



Dances April 2011

The Verdadera staff encourages you to discuss and explore the issues and stories, as the publication aims not only to offer an outlet for expression, but to improve our lives. Keep in mind that the emotions that flow through the text and the feelings behind the words could be those of your child, your classmate, or your best friend.

Things to consider:

- *Students have a choice when it comes to dancing*
- *The pressures associated with dances for students*
- *The meaning of dances to students*

Student Submissions

Id never really been into dances, going with a date or whatever. I always felt like it put a whole lot of unneeded work on yourself. But then last year, I found this girl that I REALLY liked and I heard from people that she thought I was pretty cool, but wasn't sure if she actually liked me too. Id also heard that she wanted someone to ask her to the upcoming dance, and since I REALLY liked her and REALLY wanted to spend time with her, I thought, why not, ill ask her. So for a week I talked with friends and tried to plan out some really cute way to ask her so that she would want to say yes, but not too big so that she would be forced to say yes because that wouldn't be honest. So after a lot of planning, I finalized my plans to ask her the next day and I was ready to buy flowers afterschool, but then I heard someone else had asked her at lunch. And they didn't even ask her in a way that was that special, but

she said yes anyways. I was devastated, I could have just asked her without taking all this planning time and she probably would have said yes either way. Well I ended up not going to that dance, and she ended up going with that guy, obviously, and then they started liking each other, and now they're dating. Good for them.

Adolescence isn't just about prom or wearing sparkly dresses. ~Jena Malone

Dances have always been such a good way for me to release and let loose. There's nothing to make me feel self-conscious. No one to judge me. With the lights turned off and the music blasting, I feel free. In highschool, I always have to worry about how i look, how I'm acting, what people are saying about me, etc,

but at dances the darkness blinds peoples' view of me, the loud music keeps peoples' mouths shut. All you can do is focus on matching your movements to the beat of the song. I personally don't think dances are degrading to girls at all. I understand how they may be seen as that, which is why I avoided this style of dancing for the first year of highschool, but once I allowed myself to try it, I realized it wasn't about the sexual attraction at all. It simply allows a boy and a girl to forget about the troubles of their lives and simply enjoy loud music and their partner.

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Ok, I'm sorry. Would you just explain to me, why do you care? What do you get? A bouquet of roses and a tacky tiara you can only wear to proms?

~Donna from Prom Night

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Going to a dance is like throwing yourself to the dogs. For some reason, your presence (or lack of it) at a dance is taken by everyone else as a public invitation to analyze your every move (I don't mean moves of the dancing variety) and have animated discussions about them behind your back. How do I explain...?

FLOWCHART.

Have a Boyfriend? (Yes)

- if you don't freak at the dance, or if you don't freak "hard" enough:

-you're deemed to have no chemistry, and it's declared that you aren't right for each other.

- if you freak "too hard" or too much:

- you're deemed a slut, rumors that you and your boyfriend have gotten it on everywhere- in the gym, in your cars, behind the sheds- spread faster than Holly Madison can say "Wait, that was me."

Have a Boyfriend? (No)

- if you don't come to the dance at all:

- you're deemed lame. Or boring. Or lame. Or too Asian.

- if you go and freak with a friend:

- you're deemed together. Officially. Like, it's already been decided that you two are going to get married. Because "oh my god, you were SO CUTE."

- if you freak with someone you don't know well

- you're deemed a slut.

- if you kind of stick to one freaking buddy

- it's apparently proven that there's some secret thing going on there.

- if you freak with a couple different people

- you're deemed a slut.

-if you don't freak at all:

- you're the weirdo dancing alone at the outskirts of the crazed sex mob.

Do you see what I'm saying here? There's no way to get it right. Trying to figure out how to is like trying to get through the Matrix. I'll stick to just telling people that I have a date with my [fictional] boyfriend the night of the dance.....the night of every dance.

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I wore a woman's antique fur jacket to my high school junior prom. ~Lance Loud

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Everyone dancing in a sweaty mass, hips swaying, and hands in the air. I enjoy going to dances. I enjoy dancing with boys and with my friends. I sometimes get the feeling that perhaps my parents wouldn't approve of my actions but it is more because of the generational gap than because of anything else. I am not ashamed of the way I act. It intrigues me when at dances (school or otherwise) people always hate dancing with the lights on. I understand girls think they look more flattering under dimmer lights but, the fact that people will only dance in the dark because they are ashamed is weird to me.

