



**NEWSLETTER**

Thank you, Solaris Sports Clubs! Our middle school night was a wonderful success. The kids enjoyed basketball and hula hoop contests, with DJ Kev providing music for dancing. Many thanks to Giana DiMaria, who worked on this event as part of her Girl Scout Gold Award project. And thanks to Jeannie, Valerie and Kristin at Solaris for making this an evening the kids (and parents) will remember!

This month there will be a panel discussion on April 27<sup>th</sup>: *What every Parent and Student Should Know About Prom and Graduation Season*". Parents and students are encouraged to attend. More information is on page 6.

As ever, if there's something you would like to contribute for the newsletter, just contact Cindy at [Justask\\_ask@yahoo.com](mailto:Justask_ask@yahoo.com), or Cathy at [ASK4Kids@gmail.com](mailto:ASK4Kids@gmail.com).

*Tricy Cushner, President      Cathryn Martin, Director      Cynthia Cervini, Newsletter Editor*

**Calendar**

**Sunday, Apr 25<sup>th</sup>,  
11 am – 1 pm**  
*Come visit the ASK table at Mitzvah Day, Temple Beth Am, 203 Church Place, Yorktown Heights*

**Tues, Apr 27<sup>th</sup>, 4-5 PM**  
*ASK Coalition meeting, Sparkle Lake Community Building*

**Tues, Apr 27<sup>th</sup>, 7-8:30 PM**  
*Prom panel discussion, Elks Club, Waverly Road (see pg 6)*

**Sat, May 15<sup>th</sup>, Noon – 5 pm**  
*Yorktown Community Day, Mildred E. Strang Middle School, 2701 Crompond Rd*

***Dine for ASK!***

- Take a night off from cooking, dine out and help support community programs provided by the Alliance for Safe Kids.
- Tuesday nights at Finnegan's Grill, Wednesday nights at Bob B Q's and Thursday nights at Travelers Rest are now fundraising nights for ASK. A percentage of all food bills will be donated to ASK each week by these businesses. At Travelers Rest be sure to mention ASK during your meal.
- So come and have a nice dinner, relax, and help support our programs!
- Finnegan's Grill is located at 347 Downing Drive in Yorktown Heights; Bob B Q's is at 958 East Main Street in Shrub Oak; and Travelers Rest is on Route 100.
- Many thanks to Blake Franklin, Bob Sarvaudio, and Dave Paganelli for their wonderful support!

***ASK Public Service Announcement Contest to be Launched April 29<sup>th</sup>***

If you're a student aged 10-19, it's time to get your creative juices flowing for a chance to win great prizes and save lives at the same time! We're looking for the best student-created public service announcements (or PSA's) - they can be video, audio, and/or print - to help us inform teens about the dangers of substance abuse, gambling, sexting, texting while driving, gang involvement, internet safety, peer pressure, eating disorders, and other destructive behavior. A PSA is a free advertisement that informs the public about safety and health information, community services or public affairs.

There will be five winners chosen from each of the three categories: video, audio and print (to include drawings, photos or advertisements). In addition to cash and prizes, the winning videos, audios and print PSA's will be distributed to the media to start airing on local television, radio and in newspapers.

This is an invaluable community service which will have an impact on many families. A small group can make a big difference. For more information, check [www.AllianceForSafeKids.org](http://www.AllianceForSafeKids.org) on April 29<sup>th</sup>.

*The Alliance for Safe Kids, Inc., is a not-for profit 501(c)(3) corporation dedicated to keeping our kids out of harm's way. For further information, please email the Alliance at [ASK4Kids@gmail.com](mailto:ASK4Kids@gmail.com) or visit our website, [www.AllianceForSafeKids.org](http://www.AllianceForSafeKids.org)*

## ***Sales of Alcohol to Kids? Not in Our Neighborhood.***

By Art Lander

The headlines in the North County News stated “Yorktown Chief Daniel McMahon announced during the evening hours of Thursday, March 18, 2010, members of his department utilized undercover, underage agents to conduct alcohol compliance checks in Yorktown”. The behind the scenes story is that the undercover, underage agents were members of the Alliance for Safe Kids Youth Court Program. Working in conjunction with the Yorktown Police Department, these selected members attended a training class on conducting compliance checks.

