POINT OF VIEW

My institution of learning needs help

The clocks are stopped, the ceilings leak and there are cobwebs on the pianos

Deep underneath Salina Central High School, there lives a 3-foot mutant cockroach. It's the mother of all roaches. She wanders the school during the summer and school breaks. During the school day, she hides in the abandoned tunnels under the school. Every time they spray for roaches, she just gets bigger. Her offspring thrive in all areas of the school. Whenever the lights are turned on in the locker rooms, they scatter. Never enter a room without first turning on the lights. You never know what you will encounter.

KRISTIN CONARD
for the Salina Journal

OK, so the mutant cockroach story probably isn't true. The rest of this is. I go to Central and I am getting a solid education there, but it's not the nicest of buildings. High schools are supposed to be institutions of learning, and my institution could use some help.

Every day since my freshman year, I relied on a particular hallway clock as I entered the building to tell me if I was on time. I used it to know if I could go to the bathroom or talk to some of my friends before class, or if I needed to book it just to get to class on time. Yes, I could have simply gotten a watch, but I just always used that clock because it was so convenient.

As of this year, that clock has stopped. Sometimes it is covered with a garbage bag and other times it's constantly 6:02. To find out the time, I have to walk halfway down the hall. I know, cry me a river, but if it's 8:09, you don't have time to walk down the hallway to check the time, because by then you are already late.

That clock isn't the only one that's off. Every day in English, I have to pester the person sitting next to me for the time. I'm not the only one who finds this highly annoying. Other students and teachers have commented on the lack of working clocks in the building.

Perhaps the clocks aren't really that big of a deal. I mean, I can always buy a watch.

A big hazard is walking through the hallway. Of course the halls are uncomfortable and crowded. That's to be expected. That's not my complaint. My complaint is that there are buckets in the hallway. Buckets in almost every hallway filled with brown, pukey-looking water. I realize that the buckets are there to catch the water, or whatever that brown stuff that drips from the ceiling is, and I'm glad that some effort is being put forth to deal with the problem. But, it doesn't always hit the buckets when it falls, and it is not cool when we have to avoid puddles on our way to class.

Water isn't the only thing that falls from the ceiling in our school. We also get falling ceiling tiles, lots of falling ceiling tiles. In several classrooms, you can see the brown insulation, or whatever is under a ceiling tile. Perhaps some people see that as an opportunity for scientific research or something like that, but I see it as disgusting.

Discounting all the things that I have previously mentioned, school isn't that bad. We have computers in every classroom. On those computers, we are not allowed to check our e-mail, we can't go on any Internet site that isn't strictly for school use. If you do, you get your computer privileges taken away. And if we try and do anything that deviates from the norm, the next time we use the computer, we get about 80 warnings and pop up boxes that say "Access denied."

And while I'm ranting about things that are ridiculous, let's rant about the pianos. I play piano and, on occasion, I play the pianos that are at school. It is a very intense experience. The pianos have been tuned, I think, but they're so old that they don't hold the tuning long. Grown men cringe at the playing of some of the notes. All of the pianos have keys that are chipped and yellowed. On at least one, cobwebs decorate the pedals.

I could go on, but you've all probably had enough. I don't write this as a plea for financial aid for the school, and I don't write it trying to stir up trouble. I write it because, well, sometimes you just have to get stuff off your chest. So, there, I feel better now.

• Kristin Conard is a senior at Salina Central High School who is writing for the Salina Journal Viewpoints page as a part of the career intern program.