

## Clearing Our Throats . . .

### Levels of Accountability

by Pat Willette

*The following is part of the written testimony that Pat submitted at the public hearing of the Maine legislature when she testified about LD 405, in 2000 or 2001. LD 405 would have made the state assessment test, the MEA, mandatory for all homeschoolers, and would have given the public schools partial funding for all homeschoolers residing in their district. It was killed in committee. While this was a Maine issue, her points about accountability are worth reviewing here in Massachusetts as well.*

#### Testimony for LD 405

The MEA rules state: "The MEA provides information that parents and citizens can use locally to hold their schools accountable for performance." Therefore, I would like to talk about different kinds of accountability. Since the MEA was designed to hold the public schools "accountable," it sounds like this bill's sponsor is assuming that accountability levels are comparable for "schools" and "homeschools."

They are not.

1. The most obvious level of accountability of the public schools to the state is that the public schools are accepting public money. Citizens have a right to know how their tax money is being used, and whether they are getting the result that they are paying for. The state regulates other things that involve tax money, including some business practices of companies that hold government contracts. Public schools are certainly not exempt.

Homeschoolers, however, do not at this time accept any public money, and I for one am opposed to doing so for precisely this reason.

2. The second reason why public schools are accountable to the state is because they are a state agency. The state is their boss, and when you work for someone, you have to account to them for what you do, how you do it, and the results that you get.

I, as a homeschooling parent, am certainly not anyone's employee in my homeschooling endeavor. I work for love, not money, and therefore this level of accountability does not exist.

3. Thirdly, the public schools are accountable to the state because of "public access" issues. As an example, hairdressers are licensed and regulated, so are restaurants, and so are psychotherapists. If I do any of these activities for my own family, I am not subject to state regulation. Obviously, this level of accountability does not exist for me as a homeschooler.

4. A fourth level of accountability is to "provide information parents can use locally to hold their schools accountable for performance."

Public schools have this level of accountability because the children they are educating are not their own, and they typically are not responsive to the parents of the children they are teaching. Many of us are homeschooling in part or entirely because of this lack of responsiveness to the individual student (a point I will come back to later).

In any event, this particular level of accountability becomes absolutely absurd for me as a homeschooler. I, as a homeschooling parent, have my child take the MEA, so that I (a homeschooling parent) can hold myself (a homeschooling parent) locally responsible? This takes bureaucracy to an entirely new level.

5. The one remaining level of accountability is the one that Thomas Jefferson intended when he stated that an educated populace was necessary to a democracy. However, due to the additional levels of accountability that are built into this test that do not and should not apply to homeschoolers, I do not believe that it is either fair or just to require homeschoolers to take it. I believe that the current system adequately satisfies this level of accountability.

#### Statistics

Certainly when you are testing a large student body, and collectively the school scores not so well as other schools, you can legitimately draw some conclusions

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about the effectiveness of the school's methods for carrying out the objectives that the test measures.

However, you cannot make the same inference about testing one student. And in fact, the schools are not labeled incompetent for failing to teach any one student. The fault is usually localized in the child. I have major philosophical objections to this practice, and would object to having to test and label my child to protect him from being put back in school, or having our family privacy violated by other consequences that might attend the outcome of this test.

## Current State Issues . . .

### Legislative Update

#### HB 4738, "An Act Relative to Public School Attendance Requirements"

AHEM has previously reported on HB 1044, "An Act Relative to Increasing the Mandatory School Age" (<http://www.ahem.info/HB1044.htm>), and HB 1202, "An Act Relative to Public School Attendance Requirements" (<http://www.ahem.info/HB1202.htm>). These bills have now been combined with several other bills that deal with raising the age of compulsory attendance, reducing the school drop out rate, and truancy, to create HB 4738.

