

No clowns in North Shore as police report a lack of concrete evidence

Clown rumors create panic among students

by Nora Crumley

Last week, talk of clown sightings and threats were deemed to be only rumors by police, as the New Trier Township fell victim to the clown hysteria that has taken over the nation in the past month.

According to some students, on Thursday Oct 6, New Trier received threats over social media. These threats stated that individuals wearing scary clown masks would be coming to the school that Friday.

Police Liaison, Josue Perez, said the rumored threats were completely inaccurate and there was no evidence of a threat made to New Trier.

However, the hysteria and rumors did lead to an extra police presence.

"We've had calls," Perez said. "We've even had parents come to the department to express their concerns, but nobody has been able to provide any solid evidence of anything going on. It's all word of mouth from one person to the next. It has led to some extra patrols in certain areas, specifically in and around the school last week."

Officer Perez added that extra officers were seen the week of Oct 7, when the clown hysteria was at its

highest.

"We had some extra officers coming through the building just to keep an eye on things, but it's truly all precautionary."

The clown hysteria infected students as videos circulated the student body.

Junior Dory Mydlach, explained how she first heard about the rumors of clowns in the area and how the risk of them being close to home frightened her.

"I first heard it on the news. The reporters said that there were people getting scared because these clowns are going around and stabbing people. I didn't really get freaked out because it was in other places, but then my friends sent a picture of a message on Facebook that said they were coming to Illinois and all the schools. Then I started to freak out," Mydlach said.

Junior Julia Yang mirrored Mydlach's view, "There was a rumor that a clown was going to come to my hometown [Wilmette]. I really was scared for a second but then I thought it's probably just a rumor."

The paranoia of a clown haunting the streets of the North Shore reached a pinnacle when a video surfaced depicting a car driving down a wooded road and seeing a clown. Rumors circled that the wooded road was Forest Way Drive in Winnetka and Glencoe, but local police say that these rumors were



Rumors of clown attacks create media circus across the nation | AP Photos

untrue.

Officer Perez said there has been no proven incidents involving clowns in the North Shore. Instead, there is just a lot of speculation.

"There are lots of photos going around that are not from here. Specifically, there was a video circulating of a clown being in the wood near Forest Way Drive, that was actually a photo from some kids in New York," Officer Perez said.

He stressed that so far there are no proven sightings of clowns in the North Shore adding, "There is nothing that we have seen in Winnetka to be bona fide."

False rumors have been circulating throughout the school. Officer Perez suggested fact checking as a way to stop rumors and hysteria

from spreading.

"When you hear someone tell a story, go out and do your own research. A simple google search would have shown the lies, the inaccuracies, and the exaggerations. The best thing you can do, rather than immediately react and start spreading the rumor, is go ahead and do your own research. Do some fact checking, and then if you find something that is concrete go ahead and report it to the police so we can further investigate."

The recent clown scare is not the first time American neighborhoods have been terrorized by people in creepy masks.

Clown sightings are nothing new, with even The New York Times reporting on a clown sighting in a Chicago cemetery last year. This

recent clown hysteria that has taken over the country is heightened by the use of technology, according to Officer Perez.

"Misinformation can travel at a much faster rate," Officer Perez said. "I describe it as a sort of digital terrorism, where it preys on people's fears."

Yang also noted how social media adds to the hysteria surrounding the clowns. "Social media dramatized the situation a lot. If it weren't for people starting rumors on social media we probably wouldn't of cared as much or even know about the clown situation at all."

For Officer Perez and other law enforcement officers, individuals terrorizing and taunting the public is nothing out of the ordinary.

This year, though, the hysteria surrounding these stalkers has been heightened by the use of creepy clown masks.

"Clowns are something that have been around for a long time, and right now it's being used as a terror prop to freak people out," Officer Perez said. "There have been very few incidents where it was serious. These incidents are not usually an organized deal but one-offs. It's nothing out of the ordinary from what happens all year round, it just so happens that right now clown masks are being used."

Jewish students forced to choose: services or school

With no Rosh Hashannah off, students stress over missing school

by David Heiman

As the Jewish new year rolls around, many students are forced to choose between their religion and school.

The Jewish new year, known as Rosh Hashannah, is usually a day off of school. However, with the recent construction, this has not been the case this year.

Jewish students are forced to decide between staying up-to-date in classes, and going to services.

"I think it's unfair to the Jewish students at the school because if they miss classes, they fall behind," junior Alex De Trempe said. "I think it is a really hard choice to make, and while I can't relate to their situation, I understand why it's hard."

If students do end up missing school, they might start falling behind in class, which leads to consequences throughout the year. "I missed school on Rosh Hashannah, and I fell behind in some of my classes," said junior Matt Metrick. "I had to make up a lot of work, it was really hard and the school makes it very difficult for students to decide between school and their faith."

