

STUDENT LETTERS

Letters submitted to The Westfield Leader and The Times by students

WHS Student Supports Enforcing Megan's Law In New Jersey

Parents could only imagine what they would do if one minute their child were playing outside and the next minute their child was gone, abducted from their lawn. But little did they know about the convicted sex offender living across the street.

I am referring to the New Jersey case of 7-year-old Megan Kanka in 1994. The sexual assault and murder of Megan Kanka brought up the question: Does a sex offender have the right to privacy after being convicted of a crime?

Megan's Law was introduced in 1994, and was later temporarily suspended enforcement in 2000 to protect the privacy rights of previous sex offenders.

For the safety of the children, this law requires the neighborhood to be notified if a convicted sex offender moves into

the area after they have served time in prison. Megan's Law is back in effect and the number of registered sex offenders is growing.

The idea of a sexual offender living in my neighborhood is disturbing. There are a lot of children on my block and I would be afraid that the ex-offender would have an impulse to commit a crime again. Had Megan Kanka's mother known about the convicted sex offender across the street, the chance of her daughter being alive today would have been greater. Supporting and abiding by Megan's Law is the proper precaution that must be taken for the innocence and safety of the children. Even if the privacy of the sex offender is questionable.

Vanessa Church
Westfield

Television Doesn't Cause Violence; Nor Does It Promote Sexual Activity

Has television gone too far? No, television has only gone as far as the real world has. Many parents believe that their children are being exposed to sex and violence at a very young age. The truth is even if these shows didn't exist we would still have the news. A poll done by the Kaiser Family Foundation says that shows that include sexual content have helped one in three 15-17 year olds to talk to their parents about sex. Six in ten teenagers say that television has taught them how to say no to a sexual situation that makes them uncomfortable.

I do agree that there are things on television that are inappropriate for a four-year-old to watch. However, this is why we have channel blocks and rating systems. In an article on CNN.com rating

"Deal Reached on Expanded TV Rating System," tells of an agreement between parent groups and the television industry. The agreement is to change the ratings system so that it is easier to identify programs containing sex, violence, adult themes and offensive language. Each of these subjects has a letter symbol, which will be added to the current rating system. I think this is a very good way to screen television shows for inappropriate content without completely changing the face of television. I think learning about and paying attention to these ratings is a better way of protecting children from television than complaining about something that is going on anyway.

Megan Gonnella
Westfield

Student Feels That People Should Be Aware Of Their Own Terminal Illness

If you were dying from a terminally ill disease wouldn't you want to know the truth from your physician? They should always give their patients hope and by this they use their information as a course of therapy. Some say the truth might harm the patients but I feel knowledge about your health enables one to live life to the fullest. When patients are ill, sometimes they can't make their own decisions but physicians should be able to help them.

When studies were done to see what patients want to know about their illness be provided, it showed up 80 percent of patients would like to be told about their diagnosis if it is terminal. Patients are paying the doctor for the most accurate diagnosis and should be provided with nothing less. When they aren't completely informed they no longer have the ability to make choices about their health. This is a violation of the patient's bill of rights and having the right to be informed. When a patient is diagnosed with a terminal illness, physicians should divulge the facts and provide information.

The Advanced Directives & Compassionate Care Act fund a 24-hour hotline, which provides direct assistance dealing with end of life care. "Freedom is to

consider one's life as a whole with a beginning, duration and end" (Bok, 102).

I believe that terminally ill patients have the right to know from their physicians the truth that lies ahead of them so they can plan their life wisely.

Ashley Kent
Westfield

Drinking Age In U.S. Should Be Lowered

America is suffering from a catastrophic trend, underage drinking. Drinking has historically been a part of our culture, but our government had gone about regulating its use in the wrong way. We tried prohibition twice, but that just led to an increase of crime, and a boom of drinking of all ages. Our country has the highest drinking age requirements but it correlates with one of the highest drinking epidemics worldwide.

