

Staff Editorial

Living in fear does not make us safer

On Wednesday, Mar. 14, New Trier held its breath as news slowly trickled in about the gunman situation at Northwestern. Everybody knows somebody there. 9th period that day felt like the longest 40 minutes ever.

Around 2:15 P.M., an unidentified man called the Evanston Police Department claiming that he had shot his girlfriend at Engelhart Hall graduate dorm. The entire Northwestern campus went into lockdown within minutes. The speed of the response was impressive.

But, it was soon revealed that the call had been a hoax and that there was no shooter on campus.

Now more than ever, students feel worried about school safety and frustrated by the slow response of lawmakers. This time in history will be remembered as tense and fearful. Gun violence will be remembered as a defining issue for Generation Z.

These past few weeks, discussions in advisory and in classes have equipped students to keep themselves safe in the event of the unthinkable. We appreciate the efforts that administrators have made. We have been especially impressed with implementation of new measures within the new building. For the most part, students have been made to feel safe in the school.

Our hope is that the student body is now knowledgeable of safety procedures, but also that they will not walk the halls in fear. It is necessary that students feel secure in their school. It is our hope that the discussions held in class will empower students, not make them feel paranoid.

Administrators, faculty members, and law enforcement officers have emphasized that the most important preventative safety measure is the feeling of connectedness among the student body. Nationwide, we have seen a growing number of particularly young white men who feel disconnected from their communities.

This has manifested not only in mass shootings, but also in the political culture and the opioid epidemic.

We are privileged to live in a community that is less affected by these issues. Our adviser system fosters connection between students and also ensures that at least one adult sees students every day for four years.

As the PowerPoint about school safety shown in advisory made clear, this is a place where people want to open doors for each other. This is a community where students support one another.

New Trier is a very safe place. Not only because of our grandfathered doors with wired glass, but because of the opportunities this school provides students, and the community that is created as a result. We should not be living in fear of the headlines. We should not be afraid to come to school.

By no means should we stop caring about these issues. In fact, we must keep speaking our minds, writing to our representatives, and marching.

But, maybe it's best that we don't talk about these issues so much. To live in constant fear does not make us any safer.

This piece represents the majority opinion of the student editors of The New Trier News. The views expressed in this piece do not necessarily reflect the views of all student staff members or Editorial Board members of New Trier News. If you would like to respond to this editorial, send a Letter to the Editor to ntnews@nthns.net

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We should be scared of our own potential

by Mia Sherin



The thought of a school shooting has always been scary. As a young kid in a lockdown drill, no one ever announced, "Yes, I welcome a shooter! Let me fend them off. I got this."

No, we all cowered in a corner, imagining the what ifs. Am I in the safest possible location? Who would be shot first? Me, or the girl curled up next to me?

Today, I am more terrified than ever. Yes, I will always be scared of a school shooting, but today, I am scared of our own potential. Or rather, not living up to it. For me, today's walkout was a wakeup call.

We teens come with an agenda. And we come in numbers.

People often see these movements as good, but flawed. As well-intentioned, but not enough. Unsurprisingly, this is a mindset many students took after the walkout.

While there was a lot of chatter flying about the school, there was one question that seemed to rise above the rest: What was our purpose?

Some complained that they couldn't hear the speakers, but I would argue that listening to speeches was not our purpose. Others argued

that by walking out, we didn't change any legislation, to which I would say that was also not our purpose. And finally, students said that the only true change we can make is with our vote, so what good does a protest do?

We come with an agenda, and we come in numbers. I believe that we marched to spread this message.

I agree that the most important change you can make is with your vote. But sometimes, people need to be inspired. These protests did not change legislation. They did not magically cause the NRA to cease to exist.

But that was not our purpose.

The purpose of the walkout was to empower our generation to be active and vote, in the hopes of voting in new politicians who are ready to make a change.

The purpose was to make each and every student scared of their own potential. Scared of their own power.

While there were critics of the walkout, those who thought it was flawed or not enough, I was still proud to see overwhelming support and participation. I can see the excitement just by scrolling through my Instagram feed, which is flooded with pictures and videos from the walkout.

The way that these images have spread across all forms of social media only emphasizes that youth have taken over this movement. As I said, we come in numbers, and so do our Snapchat stories.

While I see this social media explosion as impressive, some

find it problematic. During class discussions, some of my classmates expressed their worry that people are just participating and posting on social media because it is trendy. Not because they are passionate, educated, or plan on continuing to stay active after the trend passes.

To that I say, keep posting. Keep participating. Keep sharing, retweeting, and snapping. Why are we complaining about it being trendy and cool to be active in politics?

