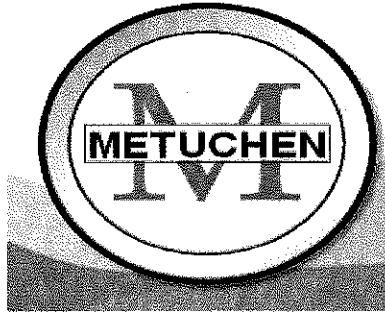


# **METUCHEN HIGH SCHOOL**

**May 2011**



**TO: All Parents/Guardians**

**From: Bruce J. Peragallo  
The Office of the Principal**

Since the Junior-Senior Prom (May 26) and Graduation (June 22) are near, I urge all parents to join us in supporting celebrations that are free of alcohol and drugs. To that end, the High School again will cooperate with the **Middlesex County Driving While Intoxicated Task Force** during prom weekend and on graduation night. I have attached letters from County Prosecutor Bruce J. Kaplan to all students concerning the DWI Task Force's Checkpoint system and to all parents concerning drinking and driving. Also attached is information from the National Council on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse (NCADD) of Middlesex County for all parents concerning parties and substance abuse.

In addition, the High School Student Assistance Coordinator (Judi Cheung) will sponsor an assembly program on Tuesday, May 24, for all juniors and seniors. This program will provide information from SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions), Liberty Mutual Group and the local police department. It is the aim of this program to provide our teens with important and timely information about driving, staying safe, and making good decisions.

As parents, you can do your part by not condoning parties or celebrations where alcohol and/or drugs are present. Also, be advised that you do have legal responsibility and civil liability if alcohol and/or drugs are consumed by high school students in your home or on your premises. Do not allow your children to attend parties that are not properly supervised by parents or other responsible adults.

Please note that **Project Graduation**, the alcohol-free and drug-free graduation party for seniors (sponsored by senior parents), will be held again this year. All seniors will be bused to and from the affair. Specific details will be provided prior to the party.

Let's all work together to keep May and June, especially prom weekend and graduation night, a happy, safe and sober memory.

If you have any questions concerning the prom, graduation night, and/or substance abuse, please call Vice Principal, Susan La Fauci, or me for clarification. We will be happy to discuss the above with you (732-321-8744). Thank you for your cooperation in such an important matter.

Just a few reminders.....

**Reminder 1** – Early dismissal time for Thursday, May 26, for any student for Prom is **1:07pm**. No one will be allowed to leave before that time. **All requests for early dismissal for that day have to be in writing (NO PHONE CALLS) and in the Front Office by Tuesday, May 24 – no later!**

**Reminder 2** – The High School will be providing bus transportation to and from the Prom free of charge. The bus will leave the high school at 6:30pm and will return after the Prom at approximately 12:45pm.

**Reminder 3** – If your child is driving to the Prom and is 17 years of age, he/she must leave the Prom by 10:30pm in order to be home by 11:00pm. This is New Jersey State Law for all students on a provisional license.



## MIDDLESEX COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

**Bruce J. Kaplan**  
*County Prosecutor*

25 Kirkpatrick Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901  
732-745-3300

prosecutor@co.middlesex.nj.us

**Julia L. McClure**  
*1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Prosecutor*

**Robert J. Travisano**  
*Chief of County Investigators*

*Deputy 1<sup>st</sup> Assistants*

**Nicholas F. Sewitch**  
**Christopher L. C. Kuberiet**  
**Christie L. Bevacqua**  
**Keith M. Warburton**

April 25, 2011

Dear Parent:

Prom and graduation season is almost upon us.

Congratulations on a job well done! We at the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office hope that you and your family enjoy this very important event in your lives.

However, it is during this time of celebration that we must be especially careful. Our children are under enormous peer pressure to drink. The pressure on parents to allow drinking during this season nearly equals the peer pressure placed on our children. It is important for us to do everything in our power to combat this peer pressure and discourage underage drinking.

When our children drink and drive, they are at risk to kill or seriously injure themselves and others. This simple, but chilling fact, requires no further explanation. Hopefully, it is all the motivation that we need to ensure that we, as parents, act responsibly when addressing the issue of alcohol use during prom and graduation season.

