

The difficulties of senior parking



Parking spots on campus are hard to find and primarily go to staff |Minturn

by Charlie Clarke

Whether you walk, bike, drive, or take a bus to school, it can take awhile before you get onto the campus. With over three thousand students, there is bound to be traffic on your way to school. And with the combination of Winnetka’s strict parking restrictions and the residential area surrounding the school, parking doesn’t come easy for most students.

Scott Williams, the Assistant Principal for Student Services, understands the difficulty of parking.

“(Parking) is one of the restrictions we have of being a large high school landlocked in a residential area. There just aren’t a lot of places to park. We have over a thousand students and over the course of two semesters, 280 spots.”

The lack of spots stands as the main issue. The administration gives Senior parking priority to those who didn’t have a pass first semester.

Also stated in the application is that ‘no student will be given priority for reasons such as jobs, activities,

athletics, distance, etc.’ Below that the application states that students living one and 1/2 miles away will be considered before the students living within that radius.

As far as the application process went for second semester parking for seniors, the number of students exceeded the amount of spots. “One of the reasons it may be an issue this year is because we have 140 spots. We had somewhere around 170 applicants, so unfortunately 30 people won’t have an opportunity to get a spot,” said Williams.

One of those thirty seniors was Maggie Brown. “I had a parking pass first semester because neither of my parents could drive me.” Brown, who is a senior helper, also used the car to get from Northfield to Winnetka. “For these reasons my parents got my sister and I a car.”

Being a senior helper, she wasn’t aware of the deadline. “I was almost never in advisory so I was never made aware of the deadline for the 2nd semester parking application,” said Brown.

“The day after the application

needed to be turned in, I learned that it was already due,” she said. “I scrambled to get all the information ready and turned it in one day after the deadline. A few weeks later I learned that I didn’t get a pass.”

Maggie now gets to school through a combination of getting rides from friends and driving to Northfield a half an hour earlier to catch the shuttle bus.

“Each night, I have to figure out the logistics of getting to school. This was frustrating because I was doing something beneficial for our school and only missed the deadline by less than a day. Now the car I have to drive to school sits in my driveway.”

Another senior who was left out is Billy Maloney. As a result, Maloney, who had a first semester parking spot, ended up putting up flyers to houses around New Trier asking for an open spot. “My first email was a spot for \$3,000. I couldn’t afford that,” said Maloney.

The emails came in with spots for less and less and he eventually settled for a \$1,500 spot, which is triple the amount of the price for New Trier’s senior parking.

Maloney understands that it’s fair to give each student a chance both semesters, but doesn’t necessarily agree with it. “The school should realize that they are creating problems for students who became dependent on their route to school first semester,” he said.

Maggie Brown agrees with Maloney. “I think it’s ridiculous that a high school with this many students has to turn away people who have no other way to get to school. It’s not excusable at all.”

The main question the administration at New Trier has been getting is ‘Why didn’t I get a spot?’ Williams said that “In most cases it’s us saying to them, ‘You had one first semester and as a result you were put in a lottery. Sorry you didn’t win the lottery.’”

Referendum causes NT to begin selling public bonds

by Michael Pruchnicki

In November the referendum to repair the Tech Arts, Music, Performing Arts, McGee Theatre, and the Cafeteria was passed.

This gave New Trier the opportunity to sell \$89 million in municipal bonds. Cheryl Witham, the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, is the head of the project.

On January 13, the bidding for the municipal bonds for the 89 million dollar referendum was

‘New Trier has a rating of AAA by Moody’s and by Standard and Poor, which is excellent...The companies knew that New Trier was financially set.’

-Cheryl Witham

completed. Citigroup bid the most for highly valuable bonds, followed by Hutchinson, Morgan, Robert Baird, Wells Fargo, and Bank of America.

Witham said, “New Trier placed a referendum question on the November ballot which was approved by the voters. The ballot question asked voters if they would approve an \$89 million dollar building bond issue.”

The project is \$100 million, so New Trier will spend a portion of its own money as well, but a majority of the project will be funded through the sales of these bonds. Citigroup will pay \$88 million up front to New Trier

for the construction to begin. Then over the next 20 years property taxes in New Trier Township will rise and then steadily go down in order to pay Citigroup back.