The new bill, **HB 4738, "An Act Relative to Public School Attendance Requirements,"** would establish a Commission "for the purpose of investigating and reporting on current efforts to reduce student drop out rates in the Commonwealth, and to recommend additional programs or policies that could reduce the drop out rate in the Commonwealth. The Commission shall explore plans, programs, initiatives, curricula, policies, including those in other states, or any other source of information, which is relevant to reducing the drop out rate in the Commonwealth." The Commission would be made up of 15 members, including members of the Joint committee on Education and the Joint committee on Children and Families. The Commission would hold four public hearings in diverse locations, would take testimony from the public, and would submit their report to the full Joint committee on Education on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007.

On March 6, 2006, HB 4738 received a unanimous "ought to pass" vote by the Education committee. On March 8, 2006, the bill moved to the Joint Rules committee. On March 13, 2006, HB 4738 was moved to the House Rules committee. We have had several conversations with staff members from these various committees and it does appear that this bill will go forward. The next step should be scheduling HB 4738 for debate and an eventual vote by the full House.

We will continue to monitor this piece of legislation and keep you informed of its progress.

A draft of the new bill can be seen at:  
<http://www.ahem.info/HB4738.htm>.

#### HB 1220

AHEM has also been following HB 1220, a bill which would allow homeschoolers to take the MCAS at taxpayers' expense, and would require school districts to grant diplomas to homeschoolers that pass the MCAS, and request a diploma. This bill has become part of a study order, HB 4822, and is now with a study committee in the House. In the study committee, the bill will undergo further review. If the bill doesn't move from that committee by December 31, 2006, it will be considered "dead." You can read more about this bill at <http://www.ahem.info/HB1220.htm>.

#### SB 1907 & SB 2125

SB 1907, "An Act Providing for the Denial of Driver's Licenses to Truants" and SB 2125, "An Act Relative to Eligibility for a License to Operate a Motor Vehicle" have been combined and are now included in SB 2417. This new bill authorizes the Joint committee on Transportation to make an investigation and study of

certain current Senate documents relative to transportation. The Transportation committee reported favorably on this bill and the bill is now with the Senate Ethics and Rule committee. Information about both these bills can be found at <http://www.ahem.info/SB1907.htm> and <http://www.ahem.info/SB2125.htm>.

## Meet Massachusetts Homeschoolers . . .

### Two of the three branches of government come alive

by Rachael Barlow

*(First published in the Groton Landmark; reprinted with permission.)*

When I booked a field trip to the State House for a group of children ages kindergarten to third grade, I heard silence on the other end of the line. (What – is she nuts?) But using our chronological history curriculum, we had learned up through the American Revolution and the making of our federal Constitution. The previous week, we had focused on the Constitution and learned about our three branches of government. It occurred to me that we live so close to Boston, we ought to see some branches of our own government in action.

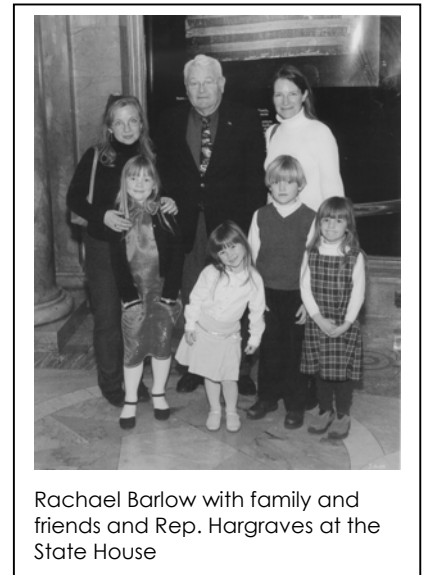
We carpooled in with another homeschooling family and met 2 more families in Boston Common on the way in. We got there just in time to see an “informal session” of the State House of Representatives. Now, I’m embarrassed to say this, but I had never seen our legislatures in action. They prayed, just as they had after the first couple months of trying to write the constitution, and then said the Pledge of Allegiance. That was the most formal part. The rest of the time about 12 people walked around schmoozing while one guy spoke into a microphone. He would introduce a bill, like one about installing an elevator, and then say “All in favor say ‘Aye’”. Then “All against it say ‘Nay’ – The Aye’s have it!” Meanwhile, no one had responded in any way – they were all too busy talking to each other. It reminds me of trying to help the soccer coach talk with all the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade girls! For about 30 minutes we occupied the children by pointing out the various artworks around the room and the process of politics, then we left for our tour. “That was not very interesting, Mom!” my 3<sup>rd</sup> grader said. (I’m sure it was even less interesting for the poor guy at the microphone, I thought!)

