



An unpleasant part of our work here at ASK is researching news items about incidents involving substance abuse, especially involving children. This job has been especially hard over the past month.

There have been three recent cases in our immediate area of women driving drunk with their (and other parents') children in the car, but there's worse news: Apparently, there have been 8 other incidences of women arrested for DWI with children in their car in the recent past in lower New York. In the last three months of 2006 there were 3 incidences in the Yorktown area alone, one leading to the death of a teenager. In one of those cases, the mother was found passed out in her driveway after picking her children up from school. And in 2004, there was a case on Long Island of a woman arrested for DWI with her 5-year-old triplets in the back seat.

Surveys, both locally and nationally, show that girls in their teens are drinking at least as heavily as comparably-aged boys. It appears that this extends to adults as well. Some news items are pointing toward the current economy as the reason behind this horror, but these cases extend back several years. Simply put, it's nothing new.

At ASK we have a vision: a community that – by everyone working together – has become a safety net for our families. Until parents sign on to that whole-heartedly, the newspapers will continue to be difficult to read.

*Tricy Cushner, President    Cathryn Adler, Director*

### **Calendar**

**Thursday, Sept 17<sup>th</sup>**  
**7-10 pm**  
**2009 Taste of Yorktown**  
**... and Beyond!**  
*Field Home Mansion, Yorktown*

**Tuesday, Sept 29<sup>th</sup>**  
**4 pm**  
**ASK coalition meeting,**  
*Sparkle Lake Community Bldg*

**Saturday, Oct 10<sup>th</sup>**  
**11am – 6 pm**  
**New Yorktown Chamber of**  
**Commerce's Yorktown Festival**  
**& Street Fair, Commerce Street,**  
*Yorktown*

**Tuesday, Oct 27<sup>th</sup>**  
**4 pm**  
**ASK coalition meeting,**  
*Sparkle Lake Community Bldg*

### ***“Lights, Camera, Action!”***

By Art Lander

That's a direct quote from a group of Alliance for Safe Kids volunteers. Eight members of ASK spent six weeks over the summer learning to produce, direct and edit a show for the public access channel on Cablevision. Under the watchful eye of Cablevision trainer Walter Sands, we learned how to be floor manager, producer and director as well as editor of the programs we will produce. We will be working with youth from the Lakeland and Yorktown School Districts, as well as ASK Youth Court members, to create public service announcements (PSA's) focusing on preventing substance abuse in our community.

In addition to the PSA's, we will be producing a TV show highlighting all of the programs that the Alliance for Safe Kids operates as well as showcasing other local groups that are involved in keeping youth safe and secure in Yorktown. When it's time for the annual Emmy Awards, I am sure that when they open that envelope, they will say “And the winner Is ... ALLIANCE FOR SAFE KIDS!”

*Art Lander is founder and director of the ASK TV project*

*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 [Alliance\\_for\\_Safe\\_Kids@yahoo.com](mailto:Alliance_for_Safe_Kids@yahoo.com), visit our website, [www.AllianceForSafeKids.org](http://www.AllianceForSafeKids.org)*

Check out the new and improved ASK website: [www.AllianceForSafeKids.org](http://www.AllianceForSafeKids.org) !

Many, many, *many* thanks to Jann Mirchandani of Mirchandani Consulting for designing the site.

### ***Do as I say, not as I do?***

By Cynthia Cervini

My daughter has a knack for spotting any hypocritical behavior on the part of her parents, even from a distance. This ability is actually quite perplexing, since she is rarely able to locate anything useful or necessary like, say, missing cell phones or ipods. I once placed a dead mouse on the floor of her room (she'd gotten fond of eating in there despite our incessant pleas not to, and hey - I needed to send a message) where it stayed for forty-five minutes before she even saw it (ps: the dead mouse ploy worked for about a year before she tried to eat in her room again). But heaven forbid I should check my Blackberry at a traffic light; Little Miss You Know Who in the back of the minivan is sure to call me on it. She's so adept that she has the whole process streamlined to a slight incline of the head accompanied by a withering look and just one word to sum up her disgust at our blatant disregard for the rules...

#### ***"Really?"***

She's called us on stretching the truth, gossiping, lax seatbelt use, and (I love this one) when we spend money on anything she deems frivolous while preaching economic constraints. When I point out that perhaps she doesn't need \$300 of back-to-school clothes the month before we are about to outlay \$1,000 on her Sweet Sixteen, she'll counter any or all of my expenditures (conveniently overlooking that I'm the one earning the money in the first place).

Our teens (because I'm sure my daughter hasn't cornered the market on this behavior) watch EVERYTHING we say, wear, eat or do for signs of hypocrisy, so I wonder what they are internalizing by the rash of recent incidences of women driving drunk with children in the car. This July alone there were three cases in our immediate area with one receiving national attention. On August 18<sup>th</sup> CNN reported a disturbing development: 28.8 percent more women were arrested for driving under the influence in 2007 than just a decade earlier (this while the rate of men arrested for DUI has fallen). Does the warning against driving drunk just apply to men (who seem to be starting to listen) and teenagers? If we haven't gotten the message, how do we expect any credibility where our teenagers are concerned?

