

# Seniors making history

by Abby Burton

I didn't realize how different it would feel being a senior until I actually was one.

I've got to be honest, in my previous years here at New Trier, I never felt like the senior class really bonded as a whole. This year though, I feel that everything has changed for the better.

Everyone has heard of the Green Team, but the purpose of this group has been completely transformed. Past classes have used it to define the "top tier" of popular students at New Trier. I mean, it was basically like an elite society: high school version.

This year, the importance of the group has finally been uncovered, and that's school spirit. Sure, it has always been a group of spirited seniors who show up to all the sporting events, but has the group ever been as big as five hundred students? I don't think so. Last year, I didn't go to one football game. This year, I can't imagine missing one.

There was so much hype around the first game, and it was so fun to see

all the seniors dressed up and full of positive energy. The game was really crowded, and the student section was completely full.

I have never been the type to participate in "Trevian Gear Fridays", but this year, I just said to myself... "Why not?" It's my senior year; I might as well make the best of it.

I think that everyone else has the same mindset too. I love seeing all the senior students walking down the hallways, saying hi to people they don't really know, and even promoting the many sports events that are going on after school.

I guess everyone is beginning to realize that this is it. It's our last year together, and chances are, we won't see many of these people ever again.

It's kind of sad knowing that I haven't even met some of the people in my own graduating class. I have heard New Trier alumni say that senior year can be the best year, mainly because everyone is more open to meeting new people and talking with other students outside their own social group.

It definitely is hard to step out of

your comfort zone, but let's just say it's practice for next year.

If only our class started this spirit up freshman year, New Trier culture could have been so different.

I'm not saying that the culture was bad before, I just wish I had the experience of our class coming together before this year. I know some say that at the football games, freshman can't stand in the student section because it is a privilege that has to be earned, but this concept is just ridiculous.

Although I feel that we have bonded as a class, it doesn't necessarily mean that we have come together as a school. For all the current seniors, welcoming the other grades with open arms will help promote Trevian spirit from the beginning and is only going to make this year better. I mean really, what's school spirit without the whole school, and yes, that includes freshman.

I can't wait for the rest of the year and hope that the senior class keeps up this positive energy. Our time is running out, so let's make this year better than ever before.



# Chill out on your illegal activities

by Leah Pearlman

So, it's Friday and you're all probably in advisory with this golden piece of literature in one hand a bagel in the other, enjoying the calm before the storm of your hectic school day. I doughnut doubt (get it?) that this Friday advisory breakfast ritual is the place where you want to hear Leah preaching about her philosophies on life and what not.

However, as the new writer of this column, it is my duty to express my feelings as eccentric as they may be. And trust me, they are. It is a great gig — I know — I am surprised I haven't been kicked off the newspaper staff, too.

Seniors out there, this message is for you: stop doing your work. Put down the pencil. Do not finish your annotations for AP Lit, and definitely stop raising your hand before you speak in class.

This is our last year before college. Don't try too hard. You'll stress yourself out and won't have the time or energy to party on the weekends, which is vital for a worthy high school experience, obviously. #NTGreenTeam.

If you have already given up your summer mentality, I want to see you go out there and grab it right back. Forget "second semester seniors," we need to stand our ground, portray dominance, and maintain our hierarchy in the school early on. #NTGreenTeam. Let's make the most

of our senior year. #NTGreenTeam.

Who cares about grades senior year, anyway? My friend's sister's college room mate said colleges definitely don't. If that isn't enough evidence for you, I can't come up with more, after all I am a senior and I'm half sure the newspaper is an elective. I'll have another editor fact check me on that.

You're about to get confused if you actually read the above paragraph because I am getting down to the harsh reality of my opinion on the above stereotype. Suggestion: if you just took a really good bite out of a Cinnamon Crunch bagel from Panera and are simply living in bliss, don't read on.

With recent events regarding certain students getting drunk at a recent football game, it has come to my attention that the way my generation perceives fun is almost always negative. Can we not enjoy a school football game, or embrace school spirit, without alcohol?

As we begin to seriously get into school mode — which I think most of you have, I just might be in denial—seniors will start their typical shenanigans to embrace their superiority in the school.