The topics covered in this training were New York State Alcohol and Beverage Laws as well as Yorktown Police Department protocols for conducting compliance checks. On Thursday evening they met with members of the Yorktown Juvenile Unit and were instructed on the schedule for the evening. Detective Sean Lewis, Youth Officer Richard Finn and I went along with the agents.

Now here is the best part... Lights, Camera, Action! It was like being on the TV show “Cops”, except Sean and I are much better looking than those guys on TV - Officer Finn, well, that’s a different story. Like “Cops” we were taping each compliance check on our video cameras.

The agents would attempt to purchase alcohol beverages and when it was time to pay they would produce their own New York State driver’s license, if asked for by the clerk. If the clerk questioned whether they were 21 years old, they were not to lie but tell the truth - that they were underage. We took up positions in the store where we could see the counter and were able to tape the sale ... we television professionals call this camera angle, by the way.

The team checked seven different licensed establishments in Yorktown that evening and not one clerk sold to the agents. All checked for ID from the agents and refused to sell alcohol to them. It should be noted that all of the stores we checked were members of the ASK “Adopt a Store” program and had in the past attended our “Training for Intervention Procedures” (TIPS) Program.

This venture was successful due to the cooperation of the Yorktown Police and the Alliance for Safe Kids as well as our merchants in town. Working together is the best way to stop the sale of alcohol to minors in our community.

*Art Lander is Director of the ASK Yorktown Youth Court, a retired Yorktown Police Department DARE and Youth Officer, and a budding television director.*

### ***What’s on My Nightstand***

The Catcher in the Rye, by J.D. Salinger

*Review by Jessica R. Schnabel*

Of the many pieces of required high school reading, there are few that truly make an impact and stay with you throughout life. The Catcher in the Rye did that for me.

I recently reread and had the opportunity to discuss the classic novel with two eleventh grade English classes at Yorktown High School. Written in 1951 by J.D. Salinger, the story is from the unique perspective of a young man undergoing treatment in a mental hospital. While discussing the book, students made connections between lead character Holden Caulfield’s issues of depression, insecurity, loneliness, and deception. The students of the twenty-first century were able to identify similarities between Caulfield, their friends and even themselves. The novel has maintained relevance across decades and generations.



*Jessica’s nightstand*

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*What's on My Nightstand* cont'd from pg 2

The reactions of the students varied; however, the level of impact appeared great throughout the classes. The students noted warning signs and symptoms of depression and how it plagued Holden throughout the story. They shared feelings of anger about Holden's thoughts of taking his own life and began to offer a number of alternate solutions and methods for getting help when suffering a similar plight. For some, the book evoked sadness from memories of lost friends and for others it elicited anger and disappointment in Holden's immaturity and poor choice-making. Regardless of the response, be it positive or negative, J.D. Salinger's writings can be considered relevant and powerful for another generation.

*Jessica Schnabel is a psychologist for the Yorktown Central School District.*

## ***Let's Talk about the ABCs (Adolescent Background Check) of Job Applications***

By Cynthia Cervini

*N.B.: while we call my son 'the Shot' for his penchant for using a metaphorical shot glass as a unit of liquid measurement for things like dog vomit, 🍷 is my iconic nickname for my sixteen-year-old daughter, who is better dressed, with more makeup, and considerably more panache, than her mother - especially since the former's return from France.*

🍷 is out pounding the pavement looking for a job. After twelve days in France on my (many) dime(s) she said, "au revoir pays adopté aimé" (loosely translated, goodbye beloved adopted country - my French is rusty, and don't expect help from 🍷), ushering in a new era called REALITY.

