

Dear Seniors,

In a matter of days, I will be leaving Nigeria for an unknown period of time. In a matter of weeks most of you will be doing the same thing. Before I left, I thought I would write this up to provide you all with some valuable advice and information. First of all, the advice. Do not make the age old mistake of counting down the days until you leave Hillcrest and Nigeria. So many in the past have done so and have lived to regret it, because in doing so they failed to really appreciate fully what Nigeria in general and Hillcrest in particular had to offer. It has also made it so that they were not able to say a proper good bye not only to their friends, but also to a school, a city, a state, and a great country in which they spent some of the most important years of their lives. It is only when you leave that you realize what a good school Hillcrest really was, what a great city Jos is to live in, and what a wonderful country Nigeria is to grow up in. Like Ken Saro-Wiwa wrote in his book A Forest of Flowers, "*For (Jos) is home, and as everyone will proudly tell you in these parts, home is home. This cryptic saying means that it is far better than all the places you have visited or read about. That the dirt in which it wallows comfortably is to be preferred to the paved streets of the best cities in the world. And its mud houses greater and more beautiful than the palaces of kings and queens in other lands.*"

Once you graduate, you will become a part of an illustrious group of people known as Hillcrest Alumni who have become successful all over the world. Unfortunately, the Hillcrest Alumni Association is not in very close contact with Hillcrest itself, so you may not have heard of it, but it does exist. Please appoint someone in your class as your alumni association representative, and have them send the list of addresses of where you will all be after Hillcrest to:

Hillcrest Alumni Association
4432 Quail Hollow Rd.
Fort Worth, TX 76133 U.S.A.

The most important thing the alumni association does is to organize a Hillcrest reunion every three years. The next one will be in Wheaton, Illinois (near Chicago) over the July 4th weekend of 1997. Be sure to try and make it, because it is a wonderful opportunity to meet Hillcresters young and old -- some of the people who attend finished Hillcrest before you were even born!

I would hope that by now all of you have at least heard of e-mail. Although Nigeria itself is only on the brink of linking up to cyberspace, Nigerians abroad have been hooked up to the internet already since its conception. A very easy (and more importantly, cheap) way of keeping in touch with events back in Nigeria, and in keeping in touch with friends from Hillcrest is through the internet. Here are four important e mail addresses that you should definitely take with you when you leave here: **naijanet@mit.edu** -- this was founded by a member of the Hillcrest class of 1989 and is a way to get to know thousands of Nigerians around the world. It is an informal forum for debating and insulting each other about issues pertaining to Nigeria. **ana@quincy.med.harvard.edu** -- this e mail network is for the serious minded Nigerian abroad who wants to keep in touch with his/her countrymen and do something to improve the situation back home. **hillcrest-l@netcom.com** -- this is a discussion group for Hillcrest alumni all over the world, and is the best way to 'find' old friends. Finally, **wboer78@ursa.calvin.edu** -- that is my e mail address. When you are settled down wherever you are, drop me a line, because I will be very interested in hearing from you.

Good luck in your future endeavours. Just remember, whatever they tell you at Hillcrest, you can excel at anything you put your mind to. There is no reason that once you leave here you cannot become the best runner or soccer player or actor or singer at your future university or even have the highest grades in your class and become the student body president. Aim high, that is the only way you can achieve your full potential. Hillcrest has given you about the best educational base you will get anywhere, so now go out and build on it. It has been interesting to interact with many of you over these past few months. You have definitely all grown up since when I was your study hall monitor when many of you were bratty, immature eighth graders. I look forward to the day when some of you will be my deputies at the United Nations when I become the Secretary General. See you then, and hopefully some time before then as well.

Allah ya ba da sa'a.
WIEBE BOER II

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