

School-dance ban was misstep

At least adults were on hand to catch the behavior troubles at L. Merion High.

By Louis Greenstein

A month ago, the school year began at Lower Merion High School. This year, though, there will be no school dances. Last spring, the high school administration banned school dances at Lower Merion (except for semi-formals and the prom). There were two reasons for this decision. Apparently, students were "simulating sexual acts" on the dance floor. Also, some students were arriving at the dances in an intoxicated state.

Maybe I'm missing something here, but it seems to me that if there's an activity that draws inebriated students — giving parents and school administrators the opportunity to catch them before they can harm themselves or others — why ban it? That is, if the dances function as a "sobriety checkpoint," all things considered, maybe that's all right. Of course, we don't want our teenagers to get drunk, but if they do, catching them and taking appropriate action are excellent ideas.

As for the "dirty dancing," one might argue that all dancing is a simulated sexual act. In fact, religious zealots have been contending that for years. But let's put

that premise aside for a moment. Again, maybe I'm missing something, but from a parent's perspective, isn't a chaperoned dance floor a better place to simulate a sexual act than an unchaperoned environment?

Now that the dances — which were supervised by parents — have been banned, what will students do on Friday nights? Calculus? Without dances, Lower Merion High School students will have one less adult-supervised activity.

Or, we could extend the logic that asserts that simulated sexual acts lead to actual sex — and ban all simulated sexual activity that occurs in high schools.

Football. Now there's a simulated sexual act if ever there was one. Young men piling on top of one another. Ban it!

Wrestling. All that clutching and grunting. Ban it!

Baseball. The game where players slap one another's rear ends and openly brag about getting to second base and beyond. Ban it!

Chess club. Way too much mating. Ban it!

Ban everything that could be construed as a simulated sexual act. If not, by golly, next thing you know, Lower Merion High School will have a pool table. And we all

know where that will lead.

Or ... reinstate the dances and enforce the rules that are already on the books. No intoxication; anyone arriving drunk will be turned over to his parents and/or the authorities.

And simulated sexual acts? Puh-leaze. Half of life's a simulated sexual act. And the other half's drudgery.

In reality, our teenage kids think about sex at least as often as we do. Sex (or, to be more precise, simulated sexual activity) is all around them. In the movies, television, advertising, everywhere they look. Like it or not, when one engages in a simulated sexual act, by definition, one isn't engaged in actual sex.

And like it or not, sometimes a simulation will blow off enough energy to quell one's desire for the real thing. Even if you don't like the moves, simulated sex isn't real sex.

To the Lower Merion High School administration: Bring back the dances. Give the kids a supervised, chaperoned place to dance (dirty or otherwise). Wake up and smell the body heat. Acknowledge that young adults need supervision, not censorship.

Louis Greenstein, a Lower Merion resident, is the father of three teenagers and the copresident of the Bala Cynwyd Middle School Home and School Association.



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