However, drinking and driving can destroy their lives in other ways as well. Few parents realize the virtual certainty that their child will be sent to jail if he or she kills someone in an alcohol related crash. A drunk driver who kills another person must serve at least three years in State Prison without the possibility of parole regardless of his or her age or good character. (Most will serve considerably more than three years in jail). Over the last 18 years, every drunk driver who has killed someone in Middlesex County has gone to jail. During that time period, 95% of all intoxicated drivers who have seriously injured innocent persons in this County have been incarcerated. These statistics include children who were in their late teens. The message is clear and simple – drunk drivers who kill or seriously injure others are going to be jailed without exception. It is the duty of every parent to ensure that this does not happen to their child.

Even a simple drunk driving arrest which is not related to a car accident will cost a first offender a minimum of \$23,980.00 in fines, surcharges, legal fees, increased insurance premiums, etc. as well as the loss of his or her driver's license for at least seven months and possibly even a year. Most of us would agree that this is hardly the way that we would want our children to begin their adult lives.

It is important for parents to understand that they too may suffer legal consequences that result from underage drinking. Anyone who provides alcohol to a person who is not of legal age is guilty of a crime. More importantly, if the underage drinker then becomes involved in a fatal or serious motor vehicle collision, the parent who provided the alcohol can be sued and held liable for enormous damages. The same holds true even when the parents do not supply the alcohol, but rather provide the environment or safe haven in which persons under the age of 21 are permitted to drink. In other words, parents who purposefully, knowingly, or negligently allow underage drinking in their homes can be successfully sued even if they did not furnish the alcohol.

These are but a few of the tragic consequences that await underage drinkers and their parents. Our goal is to help you recognize and understand these consequences so that you can protect your children, as well as yourself. More importantly, by demanding an alcohol-free prom and graduation season, we can ensure that our children will arrive home safely.

I am also asking you to speak to your children about the perils of driving while fatigued. Please understand that driving while fatigued is as dangerous as drunk or drugged driving. It has long been popular for students to drive down to the shore immediately following their prom and graduation celebrations, despite the fact that they are tired from having been awake for 24 or more hours. We must do everything in our power to discourage this dangerous tradition. In addition, under a new law, drivers who fall asleep at the wheel and cause fatal accidents may now be prosecuted for vehicular homicide. It is imperative that we not allow our young drivers to succumb to driver fatigue and become either a fatal accident statistic or a criminal defendant.

Thank you for your help, assistance and understanding.

Very truly yours,



BRUCE J. KAPLAN  
Middlesex County Prosecutor

/sk

# Mother gets 30 days for buying teens beer

*By Sam Chan, Associated Press writer*

WAREHAM -- A Plymouth mother of five will serve a month in jail after admitting yesterday that she bought several cases of beer for her teen-age son and his friends, two of whom drowned after drinking.

Anti-drinking activists and the parents of one of the dead boys called the sentence disappointing, saying it was too slight. Roxanne Pulsifer, 30, pleaded guilty in Wareham District Court after accepting a two-year jail sentence, of which she will have to serve 30 days. She also was ordered to perform 500 hours of community service.

Ms. Pulsifer had withdrawn two previous guilty pleas after hearing the sentences that were to be imposed upon her. Yesterday, she was in court with her 5-year-old son by her side.

"I feel sorrow and a great deal of pain for the families of the victims," Ms. Pulsifer said after the hearing. "For all involved it's best to end it here."

Ms. Pulsifer was accused of buying two 30-packs of beer during a party hosted by her teen-age son June 1. Two of her son's friends, John Linden, 17, and Jared Purser, 16, both of Plymouth, drowned when a canoe they took out later that night capsized on White Island Pond.

Parents of both victims were at the sentencing.

"I'm going to my son's grave to tell him what happened today," Cindi Linden said.

Tom Purser said he was disappointed both by the sentence and by the fact that Ms. Pulsifer won't begin serving it until June 30 so she can make child-care arrangements. He also wanted Ms. Pulsifer to address him in court.

June Shire, co-founder of the Plymouth County chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, said Ms. Pulsifer's sentence was "a travesty of justice."

"After 30 days, she can go on with her life," Ms. Shire said. "These boys who were killed, they can't."

