



The Community
School

Passages Program



Passages Press

My Chance to Make a Difference

by Sheena Stone

My first experience in the Rockland, Maine City Hall was on April 9, 2007. I have to say that I felt very privileged to be there and felt very big because of it. I was at City Hall because I felt that Rankin Street really needed a sidewalk and I was concerned for the families who live in the Fieldcrest and Coughlin apartment complexes. It was very wrong for the people who had put in the complexes side by side to never even consider the fact that most of the people would be disabled or family oriented that lived in the apartments. There are a lot of people who live in the complexes without vehicles, such as myself, who have to walk into downtown Rockland. The cars that come onto Rankin Street like to speed by and get really close to the people who are walking on the street. This was my chance to make a difference for the people who live on Rankin Street.

I was very nervous when I got into the City Hall building because of all the people there. I had written a speech four days earlier from this night and I must say I really didn't feel all that confident about my speech. I had gotten an email from Tom Hall, who is one of the councilors here in Rockland. The letter said that I did not have to go to the meeting. I knew I had to go to show them how important this was to me.

I made sure I was all dressed up for this event, so that I looked a little professional. I think that it helps. Glen was working that night, so Aislinn had to come with me. It was close to her bedtime so I worried about how grumpy Aislinn would be when we got there. Andrea, my teacher, had picked me up at 6:45 P.M. and we headed to City Hall.

When we got there I guess I was the first person on the list, because there I was, the first one called to the stand! As I read my speech, I felt like my heart was going to burst right through my chest. The palms of my hands were all sweaty and I felt like I was reading my speech as fast as a young child would talk. It seemed to me that I could hear the nervousness in my voice. It sounded really shaky and I barely made any eye contact with the mayor and councilors. As I was reading my speech, I had to make sure that I concentrated really hard because Aislinn had followed me and was jumping up and down and crashing into me. Andrea said it would be okay that Aislinn followed me, because it would show the mayor and councilors that I did have a daughter and it would make them look like bad guys if they opposed my request.

When I was done I walked past this older gentleman who gave me praise and said I did very well. This made me feel very happy. I was very

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happy to be able to do this. If it wasn't for Andrea none of this would have happened.

They ended up reading my letter to the mayor and councilors and that letter is what got me to City Hall. Then, when they were done reading the letter, it was time for them to vote on whether my request got onto the agenda or not. To my surprise all accepted and none opposed! I was so happy to hear it and so was Andrea and Martha.

Tom Hall stood up to inform me that I was invited to the next meeting in either May or June where they would discuss the cost for the sidewalk. This meeting is going to have a lot more citizens of Rockland to either agree or disagree with the sidewalk idea. If more of them disagree than agree, then it will not be happening in 2008. If most disagree with the sidewalk, then I will have to do a petition and go back to City Hall later.

When we first got to City Hall all I really noticed at first were all the cameras they had in the building. I wondered if they were recording this meeting, and come to find out, a couple of days later I saw myself on T.V. on channel 22! It was a big surprise and I wanted to record this for my own happiness! I got it recorded on one of Aislinn's old Barney movies.

I cannot wait to go to the next meeting to see if the sidewalk will actually be built in 2008. I hope that people will be on my side about this request for a sidewalk. If they do, I will be so grateful for it!



Five People I'll Meet in Heaven

by Amanda Cross

After watching the movie, I had to put a lot of thought into the five people I'd meet in Heaven. I was inspired by the lessons this man had to learn, like forgiveness. I really had to think about people who made an impression in my life whether good or bad. Also, whether or not these people played a big role in my life or not. This is what I came up with.

Number one. The first person I think I'd meet would be Brenda Gray. She made a very big impact on my life; she taught me trust, compassion and emotion. I believe I need to thank her for everything she brought into my life.

Number two. The second person I'd meet in heaven would be Martin, the man who shot her. He defined courage and fear for me. His actions set in motion a chain of events that played out in my life. I guess I need to forgive him for taking my best friend. I don't believe that I will have a living, breathing day where I will, though.

