



Adventures in Acceleration and Inspiration

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This year at CHS, there have been many good things, from victorious sports seasons to raising money for charities to resounding success for the fall musical, *Singing in the Rain*. However, the most memorable experiences for me have been in my English class and my physics class.



Physics may sound unexciting, but during my class at CHS, there were several entertaining and informative projects, my favorite of which was dropping water balloons from a fire truck bucket.

For the lesson on the physics of falling objects, the Charlotte Fire Department volunteered a fire truck with a bucket from which we could drop balls and water balloons and calculate the time until they reached the ground. Using what we had learned in the class, we calculated how long it would take for a water balloon to fall from the fire truck bucket, 75 feet high, to a pickup truck parked below. For the experiment, the Agriscience teacher was to drive the pickup truck at a steady 5 mph under the fire truck bucket, and my teacher, Mr. Robinson, would drop the balloon at just the right time. With balloon in hand, Mr. Robinson entered the bucket, white faced and shaking, for he is terrified of heights! He rose slowly into the air, and when he was at the full, frightening height, the experiment began. The Agriscience teacher drove the truck, but it most certainly was not at a steady 5 mph! More like 10 or 15 mph. The balloon landed *behind* the truck, but we did not give up hope, and the Agriscience teacher, after receiving a firm talking-to, reversed the truck and began again. This time he drove the pickup truck at a steady 5 mph towards the fire truck. At just the correct time, Mr. Robinson dropped the balloon and voila! The balloon landed splat on top of the pickup truck.

Physics lesson complete, my classmate and I were allowed to ride in the fire truck bucket. It was rather scary, and as we rose into the air, the firefighters joked that we might just be exceeding the weight limit for the fire truck bucket! 75 feet in the air, the bucket swayed in the wind. It felt as if the bucket would fall, and down would come students, bucket and all, but it was worth it because the view was astounding. I could see above trees and buildings of Charlotte, and I could even see buildings and a water tower in the cities surrounding Charlotte. That class was definitely memorable.

English class is one of my favorite classes because the literature we read makes one think about our society, and it helps us learn from our mistakes. It can be depressing, however, for we read about pigs who take over farms and abuse the other animals, and we read about innocent people being hanged for witchcraft. We did read one uplifting book: *Tuesdays with Morrie*. *Tuesdays* is a true story about an old college professor, Morrie, who is dying of ALS. Instead of dying quietly, Morrie decides to help others by sharing his wisdom and experiences with the world. The book contains countless bits of wisdom, but here is my favorite. In the book, Morrie discusses what a perfect day would be for him. It would be simple: eat good food, talk with friends, walk in the garden, then dance. Morrie's idea of a perfect day is powerful because many people are so busy that they don't stop and realize all the good things they have; they just want more stuff and more adventures. It is only when people are unable to walk or eat or go to the bathroom on their own that they realize how good their lives used to be, and by then it's too late to enjoy the simple pleasures of being healthy. Morrie's message is that people should enjoy healthy lives while they have them.

Many of my classes at CHS have proved interesting and useful, but so far this year, riding in a fire truck and reading *Tuesdays with Morrie* have been the most memorable moments of my classroom experiences.