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I'd never been to a prom, I had never had the whole high school experience. I think I was kind of an anomaly. I don't think they knew where to put me. ~Alicia Witt

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Deep breathe, gotta think straight. I was sketching out my plan to ask someone to Sadies in my head. Given that I like to go all out on certain "projects" I was willing to come up with an elaborate plan. *Got it. First part done, second part thought out, all I need is to connect them together...* Fortunately, my friends came by to offer some help. In the end, I had more than 65 pink balloons blown up, a big wrapped present box, scissors and note-cards, a sign, and some of those delicious bite sized cupcakes. I'm really thankful for all the help I received! *Things are looking well(: ... all that's left is to put it to action...* That's when a wave of worries washed through my mind. *What if things go wrong? What if I mess up and make a fool of myself? What if he says "No"?* However, there was no turning back. I just had to be courageous. I recall 6th period being the worse. It was minutes away from starting my

plan and, well, I was reeaallly nervous. *First stage: Scissors and note-card delivered & done! Alright, time to take the longer route around and not be seen. Wish me luck!* I took my time walking towards the leadership room, thinking that it would take longer for him to pop the balloons. When I got there, I saw my friends running around frantically, there were looking for something...they were looking for...me?! Dazed and confused I rushed upstairs with my sign. *Wait... I don't even know what's happening anymore...* My best friend ran up to me yelling something I couldn't hear, I was still trying to connect everything together... Apparently, he had already popped all the balloons, found the present, and ate the cupcakes, but I was slow to comprehend that fact and was still shocked at everything that was happening around me. Then out of the blue, I saw him walking towards me. *OH! That's my cue!* "Heyy! Will you go to Sadies with me?", and well, the rest was pretty predictable. Let's just say that day had a good ending to it.(:

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I'll take being on Baywatch over being Prom Queen any day. ~Brande Roderick

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I love dancing! Whether it be PE Dance or pulling a Taylor Swift moment from "You Belong With Me" where she's dancing in her bedroom, or formals where people come up with crazy creative ways to ask their dates, and even freaking. My favorite part is dressing up and the dinner before the dance, and taking pictures; not even the dance itself or the dancing. Freshman rape is not as bad as they say though some have some weird stories to tell but there is so much more to Monta Vista dances than what everyone exaggerates. Sadies is one of my favorite dances too because cheer always does a great job with the themes and decorations, and dressing up with the theme is always fun! In regards to freaking, I don't think it is that bad. You can freak how you want, and by that I mean people don't have to freak in a totally dirty way where the girl is bent all the way down. Besides, sometimes when I watch Grease the movie some of the dancing they do is much dirtier. I think that this is how our generation dances and that it is not the only form of dance out there; we are well aware that there are much more popular dances out there like breakdancing or something, but that we choose to express ourselves by dancing that way. The dance I'm anticipating the most is Senior Ball on a boat. My date better ask me in a sweet way!

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It was nice to make things right, and I went to prom and actually had a good time in the TV world - the real world wasn't so much fun. ~Nicholas Brendon

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The things I had to do in order to go to senior prom, the lying, the forging of signatures, the inevitable moment where I get caught and must suffer the consequences....some might think that something as silly as prom was definitely not worth all of the trouble.

You see, my parents are not really the type to look kindly upon social events, especially ones that involve dates and dancing. Before even asking them, I knew that going to a prom itself was a definite "No." Staying out all night was again a definite "No," and would probably be followed by a "Do you know how dangerous that is for a young girl like you?!" Doing both of those things with a certain boy that they already couldn't tolerate, would elicit an "OVER MY DEAD BODY" had I the nerve (or stupidity) to ask them. That's why I didn't.

But just because I didn't have my parents' blessings didn't mean I wasn't going to go. I mean, I couldn't NOT go. It was my date's senior prom, and he refused to go with anyone else, so who was I to be the reason that he missed out on the first and last formal dance he could go to at MV?

So we filled out the permission slip using a not-so-legit signature and not-so-legit insurance number, but hey the epitome of the high school experience was at stake, so we had to do what we had to do. I came up with a lovely story as to why I would be sleeping over at a friend's house for the night (not to be told to the parents until the day before so they would have no time to think about all of the reasons why I wasn't allowed to do it), borrowed a dress, and on the day of prom, quietly slipped out of the door to avoid last-minute arguments.

The actual event is kind of hard to explain. The getting ready was fun; applying makeup, digging out the rarely used heels, gathering at one person's house to take pictures. The bus ride to San Francisco was just a drawn-out hour of anticipation, walking from the bus to the dock in our fancy getups and seeing the pedestrian smile at us was fun, setting off on the ship and beginning dinner was like a "Yes I am actually here this

is actually happening” moment. From then until the end of the dance was one of the most amazing nights of my life. Not at all because it was prom though. I saw some people sort of just sitting off to the side looking bored, and I felt awful for them because it was they had paid so much money to be there and supposedly have FUN. But really, just because you’re AT an event that has so much hype surrounding it doesn’t mean you’ll understand instantaneously why the hype even exists at all. Even I, who went and had fun, still don’t understand why it does. Really the only thing that makes the night amazing is the person you’re there with. Having that connection with someone, and being able to have fun with them anywhere, means that being at prom with them is just making an already fun time, ten times more so. Add on going with a really fun group of people to that, and you have the perfect night.

So really the thing about dances isn’t the dancing or the dressing up; it really depends on your date and if you know whether or not you can have fun with them. Like honestly, I went to sadies with a friend last night and while I had a good time, it couldn’t compare to prom. NOT because prom is just so much better than Sadies because its more expensive and at a cooler location; if I had gone to Sadies with my prom date and prom with my Sadies date, I’m pretty sure, in that case, Sadies would have been the more fun of the two. As for this year’s senior prom..well. I’m unsure if I want to go. Last year’s was so perfect already, I just know I can’t beat it, so why spend the money and effort?

