

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK: "I Would Never Have Come Here"

By Laura Woodworth

A few weeks ago, Cathy and I sent a questionnaire to each senior to get information to help us with this last issue of the paper. Question number seven was: "If you could do it all over again, what (if anything) would you do differently?" My answer was: "I would never have come here."

That answer might surprise you. You see me doing coursework, running errands, socializing, etc. I guess I look like I love it here. But I don't. I truly wish I had never come.

All right, then, you say. Why'd you even apply in the first place? And why did they let you in if you were so down on this school? Why did you accept their offer of admission? Why on earth did you stay here two years if you disliked it that much? And finally, what reasons do you have for believing these two years would have been any better elsewhere?

I can answer all these questions, and I shall. First, however, let me tell you that I am being candid and truthful about all of this. This final editorial is not a joke, and it is not the product of separation anxiety. I'm telling you how I have been feeling for a long time.

When I applied, two and a half years ago, I really had no idea I'd ever come. I was encouraged by Mr. Anderson, my wonderful tenth grade bio teacher. And, of course, the prestige of possibly getting chosen attracted me. My best friend Suzy was applying -- that was a big factor, for since sixth grade, Suzy and I had done everything together.

My attitude towards science and math as subjects was as lukewarm then as it is now, but I told the admissions committee what they wanted to hear on the application. So they invited me for an interview. Lucky me! I had an English teacher, and we talked about books most of the time. (Perhaps if I had had a science or math teacher, I would never have made it.)

They admitted me, and I accepted. In the words of a girl I know who got in and did not come, "I didn't have any reason not to come here, but I didn't have any reason to come, either." Unlike her, I did come. People tend to do the possible, even if they're not sure it's the best idea. I was sore about

having been rejected by Governor's School, and I figured this place would be just as good. So I came.

It took me a long time to figure out that this was not really the place for me, and by then it was too late. The July after my junior year I began to realize that I didn't belong at S and M. But I had made close friendships which I didn't want to sever, and the thought of the shame I'd have to endure if I went back to Fayetteville a "dropout" was too much. So I resolved to stick it out.

But my senior year, as one of the comments in my last progress report so accurately stated, has been "one long struggle." I know now that I would have had a much better time of it at home.

I don't deny that there have been good things. Coming here enabled me to get a summer

EDITORIAL: On Two Years Well Spent

By Terry Blankford

When I think of all the college essays that ask students to tell why they chose to come here and what they got out of this "special" school, I wonder if they will come to the same conclusion I did? My conclusion: I would not trade what I have found here during the past two years for any other educational experience.

I know that some students do not believe the P.R. the administration sends out about the school, but I guess I've been lucky because the P.R. I heard was for the most part exactly what I experienced. I have enjoyed having teachers who really wanted to help me. I have enjoyed meeting people from all parts of the state, each with a different view of the world. I have enjoyed getting involved in things that interested me. All this was and is NCSSM.

No where else could a person from a small Eastern North Carolina high school have the same educational environment. It is that environment which has made the school so special for me. Not just because of the teachers and fantastic equipment, the special part is the atmosphere that we are all here to expand our world beyond the thoughts and experiences of our former opportunities. At NCSSM, we are challenged by how much we dare to do, not just by how much the school offers.

job at Duke's TIP program, which I love. My Mentorship this year has been a real joy. And, of course, there are the friends...you all know how important the friendships are.

But I would have given all of that up not to have had to endure the constant battle of the past two years. I hope that others won't have to feel the way I did. My brother Steve won't be coming here. I've advised some friends' siblings not to come. This place is not for everyone. It is for some, but not for most.

I really regret having come here. But I won't have to live with that regret much longer. This place has been uncomfortable, but it hasn't done me irreparable damage. I look forward to graduation and the chance to rest up this summer. From this school, I'll try to extract the best and leave the worst behind.

Of course, there is so much that the school does offer. NCSSM has more clubs that are actually active (they DO something) than do most high schools I know of in the state. It is also interesting, and inspirational, that I would come to a school of science and mathematics and become interested in physical activity. The sports program here tries to offer something for everyone who wants to play. In some other schools, the "non-jocks" dare not try out for an athletic team.

There are problems here, and one of them is "time". In fact, I think the major problem is simply a lack of time to do all the things that one wants to do. I tell people whom I talk to about the school that you can work on basically anything you want to do as long as you can find the time to do it.

NCSSM gave me the chance to do so many things I could not have done anywhere else, and I guess that is the main reason why I'm glad I came here and why I have no regrets about my choice to come here. I believe that any student who puts something into NCSSM will get something wonderful in return.

I have received an education in which I have learned much more than facts about science and mathematics, as important and enlightening as they have been. I have learned about my world and about myself. I would not trade these two years for anything.