“The taxes are going from high to low because we are taking advantage of lower interest rates die to the yield. The interest rate in the June of 2014 was 3.7%, and in January of 2015 it was 2.8%. New Trier will save \$11 million because of this,” Witham said.

Now Citigroup is looking to sell the bonds on the secondary market. It is irrelevant to New Trier who buys these bonds on the secondary market. Citigroup is doing this to make money from the transaction with New Trier. An investor has incentive to invest in these bonds because New Trier is a very financially safe institution, and the fact that municipal bonds are very safe to invest in. The money always gets paid back to the bank by the tax payers and the interest rates are strong.

“New Trier has a rating of AAA by Moody’s and by Standard and Poor, which is excellent. Because of this the bidding for the bonds was very competitive. The companies knew that New Trier was financially set,” said Witham.

She claimed that New Trier was financially set because of the financial support New Trier has from the community.

In 2010, there was a referendum went to voters but was not passed. According to Witham, it did not pass because residents of the township thought that New Trier asked for too big of a project, which would require more construction, and more money. It was also a difficult time in the economy to ask for the tax money and to complete the construction.

This project is expected to be completed in 2017.

How snow days are decided at New Trier

by Melanie Mandell

Although the winter season brings on snow, ice, freezing temperatures, and terrible drivers, there is one redeeming quality for kids still in school: the possibility of a snow day.

Whenever it snows, students always begin to hope for a snow day. Most of the time, the snow day isn’t given, resulting in blame being put on the staff.

Students usually tend to blame the principal or the superintendent, when in reality, according to the principal Denise Dubravec, “There are multiple administrators who are involved in the discussion and decision-making, including a discussion with our sender schools.”

When snow day talk beings to fill the school, each student has a different reason why they think school will ultimately be cancelled. Many think it’s because of how far away some teachers live, whereas others think it’s because of timing (if it starts to snow late at night the roads probably won’t be cleared by morning).

Dubravec revealed that cancelling school happens for a combination of reasons. “The safety and well-being of students and staff is our priority,” said Dubravec. “We consider the following when approaching a possible school closure: severity of the weather,

timing of the weather conditions, and the ability for cars and buses to travel safely to and from school.”

It was rumored that school wasn’t canceled on Thursday, Jan 8 because of the impending construction start date and the staff not wanting to put off the start date any further.

Dubravec put an end to these rumors by emphasizing the safety of the students when she said, “Our priority is always the safety of our students. The construction schedule does not factor into our decision-making protocol for weather or other emergency closures.”

Students were mostly positive about taking a snow day. Junior Charlie Collyer said, “I love snow days. I realize that we get another day of school, and I don’t mind that at all.” While some students said that making up the school day can be a real inconvenience, senior Jacqui Gossard said, “A surprise day off is way better than a scheduled one, even if that means making it up later.” Georgia Caras, sophomore, disagrees, “Snow days are nice for a few hours, but there’s always that day in the middle of June where you’re like, ‘well instead of having summer fun, I’m studying for my chem final. Winter sucks.’”

The one opinion that all of these students agreed on was that this last snow day was not necessary.

When snow days are called at



Snow remains on New Trier’s front lawn after February’s first major snowstorm and school cancellation |Minturn

New Trier, all of the days that are missed must be made up. Loyola and even some feeder schools add extra school days to their calendar in order to be able to miss school without having to make up snow days.

It may seem that New Trier doesn’t follow this strategy, Dubravec, though, said, “Every school in the state is required to add five emergency days to their school calendar. We have one at the end of each semester, which is a grading day and the other three are added onto the end of the calendar that we submit to

the state.”

In a way, grading days are New Trier’s two “safety days” to prevent having to add extra days onto the school calendar at the end of the year.

Although the state as a whole tends to experience the same weather phenomena, individual schools are almost always in charge of whether or not the school opens. “In general the decision rests with the local school districts. The state governs the number of normal attendance days and emergency days schools must build into their calendars,” said

Dubravec.

Many students engage in various superstitions in order to make a snow day a reality, like flushing ice cubes down the toilet, putting snow in the freezer, sleeping with spoons under their pillows and wearing their pajamas inside out.

Before you start hoping for any of these things to work, remember that school is only canceled if the weather interferes with the “safety and well-being of the students and staff.”