Unlike many other countries, drinking is a leading cause of death. Even though we try to regulate and restrict its availability it fails to work and seems to feed the problem. If our government were to conform to the systems of other countries, then perhaps underage drinking would lessen. Italy for example has a drinking age of 16, but the consumption of wine is encouraged with families and at almost every meal. With children being introduced to alcohol at a young age, it takes away much of the urge to binge drink. In short, the countries with less restriction on a drinking age tend to have far less problems related to drinking. If America were to emulate the lower drinking ages, even though there could be a temporary increase, in the long run, drinking could decrease from an epidemic to just a problematic factor.

Joseph McCabe
Westfield

SP-F BOE Invites Residents To Tour Renovated Schools

SCOTCH PLAINS -- The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education (BOE) invite all local residents to tour the freshly renovated schools, visit classrooms and additions and see building improvements made possible through the community's support.

Both tours will take place on November 16. The elementary school tour will be from 9 to 11 a.m. and the middle school tour will be from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Joseph McCabe
Westfield

Concepts & Thought



GETTING TOGETHER IN ATLANTIC CITY...New Jersey Governor James McGreevey teamed up with members of the Teachers' Union in Atlantic City to formulate plans to improve communication between state government and its educators.

DECA Continues Work With Interfaith Council

SCOTCH PLAINS—The Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School DECA Chapter, an Association of Marketing Students, is beginning its 12th consecutive year working with the Interfaith Council of Union County, a non-profit organization that provides for the needs of homeless families in the area.

DECA is planning several activities for over 85 families and over 200 children currently being assisted by the Interfaith Council including housing, basic necessities, medical needs and educational programs.

DECA student Sara Finkelstein stated, "In this difficult economic

time, these people have been hit the hardest, and we want to do all that we can to help them."

Many of the families live in temporary housing, including churches and synagogues on a rotating basis, until permanent housing can be found.

DECA's first activity was a Halloween party for over 70 children, for whom DECA supplied over 60 costumes. DECA is also planning its 12th annual Toy Drive and Adopt-A-Family Program for the families of Interfaith during the holiday season.

Residents, businesses or organizations that are interested in assisting may call DECA at (908) 889-8600.



LIFESAVING...At a recent Westfield High School (WHS) football game, members of the team were shown the automated external defibrillator (AED), which was donated by the Education Fund of Westfield. Sandy Mamary, Certified Athletic Trainer at WHS, brings the AED to all major athletic events. It is the first one ever available to the school district and was made possible through a grant request to the Education Fund of Westfield.

December Open House Set at Far Brook School

SHORT HILLS - Far Brook School, which is located at 52 Great Hills Road in Short Hills, will host its Open House on Tuesday, December 3, for parents who would like to consider enrolling children for the 2003-2004 year.

Now in its 55th year, Far Brook is an independent, co-educational day school for nursery through eighth graders with an enrollment of approximately 225 students drawn from 32 communities in Essex, Union, Morris and Somerset counties.

Space for the Open House is limited. For more information and to

make reservations, please call (973) 379-3442, or to learn more about the school, visit www.farbrook.org.

Periclean Society Grants Membership to Campbell

FANWOOD - Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, N.Y. has reported that Allison Campbell, a member of the Class of 2003, has been elected to Skidmore's Periclean Honor Society.

She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Alan Campbell of Fanwood.

Amy Seligman Elected To Periclean Society

WESTFIELD - Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, N.Y. has announced that Amy Seligman, a member of the Class of 2003, has been elected to Skidmore's Periclean Honor Society.

She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joel Seligman of Westfield.

Leiz, Tucker Nominated For Heisman Competition

WESTFIELD — Westfield High School (WHS) seniors Christine Leiz and Andrew Tucker have been nominated by Principal Dr. Robert Petix for the 2003 Wendy's High School Heisman Competition based on their academic aptitude, athletic talent and exceptional display of commitment in and out of the classroom setting.

Now entering his ninth year, the Wendy's High School Heisman Program was created through a partnership between Wendy's, the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the Downtown Athletic Club to recognize high school seniors such as Christine and Andrew, who have excelled in the areas of academics, athletics and community service.

