

Chris Sweeney

I am in my 9th year of teaching, and I have been fortunate to have taught many hard-working students. Christopher Sweeney ranks in a very select group of the hardest-working students I have ever known in my career as a teacher. His work ethic pervades everything he does: Marching Band, Varsity Soccer, Jazz Band, Concert Band, and especially his studies in math and science. He makes the best use of all of his time, squeezing in a bit of work on a Chemistry lab after school ends, but before Soccer practice begins. Between Soccer and evening Jazz Band practice, he'll write some code for AP Computer Science and work on an essay for AP English Language and Composition. In class, he displays a *sense of purpose* and *intensity* of a natural scholar. I am sure his coaches and band directors would say the same about the manner in which Chris carries himself in practices and rehearsals.

Simply put: Chris is old school.

If the Yearbook printed his senior photo in black and white, I would not at all be surprised. He embodies the values of hard work, respect, earnestness, and integrity.

Teddy Roosevelt said it best when he said "I wish to preach, not the doctrine of ignoble ease, but the doctrine of the strenuous life, the life of toil and effort, of labor and strife; to preach that highest form of success which comes, not to the man who desires mere easy peace, but to the man who does not shrink from danger, from hardship, or from bitter toil, and who out of these wins the splendid ultimate triumph". Chris Sweeney lives these words.

Now I usually call him just Chris, but his classmates usually call him Sween. In the short 3 years he has been at VHS, that nickname has undergone several mutations attesting to Chris's excellence and hard work. The first generation nickname was "The Sween Machine" a name which affectionately reflected the respect his classmates have for his work ethic, but then came the always popular SweenDog (SweenDog is man's best friend) SweenDog later evolved into SweenDog Millionaire, which is appropriate, because SweenDog will definitely be a millionaire. We've had the AP Computer Science kids run some simulations to predict future mutations of Chris's nicknames for his senior year and got these results: From the world of baseball, The Sultan of Sween, from football Mean Joe Sween. Then there's the vigilante superhero crime fighter, the Sween Hornet, Stretch Limo-Sween, and finally, the Boss, whose real name is of course Bruce SpringSween. Chris, with your, software development talent and the computing power available in room 10, there is no limit to the number of Sween-based nicknames we can develop for you.

Chris's contributions to classroom discussion are invaluable. He has the ability to quickly identify exceptional cases of general concepts and pose important questions to address those. When new information is presented, Chris will easily see its implications for prior knowledge and formulate novel questions to address them. To put it more simply, he exhibits the mind of an engineer. He actively and generously collaborates with his fellow students, and manages his heavily-packed academic and co-curricular schedule masterfully.

Chris is always on the move. During last year's AP bio exam, he had so much energy that he tumbled out of his chair and onto the floor during the exam, only to recover, get back in his seat and score a 5 on the exam. During last Thursday's power outage, we had some lights on but not enough power to run the computers, so our resident Energizer Bunny grabbed a whiteboard marker and started to furiously scribble Java code designed to control a robot on the class whiteboard.

Chris is given the utmost respect by our faculty and his fellow students for his intellect, leadership, wit, and gentlemanly demeanor. His classmates certainly enjoy having him in class as much as I do. He has an exceptional ability the "raise the level of play" while keeping class fun for himself and his classmates.

Chris, through your academic, athletic and musical excellence, you have raised the bar and made this school a better place. Be proud of all that you have accomplished. It is now my honor to induct Christopher Sweeney into the National Honor Society.