Although not everyone will be in it for the long haul, I can only hope that some of these people will stick. And there will be at least one more person who is active in politics. One more vote. Or maybe 10, or 20, or 100,000. Our numbers have only begun to grow.

There will always be more we can do. We often take steps back as we take steps forward. This walkout was imperfect, but that does not make it any less of a success. On Mar. 14, students across the country stood in solidarity with the students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas. We came in numbers, and we came with an agenda.

Our purpose? For every single person marching or supervising or watching the videos from home to be inspired by these protests. To be inspired to vote, inspired to become educated, and empowered to stay active in politics. Because there is a lot of responsibility on our shoulders.

We can make a change. And it's terrifying.

Don't hate if I don't participate

by Michelle Yurovsky



I used to be pretty shy in the majority of my classes. In most other situations, I am extremely social. I love meeting new people and making new friends. For some reason when it came down to participating in classes, I found it extremely difficult to get myself to do the same.

There's nothing that frustrates me more than forced participation. In my eyes, if my hand is not raised, I clearly have nothing of substance to say.

I don't see the point in forcing a student to ramble about something that doesn't really make sense as opposed to just letting them listen.

I'm all for teachers calling on students who don't seem like they are paying attention, but other than that, what harm would come from just letting them sit there?

As far back as I can remember, I've had somewhat of a love-hate relationship with participation. I either actively participate in a class, or I don't participate at all. There's no in between.

There's a significant difference between calling on students just because they have not said anything the whole class period, as opposed to choosing students who do not have

their hand raised, but the teacher knows they probably have something great to say.

Freshman year, nothing made me more uncomfortable than having to present in front of the whole class. I remember in my world history class we had a huge presentation at the end of the year. I did not sleep at all the night before because of how nervous I was. During the majority of my presentations my heart was racing and my palms were sweating like no other. It was even difficult for me to speak coherently.

To be able to feel more comfortable talking in front of my peers, I decided to sign myself up for a public speaking class.

Sophomore year rolled around and it was finally time to face my fears. It was time to go to a class once a day that would force me to participate and learn how to become a better speaker.

The problem that arose was that now I was scared of going to my public speaking class. I loved the teacher and the idea of the class.

Unfortunately, every time I had to present I found a way out of it, and even went as far as staying home.

I finally realized that even if I didn't show up the day I was initially scheduled to present, I would still eventually have to.

The more speeches I gave, the more comfortable I felt and the fear began to subside.

I would highly recommend

trying out a public speaking class. It has, without a doubt, helped me become a better speaker.

Junior year was great in the sense that none of my teachers forced me to participate. The problem, though, was that I rarely spoke in any of my classes besides English.

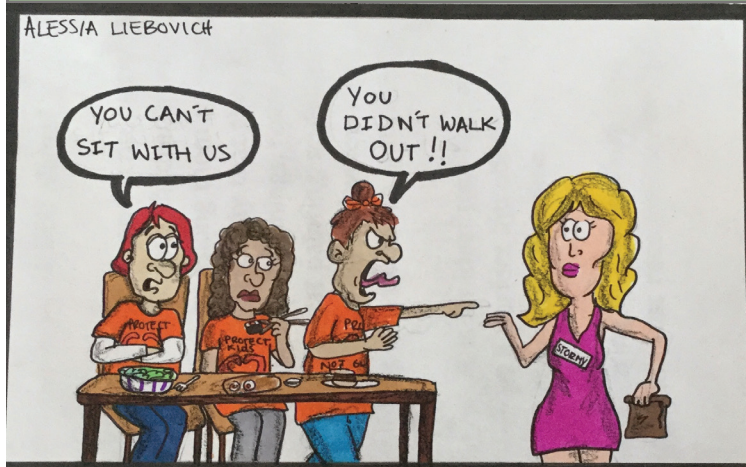
I am now in an English class called Great Books. Participation is worth about 40 percent of our final grade. I took this class for the precise reason of hoping that it would push me out of my comfort zone. And that it did. At the beginning of the year, I was pretty intimidated by my peers because everyone had such thorough responses in the discussions.

Now it is honestly one of my favorite classes. I've learned not to doubt myself, and sometimes just speaking your mind is all that it takes to be more comfortable participating.

Don't let your own fears determine whether or not you will pursue an interest of yours. I've always wanted to take a public speaking class, even though I hated speaking in front of groups.

Great Books seemed like a spectacular class unlike any I have ever taken before. Stepping out of your comfort zone can be a great thing, and it can help you discover interests that you never even thought you had.

In some situations, you are the only person holding yourself back from reaching your full potential.



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