The official tour of the state house was just great. The docent asked the children questions and showed them

statues, busts, and portraits of people they knew from their reading. They were thrilled to see the original portrait of Lincoln used on the old five dollar bill and a Greek-style statue of George Washington, amongst many other works of art. At one point we were looking at a window which contained the seals of many of the King-appointed Governors of Boston. We could not locate the one Governor we remembered from a great picture book, (Sleds on Boston Common). It was about the children of Boston complaining to a General because the British encampments were in their sled runs. I couldn’t remember the Governor’s name and neither could the docent. One of the children remembered though and we were all thrilled when the docent found a portrait of the man. It was wonderful to see the children’s excitement at finding the portrait of a historical figure that had become real to them! (These tours are free, by the way, and really excellent.)

Timing worked perfectly that we could eat lunch and then sit-in on a “formal session” of the State Senate. We got there just as a bill was being introduced. The bill suggested that a non-custodial parent be allowed access to their child(ren)’s school records. Then three senators expressed questions about or support of the bill. This was followed by a “roll call vote” where every senator answered. Interestingly, they all answered “yes” not “aye” and it was unanimously voted in. As the bill became law, my 3<sup>rd</sup> grader said, “That’s great Mom. Now my friend Jane’s dad can get her school records too.” How perfect! A law children could understand was introduced, debated and adopted – and all before the five-year-olds lost interest in playing on the carpet!

At this point we stopped by our local state representative’s office. Representative Hargraves was in his office and happy to see us. The children were quite excited to actually meet a *real* legislator! Representative Hargraves was polite and engaging as he explained the photos on his wall and showed the kids a photo of him in a beautiful antique car with the nice folks who gave the money for the playground in Groton. After a photo



Rachael Barlow with family and friends and Rep. Hargraves at the State House

with Representative Hargraves, we were off for home with a sense that politics wasn't just big and overarching but personal too!

It's hard to explain why the whole day was so exciting. I think it was because we read about how these different offices were created and then got to meet real people in these roles. Sharing the experience with friends who also enjoyed it added a great deal too. Either way, we can't wait until our next field trip to the John Adams Courthouse so we can see the third branch of government in action!

## Around AHEM . . .

### Spend a Spring Day in the City State House Visit

One of Advocates for Home Education in Massachusetts's organizational goals is to encourage self-advocacy and legislative awareness. Cultivating relationships at the State House is a key component to achieving this goal. In developing these relationships, we will have a base of state legislators to work with in the event of a legislative challenge to homeschooling. To this end, AHEM sponsors periodic State House field trips throughout the year. During a typical visit, the group tours the State House with a guide who details the historical significance of the building. For representative government to work, we need active participants. We strongly encourage families to participate in these events.

Advocates for Home Education will sponsor a State House visit on Thursday, April 27th, at 11:00 AM. Children are welcome. Our tour will begin promptly at 11:00 AM, so please plan to meet in Doric Hall (2nd floor) at 10:45 AM. If there is a legislative session going on that day, we will be able to sit in for part of the session.

Participants are encouraged to contact your own senator or representative and let them know you will be visiting the State House on April 27th. Your legislator will arrange to come down and meet with your family. They are always very enthusiastic about meeting constituents. Visit [www.ahem.info/ContactInfoforFedStateLocalReps.htm](http://www.ahem.info/ContactInfoforFedStateLocalReps.htm) for contact info for your representative.

