

## Stop complaining; get involved

No school is perfect; all leave plenty of room for complaints. NCSSM is no exception. Students protest the school's restrictions on walking to Northgate Mall. We gripe that Chartwells food, while it is improving, leaves much to be desired. Though the Weekend Update is informative, some weekends bring few interesting activities. These more specific grievances lead to broad generalizations. As a result, we claim that SGA does not do anything, or that the administration is unresponsive to student concerns.

These complaints, repeated without any suggestions for improving the school, accomplish nothing. NCSSM offers a unique opportunity for students to take responsibility for their own educational and social experience. There are many opportunities to participate in the way the school is run, promoting positive changes. NCSSM is "student-centered" for those students who choose to get involved. A little less complaining and more involvement would benefit every student at this school.

The opportunities for involvement are many. We elect SGA so we can have a voice in governing NCSSM. Too often, though, students do not know or care what happens at SGA meetings. SGA takes the time to post their minutes after each meeting, but few students read them. Our SGA representatives and officers are valuable resources. We should feel free to go to them with problems and suggestions.

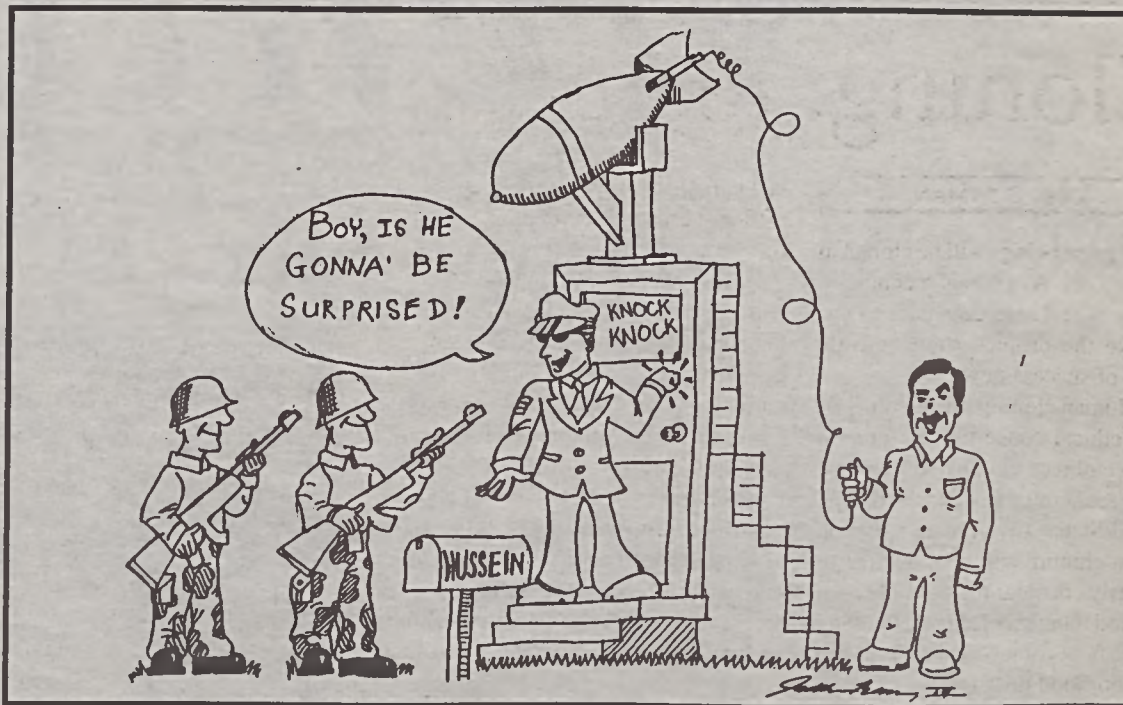
Speak-outs provide another opportunity to offer concerns and suggestions. Often these events are poorly attended. Even when we do attend, we express too many complaints and too few solutions.

Other groups, such as the Curriculum Council and the Parent's Council, address our concerns. Both groups open their meetings to students, but few attend. Students who do attend these meetings are often able to add a new perspective to the discussion.

When we are dissatisfied, we criticize NCSSM's administration. We say that the administration is unresponsive, that it has no idea what life at NCSSM is like. Unfortunately, these claims seldom lead us to talk directly with the administration. If we did, we might find that administrators are responsive. They care about the well-being of students. If they do not know what we experience here, it is because we have not told them. As we talk to the administration, we must keep in mind that specific suggestions are most helpful and most likely to lead to action.