Christine, who is a member of the National Honor Society and the National French Honor Society, has participated as a team member of Varsity Field Hockey and Junior Varsity Lacrosse and Winter Track during her four years at WHS.

A news editor for the weekly school newspaper, *Hi's Eye*, Christine has also been a member of the WHS Choir and the French Club. Within the community beyond WHS, Christine has been a regular volunteer at a local soup kitchen and an assisted living facility, as well as an advisor for her church youth group.

The volunteer work she performed as a member of the Girl Scouts earned her a Gold Award. During the past two summers, Christine attended the prestigious National Youth Leadership Forum and the National Young Leaders Conference in Washington, D.C.

Christine's accomplishments have also earned her inclusion in the 2002-2003 edition of *Who's Who Among High Schoolers in America*.

WHS Guidance Counselor Paul Smith stated, "Christine is a motivated young woman who has challenged herself both in the school and beyond. Her accomplishments truly merit her being selected as one of our school's Heisman scholar-athlete nominees."

Andrew, an honor roll student all four years at WHS, has distinguished himself as sports editor of *Hi's Eye* and as a member of both the National Honor Society and the National French Honor Society.

His athletic accomplishments have included team membership on WHS Junior Varsity and Varsity Soccer and Lacrosse, Junior Varsity Basketball and Golf, the Peddie School Indoor Winter Lacrosse League and Westfield Basketball.

While attending the Duke Lacrosse Camp, Andrew was named Most Valuable Player.

He has served the Westfield community well through his service work at Temple Emanu-el where he is a youth group leader and an outreach tutor to inner-city children.

Last summer, Andrew served as a camp counselor and soccer coach at Camp Lenox in Massachusetts, and during the summer of 2001 he attended an enrichment program at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

"Andrew Tucker works hard and plays hard," commented Judy Glasser, Tucker's guidance counselor. "He has developed that competitive edge that makes him the epitome of the scholar-athlete."

The Wendy's High School Heisman Program involves five levels of competition — Nomination, State Finalists, State Winners, National Finalists and National Winners.

Entries are initially evaluated by the scholastic review service CTB/McGraw Hill during the State Finalist and State Winner phases and then passed on to a distinguished panel of judges — including past Heisman Memorial Trophy recipients as well as education, business and community leaders — to elect the National Finalists and National Winners.

Twelve National Finalists will be granted the opportunity to fly to New York City on December 12 through 15, to participate in the Heisman weekend festivities.

ESPN will feature all 12 National Finalists during the Wendy's High School Heisman Awards Ceremony that will air right before the live broadcast of the College Heisman Memorial Trophy Awards on December 14.

The presentation will be made by Wendy's President and COO, North America, Tom Mueller, program spokesperson Archie Griffin and Dr. Gerald Tirozzi, National Association of Secondary School Principals Executive Director.

"I am pleased to nominate Andrew and Christine for this year's High School Heisman Program. Their commitment to academic and athletic excellence, in combination with their active involvement in community service, speaks highly of their promise as young leaders," commented Dr. Petix.

All nominees will be posted on the Wendy's High School Heisman website in early October. To track a student's progress or to find out more about the program, please log on to www.wendyshighschoolheisman.com.

Westfield High School to Host College Night on November 21

WESTFIELD — On Thursday, November 21, at 7:30 p.m., Westfield High School (WHS) will host approximately 200 colleges and universities at its annual College Night.

This event gives students and their parents an opportunity to gather information about colleges and universities nationwide.

College representatives provide literature and answer questions about their schools.

Begun more than 30 years ago by the College Woman's Club of Westfield and now hosted by the WHS Guidance Department, "Westfield's

College Night has long been known as one of the biggest and finest in New Jersey," according to Dr. Robert Petix, WHS Principal.

"It is appropriate that College Night is once again being held during American Education Week," noted Dr. Cas Jakubik, WHS Director of Guidance.

"Since 92 percent of our recent graduates continued their education, there is clearly a need to provide our high school population and their parents with a broad overview of colleges and universities for their consideration. We encourage our current students and families to attend."

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