

## Staff Editorial

### Climate Strike is more important than a few hours of school

Last year, Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg made global headlines for her weekly protests in which she skipped school every Friday to sit on the steps of the Swedish Parliament brandishing a sign that read “School Strike for Climate.”

Today, thousands of young people across the world will follow in her footsteps and join a global climate strike in protest of political leaders’ indifference and lack of action in the face of climate change-- one of the greatest global challenges humans have ever faced.

In a significant report issued from earlier this year, the UN’s scientific panel painted a far more dire picture of the immediate consequences of climate change than previously thought and said that avoiding the damage requires transforming the world economy at a speed and scale that has “no documented historic precedent.”

In light of this urgent report which joins a growing chorus of evidence, the Climate Strike is to collectively show our global leaders that we support quick, concrete action in opposition to climate change.

As members of a country whose government is supposed to derive its power from the consent of the governed, it is our responsibility and privilege to make our desires heard through speech and action so that our elected officials can legislate on behalf of their constituents. And while the most obvious source of political change, voting, isn’t an available option for many of us under 18, it isn’t the only means of political participation.

We have the right and responsibility to contact our officials, sign petitions, donate money, and to protest to make our voices heard-- such as by attending today’s climate strike from 11:00-2:00 in Grant Park.

Yes, you heard us correctly: we’re advocating that students should responsibly make the decision to attend the Climate Strike instead of school today.

Between 9:30 and 10:00, a group of students led by NT’s Environmental Club will take the Metra to Ogilvie and walk to Grant Park to march with hundreds of others in what will surely be a historic day of protest, following in the wake of other record breaking protests that have taken place in the past few years.

It’s true. You might have to sacrifice a few precious hours of balancing chemical equations and discussing political parties in Russia. But it’s not as if we’ve never missed a day of school in our lives. We’ll get the notes from a friend, talk to our teachers, and make up the missed work.

Because ultimately, the civic education you gain from exercising your right to protest by showing up for a climate strike is far more valuable than what you will get sitting in a classroom as you would on any other day.

Like Parkland, this iteration of activism is being helmed by youth leaders like Thunberg. It is imperative that we as students take action individually and collectively against climate change because we are tomorrow’s electorate, and we are the future leaders of this world. Our generation didn’t get us into this mess, but it is our generation that has inherited the responsibility of getting us out of it. For these reasons and so many more, we urge students to make their voices heard by joining the chorus of voices that will speak out against inaction-- by showing up to the climate strike.

But if missing a single day of school to take part in a historic protest, please take this opportunity to call your elected officials. We have the privilege of living in an area where they most likely already include climate action in their platforms, but it is still imperative that we emphasize the urgency of immediate action and also to thank them for the action they have taken already.

## How to talk about mental health



by Danielle Kurensky

I have anxiety. While this might not be a big deal to some, this fact is something I have wrestled with for the past five years and for a while I wouldn’t talk about my anxiety with people outside of my family.

Anyone who struggles with mental health knows how personal it is and that wasn’t information I wanted to share.

I felt like the majority of people didn’t understand what I was going through, or had major misconceptions about what having anxiety is actually like. Although I’m still uncomfortable, I feel like I have to discuss this topic. If I am constantly going to emphasize the importance of talking about mental health, then I should use this platform to discuss it as well.

First and foremost I want to stress one thing: if you are struggling please reach out to a mental health professional. I have been going to therapy for almost all of high school and I can’t imagine where my life would be without it. Or if you are in need of more immediate support please call a mental health hotline.

The important thing to know is that you are not alone and there are trained professionals who can help

you with whatever you are dealing with.

Our society is full of misconceptions, false information and stigmas when it comes to mental health. My only hope for this piece is to start some form of genuine discussion and hopefully begin to decrease the stigma and further our overall understanding.

I want to make one thing clear: mental health is not a personal failure, it is not your fault and you are not weak for having these issues. Also, I am by no means perfect, I still struggle with how to talk about mental health and feeling weak myself. I am only sharing what I have learned through my own experiences in an attempt to help others.