But for Prom 2010, all of the lying and stress and hassle, along with getting found out about going and getting in trouble for that, was it worth it? Yes.

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It wasn't that no one asked me to the prom, it was that no one would tell me where it was. ~Rita Rudner

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Hey, im a guy that really love girls. However, I feel very insecure about myself when it comes to school dances and whatnot. I do not understand why we have to “freak” all the time. Of course I want to be more “intimate” with my dance partner, but is freaking the only case where both you and your partner could be intimate in an upbeat song? That is also not just that case though... I have a huge problem asking girls that I like to dance. There is this girl that I really like, but

whenever I go up to ask her, all of these thoughts run in my mind; What does she think of me? Does she like me? Will this be awkward?”. I want to be more confident with that area.

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This is prom, Let's just all be nice and forget the past.  
~Donna from Prom Night

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Dances. What can I say about them? They're not really my thing anymore. In middle school, I used to always go to them, and sometimes I'd actually dance with a bunch of people. But it kind of loses it's edge if none of your friends are really dancing either. And if you're not even asked in the first place - and I'm not just talking about being asked by random people who you don't know, I mean an actual person who you like or is decent for the matter - it just becomes a show, a really bad show, of you watching some other people jump up and down. Now, it's like watching people have sex with their clothes on. Or maybe that's just me. Up until this point, I have only gone to one dance in high school, which was the welcome dance in my freshman year, and that was basically enough for me. Before, I actually had a reason to go, since they sold food and my friends would be there. Now, since neither of those particular things are there, there's really no point. Three hours of me just standing there awkwardly, watching all the couples have happy times, making memories they will never forget. Or just watching random people who don't know each other freaking their butts off out of desperation. And on top of all this, my mom actually begs me to go every time. It takes a thirty minute conversation - no argument - for her to put the subject at rest. That is, until the next dance comes up. She just wants me to have fun and remember some elements of high school that don't involve cramming for a test or procrastinating for a project thats due the next day. But for someone like me, it really isn't. I guess its for other people who actually have fun with their friends or their boyfriends/girlfriends dancing and being together. For me, going out with my friends to a restaurant or a movie would be a lot more fun. Or just staying home in general.

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The future is built on brains, not prom court, as most people can tell you after attending their high school reunion. But you'd never know it by talking to kids or listening to the messages they get from the culture and even from their schools. ~Anna Quindlen

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Dances are so much work. As a girl, sadies can be really fun, but also extremely stressful. First, you have to decide if you want to go, because sadies tends to be a little more date-y than homecoming so if you want to go, then you have to make sure you'll have fun spending a lot of time with your date. Then when you decide you want to go you have a date picked out, you have to think of a really cool and cute way to ask them because you want your date to be happy and also because you're a girl so you're expected to have some cute and creative ideas. Then you have to go through all this elaborate planning to make it go perfectly and you have to spend time baking something or getting balloons or making some posters. Finally when they say yes to go with you, you then have to take the entire task of creating the costumes/outfits because even though you just want your date to deal with the whole costume situation himself, you want to look cute, so there's no way you can trust your date to look cute on his own. And then when you're actually making your outfit, you want to look cute, a little slutty, but of course not too much because you don't want people talking about how you look like a hoe. I mean you're already dancing like one so why make it worse. Then you have other random planning like dinner reservations, who is invited to dinner, who pays for dinner, who pays for the dance, who pays for pictures. It was my impression that the girls would pay for that stuff for sadies since they're the one asking the guy, but who really knows, there aren't any rules set up so it makes it that much more difficult to figure out this stuff. And other issue could be like, should you dance with only your date? Or should you guys dance with other people too? There's so much planning with dances that they're pretty exhausting. But I guess you can say they're fun too.

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We had to decide: Do we want to do Saturday Night or go to our Senior Prom? We opted for Saturday Night Live. ~Mary-Kate Olsen

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Okay so I'm a senior here at MV and this is just my way of venting how my homecoming experience was this year. I'm not sure how many people experience it but along with it being so fun, it is also really stressful when you have to fight between what would make you happy and what would make anybody else happy; because they are so important to you!

So it started out at farewell when I was saying no to all guys that were asking me because I just wasn't in the mood to dance with any of them. I defiantly don't know why; but it just felt that way. So then my friend got mad at me and he was all like "THE NEXT GUY THAT ASKS YOU, you have to dance with him, this is just ridiculous." And so I did! I didn't know who he was at the moment and frankly I wasn't having the time of my life. However after a song, when I pulled away from him, all of my friends gathered around me to ask me why I was dancing with "HIM" and I questioned their sanity asking them if they were sure THAT is who I danced with. I didn't feel awesome about it but whatever it didn't matter because he was a close friend of mine and that was that. The next day when we talked on gmail he told me that he had fun; and that made me happy that I was able to bring joy to my friend. But then it started getting awkward, he told my friends that he wanted to ask me to homecoming while on the other hand I was telling them "make sure he doesn't ask me." It was becoming this huge train of "why don't you want to go with him" or "just go with him who cares," or from my side "i don't think of him that way, and don't want to." And so I talked to my best friend and he told me that "we don't want to hurt his feelings so just tell him that your mom isn't letting u go because you seriously messed up." And so the next day I went around telling everyday that and he called the plan off.