Make a day of it by walking the Black Heritage Trail in the afternoon. Sign up info for either or both tours follows.

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### Black Heritage Trail®

<http://www.afroammuseum.org/trail.htm>

Advocates for Home Education in Massachusetts is planning a guided tour of the Black Heritage Trail® on **Thursday, April 27th, 2006 at 2:00 PM.**

The Black Heritage Trail® is a walking tour that explores the history of Boston's 19th century African American community. The tour encompasses the largest collection of historic sites in the country relating to the life of a free African American community prior to the Civil War.

Make a day of it by visiting the State House with AHEM in the morning (see above), picnicking in the Public Gardens or having lunch in a local restaurant, and then spending the afternoon walking The Trail in the company of other Massachusetts homeschoolers.

We will meet the Ranger at the Robert Gould Shaw Memorial on Beacon Street directly across from the Massachusetts State House at 1:45 PM. Please dress appropriately for the weather, and make all necessary personal preparations prior to the start of the 1.6 mile walking tour. Also, please be sure to bring water with you for the beginning of the tour.

**If you want to go to the State House and/or the Black Heritage Trail:** Space is limited. Please RSVP to [FieldTrips@AHem.info](mailto:FieldTrips@AHem.info) or call Cheryl at 978-532-5778 to sign up. Please include:

- your name,
- the number of children and adults,
- the ages of children,
- the program(s) you are signing up for
- your address, and
- email or phone number.

#### Directions:

Find directions to the State House at <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/trs/trsdir/diridx.htm>. We recommend taking the T: 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. For directions to the garage, see [http://www.mccahome.com/Garage/commons\\_garage\\_directions.html](http://www.mccahome.com/Garage/commons_garage_directions.html).

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## Saturday Evening Spring Social: Eat, Drink, Dance, Chat, and Support a Good Cause

Congregational Church of West Medford  
400 High Street (Route 60), Medford, MA  
May 6, 2006, 5:30 – 9:00 PM

### Book Swap

Bring books, CDs, DVDs, and videos that are ready for a new home and browse what others have to offer. Leftovers will be sold to benefit AHEM or donated to charity.

### Dinner and Dessert Buffet

Mangia! Mangia! Feast at our dinner and dessert buffet, featuring mouth-watering appetizers, pasta with sauce, insalata, and delectable goodies.

### Dancing

There will be dancing for all ages, including the Cotton Eyed Joe, the Macarena, the Cha-Cha Slide, the Electric Slide, the Hustle, and much more. For those that don't know a dance, there will be people available to lead and teach them.

### Entertainment by Teenage Homeschoolers

So far our entertainment includes piano, trumpet, and guitar performances by accomplished homeschooled teens. More to come!

### Silent Auction

So far auction items include:

- **ARTBEAT Studio** — A Playdate for Two
- **Basketball Hall of Fame** passes
- **Battleship Cove** passes
- **The Book Cellar** gift certificates
- **Boston Duck Tour** passes
- **Concord Museum** passes
- **DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park** passes
- **EcoTarium** passes
- **Edaville USA** passes
- **Four Springs Farm** — two night cabin stay
- **Fresh Pond Ballet** summer classes
- **Fruitlands Museum** passes
- **Fuller Craft Museum** Household Membership
- **Guitar Lessons** with Fred Sladkey
- **Higgins Armory Museum** passes
- **The House of Seven Gables** passes
- **The Institute of Contemporary Art** passes
- **Massachusetts Audubon Society** Family Membership
- **Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art** passes
- **New Bedford Whaling Museum** passes

