

Teachers Bid NCSSM a Fond Farewell

KITTY FROMSON

Our school is about to suffer not one, but three great losses as Ms. Maier, Ms. Sikkink, and Dr. Stadter move on to another phase of their lives. They are well-respected and well-liked, and there is no question that all three are excellent teachers. We will miss them, but they are looking forward to wonderful new opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Ms. Caroline Maier has taught Biology at NCSSM for four years, but next year she'll be teaching at another Science and Mathematics consortium school, Bergen Academy, located in Hackensack, New Jersey. It is a school similar to ours, but students are in grades 9-12 and it is not residential. At Bergen Academy, Ms. Maier will be teaching biology courses, although she's not yet sure exactly which ones. The school does not offer a separate evolution class, her specialty, nor does it offer Mini-Term, but Ms. Maier is determined to plan a Costa Rica research trip similar to the ones she has led at Science and Math.

Ms. Maier grew up in Delaware and did her undergraduate work in education at

University of Delaware. She then taught elementary school children and was the director of education at a museum before going back to graduate school, where she earned her Masters in research in evolution.

When asked about her philosophy of education, Ms. Maier responded that she tries to, "make it as light-hearted as possible." She also believes that students should be active, that they should gain an understanding of how the science works instead of just memorizing facts, and that they should feel connected to the material. She accomplishes these goals by incorporating information about people in the field of study, by using a variety of activities in class, and by having students read non-textbook materials.

Ms. Maier is sad to be leaving, but she says that she finally feels ready to move on. "It's a great place," she says, and she will deeply miss both her students and her colleagues.

Ms. Julie Sikkink, who has taught WRRD and U.S. History at NCSSM for eight years, is also leaving next year to be one of the first faculty members at the Conserve School in Wisconsin. Founded by James Lowenstein, the school is a private, residential school commit-

ted to teaching students conservation studies, environmental issues, and environmental law and policy. It focuses on leadership and ethics, but does not neglect the traditional disciplines of non-biological sciences and the humanities. It opens in the fall of 2002, giving the faculty a year to plan their unique, interdisciplinary curriculum. Ms. Sikkink is thrilled to be given the opportunity to design and implement such a creative new teaching program. She is also excited about being a part of the pioneer group for this school. She has talked to NCSSM professors who have been at the school since the year it opened, and from them she has learned that, "That was a heady time around here." She wants to be a part of that same excitement of generating something new and is looking forward to "creating a legacy." Ms. Sikkink also adds enthusiastically, "I get to go play in the woods!"

There is a strong connection between our school and the Conserve School: the Conserve School's first executive director is John Frederick, a former NCSSM executive director. Also, the dorms at the school were designed by NCSSM during a past Special Projects Week. Ms. Sikkink hopes to get future Mini-Term classes to come to the Conserve

School for special projects and says she is strongly invested in keeping ties between the two schools.

Ms. Sikkink is excited about her new position, but she has enjoyed her stay at NCSSM and will miss all the wonderful people here. She does note, however, "I'm not going to miss fighting with the state government for money."

Dr. Lucia Stadter, who has taught Latin at Science and Math since its second year, is retiring, but she doesn't plan on sitting still! This summer she's going on a road trip through Canada with her husband, brother and friends, and in November, she'll head to Milan to visit family and do research. Her chosen area of scholarship is the classical texts that were rediscovered in the Italian Renaissance and their effect on Renaissance culture. Her new line of research focuses on the writings of Pliny the younger, who lived in the first century AD. Dr. Stadter is also pleased that she will have more free time to volunteer, mostly at Habitat for Humanity and Faith Council of Chapel Hill.

Dr. Stadter began her teaching career in Italy as a high school teacher. When her husband got a job in North Carolina, they moved to the Triangle and she began teaching Latin

and Italian at UNC and Italian at Duke. She was a part-time professor for her first year at NCSSM, but gladly took on the job when it became full time. She has really enjoyed working with the students and colleagues over twenty years, and has many fond memories of this school. However, she says that "It's my time to retire" and "I want to leave when I'm still enthusiastic about teaching and when I still like it. I want to watch new people with fresh ideas come in." She feels that this is a time in her life when she needs to change and move on to other experiences. Finally, Dr. Stadter comments that, "Being a teacher is like being a mother: there are difficult times that you have to go through, but then you forget the difficult times."

We hope that Ms. Maier, Ms. Sikkink, and Dr. Stadter will be happy and successful in their new lives. We have loved and appreciated them and the gifts they have given to our school are immeasurable.

Mr. Currie, a chemistry teacher, will also be departing NCSSM, but we were not able to interview him due to time constraints.

New NCSSM

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

administration and the students. The meeting would be similar to what we have had on a couple of ALT days. The meeting time would be in the period before lunch, so that "the students will be awake".

Plans for even more ambitious projects are underway. Among them are the remodeling of the various buildings such as the Royall center and the Physics floor. The Bryan lobby will be getting air conditioning and a girls' kitchen where the present Unix lab is. Large structural changes are good, but Dr. Boarman would also like to see a more vibrant student life community here, including museum trips, concert trips, and city event trips, and perhaps even bringing more performers here as is done in college.

In fact, some of these changes seem like they cater to a more competitive, college-type atmosphere. The GPA cannot help but increase competition here indirectly. In fact, the goal of the school is to make the admissions more competitive. The

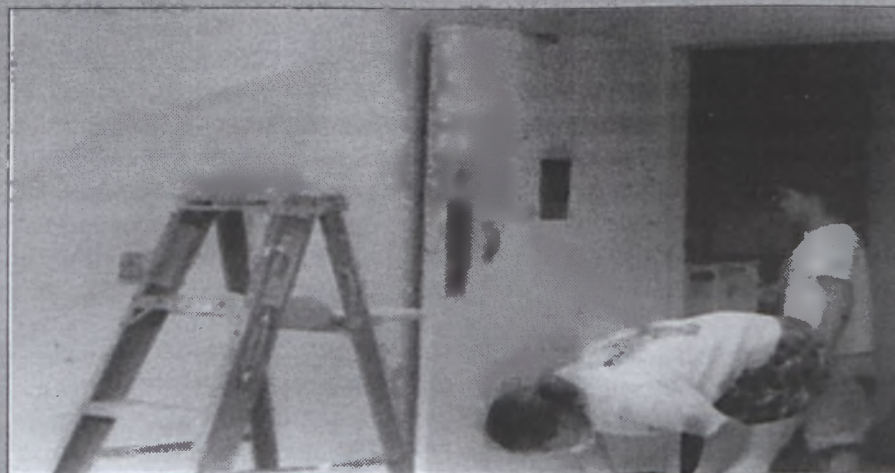
central question is: will these controversial changes at this school really improve it? Obviously no one objects to more concerts or a faster internet connection. And people who really care about NCSSM will not object to a meeting with the administration to promote community, but what about the other changes? This school has historically been a place where students can get a superior education without having to be stressed by competition. Although the new policies might not directly promote competition, the increase cannot be helped.

Two things are certain: NCSSM cannot go on appearing mediocre to prestigious universities around the nation, and NCSSM must continue to provide the opportunity for North Carolina students to get an unparalleled education. Beyond that, it is for no one to say which changes will succeed and which will not. We seem to be coming to watershed years; it is apparent the school will have to change, but to do that effectively, new ideas must be put to the test. Above is Dr. Boarman's plan.

Students Help Out on Campus Beautification Day



Jamie Shin



Jamie Shin