

Teenage Drunk Driving: The Continuing Warning

Molly Ashline, Staff Writer

According to a report released by WRAL on January 30th, at the beginning of January two teens from Millbrook High were killed in a drunk-driving incident after leaving a party. Elizabeth Molloy and Garrett Prince were both under the age of eighteen. This is just one of many times the public has been notified about an accident like this in which teenagers get behind the wheel after drinking to a point of obvious impairment.

Sherri Henderson, who works in the Counseling Center at Meredith, gave some insight as to why these events keep happening: "The brains of adults younger than 25 are still developing and some decisions that adults younger than age 25 make do not take into account the consequences of those decisions." Henderson's rationale may be an underlying reason why Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) reported this statistic in 2011: "car crashes are the leading cause of death for teens and one out of three of those is alcohol related."

According to Henderson, this frightening statistic is highly preventable through "education and the possibility of raising the age to get a driver's license." Henderson does admit, however, that raising the driver's license age might give rise to more problems of its own.

The teenagers from Millbrook High who died, the younger who was Prince (the

driver), 16, may have been influenced to drink and drive by something bigger than peer pressure, as is usually assumed. Henderson believes that America's mass culture may be partially responsible: "I think marketing ads make drinking alcohol so glamorous."

In the past year, alcohol use has killed about 6,000 teenagers as stated by MADD. The high numbers of deaths over the years have many programs to start up to educate young people about the dangers of drinking and driving. Meredith had an "Arrive Alive" seminar in November on campus.

Despite these many warnings against underage drinking tragic incidents like the one involving the two Millbrook High students continue to happen. Henderson also said that even if students do not die in these alcohol-related accidents, the repercussions of underage alcohol use can be devastating as well: "losing your job, your ability to get a job and costly legal fees just to mention a few [repercussions]."

The price for students' deciding to drive intoxicated can be high in various ways, and for Molloy and Prince's families it was the highest price paid. Their deaths serve as warnings for all young people who think about operating a vehicle after drinking alcohol. Since one in three people will be involved in alcohol-related crashes in their lifetime, according to MADD, the warning cannot be heard loudly enough.

2012 Commencement Speaker Announcement Responses

collected by Emily Gamiel, Editor

It was announced that Silda Wall Spitzer, former first lady of New York and Meredith College alumna, class of 1980, would be the commencement speaker for the 2012 graduation ceremony. Commencement speakers are selected based on input provided by the senior class. We asked members of the 2012 graduating class what they thought of the selection. This is what they said:

"Spitzer initially seems like an engaging woman and even a brief overview of her personal accomplishments is impressive. She has clearly made some difficult choices in balancing her nonprofit organization, a career in law and the raising of her children. I'm interested to hear what advice and insight she has for our generation." -Michelle Metivier

"She has experienced a lot and is a very strong and successful woman. I think that she is a perfect role model to give us advice about the future and begin our new chapter of life." -Ashley Mendenhall

"I somewhat recognized her last name from hearing it on the news. I read about her accomplishments and involvements on the Enews posting and was impressed. It will be an interesting commencement address that I will be looking forward to hear." -Elizabeth Warren

"I was pleased to hear that Spitzer will be the speaker at our commencement. She has shown herself to be a strong, loyal woman. I think that she was a great choice to provide advice for us as we enter the 'real world.'" -Brandy Woodall

"I was a little surprised, but pleasantly. I think she's going to be really good, and I can't wait to hear her!" -Collins Crowe

"While I am certain that Spitzer is an accomplished woman who has received a top-notch education at Meredith, I cannot say that I am in favor of her being the commencement speaker for the 2012 graduates. I believe that a commencement speaker should be the epitome of the values taught at Meredith, one of which being self-respect. In the face of her husband's numerous affairs, Spitzer chose to remain married. To me, this is indicative of a lack of self-respect." -Rebecca Brodney

"I was really excited to hear that Spitzer is going to deliver the commencement speech. What an honor to have such a strong, successful and influential Meredith alum speak for this special occasion. She's a fine example of a woman who has exemplified great strength and grace in the face of adversity." -Branna Williams