Number three. I might encounter the anonymous addict whose single poem I read that changed my opinion on needles, cocaine and sex. I found more self-value and less reason to abuse.

Number four. I suppose this might be a woman who picked me up hitchhiking and advised me to follow my heart and my dreams. She also told me to put a bit of trust in the unknown and to always, always be safe, and know the way home.

Number five. The last person I would (will) meet in heaven, is my mom. She is everything I *never* want to be, and everything I can't escape. I don't know if I'd find forgiveness, love, or if I'd finally just tell her off.

After writing down my thoughts on whom I'd meet in heaven, I got thinking about whom I'd wait for. To whom I might have something to give. I really thought about this for a long time and I could only think of one person.

I hope I can hang around to meet Crystal-Jean, a little girl I used to take care of. She was such

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a bright little girl. She saw way too much as a young child and endured more than any being should ever have to, all before the age of four. I hope I can meet her and make her aware that it wasn't her fault and that she should forgive her mother because she was too young and immature to be a parent. I hope she can overcome the abuse and unstable childhood she endured, and make her dreams come true.

Pregnancy from a guy's perspective

by Nick Halliley

We always hear of pregnancy from the female's side of things. Now, let's hear it from a guy's perspective. Women always talk about the pain; I can't say it doesn't hurt. They talk about the weight gain; well that's obvious. They talk about the joy they will have once the baby is finally out; I couldn't agree more. Afterwards, they usually say, "I am never having another one," but we all know most of the time they are lying. Now it's time for the guy to complain.

Us guys like the fun of conceiving. Everybody knows that. However, I don't know about every guy, but I know I was excited to find out I was going to be a dad. I just couldn't wait to find out the gender, both times. Both times I wanted a boy. Well, I haven't gotten my boy yet. Seeing the sonograms was a delightful experience. A lot has changed within two years. Technology is always changing. I was impressed by how much I could see with my second child in the ultrasound.

The term of a pregnancy is supposed to be about 40 weeks. However, it is becoming more and more common for pregnancies to only last 38 weeks. This term is divided up into three sections called trimesters. Weeks one through twelve are the first trimester, weeks thirteen through twenty-six

are the second and the last fourteen are obviously the third trimester.

For the mother:

In the first trimester, not too much happens other than you get to hear the heart beat for the first time. The second trimester, however, is when things start happening. During the very first week of the second trimester is when you'll start to show, especially if it isn't your first pregnancy. Also, the gender of a child cannot be determined until the fifth month, which is in the second trimester. Another thing to keep in mind - I just read that it is healthy to have intercourse during this time. Finding a comfortable position to sleep is going to be hard in the last weeks of this trimester. The third, and final trimester, is when you'll gain the most weight, but don't worry, it's healthy. Also, aches in your back and legs. Yeah, this is the worst time of the pregnancy, but at least it's right near the end. Braxton contractions start. Braxtons are known as pre-labor contractions. The last thing to know about the third trimester is it's time to be a mom.

For the baby:

Within the first four weeks, ovulation and conception occur, the gender is determined, and the baby can think, sense and feel. Week five is when most of the beginning development takes place, like the heart starts beating, umbilical cord develops, blood starts pumping and other organs develop. Week eight is when bones and cartilage begin to form. In the last few weeks of the first trimester, hands become more functional and the baby begins inhaling and exhaling movements. During the first weeks of the second trimester, you begin to feel the baby moving around, fingernails and toenails begin to grow, fat begins to form underneath skin, and the baby has learned to breathe. Other milestones in the second trimester include: he/she starts to look more human, vocal chords are formed, the sleep/awake patterns become more like that of a newborn and the kidneys make urine. Also, the heart grows stronger, the tongue is fully formed, proportions of the body are very similar to a newborn and air sacs in the lungs form. And in the final weeks of the second trimester, the eyelids are opening more,

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eyebrows and eyelashes are more noticeable and he or she can now recognize your voice. As far as the third and final trimester goes, it is only a matter of time before the baby can get his/her first breath of fresh air. Near the beginning of the third trimester baby's head will be in proportion, baby practices opening and closing eyelids, eyes can move side to side and he/she may start to "dance", or at least move to the rhythm of music. Mid-third trimester you can look forward to your baby acting like a newborn, having his/her eyes open when awake and closed when sleeping, baby has learned how to blink, his/her hearing is fully developed by week thirty-five and by week thirty-six the only organ left to mature is the lungs. Weeks thirty-seven through forty is definitely the final stretch. During this period the baby can come out at any point, because he/she is at full term. Baby gets hiccups, fifteen percent of your child's body is fat and about sixty to seventy-five percent is liquid or water.

