

Styrofoam: For Here or To Go?

CHRISTINA SCHUBERT

This year, the cafeteria ran out of plastic dishes and was forced to buy cases and cases of disposable Styrofoam ones in order to feed the daily hordes of students and staff. This is a problem that has occurred in past years as well and is a result of people not returning enough flatware to the cafeteria after using it. The cafeteria ran out of "real" plates and decided that its only other option, given the lack of funds, was to buy the cheaper white Styrofoam plates and bowls we know and see today.

Although reusable plates seem to many to be the only other available and economically feasible option, the use of Styrofoam has many unfortunate consequences.

Styrofoam is a brand name of an expanded plastic made out of polystyrene. Although CFC usage has been banned, manufacturing polystyrene produces toxic chemicals such as styrene, benzene, and ethylene are produced during the complex, high-energy-use chemical processes.

Styrofoam has been found to take up huge amounts of landfill space, never biodegrades, leaches small amounts of styrene after completion, and suffocates marine life when mistaken for food. It is technically possible to recycle Styrofoam, but the process is very expensive and requires Styrofoam that has not been contaminated with

food.

Over past years many things have been attempted by students and the cafeteria staff to try to lessen the need for polystyrene dishes: receptacles were placed on halls and in other locations to encourage people to return the plates



The wasteland in the cafeteria after Welcome Day.

they may have taken, rewards have been offered to whoever returned the most flatware, and, most successfully this year, some staff and students have encouraged (and many continue to encourage) each other to bring their own reusable plates to use and wash out independently.

A range of other potential solutions to the Styrofoam situation have been voiced by the NCSSM community, from

more closely monitoring all doors to the cafeteria to prevent people from leaving with reusable plates to instituting some sort of barcode system for the reusable plates. Another more drastic idea is one utilized by Warren Wilson College in Asheville (which

has had similar problems with disappearing dishes): providing no plates at all if no reusable plates are present and letting students fend for themselves.

Fortunately, the cafeteria is planning on buying more washable plates for next year. However, we as a student body need to keep the pressure up to make sure that this year's situation doesn't happen again.

Sophomores

Continued from Front Page

work out of students over three years than over two, but not fifty percent more," says Dr. Warshaw, co-chair of the task force.

A three-year school would allow students more time to develop in leadership roles and adjust to the challenges of Science and Math. It would also mean that many students would have a better background in the courses they take as upperclassmen.

But a three-year school would also bring challenges and trade offs. For one thing, keeping students here for three years means fewer spots in each class, limiting the number of students Science and Math could accept each year. Many students have also noted that they or their families would not have been ready to come to NCSSM after freshman year.

All these issues are being examined by administrators, faculty, and a group of students who meet regularly with Dr. Warshaw to discuss the work of the Task Force. A number of ideas have been brought up to deal with some of the issues of bringing sophomores to NCSSM, such as having extra Extendeds for sophomores, recruiting in middle schools, and using summer programs to help stu-

dents adjust.

A number of similar schools across the country currently enroll sophomores. At the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy and the Maine School of Science and Mathematics, sophomore classes have been very successful according to information gathered by the Task Force. These schools have taken different approaches, and NCSSM is examining a number of dif-

"A number of similar schools across the country currently enroll sophomores."

ferent ways of integrating a possible sophomore class.

One idea was to take a small initial sophomore class, possibly made up of the strongest applicants or students who had reached the limits of their home schools' programs, and add more students as juniors, the process used in Maine. In Illinois, however, they accept only a full class of sophomores.

The school is moving forward. The Curriculum, Standards, and Assessment Task Force passed a resolution stating that a three-year school could be academically advantageous if certain issues were dealt with satisfactorily. Now the idea of a sophomore class is being brought up in the larger community. While it is not likely that any changes will occur during the next couple of years, this is a question that will be discussed and debated for a long time to come.

Academics, Social Life, Sleep . . . and "Fiddler"

JULIAN HIMES

Considering all of the homework, activities, and other obligations that NCSSM students have, it's amazing to see how well a drama production like "Fiddler On The Roof" — one demanding months of work from everyone involved — can turn out.

With more props, costumes, and dance routines than "The Life And Death Of Almost Everybody," nearly all of those participating in both shows agreed that "Fiddler" called for a much larger time commitment. Students polled — including "techies," set constructors, makeup artists, musicians, actors, and directors — reported estimates of up to 150 hours per person devoted to the musical.

Rehearsals were spread out over four months and typ-

ically lasted three to four hours, two or three times each week. However, the final two weeks before opening night consisted of nine back-to-back (excluding the weekend) practices, each lasting nearly seven hours.

How, then, could these students maintain any sort of social life, without failing their classes and losing sleep? Many found new friends in the other students involved with the musical; others learned the importance of time management and finished homework after school to allow time for friends when practice ended.

Rehearsal times did conflict with many tutorials, which led to the difficult choice of "going the extra mile" academically or proving one's dedication to "Fiddler" by putting in as much work as everyone else.

Putting together a large-scale musical like this, while clearly an exhausting experience, ultimately has lasting importance. Many sopho-

mores here for Welcome Day got a taste of the school's drama program at its best, and may decide to participate next year. The juniors involved in

the production, a first for some, will be the seniors next year that provide leadership and assistance to those in the class of 2004 interested in theater.

Although the seniors in "Fiddler" will not be back to perform in or assist with next year's musical, they will have essential experience to take with them to the highly competitive drama programs of college and the outside world. They are also able to wind up their high school drama careers with a "bang."

Ms. Magee calls theater "the biggest cooperative team sport at NCSSM," and as with other sports, extensive practice is a must. Looking back at all of the time and work spent on "Fiddler On The Roof," those involved as well as those in the audience would agree that, in the end, it was well worth it.



Tevye (Daniel Silverman) tells it like it is.

Angela Kilby