

JENNIFER CONNELLAN : FUTURE FOCUSED

Mean Girls

Hardly is there a time when kids feel as self-conscious and vulnerable as they do during junior high school.

Especially for girls, junior high is an emotional roller-coaster. Moods and friendships change so rapidly, parents can hardly keep up. One day they are giggling and laughing, and have tons of friends, and the next day they come home from school crying because “no one likes me.”

Some of this is normal. But what if your daughter comes home crying from school every day? What if she is being excluded or ignored on a regular basis? What if the movie “Mean Girls” seems like more of a reality than a drama?

Then, there is likely a case of bullying. Bullying or aggression can be defined as, “any action that inflicts physical or mental harm upon another person.”



According to Leah Davies, M.Ed, “Girls usually differ from boys in the type of aggressive behavior they exhibit. While boys tend to inflict bodily pain, girls most often engage in covert or relational aggression. Aggressive girls often gain power by withholding their friendships or by sabotaging the relationships of others.” While she is not being hurt physically, a girl who is ignored or excluded or having rumors spread about her, is going through incredibly hurtful and scarring experience.

I was recently speaking to a parent of a seventh-grade girl who has been the victim of ‘relational aggression’ since the beginning of the school year. This young girl had had the same friends since kindergarten at the small, private school she attended. The families all know one another and the girls had played together

for many years. For whatever reason, two of the girls suddenly began ignoring and excluding ‘Sara.’ They would roll their eyes when she walked up to them, and then whisper as she walked away.

Sara started coming home from school crying, and telling her mother she did not want to go back.

As this mother explained her daughter’s painful situation to me, the toll that it had taken on both she and her daughter was obvious. Relational aggression is not just “something that kids do” or “girls being girls.”

According to the National Education Association, 160,000 children miss school each day for fear of being tormented by their classmates. Children who endure emotional violence are truly suffering, both academically and socially.

Since relational aggression is covert in nature, it can often go unnoticed by teachers and parents. Unfortunately, schools typically do not have policies or

prevention efforts in place until something tragic happens; a girl commits suicide, or a gun-violence situation like Columbine occurs. Whether or not your child is involved in a relational aggression situation, I encourage you to be pro-active, and discuss the issue with the administration at your child’s school. This behavior is psychologically damaging and should not be tolerated.

For more information on this topic, visit www.opheliaproject.org.

FUTURE FOCUSED OFFERS ONGOING LIFE COACHING GROUPS FOR JUNIOR HIGH GIRLS. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT THEM AT (949)276-4077 OR EMAIL: JENNIFER@FUTUREFOCUSED.COM

JAN SIEGEL: A MOMENT IN TIME

Lincoln Never Slept Here - Or Even Close

Of all of our presidents, none generate as much interest as **Abraham Lincoln**. Although his birthday is no longer a national holiday he is celebrated in San Juan Capistrano.

Lincoln is important to our local history even though he never came here or even to California. On March 18, 1865, just three weeks before he was assassinated, he signed the document which returned the Mission lands back to the Catholic Church.

The signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo which ended the war with Mexico, gave California to the United States. That treaty was ratified by Congress on March 10, 1848. In January, 1848 gold was discovered in Northern California, but it took the rest of the year for gold fever to reach the rest of the country and bring in thousands of settlers.

Interestingly, California was never established as a territory.

Congress could not decide whether the area would be slave or free. So Californians took it upon themselves to establish a government. On September 1849 a convention was called in Monterey and a state constitution was adopted which prohibited slavery. On November 13, 1849 the constitution was



approved by popular vote, and on December 20 an unofficial state government took over the needs for the growing population. Finally, on September 9, 1850 California as free and non-slave became the 31st state in the Union.

Once California became a State, the Land Act of 1851 was enacted. It said that in order to own land you had to prove you owned it. Anyone wishing to get legal title to their land had to go to San Francisco and appear before a tribunal. This was a very long, tiresome, expensive and upsetting process.

One of the claimants was **Bishop Joseph Sadoc Alemany**, who according to **Pam Gibson** in “Two Hundred Years in San Juan Capistrano,” “contested the right of the Mexican governors to sell the missions and asked that they be restored to the ownership of the Catholic Church.” The tribunal agreed with the Bishop and that resulted in the return of “five tracts” of the Mission San Juan Capistrano to the Church. It is this document, signed on March 18, 1865 by President Abraham Lincoln, that is celebrated at the Mission.

President Lincoln never came to San Juan Capistrano. Although, had he lived, there is a distinct possibility that he would have come to California. But that is supposition. The events planned around the return of the Mission to the

Catholic Church are representations of the period. They are not intended to be an enactment of actual events.

One aspect of the events at the Mission this year is the encampment of Buffalo Soldiers. Buffalo Soldiers were commissioned after the Civil War. While they were a result of the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln had nothing to do with their creation.

These all African-American units were nicknamed ‘Buffalo Soldiers’ by the Cheyenne and Comanche. They served in many western states and territories including, Texas, Arizona, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. The Buffalo Soldiers never served in California. These soldiers were active on the frontier from 1866 to 1891. They not only quelled Native Americans, protected mail and stage routes, established law and order in lawless border towns, but they explored and mapped wide areas of the southwest and were responsible for stringing hundreds of miles of telegraph lines. Westward expansion would not have been possible without their contributions.

Lincoln, the Civil War, the return of the Mission to the Catholic Church, the Buffalo Soldiers are all part of our culture, our history, but they just did not take place on exactly the same date. But they all come together at the Mission in San Juan Capistrano and they are definitely important Moments In Time.

There is an exhibit on Lincoln memorabilia at the Mission until February 20. On Thursday, February 15 at 11 a.m., **Dr. Richard Hanks** will lecture on the “Making of Lincoln” in the Soldiers Barracks.

On **Saturday, February 17** you can experience these Moments in Time with special programs at the Mission starting at 8:30 a.m. The San Juan Capistrano Regional Library will be showing the A & E Biography on Abraham Lincoln from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. The film runs for 100 minutes.

According to head librarian, **Teri Garza**, “Anyone coming to the Library on February 17 will get a Lincoln penny to show that they have good ‘cents’ to check out our Library.”

Admission for the film at the Library is free. For more information you can call the Library at 493-4984 and the Mission at 234-1300.

(Oops! In the last column the sentence starting “In 1988 Col. E.E. Edwards”, should have been in 1888.)

JAN SIEGEL IS A LONGTIME DOWNTOWN TOUR GUIDE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSIONER.