



AHEM News

Advocates for Home Education in Massachusetts, Inc.

Volume 6 • No 3 • Spring 2009

**What
you
need
to
know
when
you
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know
it**

State House Day – Monday, April 27, 2009

Join AHEM for a fun day in Boston visiting the State House and walking the Freedom Trail!

Schedule of Activities

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM | State House Scavenger Hunt and/or Delivering Packets to Legislators |
| 10:30 AM | Short Talk by Representative Sean Garballey of the 23 rd Middlesex District, followed by a photo opportunity with Rep. Garballey (pre-registration required) |
| 11:00 AM | State House Tour (pre-registration required) |
| 12:30 – 1:30 PM | Lunch Break |
| 1:30 – 3:00 PM | Guided Freedom Trail Tour (pre-registration required) |

10:00 AM – noon State House Scavenger Hunt and/or Delivering Packets to Legislators

2009 brings a new group of legislators to the State House, so to encourage Massachusetts homeschoolers to meet their representatives, AHEM is sponsoring an event on **Monday, April 27, 2009** for homeschoolers to hand out packets with information about homeschooling to legislators. Packets will include a *Meet Massachusetts Homeschoolers* brochure, a Rolodex card, and pen. A fun scavenger hunt with a small prize for all who participate will be part of the morning. This activity is appropriate for all ages.

Meet in Doric Hall on the second floor of the State House to pick up the scavenger hunt and/or packets to deliver to legislators. AHEM representatives will be available there between 10:00 AM and 12:30 PM, but we encourage you to arrive as close to 10:00 AM as possible to allow enough time to complete the scavenger hunt and help with packet delivery.

Consider calling your representatives to make an appointment to meet them while at the State House. You are more likely to meet them instead of an aide if you make arrangements in advance. If you're not sure who your representatives are, you can find out here: <http://www.wheredoivotema.com/bal/myelectioninfo.php>

Cost: Free. Walk-ins will be accommodated for the State House Scavenger Hunt, but we can plan better for the event if you take the time to pre-register, so we strongly encourage registering in advance. Fill out the registration form on the back of this newsletter.

Tip: This State House visit would nicely complement the *AHEM Unit Study on Massachusetts History and Government*. For information on the *Unit Study* and how to request it, visit <http://www.ahem.info/UnitStudy.htm>

10:30 AM Talk by Representative Sean Garballey, 23rd Middlesex

Rep. Garballey will give a short talk. Students will be able to ask questions. The talk will be followed by a photo opportunity of the Representative with our group. This event is free, but may fill up. You can find out more about Rep. Garballey here: <http://www.garballey.com/biography.htm>

11:00 AM State House Tour

Tour our magnificent State House, a building which Oliver Wendell Holmes called “the hub of the solar system.” The oldest building on Beacon Hill, the State House is brimming with history, art, and culture. Within its grandiose architecture are statues, paintings, flags from almost every town and city in Massachusetts, and, of course, legislators from the same. The tour lasts approximately 30 – 45 minutes and includes an overview of the history and architecture of the State Capitol.

Cost: Free, but please register in advance. Fill out the registration form on the back of this newsletter.

Websites:

Secretary of the Commonwealth's Kids' Zone <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/cis/ciskid/kididx.htm>

Interactive State House: an evolving collection of online history resources <http://www.mass.gov/statehouse/index.htm>

Connecting with Elected Officials <http://www.ahem.info/ConnectingwithElectedOfficials.htm>

12:30 – 1:30 PM Lunch on your own

There are many options. Pack a brown bag lunch, find fast food at Downtown Crossing, discover an eclectic café on Charles St., or head to Chinatown.

Tip: Public Garden – For families with young children a nice choice might be to picnic in the Public Garden, followed by a ride on the Swan Boats <http://www.swanboats.com/> and a visit to the *Make Way for Ducklings* statues. For older kids E. B. White's *The Trumpet of the Swan* and/or Esther Forbes's *Johnny Tremain* provide interesting context for a visit to downtown Boston (see <http://www.ahem.info/ExploringMassachusetts.htm>).

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The information in this newsletter does not constitute legal advice; it is provided for informational purposes only. AHEM is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. All donations are tax-deductible.

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State House Day *continued from page 1*

1:30 – 3:00 PM Guided Walking Tour of the Freedom Trail

AHEM has arranged for a private group *Walk Into History* tour of eleven sites on the Freedom Trail, led by an 18th century costumed guide from The Freedom Trail Foundation. The Freedom Trail Foundation offers some of the most popular and acclaimed historical tours in all of New England. Hear the tales of the brave Bostonians and Colonialists who dared to challenge Britain and helped establish the greatest democracy in the world.

The Freedom Trail is a 2.5-mile red-brick walking trail that leads to nationally significant historic sites, every one an authentic American treasure. Preserved and dedicated by the citizens of Boston in 1958 when the wrecking ball threatened, the Freedom Trail today is a unique collection of museums, churches, meeting houses, burying grounds, parks, a ship, and historic markers that tell the story of the American Revolution and beyond. There is no other place in the United States where you can take in the rich history of America's Revolution – the events that led up to the historic break from Britain and the brave people who shaped our national government.

