

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2009

Chicago

PRODUCED BY THE CHICAGO NEWS COOPERATIVE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Technology Leapfrogs Schools and Jurisdictions

Plainfield East High School doesn't have a senior class. But it clearly possesses a new staple of American education: "sexting." I urge a surely chagrined

JAMES WARREN Principal Anthony Manville to buy several large boxes of fig leaves.

A 16-year-old honors student took a nude photo of herself, used her cellphone to send it to a friend and, bingo, for the last two weeks the photo has made the rounds of the three-year-old school with 1,300 students. Plainfield police seized some students' phones and passed them on to computer forensic experts at the Will County Sheriff's Department.

The school is contemplating punishment, the police are interviewing students and James Glasgow, the Will County state's attorney, is mulling whether to prosecute anybody under Illinois child pornography statutes. In the meantime, everybody can spend time off over the holi-

gressive, considering downgrading statutes to make the passing of such images a misdemeanor, not a felony.

Tom Hernandez, a school district spokesman on the Plainfield East situation, said: "Will there be discipline? Yes. But we can't talk about it."

Mr. Manville, the principal, deferred to Mr. Hernandez, but the school handbook makes clear that cellphones and BlackBerries are prohibited from use and display during the school day. That does seem both well meaning and totally unrealistic.

Will Mr. Glasgow press a child pornography case? He finds sexting "a troubling development with serious consequences, and kids need to know how serious it is to engage in such activities," said Charles Pelkie, a Will County spokesman.

But, he said, the office "has tried to address a half-dozen cases through the probation department and tried not to drag kids through the court system."

So what should you do, especially in an age when it may be quaint to assume that an honors student is consumed only by taking advanced placement microeconomics, playing basketball and starring in chess club?

It's an issue for educators, not law enforcement, said Colin Greer, an educator and president of the New World Foundation in New York, who writes on morals and ethics. Don't apply pornography statutes to minors unless somebody is making money off it. Have the Plainfield girl talk to the principal and school psychologist. Make sure the curriculum deals with sex and the Internet, teaching about the ramifications of images going public.

"What I said to our daughters about sex generally applies," Mr. Greer said. "If you're in a position where you feel you're demeaning yourself and being drawn into something reducing your dignity, don't do it."

For sure, the culture presents challenges. I may need rotator cuff surgery, given how often harsh language or sexual imagery forces me to leap for the "pause" button on the clicker as I watch prime time television with our 6-year-old.

I'm reminded, too, of Rollo May, the late psychologist whose work had currency during my own sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll high school days. It is fine to strip down, he said. But ultimately society needs a fig leaf, or a certain degree of protection, to preserve a level of intimacy from public exposure. It was a metaphor for maintaining discipline to keep our worst excesses from public view.

The Plainfield honors student did something stupid. Cut her some slack. Give her a quickie primer on the perils of technology. And maybe a land-line phone.

The response to 'sexting' is inconsistent.

day cheerfully consuming "Teens and Sexting," a study just completed by the Internet and American Life Project at the Pew Research Center.

Based partly on a survey of 800 teenagers, parents and guardians, it underscores the role of cellphones "in the sexual lives of teens and young adults." Four percent of the teenagers indicated that had dispatched "sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude images or videos of themselves" via text messaging, while 15 percent claimed they had received such images of a person they know.

Amanda Lenhart, who wrote the Pew report, said the images were "relationship currency," shared as either part of or in lieu of actual sex. They are also used to begin or continue a relationship with a special someone. They are often passed along to others as entertainment, or a joke, with many students supposedly not taking the matter especially seriously and thus not understanding the negative legal, emotional or other consequences.

Nationally, the response to this technology-inspired mess is a mishmash. Some jurisdictions have prosecuted teenagers under statutes aimed at creation and distribution of child pornography, in the process stamping them as registered sex offenders. Others have been less ag-

James Warren is a longtime Chicago journalist and the publisher of *The Chicago Reader*.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOSÉ MORE/CHICAGO NEWS COOPERATIVE

Wrigley Field requires at least an estimated \$400 million in repairs, but the Ricketts family said it would not sell naming rights.

Family Says Wrigley Field Will Stay Wrigley Field

By DAN McGRATH

Bank of America Ballpark at Wrigley Field? U.S. Cellular Field the Elder? Oprahland?

Speculation about the possible sale of naming rights to Wrigley Field has spread since the Ricketts family bought the Chicago Cubs from the Tribune Company in the fall, but the new owners of the Cubs have not discussed the sale of naming rights to Wrigley Field, according to Wally Hayward, the team's new chief marketing officer.

Beyond that, Mr. Hayward said in an interview last week, the Ricketts family would not sell the name because they understand the essence of the old-time park.

