONEY!**
 Have your student bring in used ink and/or toner cartridges & deposit them in the bins around school!
 Thank you for your support!

Welcome Back, Faculty!

On September 5th the PPO had the opportunity to welcome back the Academy staff at our annual Staff Appreciation Breakfast. Our team of enthusiastic volunteers showed up bright and early at 6:30 AM and went to work in the Gym and outside the Auditorium setting up the tables, arranging the flowers, slicing the baked goods and making the coffee. The menu included bagels, croissants, mini muffins, mini quiche, crumb cake, banana bread and assorted pastries, most of which had been baked and donated by our volunteers. The PPO also provided three colorful fresh fruit platters.

Over 120 administrators, teachers, and members of the support staff enjoyed the delicious breakfast. Our

amazing custodial staff worked very hard to ensure that everything went as planned. Many thanks to Agnes Amofa-Boachie, Kathy Bauer, Sue Bechtold, Carol Blakeslee, Susan Bromberg, Mabel Cervino, Dahlia Greene, Jean Humanik, Mandeep Kaur, Julie Kim, Nancy Lagomarsino, Dawn Levine, Anna Lisica, Tanjeema Majumder, Angella McKenzie, Chidi Okereke, Shiaoing Paxson, Sharon Pierson, Christie Rosenberg, Hala Saardi, Radhika Srinivasan, Anabella Quirolgico, Lalitha Ramakrishnan, Karen Rittenberg, Dawn Rizza, Nikki Rodriguez, Kathie Ventura and Jun Yuan for helping to make the event a big success!

— Amrita Singh, Committee Chair

Titanium Knights Robotics -- Best Year Ever

Thanks to the continued support of the BCA community, the Titanium Knights finished last year as the **National BattleBotsIQ Champions!** Veteran robot E2V2 was undefeated receiving First Place. Rookie robot Knightrous scored 2 wins and 2 losses. Knightrous won the awesome "Coolest Robot Award" and the prestigious "Best Engineered BattleBot." In the 15 pound class, robot MiniTK and robot Hunter also produced several wins. Additionally, students involved in the North East Robotic Conflict events (NERC) produced over 20 (1 pound) robots individually and in small groups. These students attended up to 3 local and 3 regional events, producing more wins and honorable mentions than we could record. Members of our group also participated in the Boston University Design Challenge, the West Point Bridge Building Competition and other science fairs producing impressive results.

Academy students can get started in this exciting program by selecting the RADD project and/or joining the RC Club. The **Robotics and Design Decathlon** project enlists students to function as an engineering sports team. Group members follow a flat corporate model each performing a specific duty, such as a department of an engineering firm, ultimately leading to teams that enter robotic and design competitions. Teachers work as coaches assisted by parents and industry professionals to provide relevant resources at the appropriate stages in the invention and design process. RADD combines the intellectual skills of

engineering with the dynamics of a team sport. Also offered is the **Radio Controlled** club which provides students with an opportunity to explore the sport of Radio Controlled Modeling. Projects have included everything from hand-launch gliders through full-blown RC electric model airplanes, helicopters, cars and of course--robots!!! Enthusiastic members can design and build their own models with shop resources and by purchasing supplies from local hobby stores or online vendors. Robot competitions and other flying or driving meets are scheduled each trimester as needed (dates TBA, Rooms 166 and 168).

Each year as we reinvent ourselves and try to offer more exciting opportunities, the need for assistance remains. Please consider helping us fund this beneficial project through personal donations, assistance toward procuring corporate sponsorship monies or by facilitating a fundraising event for our group. Besides monetary donations, we also accept 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 Joe DeFalco at 201-343-6000 x2211 or email: jdefalco@bergen.org. Donations by check can be made out to the Student Activities Account--BattleBots and mailed to the Hackensack campus. For more information about our group visit: www.bergen.org/BattleBots.

Again, a sincere "Thank You" for your continued support and encouragement.

Math Team Boosters

Summer flew by so quickly, but that didn't keep the Math Team and the Boosters club idle — we've all been working hard on the Fourth Annual BCA Math Competition for 4th to 8th Graders. Students have been writing the exams, organizing the registrations and signing up for jobs running the event to be held at the Academy on Sunday, October 22nd. Math Team Boosters have as usual taken on many behind the scenes responsibilities. Competitors from all over the tri-state area attend. If you know of any budding mathematicians, direct them to register at our website www.bergen.org/mathcompetition. Volunteers as well as prize donations are still needed: to help out, please

contact Lalitha Ramakrishnan (see below for email).

On June 20th, mathletes from every grade level attended the Board of Education meeting at the district offices in Paramus. Coach Joe Holbrook was recognized for his outstanding work with the team. He used the opportunity to address the Board members, recognizing the achievements of the math team members both individually and as a group. Congratulations Mr. Holbrook ... We are so lucky to have you!

