

Students with undivided

By PETER JEDICKE
Westlane reporter

In last week's column, I mentioned that Westlane, as a school, is moving into what could possibly become a new era of maturity. I explained the significance of inter-school rivalry with Stamford CVI, and how our 1972-73 midget basketball Spartans and their clutch victory over Stamford in Zone III finals put our school over a major hurdle in our drive toward becoming a "mature" school. I also described what I mean by a "mature" school.

This week, I'd like to continue this vein of thought by bringing the New Westlane to the level of the average student. How does the maturing of the school affect the students, or, better

still, what are the students doing to prove the school is maturing?

The first thing we must consider is the age of the school. Our school first opened in September, 1960. How arrangements were made for shifting students who had gone to Stamford, or wherever, was arranged is something my research has not been able to dig up. Regardless, the school is now 13 years old. This particular age is important, for the students who will be entering Grade 9 will be 13, or maybe 14, years old.

Notice the subtle importance of this fact: These students will not — cannot — remember a time when there was no Westlane.

Despite their knowing that Westlane is not as old as any of the other

schools in the city, Westlane has been here all their lives. Until now, most students at least vaguely remember far enough back that Westlane is not a part of their earliest memories. To the new students, Westlane is a school already entrenched

They've lived all their lives with the knowledge that they would one day be Westlane students. This, I believe, will have an effect on the attitude they have toward attending Westlane in particular.

Furthermore, Westlane is experiencing whatever growth it is undergoing as a result of the increase in population of Chippawa. Perhaps the Board of Education is now regretting its decision to build Westlane in Niagara Falls, rather than Chippawa, but it is rather late to do anything about that. These Chippawa children do not

loyalties give Westlane maturity

live anywhere near the inter-school boundaries, and hence, the people they will be going to high school with have been their friends all the way through. This most certainly affects the ease of adjusting to high school life.

Primarily because of the increase from Chippawa, Westlane is losing its reputation as a "farmer" school, out in the "sticks". Time was when even the students of Westlane themselves joked about being a bunch of farmers. On occasion, one can still hear such talk when one visits another school. I overheard two Myer girls at a girls' basketball game last fall say that we were losing because we were "nothing but a bunch of farmers." There is nothing wrong with being a bunch of farmers, but it is still said quite derogatorily. All this is coming to a

halt, and the students of Westlane have lost the derisive "farmer" stigma. That we still have just as many students from the rural sections proves how infantile the whole derogatory thing was.

Students are also beginning to expect defeat and victory in more or less equal proportions. Until 1970, Westlane, in an entire decade, had won only two major championships: Zone IV football (junior) in 1964 and city title basketball (senior) in 1968. It might be interesting to note that many of the students who did the most for our school in its formative years were on both of these teams—people like Ron Hayward and Nick Phillips. Since 1970, we have three consecutive SOSSA golf winners, a SOSSA soccer team, a drama festival best play and a Zone III basket-

ball championship (midget) to mention the most significant ones. Although some of our teams are losers still, others are winners. Not long ago, they were virtually all losers. And there will probably be more winners in the future. The students are accepting this, and are accordingly more willing to support and participate in activities. The more active the students are the better our chances of winning. And so the snowball rolls along.

I am not certain if there will be a Current Scene next week. (Ed. note: No, Peter). If there is not, look elsewhere in the paper (perhaps on the Editorial Page) because I don't intend to let them force me to miss a week (Ed. note: Yes, Peter).

And, happy birthday, June.