Then the day of the rally I told my other friend "I think I want to go, BUT ALONE, so we'll go" and I have no clue how, but by the end of the rally EVERYONE KNEW. And so as I was walking out of the rally he asked me again JUST STARIGHT UP and I didn't know how to say "no" (imagine THAT) and so i said yes. He looked happy so i was ok but I didn't have fun at the dance, I barely listened to anything he said. I was just out of it! But if it made my friend's night, I guess it must be something good.

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I wasn't a cheerleader or the prom queen. I don't move through the world with a mirror in front of my face, and I've never been attracted to projects that had an emphasis on what I look like. ~Michael Michele

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When I first became a freshman, I heard so many rumors about the "Freshman Rape". People told me how much fun it was and the topic of freaking came up a number of times. It was really

plain and simple, "freaking: grinding your butt on someone else's area". At first people I thought it was really gross and I told myself I would never do it. Then people started throwing excuses at me like, "Oh, it's not that bad." or "But people have clothes on so it's not that gross". Slowly, I started to listen to them and finally freshman rape rolled around. I went and I started freaking. I didn't bend over or "get really into it." But still something was telling me that freaking with people that I didn't even know was terribly wrong, but I just didn't listen to that voice and pretty soon it stopped bugging me. By the time I got home, I was still extremely excited but then shock set in. I had just rubbed my butt on at least ten guys' areas. I still went to more dances but after Sadies I just stopped going, and I don't plan on going to any more. The whole atmosphere of dancing till late into the night with guys you may not know too well just disgusted me.

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I didn't even go to my prom. I didn't have one date in high school. ~Skeet Ulrich

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Haha the dance was alrighttt. First dance of MV freshman year scared the CPAP out of me. I was just standing around, hoping no one would talk to me for at least 30-40 minutes, and everything was SO dark. MV dances are certainly an experience, and i really don't regret going freshman year. Haha some of my freshman friends just disappeared into the crowd after getting pulled. I think the dances are DEFINITELY an acquired taste type of thing. It somewhat caters towards a certain type of person, but I don't think its that bad. After going to a couple dances, I definitely enjoyed a lot more, then the a guy that just quits going after his first dance.

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I got hate letters from girls all over America because I wouldn't go to the prom with them. ~Davy Jones

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I think the dance was pretty fun. The music was kind of loud, and I got scared in the beginning, but I liked the songs. I had a blast chilling with my friends. What scares me is how aggressive some people are, especially some seniors.

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We're fools whether we dance or not, so we might as well dance. ~Japanese Proverb

I love dances. I go to all of them; homecoming, prom, welcome back, winter ball, farewell-- I just love them. I love the outlet it gives, an outlet to have fun, to let loose, to hang out with your friends, and to meet new people. And all this by having a couple hours where teenagers decide to let their hormones go wild and grind on each other. It's funny, in the weird way (not haha funny), but if I actually THINK about what goes on at dances I get grossed out. Because, if you do think about it... Essentially, a girl's butt is going shoved across a guy's, uh, lower regions. Which really does gross me out. And, people have told me that it's demeaning to women, how girls always bend over, lower than the guys. It sounds like there could be some truth to it, but honestly, I never feel like that when I'm dancing. Maybe it's because for me, it's more of the people that make me love dances, not what actually goes on at dances? I love hanging out with my friends before a dance, getting ready, making shirts or putting on our pretty dresses. I love hanging out with them during the dances, whether we're just dancing with each other, or with guys. I love hanging out with my friends after the dance, eating, getting out hunger out. I love the fun time it gives me, and how it lets me release all my stress and energy and anger. While dances may be demeaning to girls like me, I can't help but love the way they make me feel-- and THAT is what makes me love dances.

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Dance first. Think later. It's the natural order. ~Samuel Beckett

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I graduated high school 2 months ago, and never been to a dance since 7th grade. Back when I was in 7th grade in 2004 (I sound like a dinosaur already), the wildest thing happenin' on the dance floor was slowdancing. From the Kennedy reports I've heard, things have changed. Theres sixth graders freaking now. Anyways for me, Welcome back dance? No. Maybe even senior ball? Maybe, but didn't happen. I know of a few others that have done this, but the reason was that I wasn't some ostracized social-outcast. Sometimes, thanks to the rigours of Monta Vista, I had no time. But the underlying cause of it was always listening to what my friends had to say happened at the dance. It just wasn't my thing.

Freshman year: "Susie was freaking with Bob with her butt right up against him like a total slut. And I thought she was so innocent."

Sophomore year: "I totally smelt booze at the dance man."

Junior year: "People have started front freaking WHILE makingout."

Senior year: "I think the girl in my math class was on E at the final dance."

Okay, I'm not some old person relic from 1940 who turns their face at the slightest mention of teen behavior. I'm kind of a loser that way. I'm totally okay with people going to dances and doing whatever they like. It's just I don't find it fun for me. I could never dance with someone and then come back to first period like nothing ever happened.