Reality isn't what it used to be, either. According to a recent [article](#) in the New York Times, the Bureau of Labor and Statistics is tracking the current teenage unemployment rate at 25.5 percent. So the competition is tough. We try to tell her that little things mean a lot (something she calls 'overreacting'): write neatly, don't use pencil (she really did this, claiming she didn't want to make a mistake; of course, when she went over it again in pen it looked as

though a kindergartner had filled out the form - and I mean no disrespect to five year olds, many of whom have better penmanship than the Shot), no gum, and now - with spring upon us - don't wear shorts to hand in an application. I knew she had the idea when she blitzed Woodbury Commons, handing in a record six applications to six different stores while keeping me outside holding the remaining applications because "I don't want to walk in with a handful of applications from other stores." Good thinking. As I'm perusing the remaining forms looking for any errors (too late, no pen) I noticed an entire page of the J Crew application devoted to background check. Candidates must sign off on the following:

*I understand that an investigative report may be generated on me that may include information as to my character, general reputation, personal characteristics or mode of living; work habits, performance or experience...*

Reading further it appears that J Crew uses an outside company to "request information from public and private sources about any of the information noted earlier in this paragraph in connection with J Crew's consideration of me for employment [or] promotion..."

Well now, exactly how do you say Facebook in French? 🍷 counters with "how do you say overreact in English"? Overreact? Maybe not... studies show close to 30% of employers are using Facebook to screen potential employees. Here's a scary story from a simple Google search 'losing jobs due to social networking sites':

*I keep my profile on the highest privacy settings, meaning you can't see a lick of information about me, my photo albums, or any tagged pictures of me unless you're my friend. My friend's mom's friend's daughter (confusing, I know) works for the company I applied for. So through the grape vine, I learned from my friend that my employment aspirations have been "strongly negatively affected" by my Facebook. I immediately thought, "how the hell did this happen"? I went to my FB to double-check my security settings. With Facebook's new security settings, I got thrown for a little loop. Apparently non-friends were now able to see*

*Continued on page 4*

## ***What do I do if ....?***

### ***I think someone might be bullying my daughter online?***

By Cathryn Martin

Teasing and name-calling isn't only for the playground these days. It's occurring to kids via text messages, cell phone calls, social networking sites, and email. With increases in technology resulting in an easier ability to 'reach out and touch someone', bullies are expanding their territory. And cyberbullying is not only cruel, it can be very dangerous.

A 2006 poll from the national organization [Fight Crime: Invest in Kids](#) found that 1 in 3 teens and 1 in 6 preteens have been the victims of cyberbullying, defined as having had mean, threatening or embarrassing things said about them online. It doesn't sound serious, but consider this: 10% of teens reported being threatened online with physical harm.

If you're worried about cyberbullying, [KidsHealth.org](#) has some suggestions. These are some possible symptoms of being bullied online:

- signs of emotional distress during or after using the Internet
- withdrawal from friends and activities
- avoidance of school or group gatherings
- slipping grades and "acting out" in anger at home
- changes in mood, behavior, sleep, or appetite

The website also provides some suggestions for ways to protect your child:

- **Block the bully.** Most devices have settings that allow you to electronically block emails, IMs, or text messages from specific people.
- **Limit access to technology.** Although it's hurtful, many kids who are bullied can't resist the temptation to check Web sites or phones to see if there are new messages. Keep the computer in a public place in the house (no laptops in children's bedrooms, for example) and limit the use of cell phones and games. Some companies allow you to turn off text messaging services during certain hours, which can give bullied kids a break.
- **Know your kids' online world.** Check their postings and the sites kids visit, and be aware of how they spend their time online. Talk to them about the importance of privacy and why it's a bad idea to share personal information online, even with friends. Encourage them to safeguard passwords.

There's some good information available for teens, too, from the [National Crime Prevention Council](#). Their article helps kids understand what's happening, and assure them that they're not alone and that there's plenty that can be done to help.

If your child might be the bully? Have a very serious talk with him or her. Explain that the consequences of their actions can go far beyond what they think. Restricting their access to the technology that's being abused can help protect the victim. Reach out for professional help, too. A guidance counselor, social worker or other school official can often help.

If you find that it's an adult who is sending the messages, it might lead to jail time. Cyber-stalking, or cyber-harassment, is not viewed lightly by the legal system.


