



Courtesy photos

Help from Colby and Menlo

LEFT: Brian Baalman of Menlo stood outside a tractor he took to Greensburg to assist in cleanup efforts following the devastating tornado May 4 that nearly wiped out the entire town. Standing behind Baalman were Bruce Bandy of Colby and his twin brother, Brad Bandy. Leatte Bandy is left of the tractor waiting to clear more debris. **ABOVE:** All that remains of the Greensburg High School is the front entrance. Baalman and Bandys volunteered last weekend. In addition to the tractor, Baalman also brought a dump truck to help remove debris. As of last week, more than 12,500 loads of debris were hauled away to a landfill nearby. For other information, visit: greensburgks.blogspot.com

Tips offered on what to do with IRS notice

It's a moment many taxpayers dread, an envelope from the IRS — and it's not a refund check.

"Don't panic," says IRS spokesman Michael Devine, "most of these letters can be handled without visiting an IRS office."

He said that each year, the IRS sends millions of letters and notices to taxpayers to notify them of a change to their account, request additional information, or request payment of taxes.

"A notice normally covers a very specific issue about an account or tax return, and offers specific instructions on what to do next," said Devine.

He said that anyone who receives a notice should compare it with the information on their return and follow the instructions in the letter or notice.

"If you agree with the correction to your account, no reply is necessary unless a payment is due."

Devine said that it is very important to respond if you do not agree with the correction the IRS made. You can call the telephone number in the notice, or write a letter to explain why you disagree.

When responding in writing, Devine said to send the tear-off portion of the notice, and any documents or other information you want the IRS to consider, to the address shown in the notice.

He recommended keeping copies of all correspondence with your tax records.

For information, visit the official IRS website at IRS.gov, and look at www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc651.html Tax Topic 651, Notices — What to Do.

School and expectations leave student unhappy

Dear Dr. Brothers: Our son is in middle school — his first experience with it — and much to our surprise and that of his teachers, he isn't doing as well as expected. We thought, considering that he's so bright, he'd be stimulated and have a great time as his studies got more complex. The opposite seems to be true. He's either bored, unhappy or both. We're beginning to be worried. Any suggestions?

— J.S.

Dear J.S.: Complaints of boredom certainly aren't unusual in boys his age, but if it continues, you're correct to be concerned, because boredom often leads to youngsters getting into trouble. Sometimes a student is bored because he isn't being challenged sufficiently. This may happen to gifted children, and should this be true in your son's case, it should be discussed with his teachers.

Some young people expect everything to be "fun," including learning new subjects. They often need to be reminded that hard work also is involved, to say nothing of discipline. If their expectation is fun and games, they're bound to feel frustrated and bored. This is when adults need to impress upon youngsters some of the long-term benefits of education, studying and maintaining good grades.

"Fun" can also come from the knowledge that a person has done something well, been creative or lived up to his potential. This builds self-esteem, and each time he feels the experience of learning, mastering something new, it makes him become more interested and curious about everything else around him, leaving little room for boredom.

Dear Dr. Brothers: One of my closest friends in school just found out she is pregnant. Naturally, she hasn't told her parents — just one other girl in our class besides me. She didn't even really know or like the guy; it just happened, and this was her first time, maybe his, too. Who knows? She's so smart — she was planning on going to a college



Dr. Joyce Brothers

• Ask Dr. Brothers

in the east. I don't know how she could be so dumb, but I ache for her. She wants me and her other friend to advise her. What can I say? I don't want her life to be ruined.

— A.B.

Dear A.B.: I don't think that you or anyone else can make this decision for her. Ultimately, she's the only one who can do that, but she needs to know and study all of the alternatives, and her choice will depend upon many different factors, including her family — and I believe that as hard as it may be, she's going to have to tell them. Depending on their religion, their age, their health, their income and their views, whether or not they're willing and able to accept the responsibility has to be considered. After she gets as many facts as possible, then she's going to need to think long and hard, not only about the next months, but also about the future. Chances are, no matter what she finally decides to do, she's bound to question whether she was right or wrong for many, many years — maybe for the rest of her life.

I'm sure you and all your friends must have had sex-education courses, and I'm sure we all agree that the ideal scenario is to avoid the need for or thought about abortion by taking precautions before we act. This young friend needs your sympathy, understanding and support, whatever her decision.



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