

## **Stein's Corner: The Starting Gate**

**-Alex Stein**

This is my final article. I have been planning this piece for over a year now. I hope you have enjoyed reading my pieces as much as I have enjoyed writing them.

Life has many phases. Some we embrace, while others we dread. We always have to deal with the constant fear of getting older and accepting the responsibility that comes with growing up. I can honestly say that in the past 18 years I have experienced my own share of ups and downs. There were times where I have felt I could touch the sky, while there are times where I want to bury myself in the depths of hell. It is these moments that define who we are and what we ultimately become. Throughout the last 12 years I have been surrounded by most of the same people. We have laughed, cried, and seen each other grow up while coping with our own individual problems. Moving on to college and away from high school means that we leave behind the people who have contributed to who we are today. The days of playing touch football at recess and discussing the Patriots over school lunch has been eradicated and will be replaced by a college life that we will both embrace and want to run away from. This will be a fresh start, a chance to recreate ourselves. In only a short time, we will enter into a time that brings about more responsibility than we've ever dealt with before.

Now that I am graduating in only a few short weeks, I have participated in the town carnival, a tradition that has been part of my life for almost 18 years. I have equated this event with my life coming full circle. Maybe I'm looking into it too much. Maybe selling tickets to go on a bunch of rides doesn't hold the meaning of life in them. It doesn't have to. I went from the

little boy who couldn't wait for carnival to arrive in town and cherished the string of tickets to selling them to the little boy I once was. Change comes at many stages in life. Maybe equating mine to a carnival is foolish. Maybe not.

We now all enter into the starting gate once again. The track is laid out in front of us and it is up to us to pick the direction their path will take. While some may burst out in front and cruise to the finish line, others will get caught on the inside rail, only we influence that path. Everyone reaches the finish line at some point, yet it is how we reach that point is how we are remembered. Shortcuts don't exist and while they may hold a short term gain it will lead to a long term disappointment. Working toward something comes with responsibility and toughness. We have finished our practice laps but now the real race begins; we have entered the starting gate and closed the door behind us. There are always the horses that fight their way into their stall while others casually take their place. I'm the horse cautiously making my way into my gate with one eye turned back to the barn. It's always nice to know where you came from regardless of the good or bad. The only thing I'm left to wait for are those three words that will usher me out of the gate and into the race. And they're off...