

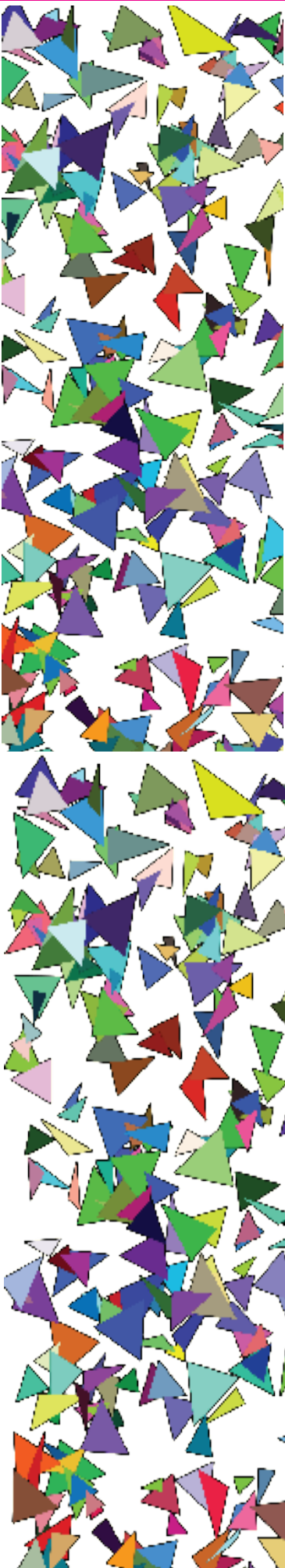
The New Trier News in no way endorses underage drinking. The purpose of The Examiner is simply to explore the culture of the modern party that is already in place, not to advocate for or support illegal activity. Due to the sensitive nature of some topics addressed in this issue, some students wished to have their identities remain confidential. These sources are quoted anonymously.

THE HIGH SCHOOL PARTY

by Emily Challenger and Nora Crumley

Voices drown out the blaring music. The dark humid basements with shut doors are filled with students waiting in line to enter rooms or gathered around a game of beer pong. Students erratically move on the dance floor, stepping around the solo cups littering the floor. Every once in a while a trio of kids, with a cup in each hand, do a quick countdown before taking yet another shot of booze. The typical high school party tends to follow this set formula of a couple dozen kids, a big basement, and enough alcohol to kill a couple hundred thousand brain cells. Besides the risk of drinking, students continue to attend many of these typical high school parties. A senior boy said, “A New Trier party, is where everyone goes to have a good time. It’s a stress relief from school and a socializing event.” Students use of alcohol to decrease stress is a depressing reality, since alcohol is a depressant. A senior girl added her own experience, “10-15% of the kids drink well above the legal limit to a point of passing out. The majority of people drink to a point of capable intoxication, meaning that they’re drunk but they won’t be falling down every two steps. The rest either only smoke or stay sober because they’re the DD [designated driver].” The senior also added that not drinking is an oddity at the typical party. Besides the anomaly of not drinking parties typically are not multi-grade parties. Usually parties are not huge class-wide event and consist of a large group of friends in the same grade. “Different grades attend different parties, with a few people from outside schools. The majority of people who attend these parties are social, there’s usually a small group of students who attend just to experience a “high school party,” the anonymous senior girl said. Many wonder if these experi-

ences of the notorious “high school party” is even worth it. A senior girl said, “I choose not to go because it’s all the same: get drunk, pass out or go home with a hangover.” Although some students have concerns over participating in illegal activities at high school parties, 42.2% of high school seniors according to the 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey continue to drink for various reasons. One anonymous senior said bluntly that people go to parties because, “most people like getting drunk.” Another senior girl explained why she goes to some of these weekend parties. “Sometimes I feel a desire to attend a party around a holiday because I imagine the party would be very exciting and fun and eventful. However, without fail, every time is headache inducing and I quickly regret my decision to go.” Another student mirrored this view, highlighting the opportunity to socialize at parties. “I like getting lit, and socializing is really fun. There’s also nothing else you could do these days to socialize than go to parties.” At parties students can also find illegal drugs, “the parties are filled with drugs, alcohol, and are in the basement of houses,” an anonymous senior said. An anonymous senior girl paralleled the view on drugs’ prevalence in parties. She said, “There are definitely drugs at New Trier parties, the most popular one being marijuana, followed by nicotine and prescription drugs (Xanax, vyvanse, adderall).” The prevalence of illegal and harmful substances calls in to question the safety concerns and detrimental effects of student health that these parties may induce. “I believe they’re safe to an extent, where it’s not too hectic but at almost every party, random people come and it gets out of hand. There are too many drunks and people throw up,” a senior boy said. But a senior girl disagreed. “They aren’t very safe, in my opinion. You have to be safe yourself because nobody’s looking out for anyone else.”