Our private guided group tour will begin promptly at **1:30 PM** and will last approximately 90 minutes, covering eleven sites on the Freedom Trail and ending at Faneuil Hall. Most of our time will be spent outdoors, so please dress appropriately. Program will run rain or shine. Specific info on where to meet will be sent once you register.

Cost: \$10 for each person 6 and older. Five and under free. Pre-registration required. Fill out the registration form on the back of this newsletter.

How to register

We're glad that you are interested in joining us on April 27! To register, please:

- fill out the registration form on the back of this

newsletter,

- write a check to AHEM for any payment due and
- return it all in an envelope addressed to AHEM, PO Box 1307, Arlington, MA 02474.

Space for Rep. Garballey's talk, the guided Freedom Trail tour and the State House tour is limited; spots are allotted in the order registrations are received. **Registrations must be postmarked no later than April 6, 2009.** No refunds after April 6, 2009. Registration confirmation will be sent via email (preferred) or enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope or postcard.

Participants will be added to the Friends of AHEM list unless they specifically opt out.

Directions:

Directions to the State House can be found here: <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/trs/trsdir/diridx.htm>. We recommend taking the T (<http://www.mbta.com/>): Take the Red Line to Park Street Station. Once outside the station walk up Park Street toward the State House.

If you drive, there is parking at the Boston Common Garage. The entrance to the Boston Common Garage is located on Charles Street, directly across from the Public Gardens. Directions to the garage can be found here: http://www.mccahome.com/bcg_dir.html

For further information

For further information about State House Day, email us at info@ahem.info, or call 781-641-0566.

Current State Issues . . .

Legislative Update

We reported that during the 2007-2008 legislative session, Senate Bill 2462 was signed into law by Governor Patrick on August 14, 2008. The new law can be found in Chapter 315 of the Acts of 2008: <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/seslaw08/sl080315.htm>.

The law will make tools available to school districts for accurate reporting of high school graduation and drop out data. Section 4 of this law also establishes the "Graduation and Dropout Prevention and Recovery Commission" to study dropout prevention and dropout recovery programs throughout the state. This commission will make recommendations on certain issues, such as raising the compulsory attendance age from 16 to 18. The commission is being chaired by the Secretary of Education, Paul Reville.

The Graduation and Dropout Prevention and Recovery Commission, by law, must "submit a report of its findings and recommendations together with legislation, if any, to the clerks of the house of representatives and the senate who shall forward the same to the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on education and the chairs of the house

and senate committees on ways and means not later than May 15, 2009.” The commission “shall conduct not less than 3 public hearings in geographically diverse regions of the commonwealth.” AHEM has communicated with the office of the Secretary of Education. According to staff in that office, the commission is in the process of setting up these public hearings. For those interested in attending a public hearing, the dates and locations will be made available on the Executive Office of Education website: <http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eoehomepage&L=1&L0=Home&sid=Eeoe> or by calling the Secretary’s office at 617-979-8340. We have been told the public hearings will most likely take place in April and May.

The 2009-2010 legislative session is now underway. Legislators are in the process of filing new bills. AHEM is monitoring all new bills filed and will alert our friends of any bills that may impact homeschooling in the state.

Yo Jo! . . .

The Reading Ties that Bind Us

By Joanne Casiello

On November 27th two of my sons were in a terrible car accident. It was nearly the one that happens in the nightmares of all parents of teens, but my sons were alive and knew me. Two weeks later, a gifted surgeon rebuilt half of my older son’s face as I paced in a waiting room at the hospital. The surgery went well. My son was in recovery. I would speak to him soon. I sat and waited.

I waited some more. I checked the time on my cell phone. Too long. Could the patient advocate check on my son’s status? She did. He was still in recovery. He was not handling the pain well. They thought he would need morphine. I shouldn’t come in yet. I sat down to wait. And then I began to think more like a homeschooler. What the experts couldn’t do, I, as a parent, very probably could.

Morphine had made my son really ill without taking away much pain when he had been given it in the emergency room on the night of the accident and he had asked not to have any before he went into surgery. I had experience helping sons deal with pain many times (as the mother of four active sons who all played seriously competitive sports over twenty five years I had come to know some emergency room techs on a first name basis). I asked to speak with the recovery room staff and five minutes later I was at my son’s side.

His pain level was at an eight. He was agitated. I cooled his hot face with my cold hands. I helped him focus on the parts of his body not in pain as we had taught our sons to do at home. He held my hand, turned his face to me with eyes closed and said, “Mom, could you read to me?”

So, I found myself standing next to my young adult son, reading Terry Pratchett’s *Moving Pictures* (the book he had in his backpack) softly aloud surrounded by machines beeping, blood pressure cuffs inflating and deflating, automatic leg massagers massaging, patients begging for morphine, nurses calling for help. And his pain went from an 8 to a 3.

