

The Best Years of our Lives: A Senior's Perspective

Rose Hunter

Staff Reporter

One might say that the high school years are the greatest years of our lives, and I agree. As a senior, these past four years have changed my perspective on things such as grades and preparation for the future.

When I started high school, I thought of it as yet another four long years of just showing up to class everyday. I was fairly serious about grades, but studying for a test didn't seem like a big deal. It wasn't until my junior year that school got a lot more interesting with all the AP classes, not to mention the beginning of senioritis. It was then that I became serious about grades and college. Now that it is the second semester of senior year, I am excited to graduate. It's been a nice four years but I'm simply ready to start college and get out into the world, and high school has done a great job in preparing me for that.

Senior Jens Lehman took a similar path when he was a freshman. He said he was mildly serious about grades knowing that things would be more difficult than middle school, but still looked forward to having fun. Fellow senior Will Lefferts, on the other hand, took high school pretty seriously from the start, going as far as to refer to himself as a "perfectionist."

Upon starting high school freshman year, Lefferts didn't find it that difficult to get involved in school activities, despite the fact that he was totally new to the high school scene. As a member of Southeast's orchestra, Lefferts said he enjoys performances and collaborations with other musical groups. Lehman accidentally became involved in the theatre and choir scene, as his older sister had tricked him into auditioning for the musical. It was there that Lehman's interest as a singer and performer

began. He currently is a member of Southeast's Bel Canto, Court Choir, and Excalibur, as well as an active member of the school plays and musicals. Lehman advises everyone to try out for something new, admitting, "Had I never tried out, I never would have fallen in love with it!"

I agree with Lehman, because just a week before the performance I was recruited to play violin in the school play, "The Choir." I have no acting experience, or any interest for that matter, but it was really fun to be one of the background actors for one scene. Sure, I won't become the next Jennifer Aniston, but it's a new thing to do, even if it's only once.

Both Lefferts and Lehman are experiencing the side-effects of senioritis. Lehman stated that the classic symptoms are manifesting, but is at least thankful that he has selected a college, as he will be attending Doane to pursue his love of music by majoring in music education.

Lefferts, on the other hand, began experiencing senioritis as a freshman because his older sister, a senior, was college searching at the time. Although Lefferts has had four years of the same manifesting symptoms that Lehman has gone through, he admits to masking them this whole time.

As high school seniors typically get burned out by the time the year is over, Lehman proudly stated, "You won't be catching us skipping class near the end of the semester. We play 'til the whistle!"

As the two seniors will start college next fall, they both have different views on how they will see the proceeding four years of their education. Lehman will be ready to focus from the start, as he will be able to work extensively on music with his lessons, classes, and rehearsals. Lefferts on the other hand sees himself as a bit mixed, saying that

"We'll be out in the world, and it will be time to experience and grasp new things." Lefferts is not set on a college yet, as he has applied to six small liberal arts schools, but is certain that he will be going into the field of psychology while pursuing his interest in music.

Both Lehman and Lefferts have gained a lot of wisdom from these past four years that I think will come to great use to all the underclassmen out there. Lehman shares with a sage look in his eye, "I have learned to watch people, because you really don't know everyone." Lefferts gives some classic advice that really gets taken for granted. "Don't blow things off, particularly early on in high school. Any year in high school, in fact."

I must agree with Lefferts on this, especially Junior year, which was definitely the worst in terms of getting a good night's sleep. In fact, I don't remember sleeping much during my Junior year with AP classes and senioritis. But there really is nothing worth procrastinating to the extent that any typical high school will do. Even Facebook isn't worth it, most times.

I am also looking forward to college

in the same sense as Lehman. It will be more than fantastic to go to school to focus primarily on my own interests, as opposed to high school, where you must take all the required courses and years of all subjects. Although colleges do require that classes of various subjects are taken, I will still get to put a good 85% of my time into music, my own area of interest.

But most importantly, college is going to be an opportunity to get out into the real world and meet tons of new people. However, I think seniors may be underestimating how drastic of a change it will be to go from living at home to living in a dorm. Seniors are always complaining about not having enough independence with parents, but I don't think any of us know what the word "independence" will mean until we live on our own on campus. Those going out of state for college are especially going to feel that change.

High school really isn't that bad, especially at Southeast. The years will go by fast, and you've really just got to make the most of them. They are indeed some of the best years of our lives.

The Clarion is the official newspaper of Lincoln Southeast High School. It is published 8 times per year and serves as an open forum for students and staff to discuss issues concerning Southeast. Letters to the editor are welcome. Letters must be signed. The Clarion reserves the right to edit letters for length, clarity, and accuracy, but will not attempt to alter meaning. Unsigned editorials represent the opinion of the Clarion staff. Signed editorials and columns represent the opinion of the writer. The Clarion does not represent the opinions of the school or Lincoln Public Schools. Clarion meets daily during 5th period in D-113. We can be reached by phone at 436-1304.

