

# Staff Editorial

## Freshmen need their own campus

All students can attest to the hallmark experience of attending New Trier West as freshmen, then transitioning to New Trier East for the remaining three years of high school. We can also agree that the separation of freshmen and upperclassmen is unique to New Trier. Freshmen think of the Winnetka campus as an almost fantastical land free of required study halls. Upperclassmen reminisce about the AAC that they took for granted, and the outdoor spaces that made school feel less like a prison.

We all know the anxiety and excitement and nervousness and hopefulness that characterizes freshman year. Especially for those who attended middle schools that totaled less than one hundred students who all grew up together, the transition to a high school as vast as New Trier can be downright terrifying.

But the Northfield campus and events held exclusively for freshmen seem to shelter the newly arrived students. The Freshman Mixer, for example, saves them from scrambling for dates, renting a party bus, and organizing an after party in their first quarter of high school. The field of grass where freshmen congregate during football games serves as a space for them to spectate away from rowdy seniors.

That's not to say that the separation between freshmen and upperclassmen is a perfect system. Students of all years complain that clubs at Winnetka are not accessible to freshmen. Information about clubs is rarely conveyed to students at Northfield, and when it is, students must take a shuttle then find their way around a totally unfamiliar building.

Interactions between freshman and JV and varsity athletes are, at best, limited. Different teams practice at different locations, and they rarely interact with one another at games, despite the fact that they play the same sport. This kind of physical separation arguably leads to a psychological separation: freshmen feel as though they attend a totally different school than upperclassmen.

Opportunities to form sustained relationships with older students, establish positions in extracurriculars, and take part in school-wide events are almost non-existent for freshmen.

But, these are all fixable problems in a system that we believe works effectively. The turbulent emotions and the foreign environment that freshmen students experience daily likely would be exacerbated by the presence of thousands of sophomores, juniors, and seniors.

In fact, at other high schools where all students attend one campus, upperclassmen are notorious for teasing and even bullying "fresh meat," as they are called. Incidents of hazing of freshmen athletes by varsity athletes all over the country continually make the news.

At New Trier, a freshman-only campus enables students to select courses, make friends, explore extracurriculars, and find their way without the pressure that the presence of older students can add. The encounters that they have with upperclassmen are limited to the work of Senior Helpers and SILCs, all of whom serve as positive role models.

We as an editorial staff made up of students of different ages, genders, and experiences believe that the separation of freshmen and upperclassmen creates a smoother transition for students from eighth grade into high school. This system is certainly uncommon among high schools, but has proven to work well here.

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# I don't have to respect your opinion

by Mia Sherin



"You don't have to agree with me. You just have to respect my opinion," someone said, cutting off our discussion. I force a smile, realizing that we are both too stubborn to have any sort of breakthrough with the other, and we go our separate ways. But still, I just don't get it. *How* could they not agree that Theodore is the superior chipmunk?

Although this is not an extreme example, I find that "You don't have to agree with me. You just have to respect my opinion," is used far too often to cut off a discussion, especially a political one.

There are some opinions that I cannot respect. And I do not believe that I have any obligation to.

While you might already disagree, or think that you are a perfectly well-balanced human being who always respects the opinions of others, I urge you to wrack your brain for an opinion you know you do not respect.

You might feel incredibly strongly that Alvin is the highlight of The Chipmunks franchise, or it might be a more serious, political one. Up to you.

From my perspective, I believe that any opinion that disrespects me, my body, or the existence of others is by no means an opinion that merits my respect.

Let's start big picture. I'm hoping that you will get behind me when I say that we should not respect racist opinions. For the group of you out there shaking your heads, riddle me this: would you respect someone's opinion that "black people aren't people?"

There are plenty of other beliefs, such as ones that are anti-semitic or homophobic, that feel relatively black and white. If an opinion discredits the existence of another person, respect should not be granted.

However, there are other opinions that I often have to grapple with, and that are less clear cut, such as abortion.

If a woman were to feel that abortion was wrong, I could understand and respect her arguments. But when those opinions attempt to take away the control that I have over my own body, I no longer feel obligated to respect them.

Being pro-life can be different than personally being against abortion, which is where the black and white can turn to a gray area.

I want to emphasize that this is not an excuse to turn civil political discussions sour, or even an excuse to not participate at all. Although productive conversations can be

harder if this level of respect is not there, this is the case with polarizing viewpoints.

Productive conversations are always difficult. But they are not impossible.

Have I, a girl who has worn a light-up Menorah sweater to school, had a civil conversation with an anti-semitic? More than once. It doesn't get more polarized than that.

It is also important to note that not respecting someone's opinion is different than not respecting that person. I am not giving permission to be rude to those with whom you disagree.