*Cont'd on pg. 3*

***"There is somewhat of a societal apathy to criminalizing drunk driving. People don't think of drunk drivers as criminals. They are. Their weapon of choice is a car."***

*-Kathleen Rice, Nassau County District Attorney*

### ***The 2009 Taste of Yorktown .... And Beyond!***

The Taste is back, and will be held on Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup>. See page 4 for more information.

**Do As I Say, Not as I Do?***Cont'd from pg 2*

Noreen O'Donnell, a Lo-Hud columnist, suggests that there may be apathy toward DWI and quotes Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen Rice, who successfully convicted Martin Heidgen of murder in the drunken driving death of a limo driver and seven year old Katie Flynn. Rice maintains, "This is a completely preventable crime that is killing thousands of people on our roads across this country every year. Every year, thousands of people lose their lives. ... There is somewhat of a societal apathy to criminalizing drunk driving. People don't think of drunk drivers as criminals. They are. Their weapon of choice is a car."

My daughter was a year old in October, 1994 when Susan Smith sent a car into a South Carolina lake drowning her two little boys, still strapped in their car seats. Along with the rest of the country, I was stunned that a mother could be capable of such behavior. I'm not sure that a woman driving drunk with her children in the car is much different.

On August 19<sup>th</sup> Brad Lamm, an interventionist who has struggled with addictions, wrote a heartfelt [piece](#) about the Diane Schuler case in which he urges readers to "replace the shock and disbelief with a teaching opportunity, in the hope that some meaning might emerge from our collective lament."

In talking about this tragedy with our children I shy away from using the word 'accident', which Webster's Dictionary defines as "chance or what happens by chance... an unforeseen event". My daughter is famous in our household in that anything adverse that happens to her is not her fault; it is invariably "an accident" simply because she didn't intend for it to happen ("it's not like I **wanted** someone to take my ipod"). I've tried to impress upon her that the choices she makes (such as leaving her iPod unattended during drama rehearsal) can lead to unhappy consequences (specifically, the iPod growing legs and walking away with someone else).

Anyone getting behind the wheel of a car in an impaired condition makes a **choice** and we need to keep driving home the consequences of these choices, while always looking closely at our own behavior. Because our kids sure are.

*Cynthia Cervini is a guidance counselor and parent who promises to not use her Blackberry while driving.*

**Youth Court Report**

By Art Lander

The lazy, hazy days of summer were not that lazy for members of the Alliance for Safe Kids' Youth Court Program. Members were involved in hearing cases from late June right up to the last week in August. The court presided over seven cases, ranging from Trespass and Petit Larceny to possession of a BB gun. Prosecution teams compiled reports and presented the cases and evidence to the Judges. The Defense teams worked with the defendants and their families to obtain a fair sentence of community service. Judges during that period sentenced defendants to a total of 90 hours of community service.

Further follow-up by teams indicated that all of the defendants sentenced during this period have successfully completed their community service.

In late July, members of the court traveled to the Ossining Youth Court and assisted them in preparing for an upcoming case.

With the continuing support of the Yorktown Police and Westchester County Probation, our Youth Court program has scheduled cases to be heard in September.

*Art Lander, a retired Youth Officer, is Director of the ASK Youth Court*

*The Alliance for Safe Kids, Inc. Presents*  
***The 2009 Taste of Yorktown .... And Beyond!***

*7 PM to 10 PM*

*Field Mansion on Catherine Street, Yorktown*

*Tickets \$75*

***Some participating businesses will include:***

*Bob B Q's ☺ Dreamcakes Bakery ☺ Finnegan's Grill ☺ Hanlon's Steak House ☺ Justin Thyme  
Little Sorrento ☺ Matilde's International ☺ Manhattan Beer Dist. ☺ Meme's Café at Club Fit  
Panera Bread ☺ Peter Pratt's Inn ☺ South Side Grill ☺ Suburban Wine & Liquor  
The Heights Bistro ☺ Table Local Market ☺ Travelers Rest ☺ Umami*

*Come taste the wares of Yorktown area businesses and support The Alliance for Safe Kids, Inc.  
The Alliance is a not-for profit 501(c)(3) corporation dedicated to keeping our kids out of harm's way.*

*To purchase tickets online, please visit the Alliance website: [www.AllianceForSafeKids.org](http://www.AllianceForSafeKids.org)  
For further information, call 914.736.1450 or email [Alliance\\_For\\_Safe\\_Kids@yahoo.com](mailto:Alliance_For_Safe_Kids@yahoo.com)*

***Family Day Message from  
County Executive Andy Spano***

Families are the cornerstone of our society and here in Westchester County, we are committed to the support and nurturing of all our families.

Each year on the 4th Monday of September, Westchester County joins with other communities throughout the United States to celebrate Family Day...a Day to Eat Dinner with Your Children. I encourage all the residents of Westchester to join together and eat dinner with their children.

Studies show that children who eat dinner regularly with their family are more likely to make positive and healthy choices rather than unhealthy ones. Communication is one of the key components to helping keep our children safe and our families strong.

Family Day 2008 is Monday, September 22nd. Share a meal with you children that day and start a habit of eating regularly together.

*For more information, download the Family Day brochure from Westchester.gov:*  
[http://www.westchestergov.com/pdfs/YOUTH\\_2008FamilyDayBrochure.pdf](http://www.westchestergov.com/pdfs/YOUTH_2008FamilyDayBrochure.pdf)

Another article on the subject:

“The Magic of the Family Meal”. *Time Magazine*,  
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1200760,00.html>