

A Haunting Halloween

I was the only fool stupid enough to do my laundry on Friday, the night before Halloween. No, I don't believe in ghosts, and I do make it a point to keep my feet on the ground, but at the moment they happened to be propped against the washer as it spewed an inch of dirty water over the floor. It was entirely dark outside, except for the glow of the moon and a few stubborn stars that refused to let the dense, hanging clouds snuff out their rays. The ferocious vibrations of the washer and the murky lighting of the room prevented me from finishing Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher." Dry leaves swirled in through the door, dancing across the suds that now covered most of the floor. I wasn't exactly scared, but, after all, I was in the old morgue and it was the night before Halloween.

So I threw all my clothes in a dryer and shot over to the 1908 building, where I began my two hour wait to see NCSSM's second annual Haunted House. It was similar to waiting to ride a roller coaster; the screams of all the people at the front of the line convinced everyone behind them that watching TV or going out for a pizza would have been better ideas. The air was chilly, so I jumped around and sang Christmas carols with the people in front of me. When our group of ten finally advanced past the hanging cobwebs and was ushered into a hall of darkness, we knew what we were in for and stuck together like a Rice Krispies marshmallow cookie, an unfortunate thing for our poor guides, who had trouble moving us along. Except for falling through a nonexistent door, I made it through relatively painlessly and recovered watching Charlie Brown in Wyche basement.

I went to bed early, at 1:00 a.m., since I had to march over to E.K. Poe to take the PSAT Saturday morning. Trick-or-treating started at 6:00 p.m., so I had all afternoon to decide how to be the cowardly lion in a "Wizard of Oz" group. After meeting half the student body at Northgate, where I bought yarn for my tail and a couple of bags of sweet tarts, I stayed on the hall popping popcorn, decorating, and eating half the candy I'd bought. The creative personalities of NCSSM soon emerged as monks, punk rockers, bands of Romans clad in togas and laurel, the tooth fairy, and a black cat with real velvet ears, to name a few. Some of the students appeared as aliens, although they claimed that they were just being themselves. Most of the students were generous and showered their visitors with bubble gum, candy corn, and enough munchies to last through the weekend.

I boogied down to the assembly building at 8:00 p.m. to get down with Phase Three. Witches, clowns, and quite a few undefinable creatures rocked the building until midnight, while strobe lights scrambled the brains of anyone too pooped to dance. By 1:00 a.m. I was running on negative energy, as most of the students seemed to be, a condition which even our bags of candy couldn't remedy. No, of course I didn't get any homework done that weekend, but exceptions must be made when Halloween rolls around in the Old Watts Hospital, where dungeons and dragons are everyday phenomenon.

Special Thanks go to Ms. Kathy Benzaquin, Mr. Branson Brown, Scott Johnson, and especially to Mr. Joe Liles, for our masthead.

To see the dream that we all live,
 produced by one who knows how to give.
 The magic thoughts that let us grow,
 Set up in such a way to let us know,
 that spirit flows so peacefully.
 A bond so shared by you and me.
 Joe Liles has just that gift of love,
 that puts your life a step above.
 The style of film we saw before,
 is just a grain within his door.
 He works beyond the limits set,
 and I for one have just now met,
 a man who gives my soul to flight.
 A man who shows "The School of Light".

My Side of the Matter

With a little over a month's experience at The North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics, I am asked to write a "junior's view" of the school, I being the junior. I am still in the process of adjusting to the school and everything that comes along with it, so this view is still a bit premature.

Overall, I can say that I am satisfied here. That's a difficult thing for me to say since so much goes into being satisfied. But just as all the new juniors, I have had major problems. I have never lived away from home before, but I knew I could handle it; besides I would be going home twice a month. Well, it didn't turn out that way at all. For the first week or so, I was miserable, but I would never think of leaving merely for emotional reasons. I would have to have a reason more rational than that, and I couldn't find one, so I stayed.

After the first week, I stopped being preoccupied with myself, and I began noticing the things around me: the administration, the teachers, and the other students, and I made some unfamiliar observations. The faculty and the others responsible for running the school seem truly dedicated to making NCSSM a place for us to feel comfortable in, to learn in. Although it is difficult for them to know the real student "experiences", they do try. I am really pleased with my teachers especially since the extended weekend. Then, I had the opportunity to visit my old school. The teachers at NCSSM do not spend half of the class period lecturing us on the importance of bringing our books to class, not chewing gum, and completing all homework assignments, usually in a threatening tone. We aren't treated like children. The teachers here spend the class period concerned with relevant material to learning, not trivial matters. I am glad my class time is not being wasted by the teachers.

I have found the students here to be interested in learning. I have to admit, though, I have seen some of the strangest things ever in the past month, but usually I pass those things off as "making life more interesting", or at least I try to.

Now, when people ask me "How do you like school?", I don't say, "It's the same old thing." There's never a boring moment, and best of all--I think I'm going to like it here.

Merit Competition

Setting precedents is nothing new for NCSSM's class of '82. The very first students to attend the school, they now have another "first" to add to the list. Eligible to enter the National Merit Scholarship Competition for the first time, NCSSM had 43 members of its initial class to qualify as semi-finalists. This figure catapulted NCSSM into second place nationwide in the number of 1982 National Merit semi-finalists.

First place was clinched by Stuyvesant High School in New York City. Stuyvesant has ranked first in the country for five years. This year Stuyvesant claimed 53 semi-finalists from an enrollment of 2,600, as compared to NCSSM's 43 semi-finalists out of last year's student body of 147.

Semifinalists, determined by scores on the 1980 Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Qualifying Test, represent the top half of one percent of each state's senior students. To advance to finalist standing, a variety of factors are taken into consideration. They include class rank, academic record, teacher recommendations and comparable SAT scores. Approximately 15,000 students were selected this year as semi-finalists. From these, about 13,500, or 90 per cent are expected to become finalists and qualify for substantial scholarships.

Finalists, who will be announced in April 1982, will be eligible for scholarships ranging from \$1000 to \$8000. The National Merit program is the largest independently financed competition for college undergraduate scholarships in the United States. A non-profit organization, they have conducted the competition since 1955.

NCSSM's semi-finalists are Jassim Al-Saadi, Keith Annas, Doug Appleyard, John Armitage, Richard Arnold, Lee Bulwinkle, Sean Cambell, Richard Chapman, Charlotte Chiu, Julie Danek, Alex Daughtey, Rachel Davis, Richard Everette, Brian Habit, Jeff Haines, Darryll Hendricks, Susan Herbert, John Humphrey, Brad Ives, Scott Johnson, Sarah Krigman, Janet Leatherwood, Robert Lee, Sarah Lewis, William Mauney, Naomi McCormick, Ken Murphy, Jeff Parker, Jamie Pate, Andrew Philpot, Keith Promislow, Alex Rimberg, Eric Roush, Butch Sigmon, Melanie Smith, Chris Staffa, Gary Steele, Dean Thompson, Shauna Tilly, Ward Travis, Richard Troutman, Mark Williams, and Andrea Wisner.