

Are students a-ttired of the graduation dress code?

Tradition of all white formal attire doesn't appeal to all students

by Sam Blanc

At New Trier, nothing is allowed to be strictly run-of-the-mill, and the students' graduation attire is no different.

Rather than the classic cap and gown, New Trier's graduation dress code consists of floor or tea length white dresses for girls and white tuxedo jackets for boys.

Dresses should be free of colored accessories, sequins, or other decorations. Backless dresses, as well as plunging necklines, are not allowed.

Boys must wear black dress shoes and black socks while girls must wear white dress shoes- either heels or flats.

According to Senior Adviser Chair, Susie Paunan, this tradition has spanned the majority of New Trier's history. In the school's archives, pictures of boys and girls graduating in white go back decades.

Paunan supports the tradition, which, to her, "is about graduating with style and dignity." She



Class of 2015 seniors gather with friends before the ceremony | Archives

believes that it's the most important celebration one can have in high school.

"It's different than a school dance," Paunan said. "It's the culminating ceremony of 12 years of education."

Although not entirely enamored with the ceremony, junior Amber Malik said, "It's nice that people get to feel a bit more elegant and mature." She agreed

that the dressing up aspect of the ceremony makes it feel like a really big deal, "like everyone has really accomplished something."

Senior Claire Zimmerman, however, had an opposing opinion.

"I just want to wear my Heelys," Zimmerman said. "Graduation is our last day of high school, and even though we're legally adults, it feels like it's the last day we get to be kids. I don't know if it's the kind

of celebration I want to end high school with."

Junior Maddy Tung also said that the attire takes a certain element of festivity away. Although Tung said she likes the air of glamour the attire provides, she finds the absence of school colors a little strange.

Tung said, "It seems like the outfits 'white out' the four years they spent at this school." She believes that at least part of graduation should be about celebrating the realities of high school life, not immediately trying to grow up.

Malik said that although everyone may look nice individually, the different shades of off-white make the whole thing look a tiny bit disorganized up close. Malik said it's just as important to look more like a group, even if it means sacrificing style.

Junior Allison Thabit agrees with Malik, but for a different reason.

"New Trier already has a reputation for being pretentious," Thabit said. "I don't know if it's worth drawing attention to that."

It's often assumed from this tradition that New Trier students are buying exorbitantly priced dresses. However, because the cost may be a problem for some students, New

Trier hosts a sale each year called the "White Dress Project" to help students buy nice garments for the significantly lower price of \$75.

On the New Trier website, the graduation attire requirements are separated into two categories, boys and girls. That being said, it's no wonder that senior Musa Abbasi was worried about what gender roles this might enforce.

"The way they put it seems really black and white, no pun intended, and things like that can make people really uncomfortable," Abbasi said. "It's supposed to be a special, celebratory day, and I wish everyone was allowed to feel confident."

But Susie Paunan guarantees that anyone who wishes can speak to her or Senior Boys Adviser Chair, Chris Pearson, about a unique situation. Paunan and Pearson are happy to learn about any students' particular concerns regarding the attire.

If the student's motives are clear, Paunan can discuss it with the principal to help settle the situation.

Although Paunan says that this only applies to a small number of graduating seniors, she believes that it's her job to make students feel as comfortable as possible.

Braving the shave for childhood cancer

The St. Baldricks fundraising event will take place on March 10

by Yiorgos Zervas

New Trier's east campus will be hosting St. Baldricks' "Brave the Shave for Kids with Cancer" on March 10.

St. Baldricks is a foundation that raises money and awareness for childhood cancer. The organization started in 1999 when a businessman raised money by shaving his head.

In sticking with its roots, St. Baldricks' main fundraising event comes in the form of a head shaving.

Volunteers, or "shavees," get up on stage and shave their heads to raise money for the foundation and to act in solidarity with their peers fighting childhood cancer.

Students of various genders and backgrounds shave their heads in support of the event

In 2015, the national foundation raised around \$37 million, \$25 million of which was spent on programs for kids. This was down from 2014's \$39 million.

St. Baldricks' expenses are split between programs, fundraising and administration, according to the financial information on their website, www.stbaldricks.org.

According to Curesearch.org, over 40,000 children are in cancer treatment every year and 175,000 are diagnosed. Leukemia, lymphoma and neuroblastoma are just a few of the different types of cancer young people are diagnosed with.

Treatment costs could be up to \$53,000 a year, slightly higher than the 2013 median household income in the United States.

New Trier has hosted St. Baldricks' head shaving events in

previous years in the main cafeteria of the Winnetka campus.

Students of various genders and backgrounds shave their heads in support of the event.

The event is usually staffed by volunteers from New Trier's Cancer Awareness Club. Marc Tadelman, faculty sponsor of the club, got involved in the St. Baldricks event due to the lack of a faculty sponsor.

"It seems like a great charity that helps out a lot of kids," Tadelman said. "I was all for it."

Tadelman was approached by Ella Brown, Cancer Awareness Club leader, and asked if the club could partner with St. Baldricks.

Tadelman described how hard the volunteers work in preparation for the shave, but couldn't predict what the event will raise. "I guess we don't know what to expect yet," Tadelman said.

Brown shared similar excitement for the upcoming event, but the club heads are currently looking for more volunteers to help out with fundraising and preparation.

They are asking anyone interested in shaving their head or in volunteering to contact them. St. Baldricks' website also provides step by step instructions for signing up.

"New Trier has hosted St. Baldricks' events for the past several years, and each year we strive to recruit more volunteers and shavees to help raise even more than the year before," junior Nalani Wean, a volunteer for the event, said.

Wean said, "Last year we raised over \$16,000 and we hope to raise more." The volunteers spend the two months prior to the event raising money, mostly through fundraising and by talking to family members and friends.

Wean continued, "Shaving your head helps contribute to the experience, because you begin to understand what children with cancer go through, while also raising money to help treat them."

The shave will be held March 10 in the cafeteria during periods 4, 5, 6.

CPS exchange continued

since the school isn't supporting them, they can't support themselves," Cunningham said.

As the fight for equal funding continues, Fox has a positive outlook on the future of Kelvyn Park, and other similarly under-

funded schools.

"My students, they come and they see this world, and they say, 'We only have two gyms and they have four!' That's true, and that's the reality of funding," Fox said.

"But there is something that

you can do, you can get the word out, you can advocate to bring more resources and programs into our school. We have to be creative."



Top left: Peyton Arenson and Ellie Kurensky from Gompers advisery advertise their Candy and Cereal Necklace booth. Top right: Grace Murphy helps with Raguseo advisery's Donut on a String activity. Bottom left: Sofia Crnkovich gives Leo Garcia a mohawk in Skizas advisery's Hair Styling booth. Bottom right: A boy participates in Baeb advisery's Hockey Shootout. All photos taken by Stuart-Rodgers.



Winter Carnival continued

seniors with one more, almost final, opportunity to spend quality time with one another.

Senior Darby Tingue is a member of the Horwitz advisery. Tingue said, "My advisery did the wedding station. I enjoyed spending time with my friends in advisery."

Although this does seem to be an exciting time for senior adviseries, there is also much preparation and work that goes into it.

"We got a lot of decorations to make the room look like a wedding scene and got candy to give to the newlyweds," Tingue said.

The Klein advisery had a "specialty" drinks booth. They made smoothies and mixed sodas.

Jacob Mehlman, member of the Klein advisery, was excited for the carnival. "Winter Carnival is a great senior tradition and I really hope that this year is the best year yet," Mehlman said.