For the father:

Here is the part most don't know about, or at least you can't really research it. Well, it's hard to find. Men, what you ought to do is love and cherish your woman. Treat her like you don't want her to ever leave. This may be harder for some men, considering some women are harder to deal with than others. However, in the first trimester, try to help her by cooking and letting her take naps, letting her sleep in if she wants to and **DON'T PISS HER OFF**. In the second trimester, she won't be as fatigued and tired, so she will be able to cook and help you clean more. She won't need as many naps, but when she looks tired, suggest a nap, don't push it, though. This will be her happiest part of the pregnancy, but still don't get her angry with you. Now the third trimester is the "fun" part. Just remember one thing - she is in a lot of pain in this trimester, so she's testy. You might end up testy by the end of the pregnancy, but it is well worth it if you love your woman. Well, it's worth it just to be a dad. Make sure that you assert yourself into her life, in a good way. So, basically what I'm saying is, in the third trimester, **DON'T PISS HER OFF!!**

In my life, I have two beautiful little girls. The first one lasted thirty-nine weeks in the womb and the second lasted thirty-eight. I wasn't around for the first pregnancy, due to dislikes between me and Lizz's dad, and between Lizz and my friend whom I was living with. So it was hard to be around, but with the second I was around for the whole thing. Let me tell you, women are not pleasant during pregnancy, but I can't say I blame them, they ARE in a lot of pain and don't get enough sleep. I know if I'm in pain and don't get enough sleep, I'm crabby. Well, have fun with the pregnancy and child after. Oh, and guys - good luck.

Parenting

by Nick Halliley

The techniques that people use to be parents vary from family to family and person to person. Everyone uses different techniques for different situations. Most things people do are NOT wrong, but there is also a lot that is wrong.

In my opinion, a little smack on the butt when kids get too out of control is fine, but smacking them upside the head as hard as you can because they said no is a little excessive. Yelling when a child is deliberately disobeying is fine, but yelling every time they do something wrong or don't do what you want is just like too much. Remember, you want your kids to love and respect you, not hate and fear you. If you don't discipline in some way, your kids will probably disrespect you for the rest of their life, because they were spoiled.

People somehow can discipline without yelling or spanking, I don't know how, but they do. I think it might be because I have a temper that I can't do that, or it could be how I was brought up. How I was brought up was being yelled at a lot. Most of the time I deserved it; sometimes I didn't. However, if I had been brought up without the yelling I probably would be a happier person, but

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gotten into more trouble. I got grounded a lot, but it didn't do anything, because I always had something to amuse me. "NO TV FOR A WEEK"... okay, I'll play with my action figures, or play my card game I made up. The only time I remember my dad losing his temper before high school, was when my mom told me to clean my room, and I said, "No. The Constitution says this is a free country and I have the right to not clean my room." Needless to say, I got sent to my room, anyway. Then, a while later, my dad came in and picked me up off my bed, either by the neck or the shirt, I don't remember, and threw me down onto the floor and yelled at me. I had a bed that was like a bunk bed, but instead of a bottom bunk there was a bookshelf and a bureau.

Unfortunately, or fortunately, I don't remember when I was littler and my dad was a drunk. I've heard there were beatings. He'd always lose his temper. He was an @\$h01e. My sister, who is four years younger than me, has told my girlfriend about some of that. I hope I don't lose my temper with my kids like that. Well, I guess it's a good thing I don't drink, but I think if I did it once in a while it might help me unwind.

