

How gossip shapes my life



by Carly Travis

The other day I found myself feeling so uncomfortable because of the conversation that was happening around me, that I had to remove myself from the room. Being around such toxic energy made my stomach churn.

I think what upset me the most about the discussion wasn't so much who it was about, but talking about another person in that way made the conversation less interesting.

From my standpoint, I was more concerned for the fact that we were wasting our time talking about someone else, as if their life and drama was that fascinating.

In hindsight, that's all gossip is anyway: talking about the life of another person, pair, or group of pals. In doing so, we're glamorizing them, making it seem like they're higher than us and therefore we must talk about them.

I think the reason gossiping turns me off isn't because I'm afraid I'll hurt someone else's feelings or that it's sin-worthy, but

because I don't care enough about a stranger's life to talk about them.

However, here's where my terrible-no-good-very-bad contradiction comes in: celebrities. America seems to always be split around the topic of celebrities; you either love them or hate them. I'm on the latter end of the spectrum.

I will, unapologetically, spend countless hours watching E! News and flipping through People Magazine all in order to keep up with the latest celebrity break-up, make-up, or pregnancy.

I'm even, believe it or not, addicted to the lives of pseudo-celebrities.

Tuesday nights are my favorite because "The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills" are on and Sunday nights are no longer exciting because "Keeping Up with the Kardashians" just ended.

Something about watching women in their late 40s and 50s bicker over things like allegedly calling someone else's disease a fraud are entertaining to me.

Because my life has significantly less drama than the wives of Beverly Hills, their fights are alluring.

Reality shows depicting lives spent brunching and jet setting rather than working tend to get a bad rap and I understand why.

However, I think the same argument can be made for our

lives. We spend our time talking about other people, whether it be interesting or not.

I fall somewhere in between the spectrum: I like talking about the Ben and Jen break up, but chit-chat about whose dating in my school bores me.

I think the main disparity between celebrities and the people in our everyday lives isn't so much the fame but the age difference.

Talking about high schoolers that I see in the halls bores me because I'm the same age as them and their problems aren't all that complicated, just superficial.

Whereas watching the lives of actors (and former actors) unfold on the screen entices me. Their drama feels more legitimate, newsworthy problems that don't just involve one person, but sometimes encompass an entire family too.

Gossiping is interesting in the sense that, on any given day, it can make you feel excited, like you just heard something no one else knows.

For me, the line needs to be drawn somewhere between teen drama and celebrity gossip. It seems contradictory, but I can't tolerate talk about who's dating who, I'd would much rather discuss the latest Hollywood scandal.

Re-examine your recycling habits

by Kate Holly

We have recycling bins seemingly everywhere: at home, in restaurants, and in schools. What most people don't realize is that much of what is in those bins can't actually be recycled.

An upsetting percentage of the contents in a recycling bin is actually trash. This is especially prominent at New Trier.

Take a look inside a recycling bin. Odds are, there is something in there that can't be recycled.

It actually does a lot of harm if you put a piece of trash in the recycling. Once there's trash in the recycling, the whole bin becomes marked as trash.

Any recyclable materials that were in the bin are thrown away due to that one stray piece of trash.

We simply cannot recycle empty chip bags or greasy pizza plates. Food residue is very detrimental in the recycling process because the oil can't separate with water, and as a result, the new paper gets oil spots.

At New Trier, we have a part-time employee who collects the recycling. Because he works part-time, he does not have the time to sort through all the recycling bins and remove the unrecyclable materials. Instead, everything in that bin must go in the trash. So, that one greasy pizza plate can actually ruin the truly recyclable materials.

In most hallways, the school has removed the swinging door on the tan trash bins in an effort to get lazy students from just tossing everything in the recycling bin. Now, the trash cans are just as accessible, yet there is still trash in the recycling.

The majority of the time, I believe the correct intentions are there. The act of recycling is seen as something that's helping the environment, and people want to help. And it can help, but only when it's done right.

We have to be the voice for our Earth. We are the ones destroying it, but we are also the ones who can help it.

In putting trash in the recycling, you are essentially taking all the recyclable materials and throwing them in the trash because that is where they will end up once the trash goes into the wrong bin.

While it appears as though little progress has been made in New Trier's recycling habits, the opposite is true. There is a definite increase in the amount recycled here, according to PPS.