If you would like to join the Math Team Boosters Club, please contact Lalitha Ramakrishnan at ramakrishnan.lalitha@gmail.com.

— Sharon Drucker

Has your son or daughter joined Chorus, Orchestra, or one of the many Music Ensembles? Do they enjoy Theatre's spotlight or working backstage?

A majority of students – *from every academy* – take advantage of the many opportunities to become involved in performing arts. Please further support your child in these endeavors by joining the Performing Arts Parents Association! PAPA champions BCA's performing arts through hands-on organizational assistance, heartfelt advocacy, and effective fundraising that has helped pay for instruments, choir robes, stage equipment, costumes, master classes and guest artists.

If you are already a member of PAPA, please make sure that you have joined our Yahoo group. This will enable you to receive PAPA e-mails and have access to our schedule of meeting dates and the most up-to-date Performing Arts calendar. Please note that while auditions for the winter musical *Urinetown* are not scheduled until November, if your child is hoping to participate in the show, a mandatory rehearsal will take place on February 22-24, 2007, during winter break.

Please bring your ideas and enthusiasm to our next meeting on Wednesday, October 18, from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in Music Room 243A on the second floor. We have many exciting plans for this year, including a Food Drive to coincide with the November 3rd and 4th fall play, *The Grapes of Wrath*. As a growing community within the BCA community, PAPA is eager to help Bergen County's community-at-large. *Join us* – it's rewarding and fun!

For further information, please contact Kathie Ventura at kav23@optonline.net.

Cultural Connections...

Theatre Arts News



As we begin a this new school year and new BCA theatrical "season" I am excited to share the news that this summer I saw an Off-Off Broadway performance of a new musical, *Autumn Moon*, stage-managed by an Academy graduate of the class of 2004 who, as she begins her junior year at Muhlenberg College, seems well on her way to a career as a professional stage manager.

Initial reports from members of AVPA: Theatre class of 2006 find them quite confident and feeling extremely well prepared for their college theatre courses.

And so we build on this firm foundation and add new opportunities for our students. Ms. Pero and guest-teaching artist Stephanie Shultz (scenic designer for last year's BCA production of *Pippin*) are offering a new Wednesday project in Design for the Theatre. Students in this project will help design elements of the sets for BCA productions, learn scene painting techniques, work with soft crafts and be introduced to the rigging, lighting, and sounds systems in our auditorium. Students involved in the Fall play *The Grapes of Wrath* will have an opportunity to work with two new guest-teaching artists, Ryan Trupp (Lighting Design) and Meredith Neal (Costume Design), both recent MFAs from Ohio University's Design program who are establishing themselves in the Metropolitan area. Guest teaching-artist, Nancy Ringham who appeared

on Broadway in principle roles in *Follies*, *The Will Roger's Follies*, *3 Penny Opera* and *My Fair Lady* will work with AVPA: Theatre freshmen in the Wednesday project in musical theatre (**culminating performance Nov. 29th, 7:30 p.m.**).

In addition to a new project and exciting new guest-teaching artists we are initiating a new system for reserving tickets for all BCA productions by phone and new reserved (specific tickets for specific seats) seats rather than the general admission seating that we used in the past. You will hear more specifics on this shortly.

Thanks to our amazing Performing Arts Parents Association we have a brand new variable speed CD player for use in dance classes and productions.

AVPA: Theatre Sophomores continued the tradition of the "old" welcoming the "new" by hosting breakfast for the Freshmen and the work of last year's Theatre Council has born fruit in the form of snazzy new AVPA: Theatre T-shirts.

Classes and rehearsals are off to an energetic start and as we look ahead I remind you to keep in mind the following dates: **November 3 & 4** at 7:30 – BCA fall Play *The Grapes of Wrath*, **week of Nov. 13** – auditions for BCA musical, *Urinetown*, **Nov. 29** at 7:30 -- AVPA: Theatre Freshman Cabaret.

— Rebecca Strum
Performing Arts Coordinator



The new year is already off to a great start! At the request of our County Executive, students in the String Quartet recently performed at a WTC Memorial attended by Governor Corzine, several senators and the County Freeholders. BCA students enjoy performing music in school as well as in the "real world" by participating in community functions, festivals and other authentic experiences. I am directing several ensembles including Concert Band,

Orchestra, Jazz Band, Guitar & Mandolin Orchestra, String Ensemble, World Music Ensemble, and more. These ensembles will be performing for the BCA community on at the Autumn Concert on November 17.

Please feel free to call if you have any questions about the myriad of music opportunities available nowhere else!

Also, our music department website is www.bergen.org/music.

— Michael Lemma