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School etiquette: A growing problem

Clarion Voice

Kirk Stiers

Opinion Editor

- A personal commentary

School expulsions and suspensions are not something new to the world of Southeast or school in general. However, the frequency and number of people violating school policies has seemed to increase recently, both home and abroad. It's one thing to engage in illegal activities at home or on a personal agenda, but doing so in a school environment only puts others at risk, including oneself.

According to SCIP team member Paula Damke, "I think many of us are concerned that students are making bad choices that could affect their future."

Students who use drugs such as marijuana find themselves less successful in school and often without finance, as both time and money are directed to support such a habit. Alcohol and drugs can seriously endanger someone's athletic or academic career because of the negative legal repercussions. In exchange for a night of drunken laughs or an hour's 'high,' students could potentially risk a successful and otherwise happy future.

What these 'risky' individuals need to understand is that their behavior not only affects themselves at school but those around them. To individuals who partake in these activities, consider this: according to alcoholalert.com over 15,000 people die by drunk driving accidents alone. Anyone who believes that it is safe to drink at home (or even at school) and then drive to and fro are sadly mistaken. While this is morbid, it's a solid truth that the student body needs to recognize and address.

Even taking away the large factor of potential fatality, we can see that Southeast and its student body are harmed by

poor decisions. Athletes who do drugs risk not only removal from their team, but consequently will do less than their full potential due to the inhibitions created by the harmful substances. One participating in an academic activity such as Science Olympiad or Speech and Debate will not be able to process as much information as quickly, nor process necessary thoughts. This not only has an immediate effect on the individual in question, but Southeast as a whole is represented poorly, both in terms of a poor performance and on a personal level where Southeast is linked with someone who abuses alcohol and/or drugs.

It is obvious that this problem is not going to simply go away or even slow down. Teenagers experiment with alcohol and drugs every day, made readily available to them both at home and in the schools. While it is only a step, raising awareness of the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse to students in schools is certainly a necessary one.

Sally Hammett

Feature Editor

From the tradition of the Knights to the advent of the Hawks, stereotypes are common. Some may be true but no one will ever know unless they have transferred, like I did.

I wanted to come to Southeast since the beginning of the school year but decided to stick it out. It would have been easier to just stay at Southwest and transfer my Junior year but I took a chance and ended up a lot happier than I would be if I were still at Southwest.

Tolerance is a topic that is not new for many students. As a matter of fact, students have been exposed to education on tolerance all throughout their elementary, middle, and high school careers. Yet, it seems that students are either very accepting of others or are very hesitant in accepting people of different backgrounds, beliefs, and lifestyles.

Too often, students and teachers walk down the halls and hear derogatory terms shouted at other students in argument or while students talk about their peers. This must stop; it's not funny and it should not be acceptable in any circumstance.

The definition of tolerance according to dictionary.com is "a fair, objective, and permissive attitude toward those whose opinions, practices, race religion, nationality, etc. differ from one's own." But how can students take this definition and apply it to their everyday lives?

Students can start by taking a stand with their friends. These derogatory

terms are usually started while students talk with their friends and discuss someone different from their typical clique. In this situation, students can stand up to their friend and tell them that saying derogatory things is not cool; people are more likely to listen to their friends than an adult.

Another way to break through the intolerant wall is to make friends with someone who doesn't fit in due to their differences. After all, the best way to start a trend of tolerance is to show people how by paving the way.

Let's face it: everyone has been made fun of for one thing or another in their lives, but some people receive a harder time for their differences and seem to have no one to turn to. These are the people that need someone to reach out to them; make a difference in someone's life today.

Tolerance is a simple enough idea and can be equally as simple to act out: students just need to watch what they say, how they say it, and let their actions reflect their words.

The truth behind the stereotypes

While I was attending Southwest I heard a lot of stereotypical comments, but most of them were about one school in particular: Southeast. I've heard everything from "have fun at that ghetto school" to "Southeast will never be as good as Southwest." Both turned out false. Southeast is by no means "ghetto" nor is it any less of a school than Southwest.

When I first came to Southeast I had no idea what to expect. I knew it would be a whole different world coming from Southwest. Truth is, the schools are very similar. However, they have their fair

share of differences. Southeast is an older school, therefore it has traditions. Southeast also has a lot more diversity, compared to the low percentage of non-Caucasian students at Southwest.

Not only did I hear stereotypes about Southeast, but since I started attending Southeast, I have heard comments about Southwest. Not all of the Southwest stereotypes are true, though from my experience a lot of them are. The truth is no matter where anyone goes in life there will always be stereotypes, so next time think before judging; not everyone is what they seem.