In fact, approximately 138 yards of recycling materials are recycled monthly.

However, this number could be much higher if the amount of trash that finds its way into the recycling bins was reduced.

It takes less than five seconds to recycle something, but it's not worth the time if you aren't going to do it right.

We need to focus more on the impact of our actions. One apparently helpful thing has become much less beneficial to the environment, and we are at fault. Fortunately, we are also able to fix that.

If students become more aware of what can and cannot be recycled, our recycling habits could improve.

New Trier would be able to recycle more materials and less trash would end up in the recycling bins.

Only positive environmental benefits can come of those improvements, and they will push our school in a more eco-friendly direction.

We have to be the voice for our Earth. We are the ones destroying it, but we are also the ones who can help it.

Next time you are about to "recycle" your greasy plates or food-ridden napkins, stop and think about where that will end up and what will come with it. It is our job to protect our environment, not endanger it.

Editorial

It's time to tweak the white dress tradition

As third quarter is drawing to a close, the senior class is looking ahead to their upcoming final months at New Trier, culminating in the graduation ceremony.

But among the girls, preparations have already begun. New Trier's unique tradition of wearing white dresses and tuxedos puts particular burden on the female population, and this burden is not one that can be left until the last minute.

There are approximately 500 females in the Class of 2016, which means that 500 girls will need floor length white dresses come mid May.

But unlike the boys, renting these dresses is not easily done. This New Trier quirk pits tradition against sensibility, with many pitfalls, especially for the female population.

Firstly, white dresses are expensive. As these floor or tea length gowns are a niche product, the average brands don't sell them, so many girls must resort to more expensive brands such as BCBG or Guess in order to find their dress.

With these brands, white full length dresses usually start around the \$200 price mark, and easily go into the \$400 and up range. As a result, a graduation dress ends up being an expensive investment, and one that they will not have an opportunity to wear often.

The White Dress Project resells donated white graduation dresses at New Trier for \$75, but often only has about 40 new dresses donated each year. In 2015, there were 38 dresses given, along with a leftover 21 dresses from the year before, which were sold for \$50. These 59 dresses were available at reasonable prices, but the event isn't particularly well-known or well-advertised. Even if every available dress was bought by current seniors, there would still be another 440 girls forced to pay for dresses at exorbitant prices.

While the boys are able to rent their white tuxedos, very few sites accommodate renting white dresses. On Rent the Runway, which carries over 50,000 dresses according to their website, there is only one dress that fits the criteria "white" and "tea or floor length." Other websites are no better, with most dresses having embellishments which render them ineligible to be worn at New Trier graduation.

Once a family has shelled out a large chunk of money to buy their daughter a white dress, she will most likely not have another opportunity to wear it. There are very few events that require a wedding-dress-like white gown, so odds are, it will sit in the back of her closet at home while she is at college, gathering dust. A one-time use seems like a lot to ask for an expensive dress.

In addition, there is only a select number of these white dresses available in stores around the area. This creates an almost competitive environment to get to the good dresses first.

Luckily, with 500 girls, if multiple girls end up with the same dress, it doesn't stand out too much. If girls leave shopping until the last month or two, they may find that their choices are very limited or non-existent, and then end up paying a lot of money for a dress they don't even like.

If the guidelines weren't strict enough already, there is the additional ruling on white shoes. Few people already own white heels or flats, though it is very likely that there are nude heels in most girls' closets. While it is reasonable to request that no one wears outlandish wedges or turquoise pumps, it would not be harmful to broaden the ruling on shoes to include nude colors. Considering the dresses are floor length, most shoes won't even be showing, and nude would still preserve the classy feel of all white. By requiring white shoes, New Trier further adds to the list of expenses that female students must endure to be adequately prepared for graduation.

There is no easy fix for this conundrum, at least regarding the dresses. Considering how rooted in tradition New Trier graduation is, it seems very unlikely that our school will suddenly switch from dresses and tuxedos to caps and gowns.

However, if the administration were to become less strict regarding the guidelines, like embellishments, length, and shade of white, it would make buying a dress easier and less expensive.

While all-white-everything is a tradition, and is therefore a valuable part of the New Trier community and experience, its strict guidelines and expensive tastes are not suitable for the female population. In order to be more appealing to all students, New Trier needs to be more accommodating and tweak their guidelines to take the pressure off the female population.

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