"We are not going to take the ivy off the walls and replace it with advertising signage," said Mr. Hayward, who will oversee the Cubs' business development, including commercial opportunities at Wrigley. "We intend to preserve the Friendly Confines."

The stated intentions of the Ricketts family, though, will be tested against an unrelenting need for major repairs at Wrigley that could run to \$400 million or more, according to documents reviewed by the Chicago News Cooperative and interviews with people who saw cost estimates during the Cubs' two-and-a-half-year auction process. Experts in sports marketing believe the sale of naming rights will prove necessary as a means of financing Wrigley renovations.

The 96-year-old baseball shrine is one of the most popular attractions in Chicago and helps make the Cubs a signature sports brand despite a 101-year championship drought. But the park is showing its age, and its lack of



The Ricketts family, from left, Peter, Todd, Laura and Tom, spoke at the end of October, after they bought the Cubs.

amenities limits revenue.

Tom Ricketts, a 44-year-old investment banker, and his three siblings completed their \$842 million purchase of the Cubs in October, prevailing over others who dropped out because of the high cost and the complexity of the deal.

One potential buyer, who asked to remain anonymous, withdrew when the sale price rose too high. He said the Tribune Company projected the cost of a Wrigley renovation at \$400 million, a claim substantiated by documents. Plans also called for the Cubs to move out of Wrigley for at least a year while the work was done, the unsuccessful bidder said.

James R. Thompson, the Illinois Sports Facilities Authority chairman and a former Illinois governor, put the tab even higher.

"I think it was closer to \$600 million," Mr. Thompson said in an

interview last week. "That was for a top-to-bottom renovation of a very aged structure with a lot of limitations — the place doesn't have a kitchen."

Tom Ricketts acknowledged that the \$400 million figure was discussed as the Tribune Company briefly considered selling Wrigley to the Illinois Sports Facilities Authority. In that plan, ownership of the Chicago National League Ball Club would have been split from the sale of the famous ballpark.

Ultimately, though, Tom Ricketts; his sister, Laura; and his brothers Todd and Pete paid a reported \$842 million for the Cubs, Wrigley Field and a quarter share of the Comcast Sportsnet Chicago regional cable network. While expectations for improvement in the team's on-field performance are typically high, Wrigley Field presents a complicated, costly challenge, too.

Tom Ricketts brushes off the \$400 million cost estimate for repairs, but acknowledges that major improvements must be made. In an interview in late November, he said he was still studying financing options, but believed that the repairs could be done without selling Wrigley's name.

"One of our top priorities is to develop a real strategy to save Wrigley Field and make it a premier baseball experience," Mr. Ricketts said.

Aside from naming rights, owners of other ballparks have turned to ticket prices and seat licenses as sources of additional revenue. But Mr. Ricketts said there had been no discussion of either of those options. The Cubs may have limited ability to raise ticket prices much beyond a previously announced 2010 increase that will most likely keep the team within baseball's top three.

Experts who have studied the challenges of the Ricketts family note that the sale of Comiskey Park's naming rights to U.S. Cellular in 2003 in a 20-year, \$68 million deal, made it possible to renovate the upper deck of that South Side ballpark, make fans more comfortable and improve the White Sox's revenues.

The U.S. Cellular naming rights came in at \$3.4 million a year. A leading sports consultancy estimates that naming rights to Wrigley could fetch much more.

Jim Andrews, senior vice president of the IEG consulting firm, said he believed a Wrigley Field rights deal could be worth \$5 million a year now, and maybe twice that in a better economic climate.

"It's not an optimal time with

Continued on Following Page

The Pulse

City Tests LED Lamps In Wicker Park Area

City Hall is considering installing white lights to replace the yellowish-orange lamps along Chicago's streets and alleys.

The city is testing LED and other 150-watt lamps in the Wicker Park neighborhood, in the First Ward. "These systems last longer and use less energy," said Manuel Flores, the ward's alderman. "We want to see if it is as efficient as the manufacturers are claiming it to be before expanding."

A spokesman for the Streets and Sanitation Department declined to comment, saying he could not discuss the issue while the city prepares to solicit bids from contractors.

Chicago has 200,000 sodium-vapor

street lights and 67,000 alley lights. Most alley lights were increased from 90 to 250 watts in 1998 to deter crime, officials said.

In March, Mayor Richard M. Daley announced that the city's share of more than \$1 billion in federal stimulus funds would include money for energy-efficient street lamps.

DAN MIHALOPOULOS

Photographers Seek a Lift With a Pop-Up Gallery

One of the Loop's first "pop-up galleries" occupies a storefront at 29 E. Madison St. and features 50 works by members of the new Chicago Photography Collective.

