

Editorial

Don't Confuse Testing With Learning

Students in New York City schools are taking so many tests that they have no time to learn anything. Requirements under the federal No Child Left Behind Law, coupled with a decision by the city Department of Education to raise the number of diagnostic tests given to third through eighth graders has meant that New York City public school students are taking more standardized tests than ever. Last year, some students took as many as six standardized tests in addition to the other tests that come as a part of their normal curriculum: this year, 10 so-called diagnostic tests have been added in the hope that results on the tests that really matter will improve.

Some students are also being subjected to "field tests", or tests to help a company that devises, tries out and publishes such tests to determine if the tests being worked on will prove a valid tool for evaluating students. Proponents of the field testing concept, many of them educators, say that the field tests are necessary to determine the exact level of difficulty of each question. This is a possibility. However, what this all adds up to is, students in New York City public schools are

taking more standardized tests than ever.

Parents at two Manhattan elementary schools who discovered that their children had been selected to participate in such field tests decided to organize a boycott of the tests to be given at their children's schools, declaring that the testing company should figure out another way to conduct its research. One parent quoted in a daily newspaper pointed out that the bombardment of standardized tests to which children at the school are subjected replaces classroom teaching. She called the practice "a waste of everybody's time".

We tend to agree with the parent. While taking tests and measuring oneself is what school is all about, the tests should measure students' progress in understanding material that has been presented. The way this usually happens is, a teacher presents a particular subject, say, Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet", the effect of glacier advance and retreat on the local landscape or the economic and religious reasons Columbus sought a new route to Asia and India by sailing west, rather than east. For a specified span of time, three to six weeks usually being

respectively the shortest and longest stretches spent on a unit, the students study the material by means of a block of lectures, filmstrips, movies, field trips and whatever else seems appropriate, and then are tested to see how much they learned, sometimes with the aid of pop quizzes along the way or by writing reports and papers. Classroom time is spent learning about the subject, not about test-taking techniques.

Standardized tests most definitely have a place in the American educational process. They are, however, only a part of that process. They do not constitute the whole. Students beset by six to 10 standardized tests in an academic year are not learning anything except how to prepare for such tests. Nowhere in our experience has a course in test-taking techniques occupied an entire nine or 10 months. To devote classroom time merely to learning how to take such tests is a waste of teachers' capabilities and students' comprehension, especially in New York City, where the demand for a skilled labor force will require more than the ability to pick the right response to a multiple-choice question.

Giants Will Come Home With Super Bowl Trophy

The Team of Destiny, the never-say-die New York Giants of 2007, will find a way to beat this season's 18-0 Dream Team—the New England Patriots—when they clash this Sunday in the XLII Super Bowl in Glendale, Arizona.

The Giants will emerge the Super Bowl champs and also end the Patriots' unprecedented unbeaten string.

The scenario for a Giant victory was established on Jan. 21, 1991. On that day,

the Giants defeated the San Francisco 49ers for the NFC Championship, 15-13, on a Matt Bahr field goal as time ran out.

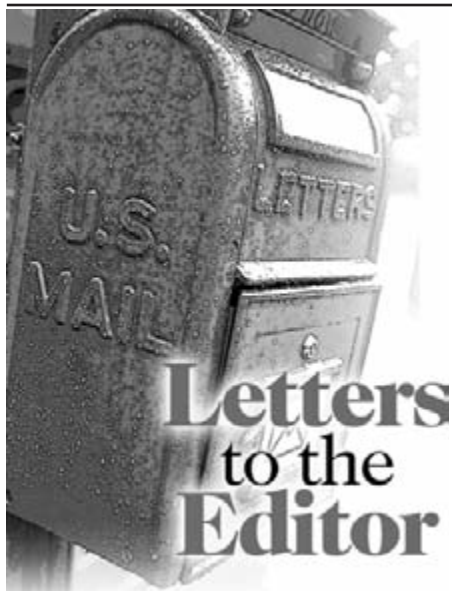
That propelled them into Super Bowl XXV, where they hung on to defeat the favored Buffalo Bills, 20-19.

A week and a half ago, following the same script, they became the NFC champions on a Lawrence Tynes field goal, defeating the Green Bay Packers. Tynes had blown two field goal attempts earlier

in the game, but when you play on a Team of Destiny, the football gods allow you to put off the inevitable before you get a hard earned victory.