But that's just me. Right now. Things might change in college. We'll see.

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Stifling an urge to dance is bad for your health - it rusts your spirit and your hips. ~Terri Guillemets

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Dances are fun! But freaking makes them super awkward, especially if you are someone who doesn't like to freak that much. And if you have an awkward date, then freaking with them is kind of weird. But you are pressured into it because EVERYONE is freaking. And dancing normally next people who are freaking is also awkward.

I wish there was an awesome group of people who enjoyed dances without freaking.

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Dance is the only art of which we ourselves are the stuff of which it is made. ~Ted Shawn

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Dictionary.com is a very loose with its definition of the word dance: to move one's feet or body, or both, rhythmically in a pattern of steps, esp. to the accompaniment of music. This, quite frankly, is a very broad definition for a many number of things. You may be wondering what my definition of the word is, right? Well, I quite honestly do not have my own definition. I just find it strange that with this definition, sex could be considered a dance. Who's to stop a few teenagers from throwing on Bad Romance and getting exactly what Lady Gaga wants in the first actual lines of her song (though I would despise the man who actually plays this while... y'know). In other words, we are saying that at a dance, you may have sex. Well, that is basically what is happening, besides all of our clothes being on, so it looks more like a teenage boy's nightmare: everyone

about to do it, but for some reason, their clothes are stuck on.

So "freaking" is sex with your clothes on. Yes. It is as stupid as it sounds.

What frustrates me the most is the argument of "I don't know how to dance, so I freak." So... you're saying that you don't know how to dance... so in order to remedy that, you begin to do another type of "dance"? Talk about some fail logic right there... ANYONE can dance! The problem is that everyone is ignorant to the fact that everyone is ignorant towards EACH OTHER at a dance. People don't walk around scoping out people who dance weirdly. The kids that DO walk around and judge are the ones who don't have the courage to stand up to a crowd of one: themselves. They don't know that nobody cares how they dance and that their one true audience is themselves. It's not a matter of can you dance, since you could tap your foot and you'd be dancing; it's a matter of ignorance and denial.

If you want to dance with a partner, do some ballroom dancing! It's not difficult and it's MUCH less monotonous than freaking. Believe me. I've done both and I'd rather be stepping in the shape of a box and doing a few underarm turns rather than pelvic thrusting a girl SIDEWAYS (seriously... wtf?) back and forth for three minutes of a song... It's almost as though you're like "Okay, so I know I can't have sex, so I'm gonna rub my crotch against her butt for 3 minutes WITH MY CLOTHES ON! Man, I'm SOOOOOOOO SMART!"

News Flash: No; you're not.

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Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance. ~Dave Barry

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I've never been to a high school dance before... well at least not till this year. As a freshman, going to the Welcome Back Dance, I heard several stories about what it would be like. My friends and I were excited, nervous, scared, and didn't really know what to expect. We heard that the "Welcome Back Dance" used to, or still might be, referred to "Freshmen Rape Night." But for all those parents reading this, trust me it sounds a lot worse than it actually is. I honestly miss the old Kennedy dances when we were all allowed to chill out and play games in the Pavilion or dance in the Gym.

The Welcome Back Dance definitely did not meet up to my expectations. Hopefully, Homecoming will!

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There are short-cuts to happiness, and dancing is one of them. ~Vicki Baum

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“Do you remember when dances were actually fun?”  
“Nope.”  
“Neither do I.”

This is a typical conversation you would hear from most juniors, sophomores, and freshman, but as for the seniors I feel like the Welcome Back Dance in 2007 was probably the best one ever (besides Prom of course). Senior girls were willing to dance around with just about anyone they could get their hands on. Oh, the stories I could share from that day...but I'll try and keep it PG. For us guys, it was like a competition to see who could dance with the most senior girls. The funniest part of the night was when I saw a couple girls checking IDs to make sure that people were actually freshman. I definitely felt welcomed to MV, if you know what I mean ;). I feel like after that dance, Admin started to really buckle down and take things out of hand. Our dances aren't even that bad compared to those of Saratoga and other schools, yet Admin still wants to implement the huge bright lights and hire crappy DJs to play weddings songs...do you remember that from last year's Welcome Back Dance?

Anyway, JUNIOR PROM WAS AMAZING! If you wanted to dance however you felt like it, you could. If you wanted to pig out, you could. If you wanted to play games, you could. The teachers/chaperones were pretty lenient. That's why after Junior Prom, I decided I would never go to another school dance other than Senior Ball. It's just not worth my time.

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There is a bit of insanity in dancing that does everybody a great deal of good. ~Edwin Denby

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It was the first dance at a new school. I knew some people, but I had no idea what to expect. I had only heard stories, but even those ranged from very good to awful regarding the dance. Once I got there it was much different than ANY dance I had been to at middle school. At first everyone was just standing around so I didn't know what to do. There were tons of people and I only knew a couple of them who were as clueless as me, but I soon figured out how the high school dances went.

Once a girl, probably as senior asked me to freak it was at first very awkward but after awhile it became normal. A few hours later I had a dance experience I will NOT forget, and it is an “interesting” part of my first year.