- **New England Aquarium** Family Membership
- **New England Wildflower Society** Family Membership
- **Old Sturbridge Village** youth passes
- **Orchard House** Family Tour
- **Owens Farm** Dorset fleece with Wonderful Wool Portable Lesson Plan
- **Panera Bread** for a Year
- **Plimoth Plantation** passes
- **Revels, Inc.** — Christmas Revels 2006 tickets and songbooks
- **Williams College Museum of Art** Family Membership
- **Worcester Art Museum** Family Membership & passes
- **Zoo New England** passes

AHEM is seeking donations for the silent auction from individuals as well. Please let us know if you have a skill or item you would like to donate. Examples are:

- Health/beauty/self-improvement services such as massage therapy, acupuncture, facials, yoga classes, nutritional consultations, or beauty and health care items;
- House and garden services such as painting, landscaping, gardening, decluttering, cleaning as well as plants, tools, and products;
- Food related items including meals you would provide, a basket of goodies, or gift certificates to restaurants or food stores;
- Family related items such as birthday party performances, family outings, museum memberships, tickets to cultural events and performances;
- Educational items such as gift certificates for lessons, classes, or tutoring;
- Professional services such as computer repair and consultation, legal services, career consulting;
- CDs, books, musical instruments, craft kits or items, toys, gift certificates to stores;
- Antiques, collectibles, furniture, tools, kitchenware, art, glassware, toys, housewares, exercise equipment, electronics, sporting goods.
- And anything else you can think of!

Please contact us with donation offers and ideas about how we can make this event a success. Let us know if you're interested in helping out with the event (info@ahem.info or 781-641-0566). All proceeds will benefit AHEM.

### Weekend plans

For ideas on ways to spend the rest of the weekend

taking in the Boston area, visit  
<http://www.ahem.info/WeekendExplorations.htm>.

## How to reserve in advance

We're glad that you are interested in joining us on May 6! Price includes entertainment and recognition ceremony, dinner, dessert, dancing, and book swap. To reserve in advance, please:

- Write a check for \$12 for each adult and teen, \$6 for each child age 5 – 12, under 5 free, to Advocates for Home Education in Massachusetts, Inc. (AHEM);
- include names of all people in your party, ages of children, your address, and telephone number or email address;
- return it all in an envelope addressed to AHEM, PO Box 1307, Arlington, MA 02474.

**Mailed reservations must be postmarked no later than April 15, 2006.** No refunds after April 15, 2006.

Confirmation will be sent via email (preferred) or enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. You will be added to the *Friends of AHEM* list unless you specifically opt out. *Friends of AHEM* receive special notices of upcoming AHEM events.

Space permitting, you may also pay at the door. Cost at the door will be \$15 for each adult and teen, \$8 for each child age 5 – 12.

Don't forget your checkbook for the Silent Auction!

Questions? Email [info@ahem.info](mailto:info@ahem.info) or call 781-641-0566.

## Directions

### From I-93:

- Take Exit 32;
- Follow Route 60 West (which becomes High Street) about 1.3 miles to West Medford Congregational Church (on left).

### From Route 2:

- Take Exit 59 for Route 60;
- At the end of the exit ramp, turn toward Arlington;
- Continue on Route 60 through Arlington Center (1.0 miles from Route 2), then through two rotaries (another 0.6 miles), and across railroad tracks (another 0.6 miles).
- Continue 0.2 miles on Route 60 (which becomes High St) to West Medford Congregational Church (on right).

## Accommodations for out-of-towners

We have arranged for a group rate for people to stay Friday, May 5, Saturday, May 6, and/or Sunday, May 7 at Hawthorn Suites, 1 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA, <http://www.hawthorn.com/>. The hotel features

spacious suites, full or efficiency kitchens, cable/HBO, video cassette players, high-speed internet access, fitness room, on-site guest laundry, free parking, and daily complimentary hot breakfast buffet.

- Queen Suite (Studio: Queen bed, sofa bed, microwave, fridge) \$129
- King Suite (One bedroom: King bed, sofa bed, microwave, fridge, stovetop, door in between rooms) \$139

In addition, a 9.7% state and local tax will be added.

**To book at these special rates, call the hotel directly at 781-643-7258 before April 19.** Specify name of group: "Advocates for Home Education in Massachusetts (AHEM) block." Special rate will be applied.

Using the T from the hotel: Hawthorn Suites is conveniently located on the #79 bus line which goes to Alewife Station on the Red Line, which runs to downtown Boston, and on the #77 bus line, which runs from Arlington Heights to Harvard Square.

## Directions to Saturday Night Social at 400 High St., Medford from Hawthorn Suites:

- From the corner of Route 16 (Alewife Brook Pkwy.) and Mass. Ave., drive toward the center of Arlington on Mass. Ave.;
- At the fifth traffic light, make a right onto Medford St. (Starbucks on the corner);
- Pass the Regent Theatre, stay to the right, and merge onto Route 60 East (still Medford St.);
- At rotary, take 2<sup>nd</sup> exit e.g. go straight, staying on Route 60 East;
- Go over the river, at rotary take 2<sup>nd</sup> exit, remaining on Route 60 (now called High St.);
- The church at 400 High St. is two blocks past the railroad tracks. You can park on High St. or on a side street, but avoid resident only parking spaces.

## For the latest updates on the Spring Social

Visit <http://www.ahem.info/SpringSocial.htm>.

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## AHEM presents A Morning Matinee at the Theater: "Ragtime"

Thursday, May 18 at 10:00 AM

New Repertory Theatre, Arsenal Center for the Arts, 321 Arsenal St., Watertown

This epic and soaring musical, winner of multiple Tony Awards and based on E.L. Doctorow's classic novel, intertwines three distinct stories. *Ragtime* poignantly illustrates history's timeless dualities of wealth and poverty, freedom and prejudice, hope and despair, and love and hate.

The serene existence of a wealthy couple is shaken when they encounter a spirited African American musician and his lover, who dream of a better life for their son. Meanwhile, a Russian immigrant and his daughter arrive on the streets of New York City, determined to build a fortune and put their former lives behind them. Along the way, each family encounters colorful historical figures, ranging from Harry Houdini to Henry Ford. Drawing upon traditional Jewish folk songs, vaudeville's outrageous style, and Joplin-inspired music, *Ragtime* paints a nostalgic and powerful portrait of life in turn-of-the-century America.

The content of the play involves issues including class and racism. It will be followed by a talk-back and includes a study guide. Be aware that it is a full-length, professional theater experience, and as such, standard running time is likely to be 2.5 to 3 hours. No food or drink is allowed in the theater. Panera Bread is next door to the theater, and will be open serving soup, sandwiches, bagels, pastries, and drinks all day.

New Repertory Theatre is an award-winning company in the Boston area. For more info see:  
<http://www.newrep.org/a/0506/0506ragtime01.html>

**Cost:** \$16.00 per seat for adults or children, drastically discounted from regular show prices. Homeschoolers ages six and up are welcome — no children under six allowed in the theater.

**If you want to go:** Mail a check made out to *Advocates for Home Education in Massachusetts* to Milva McDonald, 61 Monument St., Medford MA 02155.

Please include:

- your name
- the number of children and adults,
- ages of children,
- your address,
- and email or phone number.

Those with email will receive confirmation about a week before the visit.

Space is limited; **Checks must be postmarked by May 3<sup>rd</sup>**. No refunds after May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Email

[FieldTrips@AHem.info](mailto:FieldTrips@AHem.info) for more information or call 781-648-5579.

#### **Directions:**

See <http://www.newrep.org/about/directions.html>.

**Parking:** After turning into the Arsenal on the Charles Complex, take a right after the stop sign and an immediate left into the six story FREE parking garage.

Field trip participants will be added to the Friends of AHem list unless they specifically opt out.