Made up of 30 local shooters, the collective grew from an informal club



JOSE MORE/CHICAGO NEWS COOPERATIVE

The city is testing energy-efficient street lights in the Wicker Park area.

whose five members met monthly in local diners to lament the state of their craft.

"Ours is a dying trade as digital and video take over," says Paul Natkin, who spent nearly three decades photograph-

ing Chicago's music scene. Mr. Natkin said he believed that the collective would help keep photography in the public eye through further exhibits, salons and lectures.

As the veteran photographers try to weather changes in their industry — some of the members' income has dropped to nearly one-tenth of what it was last year, said one of the shooters, Ron Gordon — they are hoping that this peeling, plaster-walled storefront will provide a much-needed lift.

LORI ROTENBERG

Northern Illinois Football Won't Join the Big Ten

The Northern Illinois football team finished its regular season at 7-5 and will make its second straight bowl ap-

pearance. But the Huskies will not be stepping up in esteem, even though the 11-member Big Ten Conference recently announced its intentions to consider adding more teams, splitting into two divisions and playing a lucrative conference championship game.

Northern Illinois and two Big Ten members, Illinois and Northwestern, are the only universities in the state playing football at the major college level. But a Northern Illinois spokesman acknowledged that the Huskies did not have the resources and facilities to compete in the Big Ten or the money to finance a major upgrade.

For the Big Ten, television could be the determining factor for any new teams. Adding Missouri, Pittsburgh or Rutgers would put the conference, which is based in Park Ridge, in another major media market. DAN McGRATH

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Independent Station's Power Lies With Its People

By JESSICA REAVES

Commercial radio, like many other media, is in serious trouble. The prevailing view at the Chicago Independent Radio Project is that traditional radio has created its own problems: beholden to advertisers, disconnected from the community and increasingly out of reach for all but a few, well-connected artists.

Chirp — a fledgling, non-commercial, online radio station set to begin next month — will try to be everything Big Radio is not: independent, intensely local and musically adventurous.

"I'm a true believer," Shawn Campbell, Chirp's president, said in a recent tour of the project's brightly lit but crowded and poorly insulated studios, located above a photo album factory in an industrial stretch of the North Center neighborhood in Chicago. "I really love radio," she added.

Ms. Campbell, 38, is not alone. When Chirp goes live at noon on Jan. 17, it will be the culmination of two and half years of work — including fund-raising, construction and software development — completed entirely by volunteers. "People have responded so enthusiastically," Ms. Campbell said. "It's kind of amazing there isn't already a station like this in Chicago."

The radio project was begun in 2007 when Ms. Campbell, who has worked in Chicago radio for more than 15 years, left her job as program director at WLWU at Loyola University because she disagreed with the university administrators' changes to the station.

Her departure underscored something she had always known. "In radio," Ms. Campbell said, "the real power lies with the people who own the station. Not the people who program it, or who are on the air."

The only way to win that power struggle once and for all, she reasoned, was to start her own station.

Within a few weeks of leaving, Ms. Campbell had recruited 20 similarly disenchanted friends and former colleagues, all smitten by the idea of an independent community radio station.

Their zeal, as well as their plans to start a low-power FM station, faced challenges almost immediately. Efforts to secure a

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JOHN KONSTANTARAS/CHICAGO NEWS COOPERATIVE

Shawn Campbell, president of the Chicago Independent Radio Project, left, worked in one of the studios as other staff members worked on programming. The station goes live at noon Jan. 17

Federal Communications Commission license ran into a labyrinth of legislative and bureaucratic roadblocks. One of them — a law that prompted the commission to limit how close low-power radio stations could be to existing FM stations — may soon be eliminated nationally thanks to the proposed Local Community Radio Act, which unanimously passed the House of Representatives on Dec. 16 and now awaits a Senate vote.

"For some reason, we were stuck in this traditional mindset," Ms. Campbell said of Chirp's early days. "We felt we needed an FM license."

When it became clear that might not happen for years — or possibly ever — Chirp's focus shifted to online, streaming radio.

The decision made sense, and not only because it allowed organizers to bypass the F.C.C. Unlike terrestrial stations, many of which are hemorrhaging listeners to alternative technologies, the online-only radio audience is growing at a rapid clip. The 42 million listeners in 2009 were a 44 percent jump from the 29 million in 2007, according to Arbitron, the media research firm.

As news of the project spread, volunteers emerged — as did small-scale individual donors, which have made up the bulk of

the station's financial base. They have also received support from several foundations, including the MacArthur Foundation.

