

THE STUDENT VIEW

The weekly column written by local high school students

Our Approach to Tragedy Must Ensure Future Safety

By STEVEN KRAKAUER
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

In my living room, a painting hangs on the wall entitled "Manhattan Skyline."

A few days ago, my sister, Alison, who is four years old, was standing on the couch looking at that print. I pointed to the World Trade Center, the obvious eye-catcher out of all of the buildings in the cartoon.

Alison had told me earlier that her friend in her pre-school class had talked about the buildings that "fell down." She said that it was "sad."

I pointed to those Twin Towers and informed her that they were the buildings that "fell down."

"Wow," she said, sounding both stunned and uninterested.

I asked her what she thought should be built in their place, now that they are gone. "Maybe some houses, or a zoo," she said, as she jumped off the couch and continued playing.

Yes, maybe a housing project could be nice in downtown Manhattan. And a zoo could be an interesting way to honor the victims of the tragedy.

One thing that should absolutely not be built there are two 110-story buildings. Just like we can't start getting annoyed with the long delays at the metal detector in airports. And we can't clean up the mess in New York City, Pennsylvania and Washington D.C., and return to business as usual. Because business is NOT as usual.

My sister had heard correctly. Two buildings "fell down" on September 11. Two of the most powerful, significant, visually striking towers in the world lie in pieces in our backyard, and we are left with a choice.

SP-F Learning Disabilities Group Announces Workshops, Programs

SCOTCH PLAINS - The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Learning Disabilities Association (SP-F LDA) has revealed its 2001-2002 schedule of workshops and programs, which are open to all parents within the school district and surrounding towns.

"We are pleased to host speakers with a broad spectrum of expertise - occupational and speech therapists, psychologists and others - who are here to help the families of children with learning disabilities," stated SP-F LDA President Christine Bumiller.

"Any adult who is interested may attend any of our programs," she added.

The group will begin the school year with an Open House-Information Fair on Thursday, October 4, at 7:30 p.m. at Evergreen Elementary School in Scotch Plains. Parent members of the group will answer questions and offer assistance over coffee and refreshments.

Informational materials, including Internet addresses and newsletters from local, state, private and non-profit organizations, will be available. Children are also invited, and can meet new friends, work on crafts and have refreshments.

The SP-F LDA will host Penny Dagonetti, from the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN), on Thursday, October 25, at McGinn Elementary School in Fanwood at 7:30 p.m.

Ms. Dagonetti will discuss the Section No. 504 regulation and how it can help children receive special accommodations in the classroom.

Section No. 504 provides enforcement of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which provides a comprehensive plan for providing rehabilitation services to all individuals, regardless of the severity of their disability. SPAN provides training and information to parents of children with disabilities and special health needs.

Other programs scheduled for the school year include: "Social Skills"

Denise C. O'Connor

Attends Bates College

WESTFIELD - Bates College in Lewiston, Me. has reported that Westfield resident Denise C. O'Connor, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William O'Connor, is among 583 high school graduates now enrolled as a freshman.

Denise is a 2001 graduate of Westfield High School.

What do we do now?
The fight to remedy this type of problem from ever occurring again will be an arduous process. However, it is a fight that must be fought, and must be won.

President George W. Bush said last week, "We will not tire, we will not falter and we will not fail!"
This country must put our trust in the President, and believe that he will not break that trust.

Television channels have aired replay after replay of jumbo jets crashing into buildings and fiery debris falling into thriving business districts. The ticker at the bottom of CNN has been drenched with red these past weeks, as our economy has been slipping into a possible recession.

But worse than those images, we have seen the fallibility of our once-thought unshakable nation, and we have experienced the grief associated with loss of life and security.

The goal of every society is to better itself for the next generation. If betterment doesn't come in the unfolding months of this tragedy, our society has not done its job.

These have been a draining past couple of weeks. The events have sparked the interest of those in my generation. Many are worried about what America will be like when they are old enough to unpack their briefcase on a typical Tuesday morning. When will the threat of terror in our country end?

Alison will get older, go to college and go off into the world herself. I only hope that someday she won't have to ask her children what should be built in the place where two towers "fell down."

on Thursday, November 29: "Workshop for the Sibling of Your Learning-Disabled Child," Tuesday, December 4: Video-"When the Chips Are Down," Thursday, January 17, 2002: "Auditory Processing," Tuesday, February 12, 2002: "Sensory Processing Disorder in School-Age Children," Thursday, March 14, 2002: "Video Night - to be announced," Thursday, April 4, 2002, and SP-F LDA Awards Program, Monday, June 10, 2002.

The SP-F LDA is a support and resource group for families with children

Concepts & Thought

STAFF COLUMN

Removal of Classic from Reading List Prevents Learning Right From Wrong

By MARYLOU MORANO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Freshmen beginning high school in Muskogee, Okla. this year will find their English curriculum to be slightly different than that of their predecessors.