*Cathryn Martin is Director of the Alliance for Safe Kids, Inc.*

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not only my current profile picture, but all other previous ones. So I just lost an awesome job opportunity and pay raise scale bump that I really needed. It's amazing how one innocent picture can do so much damage.

Overreact? Consider this.

"There is a growing trend in the number of employers who are Googling candidates to research for additional information," said Brian Krueger, President of CollegeGrad.com. "This trend has now spilled over to the use of Internet social networking sites, such as MySpace and Facebook, for screening potential candidates."

So we decided to have a little mother/  time to run an experiment. Going on an unrelated Facebook page (someone with no connection to my daughter), I wanted to see how much of her information I could glean and - if I were a potential employer - how detrimental (or not) that information would be. Unlike the sad case above, my daughter has her privacy settings on medium level settings (if she was part of the Homeland Security Advisory System she would be a somewhere in the blue/yellow level). So what this experiment yielded is that any employer could find the following out:



*Kelsey only shares some of her profile information with everyone. If you know Kelsey, [add her as a friend](#).*

#### **Basic Information**

*Networks: Cornwall Central High School '11*


*Sex: Female*


**Pages** [See All \(88\)](#) (Note from mom: you "join" a page if you wholeheartedly agree with its premise or message- these are the first three of eighty-eight pages/groups she belongs to.)

-  [Yes, I do look at my reflection when I walk past parked cars or windows.](#) (mom thinks: all the money spent on brace\$ was worth it!)
-  [No Homework](#)
- [Quit bragging about smoking weed... You're not cool.](#) (mom likes this)

There are 85 more pages that I won't bore you with but don't think for a minute that I didn't view them. Nothing seemed jobslashing worthy. The only questionable page was titled [98% of kids drink or smoke before they turn 18. Join if you like bagels.](#)

Here's an interesting aside.... some of the college students we know who might actually apply for jobs of importance (while I think my daughter's job will somehow put a needed tourniquet on my bank account where she is concerned, we all know where the money will really be going if she is working for J Crew) have lax security settings and considerably more damaging material on their sites.

Even more interesting was having  'show' me how I can (or can't) get information off Facebook. In some strange 'my page is clean, look at how bad his/her page is' logic that flies in the face of the teenage code of honor, she actually seemed to be absorbing the lesson (although she'll deny it with equal parts of vehemence and offense). She also seemed to get past the teenage mindset entitled 'even though the possibility exists it can't happen to me', which tends to be a difficult hurdle to overcome. The final challenge? Would she come forward and advise her friends? This is the litmus test of whether they've grasped a concept. Difficult to tell because of course they'll never let you know; you just have to hope the planets are aligned correctly and you find out by accident. I might have a better shot breaking even if her job from J Crew realizes cash rather than clothes.

*Cynthia Cervini is a guidance counselor and parent who thinks overreact might accessorize well with all the J Crew she intends to borrow from .*

*The Alliance for Safe Kids, Inc, Yorktown High School and Lakeland High School  
present:*

# **“What every Parent and Student Should Know About Prom and Graduation Season”**

**Tuesday, April 27, 2010**

**7:00pm-8:30pm**

The Elks Club

Waverly Road, Yorktown Heights

## **Panel Discussion on Health and Legal Consequences of Underage Drinking and Drug Use and Decision Making**

### *Panel of Experts*

**Paul S Scharf, Assistant District Attorney; Chief, Westchester County Criminal Courts &  
Grand Jury Division**

**Officer Tom Nadoraski, Yorktown Police School Resource Officer**

**Barbara Monohan, Chairperson of the Westchester County  
Taxi and Limousine Commission**

**Justine Rice, RN & Sandy Way, RN  
Northern Westchester Hospital Emergency Department**

### *Moderator*

**Ellen Morehouse, LCSW, CASAC, CPP,  
Executive Director, Student Assistance Services Corp.**

### *Special Guests*

**YHS Drama Club performing Scenarios for discussion**



*For more information call Davia Bugge, Student Assistance Counselor, at 243-8037*