

the  stentorian

vol. XXX, issue 3

the north carolina school of science and mathematics

february 2010

stentorian@ncssm.edu

Boarman Steps Down

BY AVANI UPPALAPATI

After ten years of service to the NC School of Science and Math, Chancellor Gerald Boarman is stepping down from his position. Boarman is slated to start his job as the new head of the private Bullis School in Potomac, Maryland, in July of 2010.

"Maybe ten years is what it should be," he said, noting that his predecessors had been Chancellor for ten years each as well.

Boarman will rejoin his family in Maryland, whom he has been away from for ten years. "It's a matter of looking at what's best for my family, and being able to reunite with them," Boarman explained.

Eleven years ago, the school was looking for a new head. At the time, Boarman was chief educational administrator of the Eleanor Roosevelt Community Schools in Maryland, one of which was a technology school of about five hundred students.

Boarman did not know much about this school and got a call from a search firm asking if he knew anyone who would be interested in the position. A couple of weeks later, the firm called again and asked him to meet with some administrators

in Washington D.C.

After that meeting, Boarman was called to interview at the school and went in to it with a noncommittal outlook. He said he answered with no political correctness, noted that the "facilities kids had at their home schools were better," and was surprised when he was called back for a second interview in spring.

Boarman recalled that the area where the swing set now stands was the site of the power plant, covered in graffiti, surrounded by barbed wire. "There were no fobs or security. The school was in bad shape," he said.

Since he started working here in July of 2000, Boarman has made many changes. Before his arrival, the school had no GPA or classes labeled AP (though students still took the AP tests). Boarman argued that offering AP classes and calculating a weighted GPA would benefit students in the college application process.

Before Boarman's arrival, the Student Center was not open to students, which is ironic considering its supposed purpose. On his second day as Chancellor, he decided to open that area for student use. "The school was a stricter place,



One of Boarman's favorite pastimes has been conversing with students. He hopes that his replacement will also be student-centric. • Photo courtesy of Steve Wilson

but that doesn't mean more orderly," he said.

His next major decision was to close school early for Thanksgiving break so that students had a week off, instead of only 5 days. He saw that students were worn out and felt they needed a break.

Students did not have as many free (or "study") blocks, as students do now. Part of the reason was that students had to take 6 core classes each semester and juniors generally

had a prescribed course of study.

Boarman also created the Curriculum, Assessment, and Standards Task Force to introduce new ideas and fix problems in the school. When asked to come up with different ideas for the schedule, Jim Litle, a current economics teacher and then a part of the task force, came up with the trimester schedule.

Boarman and the administration tried to make

changes quickly, since students only attend for two years. Under the trimester schedule, more classes were offered and juniors had more freedom. "We started seeing students throwing around a Frisbee, walking off campus to Ninth Street," Boarman said. Students were less stressed after the change.

Under Boarman, the school made many new research and mentorship opportunities available to students. He introduced robotics to the school - something he had at his old school. "It's been exciting to see all the changes," Boarman said. Boarman recalls that the faculty was very supportive of the changes, and the administration became much more student friendly.

Continued on page 11

Food for thought: an inside look at school world record attempt

BY JENNIFER ZHU

At NCSSM, it is difficult to not be aware of the school's scheduled Guinness World Record attempt on Mar. 20, 2010. However, although many people, both inside and outside of the school, have heard of the attempt to break the record for "Largest Food Drive in 24 Hours at One Location", students have confessed to not knowing much about the world record attempt beyond the basic details.



Committee members (from left to right) Yusra Iftikhar, Elliot Cartee, Patrick Yang, and Rebecca Pham pose for a Herald Sun photo shoot.

The idea of setting a food drive record evolved from Residential Life Assistant Hannah Wyatt's idea to set a world record for World's Biggest Gathering of Nerds. Part of her idea was that in order to be a part of the record-setting nerd experience, each person had to donate at least one canned item that would then be donated to the food bank. After the nerd proposal was sent to Guinness World Records in September and rejected near the end of October, Student

Life Instructor and organizer of the world record attempt Sue Anne Lewis talked to Kevin Cromwell, Director of Student Services. "Mr. Cromwell suggested that we take the idea [of donating food to be part of the nerd world record] and turn it into a food drive [world record attempt]," said Lewis.

There is the intrigue: how does one work with Guinness World Records to schedule a world record attempt? "They were hard to contact," Lewis admitted. "We found an organization in Massachusetts that had actually been in contact with Guinness and they gave me their [Guinness's] phone number, and we had to write up a proposal. Guinness was pretty unhappy about that [world's biggest gathering of nerds] proposal. From there, it took Ryan [of Developmental Office] and I about a month to put together the food drive proposal,

because we wanted to make sure there was a lot of detail and we went over and beyond to Guinness's answers to show how committed, how much we wanted to do this attempt. We sent it in first week of December and heard back first week of January that we had gotten approved."

Although Guinness World Records officially approved the NCSSM world record attempt, there are some restrictions placed on the association of NCSSM with the famous Guinness World Records. Prior to the event, NCSSM cannot publicize the world record attempt with the Guinness World Record logo or use the phrase "Guinness World Records" on banners and in the headlines of news articles and flyers, although "Guinness World Records" may be used in the body of an article. The right to use the logo and phrase is purchased from Guinness World Records, so Lewis and her NCSSM World Record task force must wait until two weeks prior to the event in order to have that right.

The record to beat is more than half a million pounds of non-perishable food, which

is not limited to canned food and includes peanut butter and rice. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Calgary, Alberta, Canada holds the current record and has been tracking the progress of the NCSSM Food Drive. "I have no idea how they found out!" said Lewis. "Honestly, I have no idea—they've been following us on Twitter as well! She [a leader of the church] was very excited, wished us the best of luck, and hoped we would beat the record so that later they could go and beat us."

Speaking to the current record-holder helped Lewis greatly. Many of Lewis's questions were answered, including one that made a huge impact on how NCSSM will organize the food drive. Lewis explained, "I thought the single location defined in the world record meant Science and Math and that we couldn't go out and get food, that the food had to all come here, but it actually means all of Durham. So when I talked to them, I found out they canvassed the neighborhood, had dropoff locations in different stores, found out about how they organized that, also found

Continued on page 11