The Pulitzer Prize winning novel, "To Kill A Mockingbird" has been dropped from the freshman required reading list.

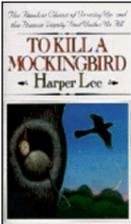
Muskogee educators removed the book because they feared the racial slurs contained in its pages would offend its student body, which is 59 percent African-American.

"To Kill A Mockingbird," which was published in 1960 by Harper Lee, is the story of a white lawyer who defends a black man, wrongly accused of raping a white woman.

The book has not been banned in Muskogee. It is just no longer considered required reading.

What the educators may not be taking into consideration is that the book may have been written to offend people and not just those who are the same race as 59 percent of the student body of their high school in Muskogee.

I am offended by "To Kill A Mockingbird." I am offended that our American history contains events such as those portrayed in the story. I am offended because, although the book is fiction, the events of the story could very well have occurred and



probably did. And, not that long ago.

In addition, all racially derogative language appalls me, especially the phrases and slurs contained in "To Kill A Mockingbird." But, I would still encourage my 15-year-old daughter to read it.

My job as a mother is to teach my children right from wrong. And how can I show them what is right if they don't understand what is wrong?

How can we direct our children toward the right path to travel if they can't look over their shoulders to see where they've been?

The truth is, for all the strides made towards racial equality in this country for all Americans, we have no guarantee that future generations will continue to walk ahead and not run back. Or slip behind.

To insure this doesn't happen, our young people should be encouraged, not discouraged, from reading books like "To Kill A Mockingbird."

Sometimes a little offense is a good thing.

Who was it that said those who don't learn history are doomed to repeat it?

Oratory Prep to Open Doors

To Prospective Pupils on Sunday

SUMMIT - Oratory Preparatory School, located on the corner of Morris Avenue and Beverly Road in Summit, will host an open house for prospective students on Sunday, September 30, from 3:30 to 5 p.m.

The event will include the distribution of the school's view book and

information on scholarships, financial aid and transportation. Interested students and their families will receive additional information on athletics, clubs and Student Council activities.

Visitors will be a guided tour of the main building by Student Ambassadors, and will have the chance to meet faculty members.

For more information, please contact Admissions Director Carlos Gutierrez at (908) 273-5771, extension no. 11.

Conner T. Mulvee Enrolls at Amherst

WESTFIELD - Amherst College in Amherst, Mass. has announced that Conner T. Mulvee of Westfield has enrolled as a first-year student.

Conner is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Mulvee of Westfield.



TOO CLOSE TO HOME... Two students from The Wardlaw-Hartridge School, Leigh Ivan of Westfield, left, and Jasmine Mitchell of Plainfield, collected \$1,094 and a truckload of needed supplies for the victims of the World Trade Center tragedy. Local merchants are said to be matching this amount. The money will be donated to the American Red Cross and the International Association of Firefighters.

Walk Our Children to School Day Scheduled for October 3

WESTFIELD - Thousands of students and parents from Westfield's public elementary schools will walk to school for National Walk Our Children to School Day on Wednesday, October 3.

The nationwide event is being celebrated as an opportunity to re-discover walking to school as a safe and healthy way for parents to spend special time with their children.

A few days prior to the event, a special raffle will be held at all of the schools. The winner will have the honor being escorted to school by Westfield Mayor Gregory S. McDermott. He will come to the child's house that morning and walk with him or her to school.

Other lucky raffle winners will find their school principal waiting at their door in the morning to walk to school with them - and maybe even carry their backpacks.

Several other Westfield officials, including members of the Board of Education and Town Council plan to adopt a school for that morning and walk with a child from that school.

All walkers are being asked to wear something red on the way to school that morning, so that they'll be particularly visible to passing cars.

Organizers of the event believe that the recent terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon underscore the importance of spending a few extra minutes with our children each day.

In memory of those parents who lost their lives as a result of these attacks, there will be a donation area

for those wishing to make a contribution to the Widow and Orphan Fund for the Firefighters of New York City.

"We hope that Walk Our Children to School Day will give busy parents a chance to discover the special pleasure of walking to school," said Maureen O'Connor of Westfield's BRAKES (Bikers, Runners And Kids are Entitled to Safety) group.

"It's a wonderful way to spend precious time with our children, to slow down and walk at their pace instead of rushing frantically through the morning as so many of us do," she added.

The BRAKES group, a pedestrian safety organization in Westfield, is coordinating the town-wide event.

www.goleader.com

Westfield BOE Meeting Scheduled October 2

WESTFIELD -- The public is invited to attend the Westfield Board of Education meeting on Tuesday, October 2, at 8 p.m. at 302 Elm Street.

The complete agenda for the meeting will be available from the Board Secretary's office on Friday, September 28.

The meeting will be taped for future broadcasting on Channel 36 on Thursdays at 10 a.m. and 10 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m. and Tuesdays at 6 p.m. for two weeks following the meeting date.

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