



Mono sweeps through New Trier

by Michael Pruchnicki

Winter in the Midwest means cold temperatures, extra layers, and the spreading of sickness, the most feared of which is the Epstein-Barr virus, also known as mononucleosis.

Mono is a virus which is spread through the nose and mouth. According to school nurse Colleen Sheridan, 90 percent of people get it at some point in their lives, but when many teenagers get it for the first time it can be more severe.

“It’s common that many high school students get it. They are so active, around many other people everyday, and sometimes they just don’t get enough sleep,” Sheridan said.

Mono hit senior Celine Oberholzer especially hard. Although she hasn’t missed any school, she has had it for three months, and the virus has affected her daily life.

“I’m a serious dancer, and I can’t do ballet because I just don’t have the energy to do it. It’s especially unfortunate because I have ballet auditions in January that I’m not as nearly prepared for as I’d like to be,” said Oberholzer.

Oberholzer continued, “It’s especially unfortunate for seniors that had it over the fall, because that is the prime college application time, and if you have a serious case of

mono you just want to lay in bed and not do anything.”

Junior Caroline Holling also had a severe case of the virus. She missed school for one and a half weeks in September and was still infected through October.

“I first noticed it when I got really tired from walking up the stairs at school. I was also just out of it and tired, but I thought it was from school starting and me getting back into the swing of things. Later I had difficulty swallowing and I got really puffy eyes, and I realized something was wrong,” Holling said.

Holling’s experience was unique in the sense that she had it in the beginning of the school year. Holling said, “My teachers were nice and willing to work with me, but it was just a bit strange because it was the beginning of the year and I hardly knew them.”

Both Holling and Oberholzer used the nurse’s office to their advantage. Sheridan said, “We can’t really treat mono, but we certainly allow students who have it to come in here whenever and relax and take a nap if they need to.”

According to Sheridan, students with mono should spend as much time at home as they need and then come back to school gradually.

Recovery from mono is not as simple as recovering from a common



Students recovering from mono are encouraged to sleep in the nurse’s office during free periods | Lee

cold. Sheridan said, “The average case takes about 4-6 weeks for the person to feel fully healthy, but every case is different, so every recovery time is different.”

According to Sheridan, some common symptoms are exhaustion, sore throat and a stomach ache. Junior Lukas Trieb had many of these symptoms.

“I felt really sick for 10 days. I missed 5 days of school right before Thanksgiving,” Trieb said. “I thought at first I had strep throat, but when the tests came back negative my doctor

thought mono was a possibility and I ended up having it all along. My throat hurt so badly, I couldn’t eat and swallow for a couple of days. My voice went up 3 pitches, as well.”

According to Trieb he also lost 10 pounds during the whole experience.

According to Sheridan, the mono virus is very unique and can vary from person to person.

She recommends getting 7-8 hours of sleep every night to try to avoid getting mono or getting sick in general. Sheridan explained, “The

average age for mono is 15-24. It is very common in college students, especially freshman, because they are living in very close quarters for the first time, and interacting with many new people, which means they are interacting with a new set of germs.”

As with all sicknesses, prevention is vital. Sheridan said, “Don’t share drinks and straws because the virus lives in the mouth, or have contact with sick people. If you are sick, don’t come to school. Stay home and get well.”

Early graduation is just around the corner for some students



Danny Kaler, one of many students graduating early this year | Rodgers

by Emma Willcocks

Some New Trier students choose to graduate early, to have more time to pursue interests after high school or to attend college early.

Junior Danny Kaler will be graduating at the end of this school year to attend college. Kaler will pursue music.

“I did not want to let high school get in the way of progress,” he said.

Kaler said his mom had been his inspiration for pursuing the three year track.

“She pointed it out to me as a way to both save a year and not spend time gaining unnecessary credits,” he said.

Kaler said that one of the

challenges for him has been fitting the extra year of English into his busy schedule.

Though it is more work, he said, “Now that I have gotten much more used to it, I feel I can say that it actually seems much easier and almost like a completely normal school year, aside from the fact that deep down I know it’s my third and final one.”

He has found that taking things a week at a time helps him to control his stress, because he finds it less overwhelming to just focus on the moment.

Symphony Orchestra has also been an instrumental part in helping him keep a cool head during his final year.

“I really enjoy the class because I get to make music with my best friends, and especially since music is something which I intend to major in while in college,” said Kaler.

In addition, New Trier allows Symphony Orchestra to count for major credit, which helps to buffer his GPA.

Kaler believes that the three year track is a good idea for anyone with one specific interest for college.

He did warn that it’s been a very rigorous track and that in order to succeed, one must be organized and stay in the moment, because “to try to think of doing everything at once would be, simply put, overwhelming.”

Tom Shorrock, a post-high school counselor, agrees that students with a particular interest are the ones who tend to succeed with early graduation.

“The ones who tend to follow through with it are the ones who have a particular interest. Like someone who wants to do an apprenticeship at the Joffrey Ballet or have more time to meet with agents for acting and attend open calls and auditions,” said Shorrock.

One senior leaving after first semester is Kevin Quinn, who is travelling to LA to audition and hopefully further his acting career.

Quinn said, “A lot of people kind of throw second semester away, but not in a bad way. They just relax and hang out, because most already know where they’re going for college.”

Quinn explained he’d rather make use of his time and go to Los Angeles.

According to Quinn, his first semester has not been affected too much by the change, despite him being in two English classes.

Quinn said it’s the same amount of work that he’s had in other years, “So, it’s not easy, but it’s manageable.”

“Honestly, I’m surprised more people don’t do it. If you have all the right credits, you might as well do it and try something new,” said Quinn

According to Quinn the one thing that he feels he will miss out on is the second semester senior experience.

“We’ve all been together for four years so we’re kind of like a family by now. So I will miss having some final chances to spend time with them,” explained Quinn.

Not many students choose to graduate early. Shorrock oversees approximately 150 students, and this year he only has two who are graduating early.

According to Shorrock there are implications to having less time in high school that some students don’t like.

Many seniors, such as Quinn and Kaler, do not love the idea of missing out on the second semester atmosphere.

For those graduating after junior year, the stakes are higher, because the colleges really evaluate them on freshman and sophomore year grades and extracurriculars.

“They miss the opportunity of having junior year be something that is considered in their application process,” said Shorrock.

Despite the obstacles and

setbacks, Kaler has been optimistic about his choice in the three year track, declaring, “I feel it will be very much worth it in the end.”

In order to graduate early, students must have fulfilled all of their graduation requirements. For juniors this is especially difficult, because at New Trier four years of English are required.

The student must then find time to fit extra semesters of English into their schedule.

Shorrock advises, “Summer school and Early Bird courses help a lot when it comes to fitting in all your classes.”

There are a variety of reasons that students choose to pursue early graduation. If a student wants to enter college with the rest of their class, yet still have a year to work, apprentice, travel, or focus on other interests, then they must graduate at the end of their junior year.

Some students may just be tired of high school after three years, and choose to enter college a year early. This involves handling junior year courses, additional graduation requirements, and college applications all at once.

The process is much easier for seniors who choose to graduate after their first semester, because the student has an extra semester of graduation requirements fulfilled, and college applications are out of the way.

They can spend that extra semester either getting a head start on a gap year, or just spend the extra months before college in an internship or traveling.