

Working for yourself

by Lydia Wuorinen

HEALTH ALERT—As many as 8 out of 10 seniors at New Trier are thought to be carrying a strand of the superbug Senioritis.

Those most susceptible to the virus include students who have received acceptance letters from the colleges that they wish to attend and students who have previously been diagnosed with #YOLO (#youonlyliveonce), another devastating ailment of high school students.

Symptoms, which can remain latent throughout students' high school careers, include low grades, poor test scores, lethargy, a lack of motivation, a rebellious attitude, and the questionable use of "senior sacks."

Sadly, students diagnosed with Senioritis are refusing treatment stating that going "anti-bio" is better than taking antibiotics. Teachers' pleas to focus during class, even when combined with parental pressure to perform, also have little affect in curing students. So how can Senioritis be prevented, or cured? The answer is complex in its simplicity. Work for yourself.

It appears the only successful treatment must come from those

infected. All that parents and faculty can do is to provide supportive care as their students' bodies fight off the illness.

Although New Trier certainly puts pressure on students to perform well academically, and parents generally are seen as wanting the best for their kids, these can't be the only motivators for students. The issue that rolls around with every senior class is that much of the pressure of the past three years is alleviated once seniors have decided what they're doing after graduation.

Once a student has obtained the ultimate goal of acceptance into college the need to do well in school is no longer seen as essential. Unless I commit a felony, or let my grades go off the deep end of the Mariana Trench I'm pretty much good—well, maybe for the moment.

The fact is what you learn in school really does have an impact on your future. This principle applies to every class. Reading those horrendously long books in English may seem pointless, but every discussion you have about that text is giving you insight into other classmates' perspectives, perhaps even changing your own. Now not every book might carry the same meaning with you, but you'll never

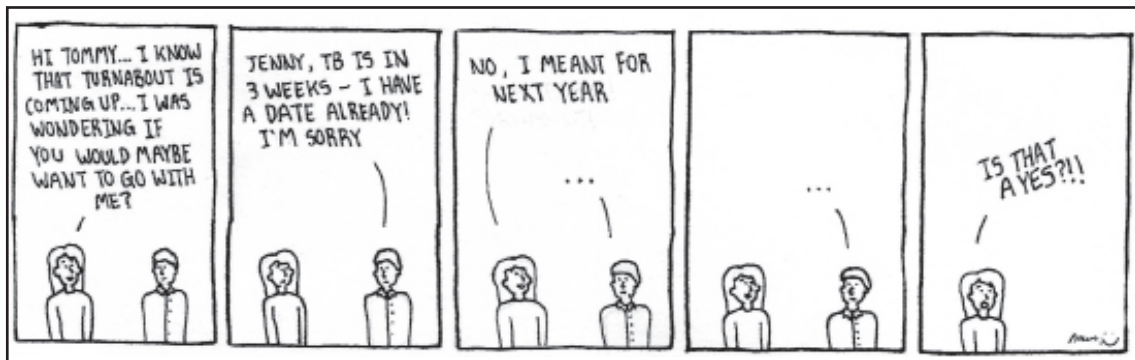
know which ones those are if you don't read each text seriously.

For those students who argue they are wasting their time on such assignments, you're wasting your time by not completing the assignments. The government forces you to be at school, so why not make the most of your allotted time? There's everything to gain, and you're wasting opportunities by slacking off.

Each assignment is what you make of it. Spend the time to put your thoughts on the page, and you're exercising your mind. An essay consisting of what is essentially word-vomit is as gross to your teacher grading it as it is to you writing it.

If anything, senior year shows more about what kind of student you are than any of the years past. Freshman through junior year is the time to show what you are capable of, senior year is when you show what you are driven by.

So if Senioritis hasn't completely drained you of your strength, and I suspect it hasn't—unless being a second semester senior is that much more difficult for you in comparison to being a second semester junior—keep working. We don't want Senioritis following us to college.



You say goodbye, I say hello

by Leah Pearlman

If you're anything like me you have a constant inner dialogue running all day. It isn't that bad, as long as you don't start responding to yourself as if you're another person. I'm not that weird, right?

As I walk through the halls, I try to act like a neutron. For those of you who aren't so knowledgeable on the parts of the atoms we learned in 6th grade as I am, a neutron is a neutrally charged ion. I try keeping my eyes toward my target—my next class—and ignore the riff raff of the halls.

I do not say "hi" to many people besides my friends, and the obligatory hellos to my past teachers. But this neutrality isn't natural. If it were up to me, which it is and isn't, I'd say "hello" to every single person I have even somewhat met at this school.

However, the reason it isn't up to me is because saying "hello" to people in the halls is also a game of who says it first and if the person decides to reply back.

Here is the guide for over thinkers on how to say "hello" in the halls: You will obviously say "hi" to your friends, so that is a full-proof-I-don't-have-to-think-about-this-one greeting. So easy. *sigh*

Another easy "hello" is that unexpected "hello" you get from a peer before you even have time to go into over thinking mode. And I think rule #00000001 is that whenever anyone says "hello" to you, you must respond with a "hi" back.

