

Complaints, school rules curb dancing styles

BY AMY BRYSON

With today's music style and culture, grinding and other forms of contact dancing have become very popular and can be seen at mixers and dances at NCSSM. But in an e-mail sent out before the Halloween Dance it was requested that students eliminate "dancing that violates the rules already established about public displays of affection."

"We were getting lots of complaints about inappropriate dancing from students, staff and parents, and we are asking students to stop," said Steve Jones, student activities coordinator. "It is very hard to define inappropriate dancing, but most students know what is crossing the line."

Jones started hearing complaints from some parent chaperones at last year's Semi-Formal. Since the first dance of the year, more students and staff have voiced complaints to Jones that "dancers are all over each other."

"I personally don't enjoy school dances because of the

grinding and PDA that occurs between other students, and mixers are even worse," one student said. "I can see where all the complaints are coming from. A lot of girls are just rubbing their butts all over boys."

Another reason for limiting the contact that occurs during dances is established in the school's PDA guidelines.

"The way some couples have been seen dancing, violates sex-

ual behavior and PDA rules," Jones said. "Why would we allow something on the dance floor that we wouldn't let go by in a hallway or during an IVIZ?"

In response to the complaints, SLI's discussed the situation and decided to send out an e-mail to see if the problem could be resolved. Students found dancing in an "inappropriate manner" will be asked to stop and, if the problem continues, asked to leave the dance.

"During the [Halloween] Dance many people were tapped on the shoulder and told not to

dance like they were," junior Stephanie Laboy said. "As soon as a guy walked up behind me, an SLI jumped in and said, 'Don't dance like that here.'"

If the problem persists, lighting levels may be raised, the music played may be changed, or Levels may be given out, but staff hopes that students will acknowledge a simple request.

"We don't want to make this a big deal," Jones said. "We would rather just ask people to change their behavior and have the problem resolved."

Senior Kam Rokon feels that

a restriction on dancing is unfair.

"We should be able to dance however we please," Rokon said. "One of our few sources of fun is grinding on girls and they are taking that away."

This is not the intent of the staff.

"We are not trying to be censors," Jones said. "We want kids to go to the dances and have a good time."

Laboy finds the staff is handling the situation appropriately.

"I think they are off to a good start by addressing the problem," she said. "They just have to find a good medium that works."

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-Steve Jones



Demonstrations of inappropriate (staged) and appropriate dancing.

Geek-a-thon gets computers to those who need them most

BY BEN BOGARDUS

There were two goals that the recent Geek-a-thon, held in the Assembly Hall at NCSSM, set out to accomplish. The first was to give NCSSM students an experience where they could learn about computers. The second was to get computers into the homes of people who need them and have never had one before.

Mark Dibner founded Kramden (his name and his son's name backwards) to help accomplish this second goal. Kramden is a non-profit organization created by Dibner and his son two and a half years ago for those who can't afford computers. "That pile (of computers) represents a family who is going to have internet in their house that never has before," Dibner said.

Making computers to be shipped to these households involved several steps. Old computer parts were first cleaned, analyzed both in hardware and software, and when the problems were discovered or what the computer is lacking was found, it was collected, refurbished, and donated to the needy.

Twice as many volunteers turned out for the event as expected, and they worked anywhere from two to ten hours. Some went beyond that. Patrick McKinnon, a senior on Third West Hunt who signed up for one six hour shift, partnered up with Alex Calhoun to work twenty one hours over that weekend. "By the end of my shift, I was absent minded hitting myself with a power strip,"

said McKinnon.

McKinnon was a super-geek at the event, which meant it was his job to make sure a computer could turn on and an operating system could be installed. If it could not possibly be salvaged, the computer went to the scrap heap. Alex Calhoun referred to their team as an "assembly line," constantly getting error messages, opening computers, and mounting new parts where old ones did not work. They had a problem with "anti-loader arrows" that they had for about two hours, and they got to the point where they could mechanically solve it in ten minutes.

In order to test for the internet on every computer, the volunteers created a phone system in which, when the modem sent out a signal, the computer was tricked into thinking it was plugged in and caused a phone to ring. This ring was followed by clapping, since it signified the completion of one computer to be shipped to a family.

SLI Mike Fliss was both a volunteer and the event organizer for the Geek-a-thon. In addition to putting up signs, he made sure that the Assembly Hall could electrically handle running all the technology. "I worked all day," he said, in reference to the twenty five hours he put in over the weekend. Even though he said Kramden is "still starting up," he definitely believes in its mission.

Fliss's main goal as to "make sure folks learn a little bit more." There was one set of

Geek continued on page 4

Students find differences at LSMSA

LSMSA continued from page 1

about perspectives on the hurricane from other students.

"For days after the hurricane, many students who were from New Orleans had no contact with their family. A lot of people felt like the school really wasn't doing anything to help, like they were kind of ignoring the problem."

After the presentation of the check, the weekend arrived with a rush of excitement, filled with parades, fireworks, and bonding time with the LSMSA hosts. NCSSM students were able to learn about the similarities and differences between the two schools.

"The class sizes were really small. And they had an interesting course selection. Classes like microbiology, strategy and military systems, and even dance courses were offered," Margaret Yim said.

According to the LSMSA official website, students are required to take six to eight classes per semester. One-hour classes are held on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and ninety-minute class sessions are held on Tuesday and Thursday.

"The classes seem simpler than they are at Science and Math. They didn't seem to go as in depth as we do here, and

they didn't try as hard to connect their learning to real-life situations," Currier said.

LSMSA students also have the option of graduating with distinction in any particular field of study. This requires the maintenance of a 3.6 grade point average as well as participation in research or other projects.

"That allows students to choose just one particular area of study so that they don't have to take as many classes in the subjects they're not as concerned about," Yim said.

Student life at LSMSA is also different from NCSSM. Check is taken by the Student Life Advisors every weeknight at ten, and every weekend at midnight. They actually check every room to make sure that students are present.

Girls live in suites, with three to four people per suite. They even have the option of changing roommates every few weeks.

"That makes it seem like there isn't very much hall unity," Yim said.

For entertainment, many students choose to hang out in the Student Activities Center, which contains a gym, pool tables, ping-pong tables, and televisions. However, students have to pay for some amenities, including the gym. Although the school is still public, stu-

dents also pay a small fee, slightly over \$1,000, to cover fees and board.

Other differences include the presence of lockers, a bell, soft drinks in the cafeteria, and cars on campus. Yes, students with a certain GPA who have performed community service can drive their cars for a few hours every Saturday.

Despite all of the differences, Margaret points out that at the base level, the students connect, just like those at NCSSM.

"There is the same closeness among students. And they stay up late studying, just like we do. They have the same groups of people, you know, the slackers, the popular kids, and everyone else, so that collectively they are a very vibrant and dynamic people," Yim said.

Nevertheless, by the end of the weekend, students and SLIs were ready to return to NCSSM, the school they call home.

Most of the students who journeyed to Louisiana felt that they have become more appreciative of NCSSM.

"A lot of people at Science and Math have started complaining about how the rules are getting awful. But once you've been to a school where the few rules aren't always followed and the adults aren't respected, you learn to be more appreciative of the rules that we have here," Currier said.