THE ADULT PARTY

by Hannah Young

What do you think grandma did at parties? She most likely didn’t play beer pong or listen to Kanye West, but despite the evolving definition of a party, illegal activity may just be the great equalizer that connects them all. The definition of a party varies among many populations and has evolved over generations but many assert that illegal activity makes them more alike than one would think. Parent Robert Zabors had his own definition of what a party was during his high school years. “It meant a keg of cheap beer and bad 70s music on a cassette tape,” he said. Parent Ali Shekari defined it as a “fun, casual get together.” An anonymous parent described it as a group of “rowdy kids with a lot of alcohol and absent parents.” However, going back another generation, one can see major distinctions. Grandparents Doris and Doug Hughes graduated from high school in 1957. Doug Hughes recalled parties as occurring most often after major football or basketball games. “Forty-five rpm records were playing, mostly rock n’ roll, some dancing, mostly talking, lots of food. Alcohol was not available, but smoking was common,” Hughes said. In terms of alcohol use, the legal drinking age was 18 until 1984 when the National Minimum Drinking Age Act revised it to 21. Although the age was significantly lower at the time, Doris Hughes asserts that the alcohol consumption was to a lesser degree than now. “We think there is a higher risk of crowd control (due to social media) and alcohol control,” Hughes said. “We know that when our children were in high school, some parents served beer at teen parties. We never did.” Grandmother Gert Galligan, who also graduated in the late 1950’s, presents another perspective to high school parties during that time. She described them as typically occurring in basements with large groups of friends. Galligan said, “There was no liquor but some alcohol. It was mostly a lot of dancing.” Her son and

a parent, Ed Price, also insisted that there was an alcohol and marijuana presence. However, one anonymous parent describes his parties in a completely different context. He said, “I grew up in a rural area so they were by river banks and on people’s farms. We had loud music, alcohol and sometimes drugs.” Additionally, the types of music people listen to at parties has transformed. “There was music, playing on a phonograph. When we played music, it was a different type of music. It was softer like the Fox Trot. Even though rock and roll was popular, dancing to a ballad was common,” a grandmother, who wishes to remain anonymous, said. Another anonymous parent, however, said, “My music was more old-school Rock and roll: ACDC, Aerosmith, Bad Company, and Leonard Skynard.” Grandmother Doris Hughes described the difference of social interaction in parties of the 50’s. She said that it was normally “girls talking with girls and boys with boys. And you might leave the party early, if the guys you were interested in were not there.” While there are social and cultural distinctions between what a party was in previous generations, one parent said, “Kids are the same from generation to generation, the substances they are using may change but it usually is the parents who allow them to behave this way. The one way it is different now is that there are stricter laws and stricter police enforcement for underage drinking.” New Trier Student Assistant Coordinator Kristine Hummel agrees that parent perspective is important. In fact, their parents play a big role in their child’s decision making when it comes to parties. “Research has indicated, as well as NT students, parents have an effect on talking to their teen about drinking. Penn State found that those parents who heartily disapproved of underage drinking tended to have teenagers who engaged in less binge drinking once they got to college.”

Hosts debate the benefits and challenges of parties

By Bella Geroulis

It’s not breaking news that many high school students attend parties, and it shouldn’t be a revelation that there’s usually underage drinking, too. But when you think of the parties, the host of those parties never seems to be the topic of discussion. Why people would host a party that involves underage drinking and at times even drugs is a question that leaves many confused and concerned. For students who choose to host parties, it tends to be just a one-time occurrence. A student from the junior class said that the one time she threw a party, everything went fine. “It was just my friend group and they were all respectful, so I knew that it

wouldn’t get out of hand.” The junior went on to say that the main concern she had was word getting out about it before she threw the party. When asked, many students share the same concern about word getting around about the party. It never starts out being a huge party, but when word gets out about it, students flock to their houses. Senior Lexie Bundy, who has since transferred schools, says that the one time she threw a party it was “just to have a good time.” She also said that it was initially supposed to be a few friends, but after word spread around school, it got way bigger than she expected. “People talk, so you have to make sure not to tell a lot of people

beforehand,” Bundy said. Parent’s role in the process of hosting parties is often overlooked, too. Many do not have any prior knowledge of a party before it happens. Teenagers host parties most of the time when parents are out of town or out of the house for the night. However, there are some parents who know about the party and even condone it. Bundy went on to say that when she threw her party, her father Holly knew about it. She said that though her father knew about the party, he didn’t encourage the underage illegal activities, but he just wanted his daughter and her friends to have fun. While most of the students who host parties make it a one-time thing, there are a few students who have

parties frequently and without concern. An anonymous senior host par-

“People talk, so you have to make sure not to tell a lot of people beforehand.”

ties quite often, and nearly all of them include alcohol. When asked why, she said she “doesn’t want to depend on anyone else to have a good time. Throwing my own parties gives me control.” This idea of hosting parties to have a good time isn’t how everyone

thinks, though. The vast majority of students don’t throw parties, and one of the biggest reasons is because they don’t want that responsibility of hosting all the night’s events. There is a lot of risk when it comes to hosting a party with underage drinking in your home. When doing so, one must contemplate the risk of the party over the reward. Ultimately, no one throws a party because they want to encourage or promote underage drinking or illegal activities. For the most part, people seem to host parties to take control of their evening and make sure their night goes as they plan.