

Drunk driving assembly conveys wrong message

■ LAUREN PAK

Staff Reporter

Free key-chains, T-shirts and CDs fell like hail on students on April 24 at an outdoor assembly. People were laughing, talking, music blaring... BOOM! The sound of an enormous firework exploded and pounding echoed throughout the stadium. The bright mood plunged, interrupted by the reenactment of a severe car accident.

I think that this scene was brought even closer to reality by using students who attend West Linn. Reading out loud the casualties' real life stories really captured stunning images of their lives and painted clear pictures of their daily actions. That day over 1,400 students took home thoughts of not drinking and driving. But, how many analyzed what was really being said?

Overall, I thought that the assembly was well thought out and really captured the students' attention. However, even if you had only tuned in for five minutes, you would have left the stadium with one message. You can drive. You can drink. But you cannot drink and drive.

This message of not drinking and driving was emphasized so clearly that the main issue of not drinking in the first place seemed cloudy. As of May 7, 2007 there was a study conducted by the

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that concluded, "Young people who start drinking before the age of 15 are five times more likely to have alcohol problems later in life than those who begin drinking at age 21 or older."

The article says that in the U.S. there are 11 million underage drinkers and by the age of 18 more than 70 percent of all teens have had a drink. Over 11 percent of all twelve year-olds say that they have used alcohol at least once. One year later, at age 13, the percent doubled to 22. In the last year of a middle-schooler's life, 41 percent have had at least one drink, but 20 percent said that they have been drunk.

The Teen Help; Schools for Troubled Teens, conducted a survey on the illegal use of alcohol from three different grade levels in the U.S. in 2003. They reported that 30.3 percent of eighth graders have used/are using alcohol, in tenth grade, 44.9 percent and in twelfth, 52.8 percent.

As terrifying as these facts might seem, these should have been mentioned. By raising the awareness of what alcohol is capable of doing would make a person think again before chugging down a shot.

In the future, any assembly should go into more depth on both the short and long term results of gulping down a glass

of alcohol. I think that the information would have been more helpful and made teens more aware. Also, the parents of the students who were in the reenactment could have read their own child's story.

This would have created an even stronger impact and emphasized how much pain you would cause to not only yourself, but to also those who loved you. In the end, instead of taking away the thought of not drinking and driving students should have been left with the message that drinking isn't okay.



On the football field, WLHS students with the help of the Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue, re-enact a car accident caused by a drunk driver.
Photo by Colton Reyes

Metamucil targets young women

■ KAITLYN RAGAN

Staff Reporter

"Drop-dead gorgeous guts" and "Help your not-so-glam insides reach supermodel status." This is what the new Metamucil ads read. The ads picture attractive, fit women who look to be in their mid-twenties. For those unaware, Metamucil is a fiber supplement used mainly as a laxative for older people, but the makers of Metamucil, Proctor and Gamble, have launched a new campaign which markets to young women.

Why would women in their twenties take a laxative? According to Proctor and Gamble, the supplement will help users lower cholesterol and improve heart health, using the slogan "Beautify your insides" in their commercial. From the looks of it, this is not a health campaign, it is a beauty campaign.

Nowhere in the ads or commercials does the product advertise the supplement as a way to lose weight, but that is not stopping experts in the field of eating disorders from anticipating problems with abuse; especially when the company implies that the use of Metamucil can be part of a 'healthy' lifestyle. If that was the only way to get enough fiber into one's diet than maybe it wouldn't cause so much controversy, but whatever happened to simply eating healthy foods like whole grains, fruits and vegetables? The ads are trying to tell women they need something that they really don't.

Women who struggle with eating disorders have for years abused laxatives, and with Proctor and Gamble implying that a woman's insides are unclean and need to be beautified, women prone to these kinds of

problems are sure to be lured. If people's insides are so dirty and in need of cleaning, what about men? Why would this product be advertised solely to women? Because they are more likely to fall for the campaign, that's why.

Metamucil is not a drug and is made of all-natural ingredients, and as Dick Podiak, Metamucil's brand manager, said, "There's no long-term negative effect" from taking it. However, it is recommended by the company that it be used only as a treatment for occasional constipation, and that a doctor should be consulted regarding daily use. How many women looking for an easy and 'healthy' way to lose weight will do that? Probably not many. The makers of Metamucil need to stop preying on vulnerable young women and sell their product to people that actually need it.

Students: put an end to slurs

■ KIRA MATSUOKA

Staff Reporter

Sticks and stones can break your bones... but words can burn your soul. Hurtful, inappropriate words are typically used everyday by teenagers around school. A hundred years ago no one would have thought a person's disability would now be used as a way to insult someone; that a person's sexuality would be used as a way to denigrate and demean others.

What vocabulary are teens using? What if the words we used now followed us to our adult years and others knew the way we had treated others—for effect, to gain power, or just to be cruel?

Some say we are what we eat, but we are what we say. Slang and inappropriate English affects how we are seen; just like our appearance influences how others see us. A person's vocabulary can bring negative or positive attention. Even one word

can make the difference.

Using words like "gay" and "retarded" in a sentence make you look disrespectful, careless and rude. Are you aware that when you say that something is "so gay" that you appear prejudiced towards homosexuals? Do you care? The murder of a college student named Matthew Shepherd is a well-known example of a hate crime that was based on prejudice which has been fueled by hateful words.

Although this may be extreme, your inappropriate words can signal disrespect to anyone who hears you say it. These types of slurs are overused and useless. There are so many ways to bring each other down, but is that really what you want to do and how you want to be seen?

So what can we do? Take time to really think about what you say. Think about the actions your words suggest, and who you could offend. Let's enrich each other, one word at a time.

Stupid entertainers produce stupid news

■ SIMON KIRSCH

Business Manager

Richard Gere kissed an Indian Movie Star, and receives warrant for arrest.

Alec Baldwin leaves angry rant on his daughter phone.

Media scandal! Don Imus said what?!

Paris Hilton: Headed for prison.

Sanjaya Malakar's ridiculous hair destroys Idol!

I admit it; there are times when I do enjoy reading the occasional article about some celebrity. *TIME* usually has great features about good celebrity news, as do some tabloid shows. But at some point, one must ask why? With celebrity news dominating the 7:00-8:00 p.m. time slot, (its only competition is "Jeopardy" and "Seinfeld" reruns on the WB) I wonder how tabloid news is so profitable. Something is wrong with our society when the top story on local news is Sanjaya Malakar. There is

no real solution to this crazed obsession, but perhaps the truth can be a strong inhibitor.

As I said before, there is nothing wrong with the occasional celebrity news story. Where would the entertainment section of the newspaper be without them? I just am really sick of the media hyping up stories that they really shouldn't. Most recently Imus, long time shock jock and radio host was fired for being a shock jock and radio host.

But everyone with a TV, computer or friend already knows and has strong opinions about the issue. Therein lies the problem: there is no issue with a loudmouth radio host being a loudmouth radio host. He offended some people, get over it!

I personally believe that Imus should have held his job. Is this situation any worse than his other

homo-phobic, bigoted, racist remarks? If not for Al Sharpton, Jesse Jackson and their Black Crusaders, not a single left-coaster would even know about the comment (the I-man is not popular in Oregon).

The problem of media circus is not unique to this situation either. Remember the non-stop cable news storm surrounding the death (and the way they covered it, resurrection) of Anna Nicole-Smith. She is not an important member of society, and though her death was (slightly) sad...No One Cares!

Everyone from Bill O'Reilly down to lowly local news anchors were covering the story. Why does America so desperately want to read about people's personal lives? At some point our society needs to get over itself and realize there are more important issues.

Stupid News

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