Change does not come only through official channels. We have an impact on the quality of life here through our daily interactions with classmates and teachers. Simply by meeting new people and getting involved, we can make NCSSM a more enjoyable place to live.

In all areas this school allows students to take responsibility for their experiences. Just as we can choose to shut ourselves in our rooms rather than venture out to meet our peers, we can choose to complain rather than seek real changes. The most beneficial choice, though, is involvement. After all, NCSSM is what we make it. When we actively work to improve our school, we can create a better place to live and learn.



## Letter to the Editor:

DR. HUGH HASKELL

I would like to comment on Saurabh Desai's article on the death penalty that appeared in the October Stentorian.

Mr. Desai argues for increased use of the death penalty as a punishment for murder. In favor of his position he offers two arguments: 1) it would be a convenient way to reduce prison population; and 2) it would be an effective deterrent.

Furthermore, he suggests that execution the same day as conviction would eliminate the expense of all those messy and time consuming appeals. To counter those who argue that this would effectively end the right of appeal for convicted murderers, he responds, "you can't please everybody." Presumably those most displeased would be the recipients of this swift punishment. Really.

In rebuttal to Mr. Desai's suggestion, study after study has shown that capital punishment is no deterrent to murder. The overwhelming majority of murders are committed either by people who are temporarily or permanently deranged or "in the heat of passion," with little or no thought of the consequences. If this is so, knowledge of the consequences of the act will have almost no effect on the criminal's actions.

Furthermore, executing every one of the death row inmates in the country would have a minuscule effect on the total prison population. The fact that people are being wrongfully convicted now is no argument for executing convicts even faster. The American judicial system was built on the premise that it is better to let some escape punishment than to wrongly convict anyone. When convicts are imprisoned and later exonerated, which hap-

pens more frequently than anyone would like, they can be released and some amends made. An innocent person who has been executed is dead forever.

Not only is capital punishment not universally applied, even when mandated, but it is also manifest that it is unevenly applied, especially according to race or economic status. In general any black person is more likely to be executed than any white person, any poor person more likely than any wealthy person, and by extension, the most likely to be executed is a poor black person. Hardly the even hand of justice.

Finally, I would argue than in a civilized society, which we believe ourselves to be, the imposition of capital punishment should be considered cruel and unusual in itself. In order to call itself civilized, society should be able to forego ritual killings, no matter how they may be justified.

## Creating the ideal teacher

Ideal teachers have many qualities. These qualities can be seen in their dedication to their work and to their students. This dedication is shown by attempts to provide the best learning environment possible inside and outside of the classroom.

Inside the classroom ideal teachers have a vivid, energetic teaching style. Their strong, animated speeches keep students focused and interested. They look for the best way to teach each individual student. Various teaching methods are utilized in the classroom at NCSSM. For example, some teachers use group presentations to help students learn from each other. Class discussions and debates are begun to encourage students to share their opinions on subjects. This makes learning not only interesting, but fun.

Outside of the classroom, ideal teachers invest personal time to ensure that their students are meeting the challenge. Ideal teachers can be found after school hours helping students with problems that range from understanding a concept to preparing for a major test. They are also willing to work one-on-one with students for individualized learning. These teachers hold tutorials to give the extra help students might need. These teachers go to workshops to gain more knowledge that will

improve the course that they teach. For example a chemistry teacher might take the time to get the latest information on research equipment from a workshop.

Furthermore, ideal teachers place a genuine interest in their students and what is affecting their lives. They care about how students are adjusting in their personal lives as well as their academic courses. These teachers take the time to inquire about and help a student who is having difficulties.

This concern allows teachers to make sure students are reaching their highest potentials. Many of the teachers at NCSSM possess some of these qualities. They are the ones who uphold the high academic standards NCSSM is known for. They make it their priority to make sure each student is reaching his goals.

All of their hard work should not go to waste. Numerous opportunities are open for us to use and learn. We must use these various resources to our advantage and support the great strides many of our teachers make to create the best learning environment possible. Just by experiencing the dedication of many of our teachers and their commitment to higher level learning, we can see what makes the teachers at NCSSM some of the best to be found.

### The Stentorian

North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics  
1219 Broad Street Durham, NC 27705  
<http://iluvatar.ncssm.edu/stentorian>

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