

Senior siblings offer juniors potential resources

BY EMMA HTUN

It's that time again at NCSSM, the start of the fall trimester. This means of course, we seniors gain a lovely class numbering 300 or so juniors to torture--er, nurture, raise, and mentor with our wise advice from a year of experience at S&M.

There is a plethora of mixed feelings in everybody when first coming to this school: excitement, anxiety, and downright homesickness.

To everyone, no matter how you feel, you are not alone. The first thing juniors will realize is that there's an incredible support system at NCSSM. The

entire school, staff, and faculty are a close-knit community. No matter what concerns you have, or even if you just want to talk, there's always someone there: SLI's, counselors, advisors, RLA's, and other various student groups.

One of the things set up is that every junior gets a senior brother or senior sister. This relationship, assigned at the beginning of the year, is whatever you make of it. Basically, your senior brother or sister is someone a year ahead who serves as a guide to a good transition to NCSSM for the junior.

Your senior sibling has the potential to be a key component to a smooth start at NCSSM.

Having been at this school for a year, they know the ins and outs of dormitory life, classes, teachers, and life. Whatever advice they give you, you can count on it to be a true student's account. Our counselors and SLI's are wonderful of course, but it cannot compare to an NCSSM student's account.

So for both the new juniors AND seniors, here's a little bit of advice:

First of all, dear juniors, DO seek your senior sibling out. If they haven't already approached you, find them and introduce yourself, ask them questions, as they probably have a really great way to get the biology floor that will shave

a minute off your "OMG I'm late for class, why the heck didn't the alarm wake me up" morning routine.

Seniors, DO try and make contact with your junior sibling. I know a lot of you will be busy this coming year, but make some time to help out. We were in their shoes a year ago, and I know I would have been happy to have a caring senior brother. (Mine barely said a sentence to me.) Do you want to be the person who is pointed out by a junior as the senior sibling whom he/she never met?

Several of my friends had great senior siblings; one of them even went so far to put a welcome poster on my friend's

door before she moved in. He welcomed her, and on the sign was his screenname and e-mail in case she ever needed any help.

Seniors, check in on your sibling from time to time, always let them know that you're available to talk to, and give them (non-school rule violating) advice when asked for. Juniors, it's great to feel welcomed and cared for, and hopefully you'll have a great senior sibling who will show you how to act when you have your own junior sibling.

After all, NCSSM, in addition to being a community, soon becomes your surrogate family, and families look out for one another.

NCSSM LINGO CHALLENGE

COMPOSED BY RACHEL SHAUGER

lin-go (ling'gō) n. 1. language or speech particular to a group of people

As you may begin to realize as you become acquainted with the wild and wacky ways of NCSSM, you will find that we sometimes speak with a lingo known only to students and people in the NCSSM community. To help you out, here is a matching game of vocabulary words and their definitions. The answers are located below. Happy matching!

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| 1. beast | A. device used to get onto your hall |
| 2. check | B. the hall connecting the ETC to the Chemistry floor in Bryan |
| 3. double labs | C. an NCSSM alumnus |
| 4. double-single | D. intervisitation, when a hall allows members of the opposite sex to enter |
| 5. E lab | E. gathering period in the courtyard from 10:00 to 10:25 week-nights |
| 6. early-out | F. not having the last block of the day |
| 7. Extended | G. when a security guard has to unlock your room for you |
| 8. fish tanks | H. what you call the school you went to before NCSSM |
| 9. FOB | I. dry lab/classroom on 2nd floor ETC |
| 10. free period | J. buses that transport students on week-ends to areas of interest |
| 11. gerbil tunnel | K. having the full class period before and after lunch |
| 12. grand-senior | L. a time on certain Fridays for students to showcase their talents, often musical |
| 13. Happy Half | M. computer labs named for their porthole-like windows |
| 14. home school | N. a room with two beds but only one occupant |
| 15. IVIZ | O. an indication of superiority, such as over a test |
| 16. key-in | P. not having the first block of the day |
| 17. Koffeehaus | Q. the area outside Ground Beall where the basketball hoop is located |
| 18. loops | R. 8:30 to 10:00 week-night required study for first-trimester juniors |
| 19. the Pit | S. an extra-long week-end when you are required to go home |
| 20. sleep-in | T. curfew times when you must be present to sign your name |
| 21. Super Study | U. a block in which you don't have a class |

1. O; 2. T; 3. K; 4. N; 5. I; 6. F; 7. S; 8. M; 9. A; 10. U; 11. B; 12. C; 13. E; 14. H; 15. D; 16. G; 17. L; 18. J; 19. Q; 20. P; 21. R

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eventually "stop being polite and start getting real." It is definitely important to get to know all the aspects of a person, especially any negative ones, before dating him or her; they can make for a nasty surprise a few weeks into a relationship.

