

## DO TRADITIONS LAST?

*Some cherished activities lose presence from year to year*

BY GRACE KIM

There are many things that students take for granted—Happy Half, for example. It is a good time for everyone all around, so why would it ever end?

"[Seniors] are closer with the junior class and can instill traditions easier," senior Ann Liu said.

But danger lies in the fact that NCSSM is only a two-year school.

"There can be a tradition that has lasted 20 years, but if a senior class decides not to do it, then the juniors won't know it ever existed," art teacher Joe Liles said.

The end result: blank expressions when you mention Hawaiian Shirt Day on Alumni Weekend and another lost tradition.

"Words From Within" and "Senior Skip Day" may be alien terms to current students, but they used to be treasured events by past generations. Liles described Words From Within as

a series of skits that were performed by the student body at the end of the year.

"It was a way for them to satirize, complain about or make fun of the things that went on at Science and Math," he said. "I looked forward to it every year. The students would always come up with such creative ways of expressing themselves."

However, there came one year when the senior class lost initiative and Words From Within was erased from the list of school traditions.

Senior Skip Day is another faded tradition that Steve Jones, former student and current SLI, recalled as "a day in April or May when all the seniors decided ahead of time to skip a day and go walk to Duke Gardens." Teachers would forgivingly look the other way while the senior class enjoyed the morning and afternoon outside.

So, what happened? Why do these traditions not exist anymore?

"Traditions typically serve some sort of purpose," said Mike Felts, class of 1995, wrote in an e-mail correspondence. "However, that purpose may no longer need to be met or may be met by another tradition or activity in a better way, and in that way I believe traditions start to die."

There are other ways for traditions to lose their place.

"The administration could also put a stop to traditions that they deem unnecessary," wrote Page Marshall, class of 2000.

This may have been the reason for the extinction of the once popular "toilet paper toss after the first goal of the first basketball game" tradition, as mentioned by Chris Rake, class of 1994.

But there are many traditions that have passed the test of time and that we fully take advantage of today. Air Band and the end-of-the-year slideshow have always graced the last days of the school year, and English

teacher Jon Miller's annual reading of *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* is one of the highlights of the winter semiformal.

"It's one of my favorite things about this school," senior Jaime McCandless said.

To stay alive, traditions must "pull at the heartstrings of the student body... and be incredibly meaningful," Liles said.

Traditions also need to be passed down from class to class.

"A tradition must be transmitted to the future," Marshall said. "Without transmission, it cannot be carried out the next year or in years to come."

Traditions like Koffeehaus, the unicorn mascot, Second Hill Day and "Tunak Tunak Tun" will only remain if each class passes them on, preserving the school as students remember them generation after generation.

Junior Jenna Bundy said, "The quiriness [of our traditions] makes NCSSM what it is."



Photos by Luis Zapata

*Left-* Contestants of Mr. Unicorn, a campus tradition, introduce themselves to students and judges on Friday, Jan. 19. Tyrik Hicks won the coveted title of Mr. Unicorn and Jordan Humphrey was named Baby Uni. *Right-* Senior Lisa Pepin plays guitar during a Koffeehaus.

## Costs, benefits found in leadership positions

BY KATHLEEN HÉBERT

February is the time of year on campus when many juniors fill out applications for the various leadership positions. With these applications comes a question: are leadership positions worth it?

"I enjoy working with my fellow Ambassadors," Student Ambassador Jessica Taylor said. "Being a part of this has given me a chance to work with people whom under other circumstances I probably never would have gotten to know."

Juniors see the impact these leaders have on the school when they attend the various programs led by seniors wearing special T-shirts. But it cannot be ignored that any kind of leadership position is a large commitment. Not only must a leader put in at least three hours a week, but there are programs to plan and boards to design, tours to give and information to relay.

There are many advantages to leadership positions, such as being able to move into school a few days earlier in August, chances to interact with the staff and faculty on a daily basis and work experience to add onto your résumé.

"I've really enjoyed being an RLA this year," senior Bob Liles said. "The leadership positions in general give you an opportunity to learn more about yourself than you might think."

Leadership positions also require more time, energy and resources than most other work services. Some seniors argue that leadership positions just are not worth the time and effort required. Working for individual teachers or such work service positions as Bryan desk, art studio or library, require much less time and work. Students

can also spend time on the academic subjects they love when they are assigned to work service in the various departments, assisting in tutorials and labs.

"I do my work service in the chemistry department as a grader," senior Wendy Hua said. "It helps me retain some of the chemistry knowledge that I learned last year, and it's really flexible and easy on my schedule."

But senior leaders are quick to defend their positions. With more control over the various tasks that need to be done during their work service, leaders feel they have a chance to make a difference in our community in more ways than one.

"Diversity is a great thing, and anything I can do to help people recognize that makes me feel good," Multicultural Peer Counselor Jason Hawkins said.

Leadership positions may also affect how colleges consider students for admission. Anthony C. Britt, senior associate director of admissions at Eastern Carolina University, said leadership positions may give one an edge in the college application process.

"Certainly we would give additional consideration to applicants who have leadership experience if all other factors were equal," he said. "An appropriate balance between academics and extracurricular activities/service tells us much about how an applicant will handle the rigors of college/university life. Proven success in leadership is always a plus for applicants."

In the end, it is up to the individual student to decide how they would like to spend their last year at NCSSM. To every work service position, there are advantages and disadvantages.



Photo by Luis Zapata

*Katie Rossitch and Chelsey Harshman prepare to cross the "lava" during the RLA group process, as team members show leadership by directing.*