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Dancers are the athletes of God. ~Albert Einstein

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Dances are so over rated. Why do people find them so enticing? I really don't understand because Homecoming 09' was the most BORING night of my life.

Before the dance, fun, fantastic, elating you could even say. I was hanging out with two of my best friends in the world, eating pizza and chatting over the music blasting in the distance. We slipped into our formal attire, took pictures against our better judgment, and exuberantly drove to school. Once we stepped onto the dance floor, things seemed to be okay. We had a dance circle and all was light hearted, but soon as more people started piling in, the atmosphere drastically changed. The temperature rose, the music was faster, and everyone was MUCH closer. Soon our circle turned into a horrified triangle of three, watching each of our friends getting lost in the crowd of “freakers.” All innocence was scarred that night; I had never seem something so demeaning in my life. And if you weren't freaking, there wasn't much else to do, so in pride of my morals I stepped aside for the last two hours regretting my decision to come, and watching people I thought I knew envelop themselves in what I could only view as shameful.

Dances have nothing to offer me, but hey, I am just a little traditional.

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To dance is to be out of yourself. Larger, more beautiful, more powerful. This is power, it is glory on earth and it is yours for the taking. ~Agnes De Mille

~~~~~  
Last year, I attended Blue Pearl, an event where you learn how to swing dance. It was so fun and diverse from the normal school dances. I think it's a great event because it will draw people who don't enjoy freak-dancing to participate in it. I ate dinner with the seniors and enjoyed having fun with my friends. We all wore flapper dresses, feather boas, and high heels. FUN. I hope we have it again this year! :)



~~~~~  
It's what I always wanted to do, to show the laughter,
the fun the joy of dance. ~Martha Graham
~~~~~  
'Grinding.' Grinding meat? Grinding herbs for  
medicine? Grinding girls?  
What was grinding? I didn't know. All I knew back  
then, when I first started  
out as a freshman, was that grinding felt good.  
Everybody was talking about  
freaking, and how superb the mushroom to pancake  
action felt like. I thought to myself, "wow, grinding  
must be pretty fun if it feels that good." Only 'til  
freshman rape did I discover that grinding wasn't that  
fun. Well, at least how it wasn't fun at FIRST. I used to  
be off beat, and girls would leave my side after about 10  
seconds, since they thought that I 'sucked'. After only  
about 4 thousand dances did I truly learn how to dance  
correctly. I finally got a chick to stay with me for over  
10 seconds. Heck yes.

'Grinding.' Rubbing my crotch on a girl's booty? What  
is it like now? It's like  
putting the chocolate covered strawberry which is sliced  
into perfect quarters  
on the apex of a miniature cupcake. It's a pirate's own  
unique eyepatch. It's a  
banker's very first dollar. Man, does it feel extravagant.  
When I think about it,  
freshman rape was pretty cool: I got to experience  
dancing, I got some upper  
class men, but shoot, I really sucked. Now, dancing is a  
mushroom's heaven for certain men that contain more  
testosterone. Just make sure you don't stick with a chick  
too long, so she can end up wanting more of you. I'm  
just kidding about this, dancing isn't that great. The end.

~~~~~  
The people who do not dance are the dead.
~Jerry Rose of Dance Caravan
~~~~~

When I first became a freshman, I heard so many  
rumors about the "Freshman Rape". People told me

how much fun it was and the topic of freaking came up  
a number of times. It was really plain and simple,  
"freaking: grinding your butt on someone else's area".  
At first people I thought it was really gross and I told  
myself I would never do it. Then people started  
throwing excuses at me like, "Oh, it's not that bad." or  
"But people have clothes on so it's not that gross".  
Slowly, I started to listen to them and finally freshman  
rape rolled around. I went and I started freaking. I didn't  
bend over or "get really into it." But still something was  
telling me that freaking with people that I didn't even  
know was terribly wrong, but I just didn't listen to that  
voice and pretty soon it stopped bugging me. By the  
time I got home, I was still extremely excited but then  
shock set in. I had just rubbed my butt on at least ten  
guys' areas. I still went to more dances but after Sadies  
I just stopped going, and I don't plan on going to any  
more. The whole atmosphere of dancing till late into the  
night with guys you may not know too well just  
disgusted me.

~~~~~  
How can we know the dancer from the dance?
~William Butler Yeats
~~~~~

Monta Vista dances are like free lap dances. Every first  
Friday of the year, once the sun goes down, girls line up  
getting ready to rub their asses in boys' crotches. I  
remember one time dancing next to a circle of girls all  
the way down on the floor with their male counterparts  
fist pumping and making erotic faces. Personally, I am  
appalled by these girls who chose to degrade themselves  
by going all the way down. Though I myself enjoy  
"freaking", I don't see the point in licking the floor just  
to amuse a guy. I fail to see how that even makes  
dancing better.

