

Westlane exams hinder devo

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It is not very often that criticism of anything appears in this column. This is because, first, I don't like to criticize without presenting all sides of any story, and this is very difficult to do, and, second, I don't like the controversy which a bad opinion tends to stir up.

However, exams are now upon us at Westlane, and I cannot help but comment on what I feel is the terrible timing of the examinations.

Exams will begin Dec. 14, and run through Dec. 22, when the usual Christmas holiday will commence.

Years ago, exams were held for the first term during the second or third week of November. The reason they have been put back is because of the change in emphasis of the divisions of the year's work. At the time of the

November first-term exams, second-term exams were held in March, and the third term extended from April to June. However, people who felt they had certain exemptions as a result of their March marks simply slacked off during the last term, and did very little work. This is called "coasting." To eliminate coasting, or rather, reduce it, it was decided to shorten the final term. Thus, second term would have to end later. Second-term exams were accordingly moved back to the first or second week in May, effectively reducing the third term to only a few weeks.

This, however, necessitated the shifting of first-term exams, as well, or else the second term would have been longer than the first term, and would have received more emphasis in the final mark evaluation. So the first term examinations had to be

held later than November.

Two times were obvious. Either they could be held just before Christmas, or just into the New Year.

This entire line of thinking has been in effect at Westlane since 1970-71. In that year, exams were held before Christmas. Then, last year, the other half of the experiment was tried, and first term exams were held in January. This year, they have returned to the first of the two alternatives. Whether it has been decided to follow this permanently, or whether the two systems will be used alternatively, I do not know.

Regardless, we are stuck with exams just before Christmas this year. I have tried to present what I feel are the reasons whoever made this decision had for placing them at this time.

But just before Christmas means

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that, with all students occupied by exams, Christmas itself is very nearly forgotten. This may seem petty, but consider carefully. What time of the year is more enjoyable, for any reason at all, than Christmas?

If you are a religious person whose thought runs in that vein, then Christmas is the holiest time of year.

If you are a businessman, then Christmas is the time of year when business is best. (Excuse the exemption of tourism.)

And if you are anybody at all, Christmas is the time to feel good and happy. The spirit of Christmas is much more than just some highly emotional outburst. Why do you think entire nations cease fighting during the holiday season?

Perhaps it is in our human nature that we endure all the evils of ourselves for 11 months, but need desper-

ately sometime to catch up and think about Peace, Love, Hope, Understanding and all those somewhat mystical things that balance the very evils themselves.

In our society, this time is Christmas. By holding exams at this time of year, the school is doing nothing less than ruining this entire frame of mind. If this is not important to people, then I feel sorry for them. School should encourage the Christmas spirit, as we did last year, and in the years before 1970-71, not spoil it, as they are doing now.

You might say, well, why can't Christmas spirit exist anyway? It does, but not to the same degree. Two years ago, Christmas spirit at Westlane was so low it was pathetic. There's no reason to think we should do any better this Christmas.

Finally, you will say, when should

they hold exams, then? This question I will not attempt to answer solidly. No matter when exams are held, something must suffer. I merely don't think that it should be Christmas that is ruined by the examination process.

If what I've said makes no sense to you, then I apologize for it.

Last week, Westlane had a big dance featuring the rock group Truck. It was a very exciting evening, as the group arrived two hours late (due to the weather) and everyone was getting very nervous. The person most nervous was Linda Digby. Linda is Westlane's new social convener, having taken over from Bill White. This was her first big undertaking, and it was a success for her and the entire council. Three were just over 500 people there, and everyone I talked to except one person really enjoyed the music. TRUCK provided for us.