Bobby Montoya Joins Girl Scouts

Julia Dent, Staff Writer

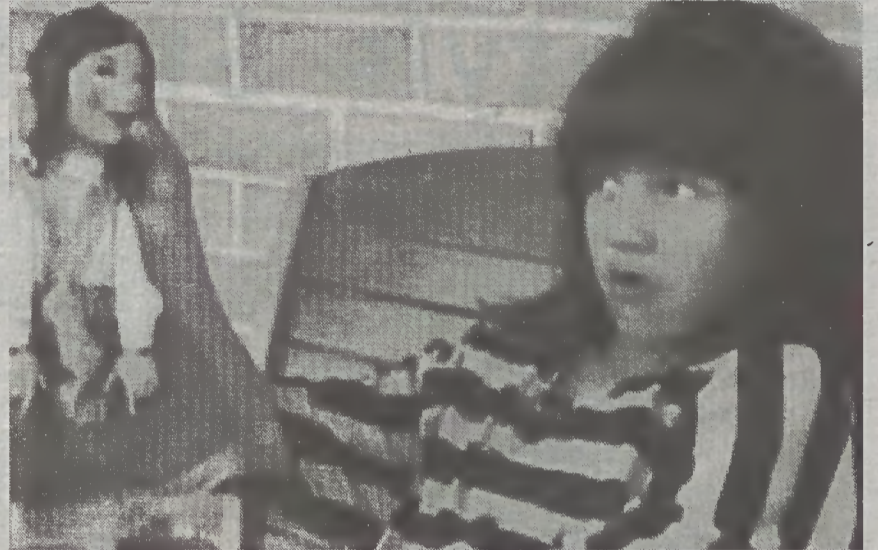


image via www.hispanicallspeakingnews.com

Everyone who grew up watching *The Brady Bunch* remembers the episode where Marcia joins Greg's Frontier Scouts; and the Brady boys retaliate with Peter joining the Sunflower Girls. Marcia struggles to complete all of the tasks at the campout, while Peter embarrasses himself by selling cookies door-to-door, decked out in a sunflower beret. More than forty years later, a similar event occurred with seven year old Bobby Montoya's decision to join a Girl Scout troop in Colorado.

At first, Montoya was denied admittance into Girl Scouts because he has "boy parts," but the Denver organization soon changed its mind. According to Mike Jaccarino, the author of the NY Daily News article titled *Transgender Boy's Attempt to Join Girl Scouts Initially Rejected Because 'He Has Boy Parts,'* Montoya's family was told that "if a child identifies as a girl and the child's family presents her as a girl, Girl Scouts of Colorado welcomes her as a Girl Scout." Montoya has identified as a girl "since he was about two years old," his mother said. "He's loved girl stuff, so we just let him dress how he wants, as long as he's happy."

However, some people are not happy with Montoya's admittance. When Montoya showed up for the first Girl Scout meeting, the troop leader "was so rude and made him cry," says Montoya's grandmother (Jaccarino). The leader told Montoya's family, "It doesn't matter how he looks, he has boy parts; he can't be in Girl Scouts. Girl Scouts don't allow that. I don't want to be in trouble by parents or my supervisor" (Jaccarino). Despite what the troop leader said, the Girl Scouts of Colorado are

trying to be supportive towards Montoya and other transgendered children. "Our requests for support of transgender kids have grown, and Girl Scouts of Colorado is working to best support these children, their families and the volunteers who serve them," the organization says (Jaccarino).

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Although Montoya will not be returning to that Girl Scout troop, the child's story has spread. Many people have started boycotts of Girl Scout cookies in disagreement with the situation, and others have bought the cookies in large quantities to support Montoya. Vice president of Spectrum Ariel Nikas stated, "I believe anyone who identifies as female should be able to join female organizations and the same goes for men."

"I definitely think that children who identify with a gender that is not the one they were born with should be allowed to join organizations that allow them to make bonds and lasting friendships," says Bailey Dunn, a former Girl Scout and current president of Spectrum. "It is the opportunity that I would want for my kids, especially with my experience with the Girl Scouts of America." She adds, "[Girl Scouts] has the possibility of helping to create another safe haven for LGBT youth in this country."