

Are we doing Homecoming wrong?



by Bella Geroulis

It seems like New Trier dances always end up being not about the dance itself, but about the excessive add ons that come with it.

Besides our above average education and extracurricular system, New Trier proves itself to be different in almost every aspect possible.

If you take a look around the school, it's not hard to understand that we are not the norm as far as high schools go.

As the Homecoming dance quickly approaches, it's becoming more and more apparent just how weird our overall attitude is towards school dances.

Most high school students don't hire party buses that cater to students all night. Most high school students don't spend hundreds of dollars on hair, makeup, and spray tans. Most high schools don't go to dances in groups of 30+ kids.

It's not like it's not fun to do all these things, and don't get me wrong, I've always had a good time at school dances.

But then again, it's all I know. Who's to say that all of these add-ons are necessary or even worth it for that matter?

I know people from surrounding and out of state high schools, and almost all of them are

shocked to find out just how much we spend on one night. We can end up spending upwards of \$400 to go a dance that we only stay at for 30 minutes.

That doesn't make sense, does it?

Like most things New Trier related, it seems like it all becomes a competition to see who can be the best or show how much they have.

Dances, in theory, are supposed to be about going with people you care about and want to spend time with. Yet somehow, we've turned it into who has the prettiest house for pictures or who can host the biggest after party.

Like most things New Trier related, it seems like it all becomes a competition to see who can be the best or show how much they have.

Like a lot of what we do, we've somehow found a way to take the fun out of it and make it into yet another social conflict, another competition.

Trevians have been trained to be competitive in nearly all regards, and some would argue that competitiveness is good because it brings out our fullest potential.

But why have we allowed that competition to infiltrate even the most benign and simplest of things like a school dance?

I really love all the memories

I've made through the years at school dances, and I can say with confidence that they've contributed to my overall high school experience.

The dinners spent with friends and the awkwardness of trying to put on my date's boutonniere are parts of my high school story that I'll never forget.

Despite all the bizarre traditions that we've created to go along with them, I would encourage all students to attend a dance or two before high school ends.

But we don't need to be so different about everything we do. For some reason, students at New Trier have time and time again taken it upon themselves to create an image of themselves that differs from everyone else.

It confuses me because we all come from such an interesting school.

Just by attending New Trier, we're among a diverse group of intelligent and complex students and teachers.

New Trier allows us to have a completely different outlook on life and gives us an experience unlike most other high schools.

The 2016 Homecoming will no doubt be memorable, and I'm not trying to say we should stop how we attend our dances.

I am, however, asking everyone to reflect on why they're actually going to the dance.

Is it to spend the night with someone you really like, to hangout with your friends, or is it to get the best party bus and count down the minutes till the afterparty?

Don't worry, you're not dying



by Sam Blanc

I had a pretty good summer, but one of the low points would have to be getting the plague.

It was just like any other day. I woke up and groggily hobbled into the bathroom to brush my teeth, but looking in the mirror, BAM! My tongue was black.

I rubbed my eyes; was I hallucinating? No. I grabbed my toothbrush and scrubbed away like Dick Van Dyke, Mary Poppins chimney sweep style. Still nothing.

So, in a tizzy, I did what any normal human would do. I googled 'symptoms of the plague' on the internet. Sure enough, under symptoms of Septicemic Plague, was blackening tissue. It was official, I was dying.

Except I wasn't.

It turns out, the plague I thought I had was just a strange reaction I had to Pepto-Bismol. I was incredibly relieved, although my mother was none too pleased with me waking her up in a frenzy asking for a ride to the morgue.

I know, what a shock. The internet had duped me. Of course, this isn't just me.

Finding symptoms on the internet is incredibly common. In fact, a survey from the Pew Research Internet Project showed 72 percent of people on the internet had

used it to search for health-related information in the past year. Within this group, 1 percent had used social media, 13 percent had used WebMD or other medically aligned websites, and 77 percent--the vast majority--started with Google, Yahoo!, Bing or another search engine.

That's a heck of a lot of people who could be scurrying around thinking they have the plague. I think anyone can see why that's not ideal.

