

## Five O'clock Shadow: Loss of Freedom

EMMA HTUN

The warm days of summer and fall have ended, leaving students melancholy, cold, and...stuck on campus?

Ah, yes. The coming of Daylight Savings Time does a lot of nice things, namely giving us one more hour to procrastinate before doing that physics homework, but on the downside our freedom to walk off campus has been drastically curbed. Once, back in the good old days, we students could freely walk to places until 7 pm. However, with the arrival of winter and Daylight Savings, we have to be back on campus by 5.

To put it mildly, most students were not pleased with this prospect.

When asked "What

do you think of the 5 o'clock curfew?" mixed reactions were given. Well, not really. A prompt "Hate it," was given by Kevin Breheny. "It's never dark at 5 at any point in the year. It's a stupid rule."

While it may not be dark at exactly 5 pm everyday, it's true that it does get dark earlier than it did this school year. And as Katrina Levine says, "I can see why they made the curfew. It starts to get dark around 5 and Durham isn't exactly the safest place to walk around at night." Good point. The crime rate in Durham definitely isn't something to sneeze at. However, the area around our school is reasonably safe with the exception of Walltown and Club Blvd. There's an elementary school, a fire station,

several churches, Duke campus, and numerous open businesses.

Another reason why students are not exactly wild about the 5 p.m. curfew is the lack of time to actually do any-

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**-Katrina Levine**

thing. With the trimester schedule, classes don't end until 4:15 giving students a grand total of 45 minutes to go somewhere. If you break down these 45 minutes logically, you'll see that really nothing can be done. It takes 5 to 10 minutes to find people to walk

somewhere with you and at least 10 minutes speed-walking to actually get to Ninth Street, Northgate, or wherever else there and back. This leaves you with about 20 minutes tops wherever you're planning to go. Needless to say, most find this frustrating.

"We get out of classes at 4:15, so there isn't really a chance for the majority of people to walk anywhere nearby since we have to go with other people," complained Eva Panjwani. "I follow the curfew, but I rarely get a chance to walk to places because of it."

"We can't go anywhere in 45 minutes!" exclaims Ann Mast. "So basically, there's no difference whether our time limit is at 4:15 or 5." On a more survival-based note,

Adam Preslar glumly adds, "It's virtually impossible to get dinner. Sure you can try and go eat, but if I eat at 4, I'll be hungry again at 9."

So with all this unrest in the student population over the curfew, will anything be done by the administration? Many suggest bumping the walking curfew back to 6 PM. After all, Daylight Savings Time is a one-hour change, not two hours. But until then, students will look mournfully to the coming of spring, warmth, and Daylight Savings Time, when the 7 PM curfew is reinstated. With our liberation from the shadow of a 5 o'clock time restraint, NCSSM students will once again be able to run amok...I mean, walk nicely in the streets of Durham.

## The Costs of Convenience

DAN APPLIGATE

I know most, if not all, of you have heard the environmentalist's cries for conservation. "Don't drill for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge," or "we need tougher restrictions on industrial waste" are cries that many people brush off as not important to their daily lives and something they can't do anything about. While I think these issues are of critical importance, I believe that there are environmental issues right in our very backyard which we have total control over, namely the amount of waste we produce through our use of the Polystyrene take-out trays.

I don't intend for this article to be an attack on people's eating habits. I think the containers are a good idea, in moderation, of course. Nor do I mean for this article to be a wild doomsday account prophesizing the destruction of the world as we know it simply because we use take-out trays. All I am trying to do is outline my arguments, hopefully convincingly, for why the excessive use of take-out trays is a bad idea.

To begin, I was curious as to how many containers we actually do use here at NCSSM. On a Monday, during lunch, I polled 165 people, both students and faculty, asking for their estimates on how many take-out trays they use per week. I got answers ranging from zero to a maximum of 15, with an average of 2.42 trays per person per week, or 1,470 trays per week. Some people refused to answer, remarking that I was "one of those environmentalists" trying to accuse them of destroying nature, or something else to that effect. After answering with a particularly high estimate, one person sheepishly asked, "Is that too high to put down?"

But from the way that people responded to my ques-

tion, it is obvious that we are conscious of our wastefulness. People who used zero trays per week responded immediately and confidently, while people who used many trays were more reluctant to answer. And so I ask, why do we continue to do something that we clearly recognize as wasteful?

I also interviewed Cathy Floyd of ABL (our foodservice organization), just to get some facts about the Polystyrene trays that we use. According to her, ABL orders the trays in boxes of 200, with each box costing \$15.72. She also estimated, on the spot, that ABL orders 10 of these boxes per week, or 2,000 trays per week, at a cost of \$157.20. If not tied up in the take-out trays, this money could be used to improve our dining experience, such as improving the quality or variety of food. It seems to me that this \$5,000 per year would be much better used on more enjoyable food than on take-out trays offering the same quality food we've come to expect, just in a place other than the cafeteria.

So why is Polystyrene so bad? The problem with using this type of material for something so fleeting as eating our meal outside of the cafeteria is that it essentially never goes away, once it is discarded. Although Polystyrene is technically recyclable, it is extremely expensive to do so, and recycled Polystyrene has limited use.

No, as soon as we throw away our take-out trays, we have deposited an everlasting monument to our consumerism and wastefulness into our surroundings. Do we want to be remembered in this way?

Another adverse effect of the Polystyrene trays which

saves time and is convenient. One day, I timed myself eating dinner. Taking into account the time it took me to walk back and forth to the cafeteria from my room, order my food, take it to the table and to the dish drop-off, even converse with people, I was back in my room within fifteen (15) minutes. A person in a hurry could easily cut this time down to ten minutes. Compare this to the time it would take you to get a take-out dinner, take it to your room, and eat, and the time you are really saving only amounts to a few minutes. Ask yourself, how much of a difference will studying for an extra five minutes, or doing a couple more problems on your homework really amount to?

As for being convenient, it depends on what you term "convenient." Personally, I find it much more convenient to have the plates and silverware ready and waiting where the food is and to be able to get rid of it before I leave, instead of having to carry my food and utensils with me, only to have to actively seek out a trash can when I'm done.

The use of Polystyrene containers also has complex, global effects. Although you cannot be served on your own plate, as per the health inspector's requirement, it would be a matter of simplicity to get the food on a washable plate and transfer it to your own. A third

option would be more difficult to implement, but in my opinion, is the most rewarding. The cafeteria is receptive to the notion of allowing students to take the washable plates out of the cafeteria. However, this has been impossible, since students who do this do not return the dishes, causing shortages and more money lost through the purchases of replacements. Imagine leaving the cafeteria with a tray full of food, eating it in your room or lounge, and then dropping the dirty dishes back off at the cafeteria the next day when you go to eat your next meal. This will only be possible if everyone cooperates and realizes that what he or she does affects the entire student body.

And so, at last, here is a problem that we have the power to fix. This is not something that happens miles away, in congresses of people arguing over our fate as humanity. This is something that we can change, something we can do to make our world better. Contrary to what some might think, what one individual does or doesn't do does matter. It matters through the realization that "no man is an island," and that what a mass of individuals believe has a tremendous effect. Consequently, if we all stopped using Polystyrene trays, it would make a recognizably positive difference in our world. But conversely, if only a few of us make this step, our progress will be lost in the mounds of trash that the remainder throws away. We must all take this step together, not hesitantly or slowly, but confidently, if we are to help in the preservation of our beautiful world that is the only thing keeping us alive.



Polystyrene take-out trays fill a hall trash can.

Yan Yan