I mean, what kind of monster would ignore a nicety like that in the

harsh world that is high school? And yes, people may ignore your "hellos" but that doesn't mean you should give up and stop being the friendly and nice person you are. Be the change you want to see in the world, guys. #Ghandi

Then we have the daily greeters. You generally walk the same route everyday so you'll see the same people. Depending on whom they are in your life, you may choose to greet them or find a way to distract yourself so they think that you don't see them. However, you'll usually find after the 2nd week of school that this is harder to do than you'd think. You don't always have a genuine way to distract yourself.

But then you walk by (literally) the acquaintance territory. These are the people you randomly see in the halls who you know, but barely regularly speak with.

Are you supposed to say "hi" every day when you pass that girl you were partners with for that English project freshman year? Doesn't it get awkward? Is she even considered an acquaintance anymore? I don't even remember her last name.

And it all comes down to being nice, if you want to be outgoing and sociable throw a quick "hello" at them. As long as you are around 55% sure they will respond. And if they don't, no harm done. Remember this, Leah. People will love you one day!

That being said, how do you force yourself in the moment to say "hi" first? I'll bring up that infamous moment when you walk down a completely empty hallway besides

one other person walking towards you. This person may be a closer acquaintance in which case you may automatically notice them and say "hi." However, other times the person may be a random peer you know but haven't really had a conversation with.

In these instances both will usually look down and pretend not to see the other as they walk. At some point one will usually look up, act surprised, and say, "oh hey!" Or they may choose not to acknowledge you waiting for you to say "hi" first in which case both parties may feel incredibly rejected.

In this situation I think the main reason we chose to say "hi" later is because once you've said "hi" from farther away, you must still continue to walk towards them. What do you do after the exchanged "hellos"? I am not close enough with this person to say anything else besides "hi," so now I'm stuck walking towards them nodding and smiling like an idiot. Why did I do this to myself? Leah, you've really messed up this time!

If you think about it, this common interaction is sad. Either we feel too uncomfortable to just walk and ignore the other person, or too uncomfortable to just say "hi" right as you see the person. Where does this uneasiness stem from?

Think about how nice it feels when people say "hi" to you in the hallway at school. It actually makes your whole day. In the end you shouldn't talk yourself out of saying "hi" to someone in the halls. Spread the "hellos" and don't over think it.

Staff editorial

A charitable twist on senior sacks

This is yet another piece in the News about senior sacks. But it's not an informational piece about the history and tradition behind the sacks, or an attempt to gauge students' and the faculty's feelings about the whole thing, or any other angle we've taken in the past.

Instead, it is a written proposition of something that we at the New Trier News believe the senior class, and potentially the entire New Trier community, can rally around.

For the uninitiated, senior sacks are backpacks donned by second semester seniors for, well, no clear reason.

Ranging from Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle shells to Yoda head cutouts (and just about everything in between), they're the type of impractical book bags you'd expect to find at an elementary school, and that's the point.

The tiny amount of space for books and other school materials within these backpacks symbolizes the workload (or lack thereof) for seniors, and when it comes to the exterior of the bag, the unofficial norm is that the more ridiculous-looking, the better.

Naturally we get a kick out of these senior sacks. There's something about seeing a classmate walk in to 1st period on a Monday morning with Buzz Lightyear strapped to his/her back; it serves as a solid pick-me-up and reminds us that we are, in fact, finally seniors.

However, we can't help but think about some of the costs of this practice. What happened to all of the completely sufficient JanSport and North Face backpacks that were used for the first 3 1/2 years of this person's high school career?

What will happen to the visual atrocity that is on his/her back once its 4-5 month window of usefulness is over?

Thus springs an opportunity.

The mission of New Trier is "to commit minds to inquiry, hearts to compassion, and lives to service of humanity." This approach is evident in many facets of student life. However, it's typically integrated by faculty members. Student-led initiatives in which hearts are truly

committed to compassion are few and far between, save for the already-established fundraising clubs (which, to their credit, do a nice job).

New Trier has a rich history of philanthropy. It makes a concerted effort to use its standing as a well-respected and financially stable institution to help less fortunate causes.

What better way to carry on this tradition, and establish a defining and lasting legacy for the Class of 2015, than by spearheading a positive twist on senior sacks?

And so we at the New Trier News propose this: a backpack drive.

There's two seemingly ideal ways to go about it. The first is the "one for one" approach, popularized by TOMS: for every pair of TOMS shoes purchased, a pair of shoes is given to an impoverished child. TOMS later expanded this drive to include eyewear.

In theory, applying this method to New Trier could work; for every senior sack purchased, one backpack could be donated to a school in need in Chicago.

If this plan didn't include the senior sack purchaser also paying for a regular backpack to be donated, properly stocking donated backpacks would be a good task for Student Alliance, Tri-Ship, Girls Club, Social Service Board, or any service-oriented club up to the task.

Another possible method is the basic charity drive approach: once a charity bin has been set up in a convenient location, say, the makeshift fundraising table in the main cafeteria, students with senior sacks could either drop off their previously used, normal backpacks for use at a school in need, or, towards the end of the year, drop off their actual sacks to be donated to an elementary or preschool.

By no means is this a fully developed idea. We think that active student support, combined with New Trier's substantial resources, can develop the concept and lift this whole thing off the ground. It can be the signature of the Class of 2015, a philanthropic foundation to be built upon for years to come. And we can lay the groundwork.

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