

The Alarm of Terror---er, Annoyance

BY EMMA HTUN

It's something that all of us NCSSM students have gone through. Imagine sitting down at your desk at 10:30, refreshed after Happy Half and check, ready to get cracking to study for that all-important physics test the next day.

Or, picture this scenario: relaxing at 11 after a hellish day of classes, letting hot soothing water run over you in the showers. Even better, 2:30 in the morning (hopefully) peacefully sleeping and resting up for the next day. Then Suddenly

BEEP BEEP BEEP

Fire alarm.

We've all been through it. No sooner are you about to start something, just when you fall asleep or get into that

shower, the fire alarm never fails to sound at the worst time. What follows are the multiple slamming of fists on desks, the anguished yells of your hallmates and pounding of feet in the hall as everyone troops into the cold night air for yet another nighttime fire drill.

We moan, we complain, we

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whine as we trudge

out to that wet grass or cold pavement in thin clothes, the few lucky ones having time to grab a coat. It's times like these that contemplations on why exactly we have so many fire drills begin. The obvious

answer is that school security wants us to be prepared in the advent of an actual fire, no matter how late the hour. But how prepared are we really?

"I think it's really stupid that we always have fire drills at night," says senior Kacie Updike. "If there ever was an actual fire during the day and I was in class, I'd have no idea what to do."

The few times we did have a fire drill during classes, there was a lot of confusion as teachers began calling lists of hall names and forcing students to somehow find the teacher who represented their hall. "There's no way they could have found out where everybody was," adds senior Bonnie Merrell. "It's just ridiculous."

Which leads to perhaps why fire drills are usually at night, everybody is on hall and able to be accounted for (unless they haven't woken

up). It certainly is more convenient for those who have to take roll for students, but there are definitely drawbacks for most of us.

"It's annoying..."

"...they need to stop doing it at odd hours so we don't lose sleep..."

grumbles junior Kamrul Rokon. "Especially during the winter when it's cold outside." junior Sara Seffels adds, "I understand that the drills are done at night so they can take roll while we're in the buildings...but they need to stop doing it at odd hours so we don't lose sleep."

That's what most of us get upset over, the odd hours of fire alarm operation. Usually the latest fire alarms go off are

around 12:30, but there have been instances where alarms go off at 2:30, 4:30, and 5. Of course then there's times were the alarm becomes broken while it's going off, and thus begins to ring in 15 minute intervals in the early morning.

So the next time the fire alarms start their cursed wailing while you're just about to fall asleep or get in the shower, think not of the supreme annoyance of having to get out of your warm bed and into the cold night, think not of how much you want to rip one of them off the walls and smash them into pieces. Think of how it works to condition us to safety when there's a real hazard.

Or just get really annoyed and stomp outside in righteous anger like the rest of us.

Camacho's Colombia

DEREK PAYLOR

Her accent is charming, infusing the musical lilt of Spanish into bland mono-syllabic English words and transforming our language into something lyrical. She is the first Spanish teacher many of us have had who is actually latin, literally thinking in the very language she teaches. To students of other languages, she's the pleasant brunette Ms. Camacho, but to those who've had the privilege of hearing machine-gun-fire Español at 8:00 AM, she is la Señora Camacho, profesora of AP and Advanced Spanish.

A speaker of several languages, Sra. Yvonne Camacho is Colombian, and proud to tell everyone. Her office is lined with idyllic panoramic scenes of the capital, Bogotá, her hometown. To escape to her office is to experience a piece of la vida of this South American cultural diplomat. After a brief conversation one soon realizes this woman knows more than just how to conjugate the irregulars and roll her r's-she is a fountain of knowledge concerning Hispanic culture.

This past December, Sra. Camacho returned to her homeland, her roots, of Colombia. Eager to educate, she answered a few questions for the Stentorian about her travels and the country so dear to her heart.

When you arrive in

Colombia, who did you see? What places are top on your list to visit?

My sister picks me up at the airport, usually, and I stay in her apartment. I go to visit my relatives, and particularly my mother who is old and ill. I don't like to go sight-seeing or to other cities because my primary interest is to see my family. Besides my mother, I have two brothers and two sisters, and many cousins. We get together and chat, play the guitar, sing, tell jokes, reminisce.

However, Bogotá is a very large and modern city, and it

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offers lots of entertainment-theatre, museums, concerts, movies, restaurants, dancing. I tend to focus on eating, theatre, and dancing.

How did you celebrate your holidays? What is one of the largest contrasts you see between traditions in Colombia and the US?

The largest contrast is between the present and the past. We were more European a few years ago. Now we are more "americanized." For example, Christmas used to be

celebrated with a novena and a pesebre. The novena started on the 16th of December, and it consisted of getting together with all your relatives for the nine nights that led to the 24th of December. During the get-togethers we would read the story of Jesus, sing carols, eat, do fireworks, and even dance. We would gather around the pesebre, which is a nativity scene. This time around, we didn't have the novena or a pesebre.

There were Christmas trees all over (you realize that we do not have such trees in Colombia), there was no caroling, or story-telling. On the 25th, my immediate family got together, exchanged gifts, and ate a homemade meal.

What are some things people here should know about Colombia?

The obvious, which our mind sometimes make elusive: we are regular people, who have been plagued by the drug-dealing business. A very large number of Colombians have died in the effort to stop the traffic of drugs.

Describe Colombia in the honest manner you'd like for us to see it.

Think of the place that you love the most, the one that offers you memories, deep emotions, family ties, long-term friendships, childhood adventures, young loves, favorite flavors and aromas... this is Colombia for me.

To a stranger
Passing stranger!
You do not know how
longingly I look upon
you.
You must be he I was seeking,
or she I was seeking,
(it comes to me as of a
dream)
I have somewhere surely
lived a life of joy with you.
All is recall'd as we flit be
each other.
Fluid, affectionate, ohaste,
matured,
You grew up with me,
Were a boy with me or a
girl with me,
I ate with you and slept
with you,
Your body has become not
yours only
Nor left my body mine
only,
You give me the pleasure of
your
Eyes, face, flesh, as we
pass,
You take of my beard,
breast, hands, in return,
I am not to speak to you,
I am to think of you when
I sit alone
Or wake at night alone,
I am to wait,
I do not doubt I am to meet
you again,
I am to see to it that I do
not lose you.
-Walt Whitman
-submitted by Sara Wise-

To Sarah and Meg
Happy Valentine's Day
My co-conspirators
(Want to hear a secret?)
I love you guys!!
-Teresa Schubert

Dear Dwight,
You are the greatest person
In the World!
-Dwight

To Michael Schoenfield
You are skinny and oh-
so-white
Your eyes they might be
green or blue.
Towering with amazing
height.
Hey Mikey I think we
like you!!
From the yellow Peaches

To Veena and Niesel
"Our love is like a river,
peaceful and deep;
your soul is like a
secret that
I never could keep."
-your fellow
N'syno-er

To our Dearest John
Kolena,
This is a long overdue
expression
Of our undying affection
for you.
We will undoubtedly miss
you terribly
At the end of our time
together
And throughout the rest
of our lives
Your astounding wit and
charm
Has plucked the funda-
mental fibers of our
beings,
Striking an everlasting
chord in our intellects,
That will continue to
reverberate for the
rest of our lives.
We love you lots
There will never be
another punk-leader
alpha.
Affectionately yours,
Your secret E-block
Admirers
PS. We want our hugs!!