This is the end of an era, and nothing is more primal than happiness and celebration. Without beating around the bush, this celebration may and does quite often include the use of drugs and alcohol.

However, senior year is not

the time for fuzzy, wild, underage drinking-filled parties (or football games).

This, in my under-qualified opinion, is not the way to spend senior year. I get it; we are all looking to feel alive after these three stress riddled, almost zombie-like years. I am not here to pass judgment. I understand the urge to "YOLO, get cray, and not think about it." Or whatever these kids say these days.

This doesn't sound to me, though, anything like living. How can you truly live without thinking?

That is almost the opposite of the objective. And if you are going crazy and partying all the days of senior year, you may leave high school with lots of entertaining, maybe hazy, memories. But you will remember this place like you left it, as a joke. Ask yourself: is this truly a good high school experience?

We are students at an academically rigorous high school, but even more we are teenagers in our senior year. I am not condoning long nights of studying, as this is unhealthy, too. I am also not down-playing senior year; it is definitely the time for celebration. I am one for a good time socializing with friends, but what I'm gonna need you to do is cool down the illegal activities.

You are not just a student with hours of homework, and you are also not just a partying teenager with no goals. Find a balance class of 2015; I believe in you.

## Staff editorial:

# Pledge to Pledge -- or at least respect it

New Trier students tend to have the same morning routine: we wake up exhausted after watching too much Netflix the night before; we rummage through our closets searching for an appropriate (or in some cases inappropriate) outfit for the day; we drag ourselves out the door, ultimately trudging into the buzzing halls of New Trier and to our advisories.

However, the next step in many students' routines varies. As we talk amongst our friends about the latest gossip, the bell goes off and we are asked to "Please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance."

Yet many students disregard this message. They simply go about their conversations and neglect the Pledge of Allegiance. Is this acceptable behavior?

Written by Baptist minister and Christian Nationalist Francis Bellamy in 1892, the Pledge was created to promote American nationalism in US students and to sell American flags in public schools as part of a 400th anniversary celebration of Christopher Columbus' arrival in the Americas.

The Pledge first came under scrutiny in 1940 with the case of *Minersville School District v. Gobitis*, and again in 1944 in *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette*. Through these cases the Supreme Court held that it was illegal for public schools to force anyone to salute the flag or partake in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Pledge again evolved in the 1948 when the "under God" clause was added by Illinois attorney Louis Bowman. It, too, has been subject to scrutiny and court cases. Clearly, the history behind the Pledge is complex, as is the question of whether a student should participate in reciting it.

However, that is not the issue at hand. The issue New Trier faces is the lack of respect for the students who do in fact actively participate in the pledge.

If you walk into a New Trier advisory at roughly 8:20 a.m, students will be lamenting their lack of fantasy football mastery, gossiping about the

latest fashion trends, or complaining about the pile of homework they had to do the night before.

Lost in this chaotic discussion is the voice we hear every day over the loudspeaker announcing the Pledge of Allegiance. Many students disregard this announcement and continue on with their conversations.

We believe students who do actively participate in this daily tradition deserve the respect of silence from their peers as they echo the voice on the loudspeakers.

As part of a Veterans unit last spring, one American Studies class partook in a service project in support of veterans. One group volunteered at Ride 2 Recovery, a bike ride in support of wounded veterans. The most important idea the organizers stressed, according to the participants, was the emphasis of the word "ride."

They explained that the event was not to see who could finish the course the fastest, but to see these wounded veterans complete something that years, months, or even weeks earlier never would have seemed possible.

This ideology was a testament to the sacrifices made by our veterans, those who continue to protect our country, and the unalienable rights we are guaranteed by the Constitution.

As contestants in standard bikes, hand bikes, sitting bikes, and all other contraptions used for the ride rolled across the finish line, students began to recognize what these men and women had gone experienced. Their sacrifices were the ones we should honor with the Pledge.

We would like to think that New Trier students respect and understand how lucky we are to live in the community and country that we do, and to enjoy the freedoms and opportunities that are afforded to us.

We even have the choice, the freedom, as to whether or not we want to say the pledge in the first place.

Therefore, next time you hear the Pledge, you don't need to participate, but at least respect those who do by keeping your voice down.

## New Trier NEWS

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