While a lot of students are against having school that day, some don't consider it to be that big of a deal.

Sophomore Dante Becker said, "My dad is Jewish, but I don't celebrate. I get why people are upset, but if they don't want to fall behind in classes, then they should come to school."

Becker wasn't alone in this sentiment. Junior James Snyder said, "I think that if Jewish students didn't want to fall behind in school, then they should skip services and go to

school that day."

Some teachers seem not to consider the predicament Jewish students find themselves in. "Even though teachers are not supposed to assign homework that day, most teachers still give homework and some even give tests and quizzes those days," Becker said.

The fact that some teachers assign homework and give exams upsets students. "It really annoys me because I go to school expecting to not have homework that day, but not only did I have homework, I had two exams that day," junior Emma Schwartz said.

Some students agree that an ideal compromise would be a day of attendance similar to the MLK seminar day. A few students liked the idea of having seminars about Jewish history.

Junior Lucas Gottshall said, "I think that would be a cool idea. I don't know a lot about Jewish history, but I would like to learn about it."

"I don't really know a lot about Judaism, but it would be interesting to learn about," said Snyder.

Jewish or not, many students have opinions about attending school on Rosh Hashannah.

Some feel that if we are forced to have school on non-Christian holidays, we should have school on Christian holidays. When asked about this idea, Schwartz said, "While I understand why New Trier prioritizes Christian holidays over non-Christian holidays, it is annoying for the people who aren't Christian since we are forced to pick between school and religion, but Christian people at the school are not." She is not the only one who feels this way.

Gottshall said, "I guess it makes sense to have school on Christian holidays, we have to go to school on Jewish holidays and that forces Jewish students to make sacrifices. It makes sense for Christians to make the same sacrifice."

Grad ceremony moves from Evanston to Hoffman Estates

Graduation to take place 30 miles away at Sears Centre due to construction

by Hannah Young

In mid-June, Northwestern announced their renovation plans for the Welsh-Ryan Arena, prompting New Trier to sign a contract with the Sears Centre Arena in Hoffman Estates.

Faculty and administrators, with input from parents, spent a few months hunting for possible locations to host graduation. They evaluated 13 of them before settling on one.

Some of the other locations under consideration included the All-State Arena, Rosemont Theatre, Ravinia Pavilion, and Willow Creek Church.

There were a lot of factors taken into account when deciding on a location.

Denise Dubravec, the Winnetka campus principal, said, "We needed a venue that could coordinate a commencement ceremony for approximately 1,000 graduates and accommodate more than 8,000 guests and was handicap accessible. We also wanted to try and keep the date of June 4th."

In addition to these requirements, a location closer to Winnetka was preferable but not available.

"As we reviewed each site, we discussed what is most important to our families," Dubravec said. It seemed more critical to the faculty and administrators to find a place that could allow them to still offer each student six tickets, instead of choosing a smaller, nearby location that wouldn't accommodate all family members.

However, it may prove difficult for the graduates and their families to arrange transportation to a location almost 30 miles away.



The Sears Center is host to live music and sporting events | Website

Senior Hanna Shekari said, "The one hour drive there will be tedious for me and my family."

Senior Allison Thabit said that it would impact her extended family, especially.

"My cousins and grandparents will be coming from different states and will only be here for a short time. It will just be really difficult for them to fly here, get to Hoffman Estates, and fly back, all in the same day."

To make attending graduation accessible and possible for students, the school is "going to offer students transportation from New Trier to the Sears Centre on the day of commencement," Dubravec said.

In case any family members aren't able to go to graduation,

"I spent four years of the most difficult years of my life dealing with construction and weird schedules. It just wouldn't be a New Trier graduation without some unexpected obstacle in our way."

they will offer a live stream of the ceremony as well.

In previous years, New Trier

paired up with Evanston Township High School to schedule their graduation ceremonies on the same day at the same location. This year is no different. They worked together to find a new location because, "sharing the venue offers cost savings to both schools," Dubravec said.

Stevenson High School also hosts their graduation ceremony at the Sears Centre Arena. They were able to provide suggestions and "valuable information about how they use the venue for their commencement," according to Dubravec.

While there have been various concerns about the distance of the venue, Dubravec touches on all the benefits of it. "The pros include air conditioning, parking for 2,500 vehicles, and individual theatre-style seating (rather than bleacher seating) for guests—all improvements over Northwestern. The facility has experience planning and coordinating large scale events with similar requirements."

Senior Kelly Zabors seems to be weary of how beneficial the new venue will be. She said, "I spent four years of the most difficult years of my life dealing with construction and weird schedules. It just wouldn't be a New Trier graduation without some unexpected obstacle in our way."