As in 1991, when the Giants won their way into the Super Bowl with last-minute heroics, here we are in 2008 with the same script, giving the Giants another shot at destiny next Sunday in Arizona.

Go Eli! Go Plaxico! Go Giants!



Enjoy Super Bowl Safely

To The Editor:

As football fans across the country tune in to cheer on their favored team and watch some great commercials during the big game this Sunday, it's important to make responsible celebrations a part of your winning game

plan.

For starters, if you're hosting a party that includes alcohol beverages, be sure to have plenty of food available for your guests. Also remember to offer non-alcohol beverages and serve one drink at a time to help your guests pace themselves. And, most importantly, don't forget to encourage guests to ask "Who's Your Bud?"—the designated driver—before the festivities begin.

Fortunately, football fans nationwide will be doing the "ride thing" this Sunday. According to a recent survey conducted by Nielsen Media Research, 154 million American adults have been a designated driver or been driven home by one. That's a game-winning plan no matter what team is your favorite. For more information on hosting a fun, safe party, log on to www.whosyourbud.com. Remember, Responsibility Matters on game day and every day!

Sincerely,
C.A. Verdon
Corporate Social
Responsibility Coordinator

Anheuser-Busch Sales &
Service Of New York, Inc.

LIRR Clears Trees

A copy of the following letter was received by the Gazette.

The Honorable Frank Padavan
89-39 Gettysburg Street
Bellerose, NY 11426
Dear Senator Padavan:

Thank you for your letter of November 26, 2007 on behalf of your constituent, Ms. Anne McNamee, regarding the LIRR's vegetation management program in the vicinity of the Douglaston station.

All tree trimming and cleanup of the right-of-way has been completed in the Douglaston area. Where feasible, we protected the natural barrier between the track area and residential homes that are adjacent to the Railroad. As a result of several meetings with you and community members, the LIRR has developed a plan of action with regard to residents' concerns. The following enhancements have been completed in the Douglaston area:

The Queens
Gazette

**PUBLISHED BY THE
SERVICE
ADVERTISING
GROUP INC.**



Publisher/Editor Tony Barsamian
Community Liaison Julie Wager
Production Manager Denise Gallo
Art Director Ed Husser
General Manager Vinny DuPre
Editor Linda Wilson
Editor Emeritus John Toscano
Assistant To The Publisher Melissa Cipolla
Classified Ad Director Rose Albergo
Restaurant Of The Week Teresa Barile

Display Advertising Sales

For your sales rep. call

(718) 361-6161

Fax (718) 784-7552

E Mail Address

QGazette@AOL.COM

Business Office and Display Advertising
42-16 34th Avenue, L.I.C. N.Y. 11101
(718) 361-6161

Display Advertising Copy Deadline
Friday 5 p.m.

Camera Ready Deadline Monday 4 p.m.
Editorial Copy Deadline Friday 12 noon

All items for the Queens Gazette must be submitted in writing. Pictures cannot be returned. The Queens Gazette reserves the right to edit or reject any material, including advertising, submitted for publication. Send your news, bulletins, photos, calendar listings, etc., to: The Editor, The Queens Gazette, 42-16 34th Avenue, Astoria, NY 11101. Entire contents copyright © 2008 The Service Advertising Group Inc. No part of the publication may be reproduced without the written consent of the publisher. Any copyright infringements will be pursued to the fullest extent of the law. The Gazette is not responsible for the content of any advertisement nor is it responsible for opinions expressed in this publication.

We welcome your correspondence.

Address your letters to: The
Gazette 42-16 34th Ave., Long
Island City, N.Y. 11101. Or EMail
us at: **QGazette@AOL.com**.

While you're on line check us out at
www.qgazette.com Please include
a name and address on all
correspondence, names will be
withheld on request.

The Queens Gazette ISSN: 1547-3538 is
published weekly on Wednesday for \$26
per year by Queens Gazette
Newsprinting Service Advertising
Group Inc. 42-16 34th Avenue. Long
Island City, N.Y. 11101. Periodical
postage paid at Long Island City. POST-
MASTER: Send address changes to
Queens Gazette 42-16 34th Avenue
Long Island City N.Y. 11101.

The Gazette is not responsible for the opinions expressed in the letters or op-eds contained on these pages.