



Absegami Consumer Bowl champions pictured from left are **Teddy Accardi, Natalie Simon, Andy Chang, Jack Rothman and Alex Wolff.**

Submitted

Absegami team advances in Consumer Bowl competition

By **DAWN M. KOSKO**

GALLOWAY TOWNSHIP – Is “phishing” a sport or an Internet scam? Is “spam” something you eat or unsolicited bulk email? In what period of time do businesses need to honor gift cards?

Atlantic County high school students from Absegami, Oakcrest and Egg Harbor Township knew the answers to these questions and more during the 13th Annual New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs High School Consumer Bowl, held at Absegami High School Feb. 4.

Absegami’s team won the Atlantic County title with 95 points, surpassing Oakcrest’s 60 points and Egg Harbor Township’s 55 points. Absegami will advance to its second Southern Regional Competition in six years. It will be held during the first week of April, and the winner there will advance to a statewide event in Trenton.

The Absegami team, comprised of seniors Teddy Accardi and Jack Rothman, juniors Alex Wolff and Natalie Simon, and sophomore Andy Chang, correctly answered questions focusing on consumer law and protection in this academic competition set in a quiz-show format. The team is coached by business education teacher Dawn Kosko.

Robert Howie, director of the Atlantic County Office of the Division of Consumer Affairs, made opening remarks at the competition, including thanking Absegami for being the host school, congratulating Oakcrest on its 2008 Southern Regional Consumer Bowl title, and welcoming Egg Harbor Township to its first ever Consumer Bowl.

In a printed message on the competition’s program, David Szuchman, director of the Division of Consumer Affairs, said “with the nation’s economy making headlines every day, the importance of

knowing New Jersey’s consumer protection laws is more vital than ever. Bailouts, bankruptcies and business closures affect our state’s 8.6 million consumers.”

Questions at the competition were posed by moderator Faith Clement, investigator with the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs. Judges, a referee, a timekeeper and scorekeepers came from various consumer affairs offices throughout the state, including Atlantic County, Gloucester County, Cape May County and the Division of Weights and Measures.

At the conclusion of the event, Howie congratulated all of the teams on a job well done and encouraged the participants to continue to become well-informed consumers.

The Egg Harbor Township team included students Matthew Stirm, Jonathan Spears, Phung Nguyen, Adam Varvaro and Taylor Barling, and teacher/advisor Kimberly DeMaggio.

The Oakcrest team included students Michael Henry, Zakiy Powell, Michael Warrenner and Matthew Warrenner, and teacher/advisor Stacey Cullenly.

“The Consumer Bowl is an excellent real-life application to academic information students will use in the future,” Cullenly said.

The New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs introduced the New Jersey High School Consumer Bowl in 1997 as a statewide competition to educate teenagers about consumer issues that they may face in the future. By 2001 the competition had registered 94 schools in 20 counties to participate.

For information on how you can protect yourself from fraud and educate yourself on a number of consumer issues, see the Division of Consumer Affairs website at www.state.nj.us/lps/ca/.

Dawn M. Kosko is a business teacher at Absegami High School.