I've also seen this one mother I know yell at her kids for everything. I mean everything. Now her daughter is scared of her, you can tell. The mother doesn't see anything wrong with that, though. Maybe it's how she was brought up, I don't know. Either way, I feel bad for her daughters. I remember she said we shouldn't name our daughter Skyler Crystal, because it's too pretty, "You can't yell it in a pissed off tone." We have come to realize she was wrong, but that doesn't matter. What matters is her two daughters will probably be scared of her for their whole lives and might turn out to be worse than her.

In closing, I think people should think before they act, especially with their kids. It's hard being a parent, all of us in the Passages program know that, but remember, it's also hard to be a kid. Congratulations on being parents and good luck on being good ones.

Syke!! I'm not done, yet. I still have to talk about something I'd like to learn. Well, I'd like to learn how people discipline their children without spankings and yelling. What do you do when your child(ren) misbehave(s)? Well first things first, stop and cool off. After a few seconds of cooling off, you are ready for the next step. Ask your child(ren) what is going on. Listen to their answers. Evaluate the stories to figure out exactly what happened. Then you can discipline your child(ren) in the appropriate manner - like a timeout, which might be more effective when they get older as an embarrassment. Or if they are going through a temper tantrum, the punishment might be to lay a blanket on them while they are kicking and screaming and let them cool off by themselves. Do this only after you talk and listen to your child(ren).

Spankings. Well, spankings are a hard thing to not do when you grew up being spanked. But, just try your hardest to follow the steps I just gave you. It is easier said than done, but hell, it's worth a try isn't it?

Changes

by Santa Havener

Since I have joined the Community School my life has been continuously changing. When I first joined the school my daughter and I had just gotten into an apartment with my ex Steve and his brother. This is what I thought I wanted for myself, but soon found out differently. After being in the apartment for a short period of time, I went unappreciated, got blamed for every problem, and was highly disrespected as a girlfriend. I was miserable and I needed to be appreciated and seen for all I did, I needed to be respected, and I needed to be happy. I had to finally come to the conclusion things were not going to change and I needed to give up trying. Mind you, this was very hard for me because Steve was the love of my life, but I could no longer handle his brother, the way he treated me, and the effect he had on Steve's life. Also, I could not stand the way Steve always made me his last

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priority. I was being emotionally, mentally, and physically damaged by the life I was living. I began to drink heavily, drive drunk with no license, give up on my schoolwork, and not have a care in the world. So, to make a long story short, when Steve decided to leave while I was sleeping and go out of state, thinking it was ok, I decided this was the last time and I packed my bags, boxes, totes, or whatever and left.

At the time I made my decision I had been hanging out with my uncle and one of his friends, who is now my boyfriend Ben. I asked Ben if he would help me get out of this place and he did. In the end I moved to Cushing from Rockland with Ben and started a quick relationship with him. When I say quick, I mean almost instantly. In the beginning I was not happy - I was a drunk. I still loved Steve and this was harmful to my new relationship. Also, being in Cushing was a big difference from being in Rockland, and at times this was very hard for me because I felt stranded in a place where there was nothing. I did not know what to do, so I drank. This impaired my judgment on everything. This went on for a long time. Ben dealt with it, though, - never calling me a name, raising a hand to me, or disrespecting me.

After going back to Steve a couple of times and figuring out that it would not work, it killed me every day. I continued to drink. Drinking made me very confused and because of my past relationships I could not handle Ben's kindness and the boring town of Cushing, so I figured I would go back to Florida and try out my daughter's father Dennis again. Him being in prison, the past being too horrific, and the lifestyle of his family that I was staying with, instantly made me realize I could not be with him either. It also made me wake up and realize I did not want to be a drunk anymore. After watching what a drunk looked and acted like every day in the home where I had to reside if I was going to be with Dennis, I tried to stop drinking. I was still very confused, but knew in my heart when I was with Ben he was almost everything I ever begged or prayed for. I knew I needed a better life for myself. I also knew I could get used to the life Ben

introduced me to. I decided to come home to Ben's and start a life. I enrolled back into the Community School, started going to church (something I knew I wanted and needed in my life), was respected by my boyfriend, and I am now a mother of our son Leland.

