



# A decade later, dance shines brightly

After 10 year hiatus, Under the Stars dance provides safe space for LGBTQ+

by Darcie Kim

On Sat., April 8, NT hosted the second “Under the Stars” dance. The first dance was held in 2007 and was also sponsored by Committed to Action, CTA, New Trier’s Gay Straight Alliance club.

The event’s purpose was to offer a safe dance environment for the LGBTQ+ community at NT and at other high schools.

The sponsors for the dance this year were Rachel Hess, Matthew Stuczynski, Dan Gross, and Marc Garneau.

“CTA’s mission is to support LGBTQ people and create safety and acceptance for all students regardless of their sexual identity or orientation. This dance promised to be such an experience, and it was,” sponsor Marc Garneau said.

While many students may categorize this dance as solely for those in the LGBTQ+ community, the dance was in fact open to all students at New Trier and those attending



Around 90 students attended the Under the Stars dance on April 8 | Garneau

schools in nearby districts.

The idea for the dance came during a CTA club meeting, when members of the club voiced their desire to host a dance that would openly welcome students who were either a part of or supported the LGBTQ+ community.

The last time a dance like this was held was in 2007. As it was only the second time the dance was

organized, the event was not on many student’s radars.

The dance was advertised with posters and announced over the loudspeaker, but it was still relatively unknown.

“I didn’t know that New Trier had a dance supporting the LGBTQ community. I saw the posters about the Under the Stars thing, and I think it’s great idea. People who are afraid

to be themselves at school can go have a fun time and not be judged in any way,” sophomore Alex Kotaba said.

Despite low awareness of the dance, 90 people attended it.

“The dance went amazingly well,” Garneau said. “Students arrived at 7:00 and stayed until the end. Everyone had a great time and the area schools appreciated being invited to the dance. The DJs were from WNTH and did a wonderful job, and CTA provided food, drinks, and prizes.”

Sophomore Lila Formicola attended the dance and said, “I thought the activities were fun, as well as the overall atmosphere. I just didn’t know that it was an inter school dance, and I saw a few people I had seen at a different dance last year as well.”

While the dance itself welcomed all those who supported the LGBTQ community, there were still students who are a part of that community who chose not to attend the dance.

A senior who identifies as part of the LGBTQ community who chose not to attend said, “I think people being in that setting kind of automatically outs you to everyone around you, especially if you have not opened up about your sexuality publicly. For me, that would have

made me a little uncomfortable.”

This same senior also recognized the significance of this dance, and how it could have been a positive experience for those who decided to attend, “I just think actually having a safe space to have that sort of social interaction for LGBTQ youth is so important. Lots of schools probably don’t have anything like this for kids.”

*“People who are afraid to be themselves at school can go have a fun time and not be judged in any way.”*

Students who attended the dance felt that, while unique in its purpose to the LGBTQ community, did not have a significant impact on the community, mostly due to the lack of publicity.

“I liked the dance overall, but if it were better advertised and better understood, there could’ve been a better turn out and more impact. I do think, though, that the goal wasn’t necessarily to have an impact, as much as to have a space where students felt okay being themselves. If that was the goal, then it was definitely achieved,” Formicola said.

# Local elections contested for first time

Independent candidates challenge caucus for NT trusteeship

by Alyssa Pak

On Apr. 4, Glencoe, Wilmette and Winnetka residents voted for the New Trier Township Board of Trustees, and for the first time, these voters had an option on the ballots.

Among the candidates that came out on top were Kevin Boyd (20.25%), Gail Schnitzer (20.35%), Elliot Robbins (19.45%), and John Thomas (19.38%). However, this year’s election results came with controversy.

In all elections prior to this year, the New Trier Citizens League was the group who allowed select residents of the three suburbs to run for a township trustee position, and this selected slate ran uncontested, resulting in a win.

Although the process on Apr. 4 was similar in process, a new group known as the Independent Party provided voters with another slate for the first time. Widely known from various lawn posters, Kathy, Bob, and Stacey fought to add their name to this year’s election ballot.

By Jan. 22, the Citizens League had already selected the slate, but the chair of the New Trier Republican Organization, Danielle Mergner, asked the caucus chair to slate the independent candidates, instead.

Bob Costello, Kathy Myalls,

and Stacey Woehrle had a new perspective. Their goals were centered around lowering costly property taxes and administrative costs.

All three candidates found the overhead cost (more than 35%) at New Trier unsatisfactory, and wanted to reduce these costs while simultaneously keeping or improving the quality of services.

Myalls stated that the overhead should not be any more than 10-15%. In addition to their goal of reducing overhead costs, they also wished to encourage more volunteer opportunities for Township services.

Woehrle, who has 15 years of experience in professional finance, said their party would demonstrate commitment to keeping residents up to date by uploading minutes, budgets and spending online as well as checkbook information.

The Independents said that if they were elected, they would want to get rid of salaries for part-time elected officials, work on a transparent budget so residents could see what the Township is spending, post this spending online, and look for a different location for the Township offices, since it is in an expensive area now.

Despite Mergner’s efforts to get Costello, Myalls, and Woehrle slated, the caucus declined her proposition, so the three residents decided to run as the “New Trier Independents” instead.

There were many mixed reactions to these new candidates, one being particularly controversial and noted by many. In response to



Kathy Myalls, Bob Costello, and Stacey Woehrle were independent candidates for the NT Board of Trustees | Facebook

the school’s Seminar Day which took place on Feb. 28, Paul Traynor, parent of a New Trier student, created an hour and 20 minute documentary entitled “New Trier: Tip of the Spear”.

One of the themes of Traynor’s short film is based off of the idea that the controversy surrounding Seminar Day was just a preview of the right wing trying to dominate the community level government, and additionally that these right wing efforts went on to influence the most recent election, with the creation of

the Independent Party.

It was for this reason that Traynor claimed he wanted his film to be shown before elections, so that voters could be more informed before they made their final decision.

Unfortunately for Traynor, attorney Adam Merrill, representing a few parents who protested Seminar Day, claimed that his film violated their privacy rights in addition to portraying them in an inaccurate manner, and furthermore, that if he did show the film at the Wilmette Theatre, it would become a legal

matter. Wanting to protect his family, Traynor opted out of playing the documentary.

Nevertheless, after attorney Michael Lieber countered Merrill, threatening the complaining parents with a countersuit for malicious prosecution if they continued, Traynor ultimately ended up showing his film at the theatre.

Despite Traynor’s short film, Costello, Myalls and Woehrle fell short on the ballots, with 6.79%, 6.97%, and 6.82% respectively, which was well behind the original slated candidates.