Ms. Pulsifer twice withdrew her guilty plea after judges imposed sentences beyond what prosecutors recommended. The first withdrawal came in December when a judge recommended she serve two years in jail.

She again pleaded guilty to charges of supplying liquor to minors and contributing to the delinquency of minors, but recanted when a judge said she would have to spend 30 days of her sentence behind bars.

If Ms. Pulsifer had gone to trial, she faced up to 11 years in prison and \$20,000 in fines.

Wareham District Court Judge James O'Neil stayed Ms. Pulsifer's sentence until June 30. She will serve her sentence in Barnstable County House of Correction because Plymouth doesn't have a women's jail.

# UNDERAGE DRINKING AND YOUR DRIVING PRIVILEGES

**DID YOU KNOW THAT** underage drinking can have severe consequences for young people who drink and the adult that provides the alcohol to a minor.

An underage drinker can face mandatory loss of driving privileges for six months, even if no car was involved.

If you are not yet licensed, the date of the suspension of privileges starts on the date you would have been eligible to drive.

An additional penalty of 30 days suspension may be added to a six months license suspension for drinking in a motor vehicle.

A minimum fine of \$100.00 can be assessed on the underage drinker.

The underage drinker will also have a permanent disorderly persons record. A court may decide to require participation in an alcohol rehabilitation program, at an additional cost.



\*Charges for use of false ID may be imposed, which carries a fine of not more than \$360.00 or imprisonment for no more than 60 days.

**DID YOU KNOW:** There are both criminal and civil liabilities for underage consumption of alcohol.

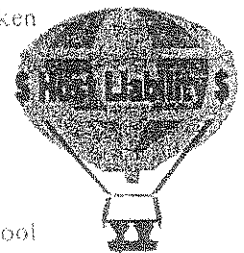
Upon complaint and observation charges will be filed against property owners, parents or guardians for allowing underage use of alcohol/drugs. If underage drinking occurs on private property and a parent, guardian and/or the owner is present, the party or parties responsible could be arrested and charged with allowing underage drinking and creating or maintaining a condition endangering the safety or health of individuals.

If underage consumption occurs on private property and an owner, parent or guardian is not present, police will send a certified letter advising what took place and what action police will take if an incident reoccurs.

When a violation occurs, action will be taken to insure the safety and well being of all persons present including the ensuring that no vehicles are operated unlawfully.

If underage consumption of alcohol or drugs occurs on school property, upon complaint said person will be examined by a school doctor, family or emergency room staff. If test determines positive results, appropriate charges will be filed.

Appropriate action will also follow for possession of alcohol and / or drugs on school property.



## ADDITIONAL SANCTIONS FOR ADULTS WHO PROVIDE ALCOHOL TO MINORS

1. Persons 21 or older who purchase alcohol or provide alcohol to an underage person are subject to being charged as a disorderly persons and face up to six months in jail, a fine up to \$1000.00 and court costs.
2. Any person 21 or older who allows an underage person to use his or her identification for the purpose of purchasing or obtaining alcoholic beverages is subject to the same penalties as an underage person using false identification.
3. An adult who serves alcohol can be held legally liable for injuries to and the actions of his guests even after they leave your home.
4. The New Jersey Legislature and Courts have addressed the issue of host liability wherein alcoholic beverages are served in the home. An adult may be civilly responsible to any person who is injured as a result of underage persons drinking in his home or on his property. This could lead to a **JUDGEMENT** against **YOU** that could imperil your home, business and any other assets.

# ATTENTION YOUNG DRIVERS!!!

## D.W.I. IS MORE THAN JUST A HANGOVER



### THE REAL COST OF DRINKING & DRIVING

Average auto insurance premium for an 18 year-old male, female living in Middlesex County, (with clean driver history).

**\$2100.00-2400.00**

#### Insurance Costs

Annual auto insurance premium post conviction

**\$ 5,415.00 x 3 = \$ 16,245.00**

(Your premium will not decrease for three years)

#### Municipal Court Fines

Underage drinking fine	\$500.00
Preliminary fine (\$250.00—\$400)	\$400.00
M.V. Insurance conviction surcharge (\$1,000 each year for 3 years)	\$3000.00
Fee for drunk driving enforcement fund	\$100.00
Twelve hours at I.D.R.C. (Intoxicated Driver's Resource Center)	\$180.00
Court fees	\$155.00
subtotal:	<b>\$6735.00</b>

#### Legal Fees

Attorney fee **\$ 1000.00**

(If you decide to fight the charges, expect to spend at least **(\$ 1850.00)**...)

