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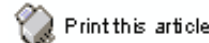
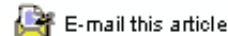
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His prom was 'fun,' but fight continues for gay student

By STEPHEN STRAUSS
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It's life after the prom for Marc Hall, the 17-year-old Oshawa student whose fight to go to the graduation dance with his gay boyfriend ignited a legal battle with the Durham Catholic District School Board.

But another imbroglio may be brewing for the board, which tried to stop Mr. Hall from taking his friend to the dance because members saw that as a violation of Catholic religious values.

As for Mr. Hall, things are getting back more or less to normal after a number of weeks in which his efforts to attend the dance with Jean-Paul Dumond became a worldwide news story.

After an Ontario Superior Court judge ruled Friday that forbidding Mr. Hall to attend the dance with his partner would cause "serious and irreparable injury," the Grade 12 student and Mr. Dumond did what other students do at dances: They danced.

"It was pretty fun," Mr. Hall said at a rally in his honour on Saturday in Toronto's gay district. "It was pretty much what I expected, you know, nice dinner, fun dancing."

At the same time, Mr. Hall, who had dyed his hair blue for the occasion and won a prom prize for the coolest hair, acknowledged: "It has been hard on J. P. and me. But I am going to fight this at a trial so no other kid will have to go through what I have gone through."

At the same rally, Douglas Elliot, one of Mr. Hall's lawyers, told the crowd that winning the right to be at the dance was less important than the larger principles involved in the case. "It's about equality and the values we share as Canadians."

Seeing their son go to the dance was a proud moment for his parents, who have supported his fight. "We are proud for him, not for himself alone, but for

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everyone else," his mother, Emily Hall, said in a phone interview.

"He got what he wanted, and if it stopped right here it would be all right by us," his father, Audy, said. The board is said to be studying Friday's decision and considering whether to appeal it.

As for Mr. Hall, he slipped away after the dance and the rally to go to a quiet place with Mr. Dumond, who sadly remarked at the rally that news media attention had put a strain on their relationship. "They said they just wanted time by themselves," Mr. Hall's father said.


The dance is not the end of Mr. Hall's relationship with the high school, which said it would accept him as a student but not condone his lifestyle at a dance. Even if the board decides to appeal the decision, he is planning to return next year to complete the pre-university Ontario Academic Credit course.


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