

HUNG UP!!

Prom Should Be Occasion For Fun and Not Pressure

By Milt Faith, Executive Director Youth and Family Counseling Service

A Teen Writes: My mother suggested I write to you to share my feelings about my senior prom, which took place this past May. I've never heard of you nor read anything, but she felt it might be good for other teens and their families to read about my experience.

I did not want to go to my prom because of all the fuss. I had to ask someone to go as my date (even though I don't have a girlfriend); I had to spend a ton of money on an outfit, have a haircut and then get flowers for my date. A bunch of guys had to rent a limo so eight of us could arrive in "style."

Even though I wanted to go home after the prom, I was told that we were going to rent a place at the shore for overnight. Other couples enjoyed it; I didn't, since I don't get excited over drinking and smoking weed. Nothing happened between my date and me because I didn't want it to, but the other guys!

Does anyone realize the pressures we feel when we have to go through this ritual? I wish other families could ease the pressure of prom night by not stressing appearances, limos, making a good impression with your date and so on.

Answer: Prom night should be a fun night celebrating the student's academic accomplishments, graduation and beginning transition into further learning and/or employment. Too often, there is an emphasis on letting go and enjoying this last moment (symbolically) of freedom before moving on. I think this is great. But I think it would be greater if each student could figure out what he/she wants for a graduation celebration. You don't have to spend tons of money getting ready for this event. It would be nice if you enjoyed your date (whomever you chose).

You don't have to go to the shore, and you certainly don't have to be involved in a situation where drinking, drugs and possible sex are taking place. There are alternatives to what you can do after the prom. I appreciate your writing and hope some parents will read this and discuss it with their teenagers. Good luck in your endeavors (Ever think of becoming a writer?).

A Frustrated Mother Writes: Do you know anyone who has a child who has joined the Scientology religion? My son, age 27, moved to California to work as a lawyer for an entertainment firm. That was last year. Now he informs me that he has become a member of the Church of Scientology and feels wonderful. He has even met Tom Cruise.

I am very opposed to this and feel he is involved in a cult situation. My problem is that he wants to visit this summer and bring his girlfriend. I know we will talk about the situation and, as has happened in the past, we argue, he walks out of the house and we stop talking for months.

Should I accept his way of life and say nothing? I do love him and want to see him.

Answer: You write that you love your son and want him to visit. I assume it will be a brief visit. You say that there is a history of arguments that did not end well. Have him visit and focus on the positives; refrain from focusing on his involvement with the Church of Scientology.

He's a big boy (age 27) and has to make decisions with which he is comfortable, whether you agree with them or not. I would hope that you could make a conscious decision to avoid controversy. If your son wants to discuss Scientology, listen and express your happiness that he seems comfortable and happy.

Doing this enhances the possibility that

the two of you will have future positive contacts (So, did he bring you a Tom Cruise autograph?).

A TV Viewer Writes: Thank goodness the TV series "Will and Grace" came to an end in May. It ran eight years. I am a very fair person, but felt a great deal of the humor was gross. After viewing the show all these years, I still feel it is wrong to have a TV show center around two gay people and make them sympathetic, as if their lifestyles are normal.

Answer: I don't know what's normal anymore. And I don't understand why you would watch a show all this time if you didn't like its basic premise about the lives of a gay man and a heterosexual woman (both were not gay).

Will and Grace was a couple who sought what we all want/need in life - caring, sensitive friends and partners. The fact that one was gay should indicate nothing. The show lost a lot of its charm as the years passed, but they remained folks for whom we really cared. I would encourage you to examine your own prejudices before condemning those who are different in one way or another.

Retirement Event Slated for Dr. Petix

WESTFIELD — The Westfield High School Parent-Teacher Student Organization cordially will hold a reception honoring Dr. Robert Petix, Westfield High principal, on Wednesday, June 7 at 7:30 p.m.

The event will be held in the high school student center and the courtyard (weather permitting). Dr. Petix is retiring at the end of the school year. Responses should be sent to goldmanfam@aol.com.