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## **EcoTarium** <http://www.ecotarium.org/>

Advocates for Home Education in Massachusetts is planning a visit to the EcoTarium and an optional program for grades K-12 on **Friday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2006** at the **EcoTarium**, 222 Harrington Way, Worcester, MA.

EcoTarium is dedicated to the study of science and nature, with a focus on hands-on exploration and discovery. The building and grounds are an accessible learning and discovery center for families. EcoTarium features three floors of exhibits that make creative use of the museum's natural history collection and living wildlife to teach us about our planet's history and about New England environments of today.

- On a visit to the EcoTarium, you'll encounter a wide variety of **animals**, from frogs to polar bears, chinchillas to turtles. You'll meet some of them face-to-face during public programs and visit others while they swim, relax and play in their habitats.
- Stop by the Alden **Planetarium** and discover the fascinating world of astronomy — from the nearest stars to the farthest planets. Offering a variety of astronomy programs for individuals and groups. (*extra cost – not included in group trip*)
- EcoTarium has a dedicated space for preschool-aged children and adults to play, create and investigate nature. The **Discovery Room** is a bright, welcoming area sized for young children and stocked with wonderful learning toys and tools.
- **Interpretive nature trails**
- **Tree Canopy Walkway:** Imagine being 40 feet high in the trees, harnessed and clipped to a series of swinging bridges spanning 150 feet. What could you see and hear? How it would smell? How would it feel to be walking through the trees or speeding toward the forest floor? (*extra cost – not included in group trip*)
- All aboard! Enjoy the ride on a **one-third scale model of an 1860s steam engine**, a favorite attraction for many of the EcoTarium's youngest visitors. (*extra cost – not included in group trip*)
- EcoTarium's Norton **Observatory** houses a 14-inch Celestron telescope and is the largest telescope in central Massachusetts for public viewing. It is used for viewing many very distance objects in our galaxy and beyond.

**You can choose to sign up for the following program as part of your visit (\$8.50/person). Participants will be divided into age groups. Parents are welcome to join in on the programs if they pay the fee:**

**For Grades K-2 and 3-5: The Bizarre Lives of Carnivorous Plants, 10:45 – 11:30, (MEET AT 10:30 AM in Lobby)** Students observe, compare and feed carnivorous plants as they learn the different strategies that these fascinating insect-eaters use to survive in boggy, nitrogen-poor habitats. Students sow seeds to take back to class to grow and observe. Length: 45 minutes. Earth Science, Life Science. **Cost:** \$8.50/person for the program and access to museum and grounds.

**For Grades 6-8 and High School: The Bizarre Lives of Carnivorous Plants, 11:45 – 12:30, (ALSO MEET AT 10:30 AM in Lobby)**

Students observe, compare and feed carnivorous plants as they learn the different strategies that these fascinating insect-eaters use to survive in boggy, nitrogen-poor habitats. Students sow seeds to take back to class to grow and observe. Length: 45 minutes. Life Science, HS Biology. **Cost:** \$8.50/person for the program and access to museum and grounds.

**Or choose to explore the museum and grounds on your own (\$5.00/person).** If you want to visit the museum and grounds but not take part in one of the programs, you must pay \$5.00 per ages 3+. Children under three are free.

**If you want to go:** Mail a check made out to *Advocates for Home Education in Massachusetts* to AHEM, PO Box 1307, Arlington, MA 02474. Please include:

- the number of children and adults,
- ages of children,
- program or no program for each person
- your address, and
- email or phone number.

Those with email will receive confirmation about a week before the visit.

Space is limited; **checks must be postmarked by June 2<sup>nd</sup>**. No refunds after June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Email

FieldTrips@AHEM.info for more information or call 781-641-0566.

#### **Directions:**

<http://www.ecotarium.org/info/directions/index.html> or (508) 929-2700. Parking is free.

Field trip participants will be added to the Friends of AHEM list unless they specifically opt out.

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## **Become a Friend of AHEM**

Advocates for Home Education in Massachusetts (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.

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](mailto: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.

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