

# 'How do I love 'Thee (Westlane)?'

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This, of course, is the last Current Scene. It is the last time I will ever put my name over the words "Westlane reporter". I've written 65 columns before this one almost weekly since October, 1971, and, yet, the 66th is the most difficult.

I love Westlane. I hate to leave. But why? A lot of people say I'm utterly crazy to enjoy school—every aspect of it—so thoroughly. What fascination do I see in Westlane that no one else can even imagine exists here? It's just a building—or is it?

It appeals to me for many reasons. Westlane is a place of opportunity. As a school, it must, by definition, provide an opportunity to learn.

But there is more available. All anyone has to do is look for it. The concern of the school for the physical well-being of its students opens many possibilities. Students interested in virtually any major sport can participate in their field of interest. Very important, too, is the consideration that, since the school is a relatively small community, and is further subdivided into age groups, competition is not so difficult that anyone with at least a little skill cannot excel simply by showing a great deal of enthusiasm.

The same is true of activities outside athletics. They offer a chance for students to gain experience in many different pastimes, also making it possible for a student to achieve recognition without being highly endowed.

So we see how important school can be in keeping a student's mind and body healthy and happy.

But this is only the beginning. When a student enters Westlane, he or she is thrust suddenly from the childlike world of public school into the maturing community of the high school. Consider the amount of time and effort even the most lazy student spends at school. I take a great deal of one's total resources simply to be a student, even a poor one. Constant use of these resources can only do a young person good. The school is a medium in which attitudes and characters can grow, as well as merely teaching students some facts.

By being in almost daily contact both with peer groups, and superiors, people at Westlane soon find out how valuable their still-forming view of the world is, and can become.

Teachers play an important role in this phase of school life. Don't ever think a teacher's involvement with his or her students ends after everyone has left the classroom, or even with extra-curricular activities. No, the teachers care about each and every one of us, not just as pupils, but as people, and most of them are more than willing to lend us their experience, wisdom and education.

Westlane is a good school, because it fulfils its possible functions to a great degree. Despite the ever-present talk of apathy, we have a vital school, and I defy anyone to tell me there is nothing to do at Westlane. Even though we may have our temporary problems, like no senior football team one year and no junior the previous season, they aren't such dreadful problems that life at the school grinds to a sickening halt. Where we may lose one activity one year, we probably will gain another.

Westlane also had become a school

in which characters are formed. With our many activities and functions, students are constantly in contact with one another. And the teachers at Westlane are, generally, especially receptive to their students inner feelings and problems. Far too many students refuse to like a teacher for a trivial or foolish, or even no reason at all, and so they lose the marvelous advantages a teacher-student relationship can have. Who is to blame for a student's failure to accept teachers as the deeply interested people they are but the student himself? Certainly we cannot blame the school. All that we need is here, we have only to ask for it.

Perhaps most important of all is that Westlane is an institution capable of treating the members of its community as individuals, not as huge masses to statisticized, sociologized and submerged. Westlane may be the only institution many of us will ever meet which will have this quality. "No institution which does not respect its individual members can expect to survive."

Westlane can expect to survive. We have not a long and glorious past, as some of our sister schools do. We have achieved much in our 13 years, but the most significant single accomplishment we have yet attained is that

we leave hope for the future in the hands of those who will inhabit our institution in years to come. Because Westlane is what it is today, it shall continue to be the same to many, many more young people as long into the future as there are young people at Westlane.

I love Westlane, then, because I have chosen to see the good things that it has to offer me.

Westlane has the same things to offer anyone. The activities change a bit from one year to the next, so do the courses in the curriculum, and so do the people who influence the growing students. Mr. W. E. Dewar, principal of Westlane in its first 10 years, had a profound influence upon me, and yet it has been nearly three years since Mr. Dewar retired. But surely a younger student will be influenced by someone else at Westlane.

All things must pass, said the poet. And so, another year passes into history. I appreciated so much the encouragement and support that I got from the many, many people who somehow managed to digest each and every one of my weekly dissertations, and I just have to thank them all. If you all show the same spirit towards my successor, then you will have made yet another Westlane student very happy.

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