Our State Government Must Cut Spending

Here are three more ways to cut state spending by State Senator James Wallwork, who is also a businessman.

General: Review all boards, commissions, authorities and agencies at the state and county levels. Eliminate or consolidate to save taxpayers' money. Include a salary review for all part-time members with a possible substitution of per diem pay for time actually spent and a salary not to exceed a fixed annual sum for these part-time positions. Included should be such boards as County Right-of-Way, County Board of Elections, Passaic Valley Sewage Commission, North Jersey District Water Supply Commission, Delaware River Bridge Authority, etc. Too many boards or commissions overpay part-time members.

Centralize professional and occupational licensing boards into a single licensing bureau with one administrator to eliminate duplication of clerical and administrative staff.

Purchasing: Require review and justification of all special contracts by the Office of Fiscal Affairs and the state treasurer. Included should be contracts with consultants, public relations firms, data processing software firms, etc. Justification, need for service within a given time frame, and reasonability of price should be among the factors reviewed. If the taxpayers have to tighten their belts, so must the government.

Joseph Long
Oak Ridge

Letters to the Editor

Washington Parent Shocked over Principal Switch with Wilson

Thursday morning, Washington and Wilson school parents were shocked with the news, via an e-mail letter from Dr. William Foley, that the two principals will be switching leadership roles.

Simply, Joseph Malanga, the present principal of Washington school, will be going to lead Wilson school, and Andrew Perry, who presently heads Wilson school will become principal at Washington. There was no reason given for this lateral move, except to say that a change in leadership can bring improvement.

Change is good? In fact, Dr. Foley mentioned that large corporations change their leadership quite often.

Although I've not equated my child's education and Washington school to a large corporation, I suppose the Westfield school district and the board of education can be interpreted as such. Still, it's a poor analogy. Good leaders, whether they are principals, CEOs, directors or chiefs, are not replaced if they are succeeding in their leadership roles.

The parents at Washington School are astounded. Mr. Malanga has led our school for many years with warmth and professionalism. The improvements he has brought forth have made our school a

wonderful environment in which our children receive an outstanding education. His stability and dedication to our students, our school and community have proven invaluable.

The future for Washington school seems a little unclear. There is talk of our school hosting a centralized Kindergarten program, possible redistricting and overcrowding issues are always at the forefront of discussions. With all these possible changes on the horizon for our community, why would Dr. Foley currently change our administration? It seems an unreasonable and poor tactic in whatever master plan he has laid out for the future of Washington school. Incidentally, none of which has truly been elucidated.

The Washington school community is very strong and stands together in their belief that Mr. Malanga is an outstanding principal who should remain at Washington school. We have voiced our opinions to Dr. Foley and the board of education. We will continue to do so in the future, with the hope that there is a chance for reversal of this decision.

Michele Zahka
Westfield

Minuteman Civil Defense: Border Security Comes First

As a fifth generation American of Hispanic descent, I feel compelled to inform U.S. citizens of the insidious and hidden agenda many pro-legal immigration organizations are deceptively promoting to millions of Americans.

The pro-illegal immigration movement has morphed into a global, racially motivated theater with an undisclosed cast of characters. The swift shift certainly should be viewed as a political spear that will drive to the heart of this nation's identity, with amnesty for millions of unassimilated illegal aliens so massive it can undermine our national character. Leftist organizers are diligently propagandizing Hispanics into engaging in anti-American class warfare and ensnaring them into a deceptive web of race-based conflict.

We must not allow the puppeteers to pit us against each other, and against our fellow Americans. We must not allow them to exploit us or suck us into the insane notion that we should reward illegal activity en masse.

Instead, we need to remain steadfast with a "border security first" policy and postpone national deliberation regarding immigration reform until such time as American citizens have secure borders and restored freedom.

Then, and only then should, we debate "paths to citizenship or guest worker programs," where the citizens pick and choose who should have the privilege of becoming U.S. workers or citizens.