There were and still are some things that need to change in order for me to be completely happy with Ben, but I let him know what these things are and I can see him trying to make an effort to change the things that bother me. That is the best! It makes me feel like my opinion matters, like I am worth changing for, like someone is listening. It basically makes me feel like I am somebody. Again, I am not used to this behavior, so it is still hard for me at times. I don't know how to react to his kindness, so I react the wrong way. This is something I have to work on.

Being with someone who respects me makes a big difference in my life. I no longer have to be miserable wondering what is going on with my boyfriend, when I will see him, or if he is ok, because I am now involved in anything my little heart desires. Ben wants to be with me, he loves me, and we always let each other know what is going on. I no longer have to feel alone, because if not anything else, I always have my Heavenly Father to lean on, and I no longer have to feel like a failure in life, because I have almost completed with my core skills, which will earn me my diploma. I can use this to make an even greater life for myself, and I now have a wonderful family to support me and give me encouragement.



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Slut – What's in a Word?

by Amanda Cross

I am writing this paper to discuss some issues I feel are very important when you are sexually active. I am working on my sexuality core skill and I felt the need to speak out about some things like communication and safety as well as self-esteem. I will cover my thoughts on the above issues and some others in the following pages. This paper is also about my sexuality and my comfort with it. My hope is that it might help others if I am open about it. I know that in the past speaking about such private matters as one's sexuality has been a bit hush-hush, but it is a new day and age. I hope to encourage some self-awareness in the readers and maybe boost their self-respect. I hope I do not offend anyone and that you can respect my opinions and appreciate that they come from my life experience. I encourage all the readers to write down their thoughts and comments, and to respond if they would like.

I have been called a slut and much worse in my life so far. I suppose there is more to come. I can't really write a paper about this slur without the correct definition, so I've chosen to define it. People use derogatory words to hurt you and make themselves feel self-righteous. This can come as a sacrifice to your self-esteem. Without good self-esteem you can't feel good about yourself, and it is hard to see why anyone else would. If you can't feel good about yourself, sex is not going to make it better. * Self-esteem is how we *feel* about ourselves, self concept is what we *think* about ourselves.*

Slut- a.) A person, especially a woman, considered sexually promiscuous

b.) a slovenly woman

The ultimate origin is unknown, but in 1402, it was used as, "a dirty, slovenly, or untidy woman" Chaucer uses *sluttish* (c.1386) in ref. to the appearance of an untidy man.

The meaning "woman of loose character, bold hussy" is attested from c.1450; playful use of the word, without implication of loose morals, is attested from 1664.

"Our little girl Susan is a most admirable slut, and pleases us mightily." [Pepys, diary, Feb. 21, 1664]

Sometimes used in the 19c. As a euphemism for bitch or female dog. There is a group of North Sea Gmc. words in *sl-* that mean "sloppy," and also "slovenly woman," and that tends to evolve toward "woman of loose morals"

(All definitions and word histories are from <http://www.dictionary.com/search/word>)

So why are we called sluts? Why have I been called this? Is it because I claim sexual freedom or that I don't consider myself a baby factory and recognize my own needs? Is it because we women have overstepped our bounds by no longer accepting the roles that society has given us? In self-defense I embrace derogatory names and accept them as a high five to my womanhood, if it means I can share sexual equality with the opposite sex. Historically, encouraging sexual monogamy and abstaining from sex until marriage was a means to protect men from fathering claims. However, it resulted in condemning sexual freedom for only one sex. Shouldn't men share equal responsibility in fathering a child? We now have DNA tests that prove paternity so why must the old custom and attitude survive? Having said this, I do not think women should sleep around and depend on a test to know who the child's father is if they become pregnant. Sexual activity requires adult responsibility. If a man wants to be protected from false paternity claims, shouldn't he be responsible enough to have only one partner? And, if the couple doesn't want a child, then birth control and condoms should be agreed on in advance. If they are considering children they should be able to communicate the need for exclusivity to one another.

I have had more sexual partners than I am proud to admit. Still, I do not consider myself a slut.