All of those homeschooling years that we spent reading to our sons had formed a bond of peaceful security, loving calm. At first we read to them as they were weaned, we laughingly said, from breast to book. Cuddled in our laps in the same cozy rocker that we had used for nursing we read *Goodnight Moon*. We read books to keep them occupied on long car trips. Once I recited *Green Eggs and Ham* over and over for 35 minutes, the only thing that would keep the baby from crying in his car seat. We read to them because they didn’t know how. We read to them as part of the good night ritual at bedtime after they had learned to read. We read aloud because we only had one copy of a really good book and no one could wait to take turns to read it. Experts told us that children who are read to will read and be more successful. Little did I know that all that reading to my child would one day help to ease his pain.

Send Joanne your question about homeschooling. Either email info@ahem.info with Attn: Joanne in the subject field, or write to Joanne, c/o AHEM, PO Box 1307, Arlington, MA 02474.

Around AHEM . . .

Become a Friend of AHEM

Advocates for Home Education in Massachusetts, Inc.(AHEM) is a nonprofit, independent, grassroots, volunteer-run, educational organization that gathers and disseminates information about homeschooling in Massachusetts through education, advocacy, and events. We believe that informed and active homeschoolers are their own best advocates in maintaining the right to independently homeschool. We welcome and value the participation of anyone interested in homeschooling in Massachusetts. AHEM, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. All donations are tax-deductible.

Friends of AHEM keep abreast of legislative and other issues that affect Massachusetts homeschoolers via an announcement-only email list or this newsletter. Friends of AHEM with email get special notice of AHEM events, field trips, and get-togethers. Be proactive: become a Friend of AHEM. Even if your involvement is simply to stay informed, that strengthens all of us.

To become a Friend of AHEM and receive email updates, send your name, address, and email address to info@AHEM.info. To become a Friend of AHEM and receive *AHEM News* by US mail instead of email updates, send your name and address to AHEM, PO Box 1307, Arlington, MA 02474. Donations to offset cost are appreciated.

You are receiving this paper copy of the newsletter through the mail instead of our timely announcement- only emails because we have you listed as a Friend of AHEM, but either your email address is bouncing, or we don’t have an email address for you. Please update your email address in order to conserve paper and postage, and to keep our costs down. **If you don’t wish to receive this newsletter**, please take a moment to let us know and we will stop sending it. Either email info@ahem.info, call 781-641-0566, or drop us a line at AHEM, PO Box 1307, Arlington, MA 02474. Thanks!



State House Scavenger Hunt, Tour, & Freedom Trail
Monday, April 27, 2009

Registration form. PLEASE PRINT NEATLY:

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Additional Adult Registrants: _____

Child Registrants:

Name: _____ Age: _____ Name: _____ Age: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ Name: _____ Age: _____

Your state representative: _____ Your state senator: _____

Mailed registrations must be postmarked no later than **April 6, 2009**. Walk-ins will be accommodated for the State House Scavenger Hunt, but we can plan better for the event if you take the time to pre-register, so we strongly encourage registering in advance. The Freedom Trail and State House guided tours **require** pre-registration.

| Offering | # participants and cost | Total |
|--|--------------------------------|-------|
| Number of people for State House Scavenger Hunt and/or delivering packets, Monday, 4/27, 10:00 AM | _____ (free) | |
| Number of people for Rep. Garballey's talk and photo Monday, 4/27, 10:30 AM | _____ (free, but pre-register) | |
| Number of people for State House Tour, Monday, 4/27, 11:00 AM | _____ (free, but pre-register) | |
| Number of children <i>age 5 and younger</i> accompanied by adult for guided Freedom Trail, Monday, 4/27, 1:30 PM | _____ (free, but pre-register) | |
| Number of people <i>age 6 and older</i> for guided Freedom Trail, Monday, 4/27, 1:30 PM | _____ x \$10 = | \$ |
| Optional donation to support the work of AHEM* (<i>much appreciated!</i>) | | \$ |
| Total (add sums in right hand column) = | | \$ |

*AHEM is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. All donations are tax deductible.

Please send this form and check or money order for above total made out to **Advocates for Home Education in Massachusetts** to the address below. Registration confirmation will be sent upon receipt of your paid registration – email preferred, or enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope or postcard to receive confirmation via US mail.

Tour space is limited. Mailed registrations must be postmarked no later than April 6, 2009. Full payment must accompany registration. No refunds after April 6, 2009.

Participants will be added to the Friends of AHEM list unless they specifically opt out. Friends of AHEM keep abreast of legislative and other issues that affect Massachusetts homeschoolers via an announcement-only email list, or if email is not available, via a periodic newsletter. Friends of AHEM with email get special notice of AHEM events, field trips, and get-togethers. This is a free service. AHEM respects your privacy and will not share your name or contact information with any other organization.

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