Second, friendships tend to last longer than relationships, and many core friendships are made within the first few weeks. Senior Holly Turner pointed out, "If you date someone that early in the year and it doesn't work out, then you're kind of stuck with that person because you limited yourself at the beginning of the year." It would be pretty miserable to come out of a relationship in which your significant other was your only and best buddy, only to realize that everyone else had already formed tight-knit circles of friends. It is also unbelievably nice to have friends to lean on after a killer break-up.

Senior Jessica Hanson reiterates Holly's viewpoint, "If you just spend all your time with your new boyfriend/girlfriend, you'll miss out on the crucial 'initial meeting of friends,' and when that time closes, it gets harder and harder to just walk up to someone new and say, 'Hey there. What's your name?'"

Lastly, it takes a while to meet everybody, and you may miss out on a more fulfilling relationship by settling for the first person with whom you make a connection. Senior Alex Solomon explains, "You never know if someone even better is waiting for you."

On the other hand, with so many people breaking the rule, it seems there must be good reasons for doing so. Every year, despite all urgings against, many juniors start relationships within the first two weeks, and there are a few students who never regret it. Senior James McCann believes that the two-week rule isn't necessary, as it is really a matter of preference instead of something to be strictly followed. Grand-senior Mark Reidy believes that the two-week rule is a conspiracy for the seniors to get the first pick of the new juniors.

Each situation is different, and the two-week rule needs to be taken into consideration on a case-by-case basis. Senior Kyle Wolpert shows the example, "It could be different if you already know [your significant other]." Also, it is possible to spend all your time with someone that you're not dating. If you find someone you're crazy about and are willing to follow the rule and wait until the fifteenth day to label yourselves

"dating," you will probably still spend as much time as possible with one another during the first fourteen days instead of meeting others, making friends, and working on time management. Therefore, the label on your relationship would make no impact, and the two-week rule would be meaningless.

Also, one must consider the two-week time increment. What makes day fifteen any different from day fourteen? At the Alabama School of Math and Science, students are urged to wait five weeks before starting relationships. Who's to say that two weeks, or any piece of time, is an appropriate waiting period? John Dougherty, Doc to his friends, thinks the tradition is unnecessary and two weeks is far too long to wait. "It shouldn't be a rule. Life is too short to wait two weeks."

Finally, to every great rule there are even greater exceptions to the rule. The story of Jennifer and Nick Saucy is the most fantastic and unbelievable exception to the two-week rule, quite possibly in the entire history of NCSSM. The two moved in on Saturday, met on Wednesday, and started dating at the T-Shirt Signing Dance on Friday. Nick and Jennifer graduated from NCSSM in 1999 and are now married.

Jennifer stated, "Yes, it's rare, but it was good in a lot of ways because by the time NCSSM got hard [writer's note: which it WILL], our relationship was already firmly enough established that we could help each other through all the rough spots. It doesn't work for everyone. I'm not saying that your priority during those crucial weeks should be finding a significant other, because, in reality, I probably didn't make as many platonic friends as I would have otherwise just because I was spending time with Nick. On the other hand, I wouldn't change a thing. So if you happen to trip over Mr./Ms. Right, well..."

Ultimately, the decision is up to you. While your seniors will insist that you follow the two-week rule and have good reasons for doing so, you and your special somebody might just be that one couple that works out in the long haul. Regardless of your relationship status, be sure to spend the first two weeks meeting oodles of people, making non-romantic friends, and learning to balance work with play.

In the words of Alex Solomon, "The point is to just make decisions based on what you really think is the right thing to do. Things like the two-week rule shouldn't dictate how you live your life."