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I am satisfied with the sexual encounters and relationships I have had and continue to have. As a parent, now I find that I have to be more cautious in my relationships, as I am introducing these same relationships into my daughter's life. Still, even exercising caution, the term "slut" remains applied to women who've had past sexual freedom. A good question is, why is it so difficult to escape the term once it has been assigned? Some of this has to do with accepting it ourselves. It is difficult to escape, because once it's been assigned to you, you are stigmatized, and as social creatures we can't help but feel the burn. The old adage, "Sticks and stones will break my bones, but words can never hurt me" is ridiculous. When people call you something like this it can't help but affect the way you feel and are thought about, because you are part of the culture that okays it. If someone overhears you being referred to as a slut, they automatically think you are unreliable, promiscuous, or a bad mother. What are the consequences of this shamed identity in terms of the way your parents, children, and employers treat you?

I guess some people think that it's their prerogative to call women like me 'sluts', but I believe it says more about them and their vocabulary skills than it will ever say about me. I am happy and VERY satisfied and nowhere near as naïve as I used to be. I am open with myself and others. I prefer to think of myself as courageous and strong. Sometimes, this requires not conforming to standards that discriminate, but women wouldn't be allowed to vote if not for strong and courageous women. I am very sexually open and I have never had a problem talking about my sexuality. I know this violates society's view of women of being passive and can be shocking. But I believe that this topic should be discussed. There truly is no reason to fear an open truthful discussion.

I believe communication is the only way to have a comfortable and healthy relationship. *If you can't talk about sex, you are not ready for it.* If you can't communicate your wants, needs, and dislikes to your partner, how will your relationship be any good? There aren't many "mind readers" out there.

The first step is understanding yourself, and being comfortable with you. Then and only then, will you be able to be comfortable communicating your needs with others. I feel that I am very in tune with myself. I know what I want and need most of the time, especially when it comes to sex. I have to have boundaries set for a relationship. It is always good to know what you want from your relationship or at least a good idea before entering it. You should always be open with your partner when it comes to these issues and also be open to hearing what they want. This can help with the problem of "I thought he/she loved me." If one of you wants love, marriage, etc, and the other just wants sex, it is probably not a good idea to be in that relationship.

It is always important, especially before entering a sexual relationship, that you can talk about past sexual encounters and relationships. Sometimes this can be difficult because of the fear that you'll be judged, especially if you've been called a "slut". Still, this openness is necessary and requires that we overcome the shame others have caused us to feel. Part of this openness has to do with being safe. If you have any concerns about your health or your partners, it is best to abstain until you have been medically tested. If you are comfortable enough to enter into a new relationship, you should also be comfortable enough to protect yourself with condoms, dental dams, etc. There are many STD's or STI's that have no symptoms and can be transferred even with protection. Physical health is very important for yourself, your children, and your partners.

Emotional health is just as important as physical health when you are in a relationship. I don't believe in having sex with someone you can't trust. Emotionally it is always a good idea to be ok with you. I don't like being self-conscious and a good way to avoid that is to be comfortable in my own skin. I love myself, therefore I can love others and I can let them love me. Good self-esteem is vital. If I don't have good self-esteem I don't have good sexual encounters. Sex has a lot to do with my emotional health.

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I hope that my contribution has been informative and thought provoking. I encourage other Passages students to start a dialogue on the subject of overcoming shame in order to have a healthy self-identity. I would love to share opinions and hear about how others have struggled with this issue. Maybe such a dialogue can unite our strengths and give us renewed visions of ourselves in the world.

Interview with a Kickboxing Instructor

by Santa Havener

Santa: I am doing this interview because I am researching different careers that I may be interested in, and I am hoping that this interview will help me to decide whether or not kickboxing is really a career that would be of interest to me.

First off, what amount and type of education do you need to become a cardio kickboxing instructor?

Emily Lawry: I completed a correspondence through The American Fitness Professionals Association (AFPA) out of New Jersey. A four month course, but there are five other national certification organizations all with different levels of recognition.