Clearly, the blessings, rights and responsibilities of American citizenship cannot be safely left to the opportunistic politicians, or to those who have arrived flouting the rule of law.

Yes, border security must be taken seriously. Our country cannot tolerate any further the immigration lawlessness creating a majestic political divide among American citizens.

While our nation undergoes this dramatic test of our resolve, the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps continues its vigorous citizen initiatives to provide border security for the American people.

In order to stem the tide, we have engaged in a project long overdue, yet essential in assuring the safety of our citizens.

Our legacy will be marked in the pages of history by the installation of a border security fence, which shall become the preamble to a reborn and safe America.

Once and for all, we must say no to the nonsensical demands of non-citizen mobs, and a flood of illegal incursions. This nation was founded upon immutable principle to ensure our domestic tranquility. No power on earth shall be allowed by this sovereign people to overtake our nation's founding ideals, or our belief in our God and the inalienable rights bequeathed us by Him.

Al Garza, Exec. Dir.
Minuteman Civil Defense Corps
Huachuca City, AZ



Don Williams for The Westfield Leader and The Times
GETTING THE FACTS...Jennifer Frega and Olivia Lavelle of Franklin School 3rd grade in Westfield with 5th grader Bill Lavelle interview publisher Horace Corbin last Friday to obtain information about Westfield business.

By Patricia Quattrocchi, Candidate for Freeholder Just Give the Word

Assembly Republican Leader Alex DeCroce told Jon Corzine in a press release in April "Just Give the Word and We'll be There." He was referring to the Republican caucus being ready to work on property tax reform in New Jersey, responding to a news article, which spoke of the governor being impatient with our legislature's inaction on the issue.

It doesn't appear that there will be too much forthcoming in the way of property tax relief from the "Big Guns" in Trenton — just as there doesn't appear to be any relief coming from our Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

In January, County Manager George Devanney presented the 2006 executive budget of \$413 million amid fanfare that a hiring freeze was implemented and predicting that serious cuts would be forthcoming as the result of scheduled departmental budget hearings before the final product would be approved by the board. The announcement in April of a \$13 million error made by county officials who had incorrectly included revenues anticipated from state and federal grants cut the total budget to \$400 million, a \$10.3 million increase over 2005.

The Freeholders will be voting on the final product in the upcoming weeks; that final budget totaling \$400 million. The Freeholders, through the public information department, have stated they are of the opinion that they will be getting the \$13 million in grants anyway so apparently they have left the budget as it was originally presented back in January. So what was the purpose of the budget hearings other than to go through the motions?

A budget bloated with waste is probably on the horizon again this year. Though considered by some to be minor, an example of wasteful spending are the holiday plants spoken about a few months ago. The tally for House of Flowers in Linden for the purchase of 225 14-inch wreaths at \$25 each and 60 Poinsettias at \$90 each, was \$11,025. On display in the Freeholder meeting room were 16 plants, with no others in sight. Where were the other 44 and where did they end up? Where were 225 wreaths hidden?

House of Flowers was selling these plants to the general public for \$89 each. It seems that they don't give a break for bulk purchases. This vendor should definitely be crossed off the list.

An upcoming summer concert in the park is expected to cost the county \$30,000 for one entertainer alone plus \$90,000 for the organizers; unknown are the costs of portable sanitary facilities, an opening act and liability insurance. It is questionable just what part of the "free" concert the corporate sponsors will finance. The proposed budget for this year shows a 100.5 percent increase over the 2005 Recreation budget, for parks and maintenance — just how free is this concert?

Zero-based budgeting would put these unnecessary expenditures on the back burner until all necessary services are financially secure. Perhaps the county would do well to consider this method of accounting by starting in one department on a trial basis and evaluate the results.

The Republican candidates for Union County Freeholder; Patricia Quattrocchi, Glenn Mortimer and Diane Barabas know that the residents of the county are getting impatient and want to see results. We ask for your support by "just giving us the word" in November and we will be there. For additional information call 908-789-0200 or visit www.unioncountygop.org.

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