

## With a new building comes a new culture



by Max Minogue

Welcome to the new New Trier! Allegedly this school year will be L17 and going into senior year, I have high hopes. If you've been living under a rock, the "New New Trier" is the \$100,000,000 massive overhaul of a large portion of the school.

I'll start by saying that I am impressed with the progress that's been made. At the end of last year, I was expecting major delays to catastrophically end the new building and leave us stranded without food or functioning bathrooms. However, really great progress was made. The library looks better than ever, complete with big, comfy chairs that make you feel like royalty. The new, spacious cafeteria is complete with a brand new make-your-own stir-fry station, regular sushi chefs, and a whole lot more.

Also, as somebody who sat in the small caf for lunch both sophomore and junior year, the lack of a mysterious egg-gasoline stench in the new cafeteria is a definite upgrade. Things like the small caf stench, along with the very, very aged bathrooms and the lack of gender-neutral bathrooms did show that

upgrades to the school were needed. Of utmost importance was the creation of new staircase to finally end the heck that was the P-stairwell.

However, as of now, I am not very sure that I like the execution of these new improvements. Talking with other kids, I've heard that the new wing would look great if they were a visitor, but they said that being in it every day is a little... uncomfortable. It's been compared to a hospital wing, an airport, a college and an office building. The building is full of stark whites and vast spaces. It's checkered with windows throughout to create a feeling of openness—all of which are at the forefront of architectural style.

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Unfortunately, things that are the most in-style get dated the fastest, but construction at this level lasts for a long, long time. And honestly, I don't think that New Trier should be trying to be at the forefront of style, and the school already had its own style.

Sure, the building was old and worn, but I really liked that. Sitting in the hallways during free periods had a special feeling of coziness, because it was a really unique thing for a high school to allow. Walking

from the old hallways to the new is a drastic transition that looks like a poor Photoshop job. One girl, who had almost all of her classes in the new building, said that it felt like she didn't even go to the same school anymore.

Lastly, I think that we went too far, into excess territory. Each year, almost every teacher I've had has mentioned the bubble that we're all in. We're all privileged, and that's something important to recognize. At a time when the Chicago Public School system has been a complete mess and talks of another teacher strike already floating around, I fear that this opulent new addition will only entrench us deeper into the bubble. I can't help but point out the fact that, within our infamously non-diverse community, the new addition is quite literally whitewashed.

There are North Shores across the United States and the world. Pretty much every major city has a rich collection of suburban neighborhoods just like ours.

Despite this, I have always felt that New Trier, with all its flaws, really is unique. The front of the school is iconic. The halls are cozy enough that a warm, brick fireplace wouldn't seem too out of place. It is not always gorgeous or architecturally chic, but that, if anything, kept us grounded. And finally, the mute greens and maroons of the building, the full Scrounge with the Scrounge rats, and even the occasional odd smell or two lent the school real personality, which is something I really don't want to lose.

## What happened to what was supposed to be the longest summer of our lives?



by Marie O'Connor

Fourteen weeks sounds like a very long time. It seems immeasurably long, like anything could happen, everything could happen. Approaching a fourteen-week long summer, I was fairly confident that I would start senior year, excited to return.

Given the ridiculously lengthy break, I had the chance to do so much. I planned on taking full advantage of the extension. I was going to travel the world, get in shape, apply to college, volunteer, get a job, make new friends, and maybe in my free time, spend significant energy on summer reading. After all, with fourteen weeks, I should have found time to do all this and more. However, once the night before August 28 arrived, a date that previously seemed only hypothetical, I still didn't feel finished with summer.

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There was still so much to do. I honestly don't know where my summer went. After suffering through a Junior year with small breaks and no days off, I was expecting a summer that lasted an eternity. I'm pretty sure somebody swindled me out of my full fourteen

weeks. It was probably Linda Yonke (I have absolutely no basis for this accusation but whenever something seems unfair people always seem to blame her).

I began the summer by wasting the first week and a half, unsure of what to do with all of my newly acquired free time. I could have been changing the world, or at least finding a summer job like my parents wanted. Instead, I wasted time catching up on sleep and regaining a healthy emotional, mental, and physical state after struggling through the last quarter of junior year.

The summer going into senior year was supposed to be magical, life-changing, "the best days of your life". I'm pretty sure I was supposed to discover my dream school and figure out what I am doing with the rest of my life. Quite honestly, this never got close to happening. If it did for any seniors, please contact me and teach me how to get my life together.