Santa: What other type of classes can you teach with your education?

Emily: I am only certified in cardio kickboxing.

Santa: What does cardio mean?

Emily Lawry: Scientifically it means to elevate the heartbeat at least thirty minutes everyday, or one hour three to four times a week, but also describes the pace of the class.

Santa: Where did you go to get your education, and would you recommend me going to the same place?

Emily Lawry: As I said before, I got certified through the (AFPA) out of New Jersey, and I would absolutely recommend you going to the same place.

Santa: Do you remember how costly it was to receive the education needed?

Emily: \$350.00

Santa: What equipment is needed to get started?

Emily: Jump ropes, good music, mirrors, heavy bags, hand wraps, and focus mitts.

Santa: If I did not have my own place of business where could I go to teach a class?

Emily: Local gyms, school gyms, martial art studios, YMCA's, resorts, or even a school field.

Santa: What is the approximate rate I would be charged for teaching a class in someone else's business?

Emily: Anywhere from ten to twenty dollars an hour.

Santa: What would you suggest the maximum and minimum charge be for each individual in a class?

Emily: Min. eight dollars and max. fifteen. It depends on the location

Santa: What preparations do you need to take before teaching a class?

Emily Lawry: I need to choose my music; I need to put choreography together to last an hour, and plan my strength training segments.

Santa: What made you choose this career?

Emily: I like improving other people's health. Also, I like improving my own health.

Santa: What is the most enjoyable part of teaching kickboxing?

Emily: Seeing my client's fitness levels improve, but also after every class seeing them leave in sweat knowing that their heart has had a good workout.

Santa: If you went back in time would you have chosen a different career? Why?

Emily: No.

Santa: I have always been interested in many different careers. It is a very hard thing to choose the career I would like best. I know that whatever career I choose I would like to be around people, express myself (through ideas, performance, problem solving, etc.), earn a good salary, face

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challenges, be noticed for who I am, get physical, be independent, etc. I look at it like this; I want my job to also be a stress reliever, and an adrenalin rush. With this said, do you think this would be a good job for me?

Emily: Absolutely, as far as a good salary you would have to be very passionate about it, because you will not get rich doing it. You definitely express yourself and develop deep bonds with people. It is completely independent, definitely a stress reliever, and the adrenalin rush you get at the beginning of each class.

Santa: Thank you for your time. Also, thank you for helping me to understand what goes along with being a cardio kick boxing instructor.

Book Corner



Rum Punch

by Elmore Leonard

reviewed by Nick Halliley

Elmore Leonard is a genius. Rum Punch is a masterpiece. On the back cover, The Washington Post Book World said Rum Punch is, “Unputdownable!” Boy, were they right!

This book is about a criminal, Ordell, and his convict friend, Louis. Ordell and Louis lead a life of crime. Louis is the only white guy Ordell wants to work with. They’re in the gun business. Ordell bounces between three women and houses, buys and sells all sorts of guns - a real thug. He says, “Once you decide what you’re going after you ride it out, no stops, no getting off. You need to use a gun you use it. Look at the situation. If it’s him or you, or if it’s him doing time or you doing time? There’s nothing to think about, man, you take him

out. Once I pick up the goods and make one more delivery? I won’t ever have to again till I’ve spent something like a million bucks. You think some dude gets in my way I won’t remove him?” Ordell is one crazy man.

One of Ordell’s three women wants Louis to shoot Ordell and get him out of the way. Louis is confused whose side to take. Ordell, Louis, and Melanie, the woman I was just talking about, do a job stealing guns from a Nazi guy. The outcome is shocking.

Two of Ordell’s employees get locked up, so Ordell has to bail them out. The first one, Beaumont, was an easy get out. However, when he tried to bail out Jackie he didn’t have enough money. So instead, Ordell gave the bail bondsman, Max Cherry, a watch, a supposed Rolex, for collateral. So Max bails Jackie out and brings her to her car. While Max is bringing Jackie to her job to get her car, he starts to fall for her.