~~~~~  
You can dance anywhere, even if only in your heart.
~Anonymous
~~~~~

## **The Truth about High School Dances**

Beverly Leftwich, MS LMFT

On a Sunday evening at the beginning of March, I had the pleasure to meet with the Monta Vista students who manage the Verdadera newsletter so adeptly. I was impressed with what a great group they were, all engaged in the process with thoughtful and articulate insights about the topic of discussion that evening – school dances.

As confidential stories were read from students about their personal experiences around various school dances, there was an honest and thorough examination of a number of factors affecting the realities of the social pressures felt.

Familiar areas of focus about dances emerged. A full range of emotions were described from excitement and humor to expressions of shyness, fear of rejection, worry about dress, feeling left out, and competition. The actual process of asking someone for a date to the dance, which sometimes involved some elaborate preparation and public display of balloons and sign, produces some anxiety as well as frivolity.

Significantly, there was a portion of students who expressed reluctance to participate in dances. Some felt out of place or socially awkward and marginalized in the experience. Others expressed a desire to engage positively in other activities such as getting together with friends at home in a more casual setting rather than get involved in the sometimes forced and stagey rituals at the dances. Some felt pressured by their parents to attend the dances in a well-meaning desire to see their child have a good time with high school traditions. However, I noticed that a good portion felt very uncomfortable about attending the dances for reasons they felt reluctant to talk about with their parents.

It became clear that a major focus of all of the students, was the predominant style of dancing known as ‘freak dancing’ or ‘grinding’. For those of you who may not be familiar with this style of dancing, it was described by one student as “like a simulation of sex with your clothes on.” While there was a full spectrum of reactions expressed about this form of dancing, one thing was agreed – it is the dominant form of dancing for “about 95%” of the students. While there are some alternative forms of dancing, such as circle dancing, this is primarily done around the peripheral edges of the dance floor with the freak dancing becoming more pronounced approaching the center. I noticed that whatever the opinion held about freaking, it was commonly felt that if you went to dances, you felt pressure to participate.

A broad range of emotions and personal reactions to the freak dancing were revealed as well as what the meaning of it was. Some described it as “shameful” or “disgusting”, while others celebrated it as a form of personal expression – a way to let go completely from all the pressures of school and have fun with the rhythms of the music. Many felt that the grinding was not necessarily about sexual attraction, but rather a ritual expression of belonging to the group. Others mentioned the feelings of pressure to participate whether they wanted to or not, and then feeling awful about themselves afterward, vowing never to attend another dance. Many felt that in spite of the extent of the sexually provocative dancing, this did not necessarily translate into similar levels of sexual behavior off the dance floor. Rather, it was simply a matter of following the crowd in the social situation.

There appear to be fine-lines of judgment and labels that are applied depending on the degree of involvement in the freaking. Girls could be labeled “sluts” for freaking with too many others, or for participating too fully, and just as easily labeled a “prude” or weird for holding back from participating. Interestingly, these polarized labels appeared to be applied to girls more than boys, who are apparently expected to engage in this dance style freely with as many partners as they want.

I heard about the well-known phenomena of the so-called “Freshman Rape” at dances taking place at the beginning of the school year with some initial alarm. As a parent myself who has raised two daughters, if I had heard about this when they were in high school, I would have needed oxygen. The students laughingly reassured me that it was not as bad as it

sounded. It involved a type of hazing activity where incoming freshman girls were expected to engage in freaking with a number of older boys and girls, as a way of initiating them into the school culture – all in good fun of course. Naturally, I wondered how much fun this actually was for most kids.

One of the most jarring questions for me as an outside observer was about this revival of an apparently primitive form of sexist ritual, a parody of male sexual domination over young females forced to submit by social pressure. I noticed a glaring contrast with the well-established acceptance of gender equality and mutual respect exhibited in the culture at large, and by these students in particular. The girls exhibited a firm grasp of their own sense of self and their freedom of choice, and would not ordinarily appear to be accepting of any form of sexist or demeaning behavior of any kind. And yet this exaggerated throwback to primitive role-playing was apparently accepted as just good fun.

Another concern I have is for the boys, who are expected to posture themselves in a type of sexual predator role with the girls, even if it is all in the spirit of a lark. I have been generally concerned about the intense pressure on boys to act as if they are “up for sex with anyone at any time”, when many of them actually don’t necessarily feel that way.

I asked about student’s communication with their parents on this particular subject, and most felt that parents were actually not fully aware of the type of activities going on at school dances. Some were concerned that they may be disallowed from attending school dances if their parents knew. Others expressed concern that their parents did not understand fully the pressures for them to conform to a type of dancing they may feel uncomfortable about, and in their well-meaning encouragement for them to go to the dance, they were unknowingly pushing them into an activity that they would never approve of.

One cogent observation was made by a student, that it may be easier for a parent to dismiss general stories about use of drugs for instance, with a sense of denial that “my kid would never do that”. But this was a different situation, since most parents cannot escape knowing that they have dropped their students off at these dances.