I'm aware that many people disagree with this. How could there be any peace in the world if it was made up of Mia Sherins who just go around devaluing the opinions of others?

But then again, I could imagine a pretty peaceful world if it lost all racist, sexist, homophobic, and xenophobic opinions. I devalue your opinion when it devalues someone's existence.

In my mind, it has always been clear that some opinions are better. Or some opinions are smarter. Or some opinions are kinder.

And some deserve my utmost respect. But those that don't, those that are selfish, or uneducated, or do not stand for equality, those are not opinions that I can agree with. And if it wasn't clear, I don't respect them either.

# Apparently enough is never enough

by Michelle Yurovsky



I haven't had a phone since Sept 25. I wish I could say that I had an epiphany and simply got rid of it. Sorry to disappoint, but that's not the case. Long story short, my phone broke, I got in trouble shortly after, and it remains broken and has yet to be replaced.

Not having a phone made me realize how addicted most of us are to technology, especially phones. No matter where I am or who I'm with, there comes a point when I finally understand how my parents feel. I just sit there. Bored. While everyone else is on their phones.

For those of you who say you're not addicted to your phones, you are. There's nothing we fear more than being in a Wi-Fi free zone.

We're all addicted to our phones to some degree. Even our parents.

Most parents don't use phones for the same purpose as we do, which for the majority of us is for social media. Parents who constantly check their email are unable to detach from work.

Our phones give us many benefits, but they also impose

limitations to how we function as a society. We are so used to hiding behind our screens and acting with a fake sense of confidence.

I guarantee you we would never be able to say at least half of the things we type out or direct message to someone's face.

Before smartphones, kids liked to play outside and interact with one another. Obviously, this is still true today. But from my own observation, the most kids I've seen outside at once was only because they were roaming around trying to catch Pokémon.

They were all roaming around while looking at their phones and all of a sudden they would rapidly change their direction. It looked so ridiculous.

Sure, it's neat that there's an app that allows people to roam around in different places all over the world and catch Pokémon, but at the same time, isn't it simply just a waste of time?

I never thought about how much time I spent on my phone until I didn't have one. Even though I'm not too active on social media, it still took up a good amount of my time everyday.

However, I've come to this "astounding" conclusion: social media is a gigantic waste of time.

We spend hours every day comparing every aspect of our lives and ourselves to other people.

Yes, I do have my school iPad to check Snapchat, but only when I have Wi-Fi. I noticed that I am so

much more productive, and present in the moment than when I have my phone. In addition, I can't text and drive, which is a much safer alternative.

Overall, I am happier without a phone. I am honestly thinking about just investing in a "mediocre" phone as opposed to a smart phone.

Once you realize how much time and energy is wasted on your phone, I'm pretty sure most of you would come to the understanding that we do not need to be so invested in this artificial lifestyle.

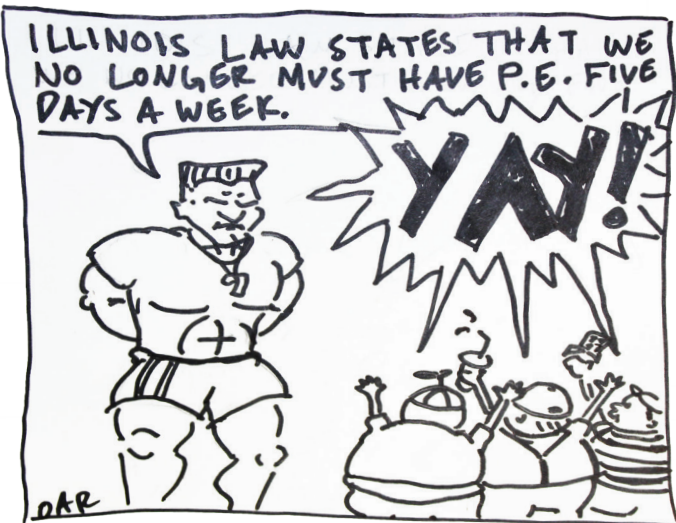
The more technology advances, the harder it is for us to be satisfied and amused. I know it wasn't that long ago, but when I was a kid, I could entertain myself for hours simply by playing outside with my neighbors.

These days, kids' idea of fun usually involves the latest Xbox or iPhone model.

I personally think it's pathetic that 10 year-olds are walking around with a \$1,000 phone. I believe my generation and the next both have a problem with understanding where money comes from, and how hard it is to make. This is a direct result of children being spoiled with all of this new technology.

Every year iPhones keep coming out because we are never satisfied with what we have. The more advancements there are, the more we push for newer innovations.

Are we ever going to be satisfied?



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