

Student Views

What are your plans for Spring Break?



Isaac Slomski-Pritz, Senior,

“I’m visiting my siblings in Alaska.”



Aryaman Ramchandran, Sophomore

“I’m going to Italy with my family. It’s somewhere we’ve never been before.”



Walker Bigelow, Junior

“I’m going with my family to Antigua, which is a beach island.”



Katie Loehr, Junior

“I’m going to Florida to see my grandparents.”



Maddie Joseph, Senior

“I drive down to Hilton Head every year with my family.”

Stop coddling students



by Arjun Thakkar

“Commit minds to inquiry.” The first part of New Trier’s mission statement. It suggests that we as students should dedicate ourselves to the never ending quest for understanding, the search for knowledge, and the pursuit of the truth, regardless of how unsettling it might be.

Throughout my four years at New Trier, I’ve been taught to be skeptical, to challenge any authority that remains unchallenged, to ask the tough questions, and most importantly, to leave no stone unturned.

Our school undeniably cultivates a desire within students to go out into the world and improve it as best we can. For that I and many others will be ever grateful to the staff that make it possible.

Yet it often seems like this kind of inquiry fails to apply to our school itself.

As easy as it is to take the safe approach and be self-congratulatory about the education we get, to do so is to deliberately be blind to a great many issues that perpetuate throughout the halls of New Trier.

Our administration does a stellar job at running the school, but there seems to be an agenda of coddling students and protecting them from anything uncomfortable.

Many of you surely recall the International Women’s Day Seminars that made the front page last week. I along with many of my peers enjoyed the worthwhile commentary that guest speakers provided.

As valuable as the day was, the event almost didn’t happen. Last week’s article briefly mentioned that the event was nearly cancelled as guest speakers hadn’t been

approved and there was concern by administrators that students would be required to attend.

This seems like sound reasoning until you consider that guest speakers at other events like the Literary Festival didn’t need to be approved. The speaker I heard didn’t push any direct political agenda, yet there was the option for individuals to opt out, giving students the opportunity to simply avoid a session if they didn’t agree with its message.

The ‘minds to inquiry’ mindset would argue that students should encounter any and all perspectives, even if they don’t agree with them, as this is where growth and compromise will take place. But the administrative approach often is centered around keeping students in a safe and comfortable situation at all costs.

To clarify, by no means do I condemn physical safety. The number one priority of a public school like our own should be to protect its students from harm. That’s what the new security measures reinforce.

What frustrates me is the administrative agenda of preventing students from facing the so-called ‘danger’ of conversations that would challenge our beliefs.

You need only look within this newspaper to see evidence of this agenda. Page 2 features an article discussing how a certain work of art was removed from a gallery for being too controversial.

The image in question depicts a young girl surrounded by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers with an ethnic slur in the background. The administration deemed this work ‘unsafe’ for student viewing.

This once again seems like a case of helicopter action intended to prevent risky yet important conversations at school. The image might’ve disturbed some individuals, but it also would’ve brought about thought-provoking conversations.

The most rewarding and meaningful discussions I’ve had

in the past few years haven’t been exactly safe or comfortable; they’ve gotten beads of sweat to drip down my forehead as complex ideas like relationships, race tensions, political frustrations, and emotional outbursts filled my high school career.

Those were meaningful conversations, and it’s that significance that made them ‘uncomfortable’ and difficult to engage in with ease. As us many of us seniors go off to college, we’ll encounter similar issues with ‘safe spaces’ that deny students from facing controversial issues that, though ‘unsafe,’ are no less valuable.

To purposefully deny us students the possibility of facing controversial topics, like a women’s day seminar or a work of art, is to push away an important issue and coddle us in an already excessively comfortable bubble of the North Shore, thus poorly preparing students for their post-high school lives.

The issues I’ve mentioned were specific events within an interconnected series of backdoor decisions that came at the cost of enriching students. Countless others – the lack of Seminar Day this year, the initial decision to keep quiet about the graffiti incident – all demonstrate a concerning pattern of action.

I would hope that our school is actually valuing student safety in these actions and not community outcry that would supposedly come at the expense of school prestige and pride. If we truly do seek to “commit minds to inquiry,” then that approach isn’t and shouldn’t be smooth sailing – there should be more challenges to ourselves in that process, even if others deem it as the school seemingly pushing an agenda.

If we want to be a great school, then we must never assume that the status quo is sufficient. That’s the kind of pride that gets in the way of committing “hearts to compassion” and “lives to the service of humanity.”

Staff Editorial

We need change now

On Tuesday Mar. 20, yet another school shooting took place, this time in Maryland at Great Mills High School.

A seventeen year old male shot and wounded two students with a handgun, before being shot by resource officer Blaine Gaskill.

This is already the 17th gun-related incident in a school since Jan 1. of this year.

As law makers at every level of government are debating gun control legislation, we feel it’s past time to implement some of the proposed legislation.

The shooting at Stoneman Douglas has sparked some real change already; Illinois passed a law requiring licensing for gun dealers, and the Illinois House of Representatives passed laws banning bump-stocks and raising the minimum age to buy assault weapons to 21 on Mar. 1.

Other states have similar bills proposed, but have not yet voted on them. The lack of urgency with which the government is handling the passing of these laws seems like an insult to the lives lost and a danger to American students.

While these issues of gun control are being pushed by much of the public right now, the government has neglected to deal with them for decades. We are quickly approaching the 19th anniversary of the Columbine shooting this Apr. 20, but little has been done since 13 were killed and 24 injured at this tragic event.

Even after the Sandy Hook shooting in 2012, where twenty children were mercilessly murdered, gun legislation failed to improve. We witnessed the deaths of these young children. Still, we hesitate.

Keep in mind that while the members of Congress continue to put off gun control as an issue that they plan to solve rather than an issue they will solve, the lives of students, teachers, churchgoers, and many

other members of the community remain vulnerable. How many more students have to get shot for change to happen?

Now we have an opportunity to make sure this same article isn’t written 20 years from now.

Legislation that decreases the chances of violent, unstable people acquiring guns must be approved: legislation such as raising the minimum age to purchase any gun to 21, increasing the thoroughness of background checks, and implementing a waiting period before gun purchases.

Many people are in favor of increasing gun control against assault rifles and semi-automatic weapons. However, we need laws that go beyond just the big guns. Like many others, the shooter at Great Mills was armed with only a handgun.

While we understand the right to bear arms, the Constitution also promises every American has the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Because the Constitution states that only a “well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State,” has the right to carry a gun, many questions have been raised regarding the interpretation of what constitutes a well regulated militia.

The word regulated could indicate that guns shouldn’t be a free for all, while the word militia may not be applicable given the context of America’s established standing army.

Gun violence is a multifaceted issue that needs to be tackled from all angles. Information and awareness of how to act in a shooting, and how to report someone that may be threat are important pieces to the solution, but ultimately we must reconcile with the fact that the ease of access to guns in America puts our lives at risk.

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All letters to the editors are welcome, though we will not print anonymous letters. Direct these and other inquiries to our email at ntnews@nthns.net

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