I shared a personal story about how when I was an adolescent, I like most kids did not exactly freely share with my parents all that was going on in my life, or spell out everything that I was exposed to, although I did respect to their guidelines. However, I felt very lucky that my parents had made it very clear to me that if I was ever in trouble of any kind or found myself in a situation where I needed help, that I could and should come straight to them first. They reiterated that I should not fear their rage or rejection that might inhibit my reaching out to them when I really needed to, and they told me plainly that they could not be shocked about anything, so don’t worry about that. Just feel free to talk to them about anything that I needed to at any time. That reassurance from them gave me a very much-needed sense of safety while I was negotiating my adolescent years, and I was very grateful for that sense of security.

***For the parents:*** The students present expressed a desire to be able to communicate with their parents freely about things that may be bothering them, without fear of retribution. They felt that if their parents could trust them to exercise good judgment and exercise their freedom of choice in situations that arose, that they could feel more comfortable coming to talk to them about a pressure or problem when they really needed help.

I expressed my concern to the students about the possibility that talking about freak dancing at their school may well cause some alarms to go off in some parent’s minds who may not be aware of the extent of this, and thus produce some angry reactions. The students agreed that this may well be the outcome, but that was in the spirit of “truth-telling” which was the whole point of the Verdadera project. We agreed that if it opened up some dialogue between parents and students about this subject, then that was a positive outcome. Some students felt that there was a “disconnect” between the realities of pressure at school, and some parent’s understanding of it.

I inquired about attempts made by the school officials who monitor the dances to suppress the freaking. One strategy was to turn up the lights. In theory what may feel acceptable in the shadows would be inhibited by exposure to bright light. This failed however, since everyone stopped dancing altogether when the lights were turned up. Another attempt at curtailment came in the form of a different form of music, jokingly described by the students as “wedding reception music”, such as “YMCA”. This resulted in the dance coming to a screeching halt when everyone decided to go home

early. More overt types of intervention have been attempted by other schools at dances, including going into the crowd to break apart students engaged in grinding, or even measuring the angle of the body positions held, but to no avail. Some school districts have attempted outright bans, or required contracts to be signed by students that they would not engage in any type of lewd or sexually provocative dancing. This approach sometimes resulted in boycotts of the school dances, replaced by well-attended private events with no restrictions. The consensus was that it was very difficult for the school to control this phenomenon.

***For the students:*** I offered some feedback to the students present that I am not particularly concerned about any of them. There appeared to be a strong sense of self exhibited generally and confidence about the ability to make good choices for oneself, in spite of any pressures that may exist. And I believe that is true of the majority of students.

However, no one is immune from feeling pressured at times in social or private situations to go beyond what you may feel comfortable doing. As with any behavior, such as experimenting with drugs or engaging in any form of sexual activity, the smart thing to do is to think ahead. Be aware of the possible consequences of risk-taking behavior. Decide for yourself what is appropriate for you, and what your limits are. Know that you have the freedom of choice in any circumstance, as well as the right to assert control over what you decide to do, or not do. It is your life, your body, your thoughts and emotions, and you have personal responsibility to make the right decisions to protect yourself, your self-esteem, as well as others around you. In spite of how powerful any social pressure may feel in the moment, maintain a firm grasp of the knowledge that you are in control of what you decide to do. And do not be afraid to look at your mistakes, and learn from them.

Finally, I wondered whether freak dancing may be getting boring in any way, and there was some agreement from the students that it may be. The phenomena may well fade sometime soon making space for yet another new form of expression. And in the time-honored tradition of adolescence, it may well be designed to produce shock among parents.

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## Resources from the Verdadera Staff and Professional

Kastner, Laura S., [Getting to Calm: Cool-Headed Strategies for Parenting Teens](#)

Lippincott, Jenifer and Deutsch, Robin M., [7 Things Your Teenager Won't Tell You: And How to Talk About Them Anyway](#)

Riera, Michael, [Staying Connected to your Teenager: How to Keep Them Talking To You And How To Hear What They're Really Saying](#)

Riera, Michael, [Uncommon Sense for Parents with Teenagers](#)

Steinberg, Laurence, [The Ten Basic Principles of Good Parenting](#)

Walsh, David and Bennett, Nat, [WHY Do They Act That Way?: A Survival Guide to the Adolescent Brain for You and Your Teen](#)

Wolf, Anthony E., [Get Out of My Life, but First Could You Drive me and Cheryl to the Mall? A Parent's Guide to the New Teenager, Revised and Updated](#)

## Upcoming Issues and Submission Deadlines

| <u>Issue</u>             | <u>Deadline</u>   |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Disabilities & Disorders | 6pm, Saturday 4/3 |
| Parental Relations       | 6pm, Saturday 5/1 |

## Ways to Submit

1. Visit us at [www.verdadera.org](http://www.verdadera.org). You can submit stories here, learn more about Verdadera, and meet staff members.
2. Stories can be turned in to **any staff member** – hardcopies or emails, anything is welcomed. Staff members are also there to help answer your questions about issues, topics, anything.
3. Email it to [verdadera.entries@gmail.com](mailto:verdadera.entries@gmail.com)



## Dances April 2011

*Verdadera is a publication created by and for Monta Vista students for the purpose of instigating communication concerning the reality of high school within the community. Each month, an issue on a topic relevant to the lives of our students is sent home for reading by both parents and students. While we do not edit submissions, we aim to publish personal experiences, not opinion articles. Please utilize all the resources present and feel free to email comments and feedback.*

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