Dustin Drase, 32, Chirp's operations manager and one of the first people Ms. Campbell brought on board, said about 150 volunteers now worked on Sundays and weeknights.

The station, staff members say, will sound unlike anything else on the air — or online. The pro-

The friend with the amazing record collection.

gramming will be mostly music, occasional interviews with a variety of performing artists, not just musicians and special events. (Do not expect to get your Friday Night 80s Party fix; themed shows are not on the agenda.)

What will set Chirp apart, Ms. Campbell said, is not only the sheer breadth of its offerings, which she described as "a diverse array of independent and under-appreciated music from a wide range of eras and genres," but also its D.J.'s passionate love

for the songs they play.

"Maybe I'll play a great new local band sandwiched between a David Bowie song and a Yo La Tengo song," said Mr. Drase, who will co-host a show. "You never know what you're going to turn people on to."

Unlike most commercial stations, where the average play list might include about 500 songs, Chirp has a catalog of nearly 50,000 albums, which were donated. And the idea, said Billy Kalb, the station's music director, is to play as many as possible.

"We want to be like the friend with the really amazing record collection," said Mr. Kalb, 24, as he sorted through donated CD's. "We want to play enough new music to keep things interesting, and the local bands that other stations probably won't touch."

Even as the station gears up for its online debut, Ms. Campbell is not giving up on the idea of taking Chirp to the traditional airwaves. She keeps a sharp eye on the legislation in Congress, and she demands professionalism from the station's unpaid staff.

"Shawn likes to say we're dressing for the job we want, not the job we have," Mr. Kalb said. "We want to minimize the work it'll take to transition onto the FM dial."

Family Says Wrigley Field Will Stay as Wrigley Field

From Preceding Page

the economy, but if they can wait a bit for the market to come back, I think you're easily into the \$10 million-a-year range," said Mr. Andrews, who helped the Minnesota Twins sell naming rights to Target for their new park, which is set to open in 2010. "That's a pretty exclusive property."

The Yankees took a different approach, selling sponsorship "zones" at their new facility in the Bronx while retaining the Yankee Stadium name. Certain areas of Wrigley — the Bud Light Bleachers, the Captain Morgan Club, the Chicago Board Options Exchange box seats — have already been sold, but consultants note that such "incremental income" is less lucrative than one major rights deal.

Mr. Andrews noted that a company responsible for a name change at the ballpark could face potentially damaging public relations fallout. "You're in for a lot of grief," he said. "It will die down, but there's such a long history of people calling it Wrigley Field."

During the Cubs auction, naming rights were considered such a touchy issue that they were discussed only peripherally, in reference to a Tribune proposal to persuade Bill Wrigley, then head of the gum company, to pay to keep his company's name on the ballpark, Mr. Thompson said.

"We didn't think about changing the name," he said. "It's too much a part of the culture out there."

The Ricketts family sees the ballpark as an essential part of the Cubs' identity and a major source of the franchise's value. Members cite Fenway Park, the thriving 97-year-old home of the Boston Red Sox, as their analogy.

Fenway has undergone a \$150-million renovation that began shortly after a group led by John Henry, an investor, bought the Red Sox in 2002. The Henry group paid for the work without selling naming rights through revenue-generating changes that include these: The addition of "Green Monster seats" above the fabled left-field wall; transforming the adjacent Yawkey Way into an "on-campus" concourse; and conversion of the ground floor of a nearby parking structure into retail outlets. New seats throughout the park and other changes have updated the park

without sacrificing the Fenway feel.

"Anyone doing work related to the ballpark was going to have to take the Fenway Park Hippocratic Oath: First, do no harm," said Larry Lucchino, the Red Sox president. "Fenway will be viable for another 40 to 50 years. We've set ourselves apart by being something special. We preserved the spirit of the place."

Janet Marie Smith is the architect who oversaw the Fenway renovation, which was done in phases during the off-seasons so the team's schedule was not disrupted. "Doing it in stages ended up being a virtue," Ms. Smith said. "Each phase got the attention it deserved."

The Ricketts family's to-do list is nearly as ambitious as the Henry group's was seven years ago. Construction of a long-planned "triangle building" on a triangular-shaped parcel northwest of the ballpark on Clark Street would add revenue-generating retail outlets and could house team offices now in Wrigley, Tom Ricketts said. This would create room within the park for expanded concourses with more concessions and more clubhouse space for the players.

The new owners have no intention of having the Cubs play elsewhere while renovations are done, Mr. Ricketts said.

Bud Selig, the baseball commissioner, endorses the Rickettses' approach and admires their stated respect for Wrigley's special status.

"Some edifices are sports cathedrals that have to be preserved," Mr. Selig said. "Wrigley Field is one of them."

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