

The Editor's Two Cents-June 12

Contributed by Brenda Seekins
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June must be memory month. It's graduation time. A traditional wedding month. The end of the school year, and for some the end of a fiscal year. The beginning of summer, a new season, maybe new adventures. Just 30 days, but so much wrapped into them.

When I started to write today, my initial thought was only women are sentimental about such memories, graduation, weddings, beginnings, endings. Men tend to push off sentiment better than women, but maybe they just hide it better. Or maybe I'm more sentimental than some people. I relish in history, traditions (not all), first times and last times. I remember first steps, last school days, first adventures. They are important to me as a storyteller, a writer, and a Mom.

That is why I'm saddened when I see someone deprived of a one-time memory. I watched sadly one year as a classmate of my son's was deprived of playing in his last high school football game, simply by the coach's choice. He was not a star player or headed to college; that was his last opportunity as a senior in high school.

I've watched other children participate proudly in school plays and performances and observed when it was over there was no one there to congratulate them, to whisk them home triumphantly. Instead they stood silently watching other parents praise their classmates and they looked forgotten because no one came to share their experience. A memory missed by the family or parent and a memory marred for the child.

It is often sad when anyone misses memory-making moments. But it is more than sad, it is maddening when someone else willingly deprives someone of the memory.

That was the case at one area high school this year when a handful of seniors was denied the right to march with graduates. The school has yet to confirm or deny the report. Students were told diplomas would be mailed, but they would not march. To my knowledge, these were not students who had misbehaved, but simply would be granted diplomas for the length of time they spent at school; just short of the right credits to graduate, but apparently worthy enough to graduate. Someone wasn't watching for "no child left behind" and no one noticed until it was too late that the proper credits weren't achieved. Still they could graduate...but without the good memories. A quiet miss-step...overlooked and passed aside, but a sad habit of administrators everywhere looking only to move on and beyond errors that might mar the record.

I was pleased to see a district attorney in southern Maine considered this one time event, high school graduation, as a milestone and memory, enough to allow a group of overly-mischievous boys the right to march after vandalizing their school. The group will be required to fulfill community service, and likely restitution as well. But rather than ban them from a one-in-a-lifetime-event, she considerately allowed them to participate in that part of their graduation ceremonies, but apparently no others.