Max Cherry is separated from his wife, but he starts thinking about actually filing for divorce and getting with Jackie. He wants to get out of the bail bonds business. He is kind of going through a mid-life crisis. Max is an ex-cop who has been working with criminals for a long time and knows how they think

Jackie Burke is a flight attendant who helps Ordell bring portions of his masses of cash to him from Freeport. Jackie has been married three times; her husbands all died in their own way. Jackie is very attractive for forty. She wants to get out of her line of business - both of them. So when she sees an opportunity to make a lot of money quickly, she jumps on it.

Read this book and see how these characters interact and work together. This novel has made me want to read more Elmore Leonard works. I just have one last thing to say about this book, “Holy guacamole, what a wonderful book.”

May 2007

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Dibs in Search of Self

by Virginia M. Axline

reviewed by Shelly Matthews

Dibs, the main character in this novel, is a six-year-old child who is non verbal and sluggish. He does not participate in school activities and seems slow in understanding what is going on around him. His mother and father believe that he is mentally retarded, brain damaged, or autistic. They are not certain. Dibs's teacher, Miss Jane, would like to see him evaluated by a clinical psychologist. His mother would like to see him sent to a school that works with mentally handicapped children. The school and Dibs's mother decide to allow the psychologist to evaluate Dibs. When she first evaluates him, she sees an unresponsive child, a wallflower who appears to enjoy solitude. She believes that he is afraid to be himself.

Eventually, the witty boy named Dibs opens up to the psychologist, Miss A. What was hidden beneath the uncommunicative exterior was a child who yearned to learn more about the world around him, and one who was wise beyond his years. He could read, write, count, solve problems, and talk very well. Dibs was not absent minded, antisocial nor aggressive. He opened up to Miss A and found the love and affection that was lacking in his life.

Dibs In Search Of Self is an excellent example of mental and emotional abuse. I think that it will make a parent realize that every single moment with their child is precious. Even though a child may have been unplanned, everything that you do will affect this baby. The parent should make the decision to either keep this baby or give this child up for adoption to someone who can nurture and love him or her. I believe the events in the book gave Dibs's parents a wake up call as to the value in their child. Dibs needed help to express how bright, wise, and witty he was and to show how much hope he had and how great was his love of learning. I would suggest that any parent who has children, handicapped or not, read this story. It would make

any sensitive parent cry. But it also can inspire hope.

Alexis

by Amanda Peters

My little Alexis

Your eyes so big and brown

My little Alexis

When you wake from a nap the way
you stretch is simply the cutest

My little Alexis

Smiles in the morning from ear to ear
She's ready to play, as I am too.

My little Alexis

Your cries or little whimpers in your
sleep sadden me.

My little Alexis

I love how you bright my saddest
days with your little laugh

My little Alexis

I love to cuddle and hold you close

My little Alexis

I tickle your little toes so I see

That smile

My little Alexis

Beautiful long lashes and a pretty smile

My little Alexis

Gosh, I love you so.

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Dark Dreams

by Jessica Isakson

Unspoken dreams, dragged down by broken wings, put aside
until another tide.

Dreams forgotten left behind, tattered, torn, worn, frayed, by
time.

I have to realize, it's the way it has to be, but I can't believe, it's
forever over for me.

In the air I breathe, is a goodbye that I know is real, I'm afraid
to feel.

Goodbye is sorrow, sorrow is pain, pain has not one thing from it
to gain.

The world is cold now, empty, I look up to
the skies, I wave to the darkness and pass away into dreamless sleep, it's all I'll ever
need, it's all I'll ever be.

A dream.

A Glass of Tears

by Jessica Isakson

Pouring water into a cup, watching it overflow, spilling itself
onto the surface below, feeling like a stream of tears.

I've created a pool of sorrow. It reflects my image of pain.

I look into the glassy surface to find that the one last tear that
falls slowly drops, and splashes into the surface, shattering the
perfect nest of salty shadowy bliss that I have created around
me, to hide me from the world around me.

I've locked myself away to this dreary place I've found I call
home more often than not.

Reaching below me into the shimmering fallen tears I find a key
that will finally release me from this hidden place, and I will
finally be let go.