**TOTAL COST OF (1) D.W.I. = \$23,980.00**

If driving drunk doesn't cost you your life, it will cost thousands of dollars in legal fees, municipal court fines, auto insurance surcharges and a mandatory six-month license suspension.

Even if you are not convicted of D.W.I., there are mandatory penalties for driving with any alcohol in your system if you are under the age of 21.

# PARENT'S GUIDE TO TEENAGE PARTIES

## When your teen is attending a party.....

1. Call the parent of the host/hostess to:

- Verify the occasion.
- Be sure that an adult will be present.
- Be certain that there will be no alcohol or other drugs permitted.
- Offer Assistance.

2. Know where your teen will be.

- Have the address and phone number of the house with the party.

3. Know how your teen will get to and from the party.

- Assure your teen that you or a specified neighbor or friend can be called if he/she needs a ride home.
- Discuss with your teen the possible problem situations which might necessitate such a phone call.
- If you are not going to be home, let your teen know where you can be reached.

4. Be sure your teen understands when he/she is to be home.

5. Be awake or have your teen awaken you when he/she arrives home.

- This can be a good way to check the time as well as a way to talk about the evening.

6. If your teen is staying overnight with a friend following a party, check with the parents of the friend beforehand to verify that:

- This is acceptable to them.
- They will be home.
- You both agree on curfew hours.

## HOSTING A PARTY

1. An adult should be present throughout the party.
  - As a parent, you can bring in snacks, non-alcoholic beverages, etc. Not only will your visibility help keep the party running smoothly, but it will also give you an opportunity to meet your teen's friends.
  - When possible, do not have a party in a separate part of the house. When it is in the main flow of the home, your presence will seem more natural and non-obtrusive.
  - You may want to ask another responsible adult to help chaperone the party.
2. Alcohol or other drugs should not be served or available
  - Be alert to the signs of alcohol or drug use.
  - Explain to your teen that you (the parent) are legally responsible for anything that happens to a minor who has consumed alcohol or drugs in your home.
  - Uninvited guests or those bringing in alcohol or another drug should be asked to leave. Be ready to notify the parents to ensure their safe transportation home.
3. Anyone who leaves the party should not be allowed to return.
  - This will discourage people from leaving with intent to drink and/or use drugs and then return to the party.
4. Encourage small parties.
  - Keep parties small (10-15 teens per adult). Go over party plans with your teen prior to the event.
  - Avoid open-house parties. This type of party limits the control of both parent and teen over the party.
  - Keep a guest list.
  - Encourage your teen to plan organized group activities or games.
  - Set time limits which will enable teens to be home before their curfew.
5. Set ground rules with your teen beforehand.
  - This will give you both a good opportunity to express feelings and concerns.
  - Let your teen know your expectations of him/her.
  - Help your teen understand your philosophy of non-alcohol and non-drug parties.
6. Plan to have plenty of food and non-alcoholic drinks available.
  - Teen favorites are pizza and chips. Food preparation also can be an important part of the fun, such as making popcorn, toasting marshmallows, making pizzas or subs.

## 7. Graduation parties:

- These parties require special planning because of the unusual mix of ages and relationships. Some families find a brunch works well, as alcohol would not be expected at this time of day. Many parents have decided to serve no alcohol at parties given for teenagers even if adults attend them.

## 8. Some other ideas:

- Get to know your teen's friends and their parents.
- Many parties occur spontaneously. When they do, it is recommended that the above guidelines be applied.
- If, despite your precautions, things get out of hand, do not hesitate to call the police department for assistance.

## ❖ Homes where parents are absent are frequently party sites!

- If it is imperative that you be out of town, have a friend or relative live in while you are away, or have your teen stay with a friend's family.
- Tell neighbors about your plans, and if they notice anything suspicious to call the police.
- Encourage your teen not to tell his/her friends that you are out of town.
- Ask friends and neighbors to monitor your house.

## References

Wilmes, D. (1988). *Parenting for prevention*. Minneapolis: Johnson Institute.