This summer has been confusing rather than transformative. I've been told on separate occasions to "live while I'm young" and also to "remember that every choice will affect your future." By the time of the Fourth of July, roughly halfway through the summer, I was still confident that I still had time to visit colleges and finish my Common App. So when I visited my entire extended family and they asked me where I wanted to go to school, I was still okay with saying "I really don't know" as an excuse to run away from them and hide from their questions.

It's not like I did nothing this summer. I went to the beach, saw friends, and got through some summer reading. I even visited a few colleges. And of course I was very

busy staying updated on basically every show on Netflix. You would be surprised that rewatching "Parks and Recreation" and "The Office" for the eighth time is just as enjoyable as watching it the first time. Plus, going through "Stranger Things" in two days, how could I not binge watch that?

It wasn't just reminiscing on old TV shows that ate up my summer, but also basking in the glory of the new heroes and records set in the 2016 Summer Olympics. The Olympics started August 5 (four days after the Common App opened), and so for a solid week or two most of America forgot about our embarrassing state of politics, and instead decided to be patriotic and proud.

So when Michael Phelps won his 28th medal, I was cheering right along with the rest of the country, bailing on all the things I had promised myself to get done this past summer. Basically, I have Simone Biles, Gabi Hernandez, and the entire U.S. women's gymnastics team to blame for the fact that I never finished my college essays over the summer.

Once the Olympics were finally over and I had emerged from my patriotic trance, it was already time to start gathering school supplies and hit up the bookstore. Tryouts had started once again. We had returned from the summer to get back into the grind and explore the new New Trier.

The 2016-2017 school year is now in full swing, and I'm still hoping that I'll wake up from some summer heat-induced coma to realize that it's the first week of summer, and that I still have fourteen weeks to waste time and procrastinate on all the things I'm supposed to do.

## Editorial Finding Comfort and Discomfort

This August John Ellison, the dean of students at the University of Chicago, sent the incoming class a letter on the school's policy on invited speakers and political correctness.

According to the New York Times, Ellison writes, "Our commitment to academic freedom means that we do not support so called trigger warnings, we do not cancel invited speakers because their topics might prove controversial, and we do not condone the creation of intellectual 'safe spaces' where individuals can retreat from ideas and perspectives at odds with their own."

The University's opinion highlights the importance of accepting discomfort in certain situations. In order to become a well-balanced student, or more importantly, an educated citizen, students must acknowledge different opinions even if the opinion makes them uncomfortable.

This letter sparked conversation throughout the media, with some arguing the importance of trigger warnings. But in order to truly, and fully "commit our minds to inquiry" we, as New Trier students, must also welcome Dean Ellison's letter.

To welcome Ellison's advice we must develop a "skin." Not a thick skin. Just a skin.

We must not shy away from opinions that cause us discomfort. We must not take offense when people disagree with us. We must not run from every miniature insult (we are high school students after all).

In order to develop this skin, we must accept and learn to prosper when faced with adversity and the feeling of being uncomfortable.

One instance New Trier students experienced discomfort was the MLK seminars day last winter. Discussing race and examining our own experience with race was an uncomfortable process for many new students. Some students even chose not to attend the seminars because of their fear of being challenged and uncomfortable intellectually.

The MLK seminar day was not the only circumstance New Trier students experienced discomfort. Students experience intellectual discomfort every day. Being confused, presenting in class, and giving the wrong answer during a class discussion are all instances we experience discomfort. We must learn to find comfort in discomfort, as that's a sign we're truly learning.

And if New Trier truly wants to ensure all students are prepared for life after high school, they must teach us this lesson.

New Trier is not the only place we should learn to embrace intellectual discomfort. Spending summers abroad or even in a different city can teach students to be more open about certain cultural ideas or norms. These new cultures force us to think about new ideas, and new traditions expanding our intellectual area of comfort.

The more cultured we become, and the more we expand our area of comfort and develop a skin the more educated citizens we will become.

Furthermore, all these instances, inside New Trier and out, are lessons in dealing with discomfort and help students slowly adapt to the demands of the real world.

This skin we develop will ensure we fully "commit our minds to inquiry." We will learn not to shy away from controversial opinions, or scary situations. And we will prosper in a world filled with diversity.



by Sam Blanc