Sure, there are probably some people who can handle the awesome responsibility of typing in symptoms and looking beyond the first 10 sources that all point to cancer. But I'm way too much of a prophet of doom.

The internet opens up infinite possibilities, but it's hard to admit that maybe accessing these possibilities doesn't change much. I want to think that with access to unlimited information, I can be a doctor or a lawyer or an expert at anything, but the truth is, most of the internet can't help at all.

According to a study published in the Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery, nearly half of the top medical condition search results turned up commercial sites.

Of those sites, some, like eMedicine and WebMD, provided valuable and relatively accurate information. But the rest of the sites promoted their own products as treatment options, without medical evidence to support the claims.

It's hard enough to find genuine information on the internet, and human error just adds another level.

In 2010, Nottingham

University's department of pediatrics did a study to see how well everyday people functioned as diagnosticians with the internet as substitute for a medical degree.

They found that even though around 78% of information on medical websites (WebMD, MayoClinic, etc) were correct, 49% of people still could not find the correct diagnosis or solution to their problem.

I did what any normal human would do. I googled 'symptoms of the plague' on the internet.

No matter how much information is out there, I'm still not a medical professional. There's no way I can sift through copious medical facts, symptoms, and Latin names for a right answer 100% of the time.

But maybe that's not the reason I can't seem to find a reasonable diagnosis at all.

Maybe I'm more likely to look at my symptoms and say I have cancer, or Ebola, or a plague because I want to discover something. I want my google search to mean something. But it doesn't.

Basically, the moral of the story is don't google your symptoms. The internet is great for a lot of things, but identifying illness in jumpy teens is not one of them. Doctors still have the edge in that market. Don't start planning your own funeral over an upset stomach.

Staff Editorial

Art is not dead, not yet, anyway

When we were all in middle school, playing an instrument or performing in a school play was not an oddity. Furthermore, an art class was part of our every day curriculum—with students having a designated art, drama, or music class at least once a day. This trend of allocated art time ended in high school. Participation in art class was 100% because it was mandatory, but according to data provided by Assistant Principal Gerry Munley, participation in New Trier fine arts is lower than 60%, showing the overall participation in these classes drops in high school.

This drop is not due to our lack of interest. New Trier students still enjoy art as seen from the popularity of going to see Lagniappe and the high enrollment in Lit Film classes—which is studying the art of filmmaking. Even the clubs with their aesthetically designed posters show students' affinity for art.

Though there are signs all throughout the school of our artistic nature, not many students participate in a theater, art, dance, or music classes. Previously all groups of students participated in art because it was mandatory; now only certain groups of students take part in these activities.

This has created a divide in the student body: the athletes, the academics, and the artists. Now of course, New Trier students are very fluid in their interest with many overlapping into two interest groups. But having active involvement in the three groups is close to impossible.

The competitive environment of New Trier and the lack of time in the day make art classes second hand priorities for some students. Students, including many on this editorial staff, are often forced to choose between athletes, academics, and art. But with this athletically and academically competitive school, arts are often put on the back burner.

The days of designated art time, to be creative, use imagination, and unwind from the stresses of academic life, are behind us. Though this is a depressing thought, New Trier administrators do not need to create a designated art time—parents and children alike would throw a coup if art time took away from "important class."

No, this decline in art in high school should not guilt students in taking art classes, but it should make us appreciate student art more. For the students that continued to play an instrument, continued to take art classes after their arts requirement was filled, the students who take early bird to fit in all their theater courses, and the students who create a band with their friends and rehearse for hours after school, they have survived the threat of academic and athletic pressures trying to steal their art time. And despite these pressures, they continue to pursue their passions. Their determination and passion is inspiring and should be looked at in awe. And the work that they produce should be appreciated and marveled.

The student body should focus more on the artist, just as we focus on the Friday night athletes. For a student artist, just like athletes, donate 100 of hours and refine their skills to produce: a piece of art. Just as Green Team appears for every football, basketball, and soccer game, they should make an effort to show up for every concert, musical, and art show. The student body must show support for all its diverse and talented students.



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