One thing that is necessary for a conversation about mental health is to be conscious of the words you are using because language is important. I know this is something you’ve probably rolled your eyes at when your English teacher says it but when it comes to mental health it really is important.

A common misunderstanding in society is the difference between being anxious and having an anxiety disorder. They are not the same and should not be treated as if they are. It is normal to experience occasional anxiety but having an anxiety disorder is much different.

According to the National Institute for Mental Health “Anxiety disorders involve more than temporary worry or fear. For a person with an anxiety disorder, the anxiety does not go away and can get worse over time. The symptoms can interfere with daily activities

such as job performance, school work, and relationships.”

Tips or techniques that are often used when someone is anxious are not going to be solutions for struggling with an anxiety disorder. I’m aware people are often times just trying to be helpful, but when someone says I should take a bath, try some breathing exercises or listen to some music it feels like I have a broken arm and they’re giving me a bandaid.

Further, please avoid phrases like, “let’s not blow this out of proportion,” “it’s all in your head,” “you just need to push through it,” “don’t think about it,” or “try and calm down.” No matter how well-intentioned, they can be incredibly hurtful and cause more anxiety.

The same is true with panic attacks. Too often people claim they’ve had a panic attack over something superficial. Saying “When I saw how much ticket prices were I almost had a panic attack,” is not an actual panic attack. Mental health is a serious issue and should not be used as a punchline. Not only is joking about it extremely insensitive, but it can also be triggering for some.

According to the American Psychiatric Association, “Anxiety disorders are the most common of mental disorders and affect nearly 30 percent of adults at some point in their lives.”

So please know if you are struggling with any form of mental health you are not alone, help is available and what you are experiencing will not last forever.

## Memiors of an unlicensed senior



by Stephanie Kim

On my 16th birthday, far off into the horizon, I could just begin to hear the sound of my long-desired freedom ringing in the form of a 3.37” x 2.13” card. The DMV apparently did not hear such a melody.

A dramatic retelling? I admit. But hey, I think it’s drama well-deserved. After all, having my adventures confined to my parents’ demands while almost everyone else at school can take the North Shore by storm via automobile—after 3 years of this, it gets rather debilitating.

In June 2017, that very first week of Summer School, I drove two hours to Deerfield with my mom thinking I’d have sweet independence by the end of the day. We brought the necessary paperwork and there was a single document we’d been missing, but we brought a whole other stack of documents to cover for it. Unfortunately, the DMV employee was not having it, and after minutes of pleading, he put his foot down and moved on to the next hopeful student driver.

Granted, I’m not the only senior experiencing this lack of a driver’s license. I definitely can rattle off a couple of friends who remain unlicensed alongside me as second semester seniors.

The catch is, I can list these people on one hand, and because our population is so sparse, most of

the time it feels like a population of just moi. I might as well be living in the Monowi, Nebraska of unlicensed seniors in the northern suburbs. (Side note: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monowi,\\_Nebraska](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monowi,_Nebraska))

And a solitary population it is. My friends have the capability to go to coffee shops, go to the library, drive to the beach, drop off goodies at each other’s houses — the world is their oyster! Out of Band-Aids? No problem, they’ll just hop in the car and make a dash to Walgreens. Want some spontaneous brunch? With a car, Walker Bros. is at the tips of their fingers.

On the flip side, if I run out of Band-Aids, my only hope is to suck it up or cobble together a napkin-Scotch tape substitute, because my parents refuse to make the trek to the Walgreens on Lake. As for spontaneous brunch, I’ll stick a slice of avocado on my toast and call it a day.

The real issue is when friends invite me out with them. As soon as those three grey iMessage dots morph into a text asking to hang out or make plans: pseudo-survival mode, activate!

My future becomes a Choose Your Own Adventure in that instant. The three possible paths: suffer the merciless guilt of needing your friends to go through the hassle of navigating to your house and picking you up, suffer my vexed parents when they have to drive me back and forth during their prime bedtime, or suffer the loneliness of “house arrest” inflicted by one nasty DMV employee who refused to let me take the driver’s test. In any case, I’ve suffered. Who knew a plastic card, or lack thereof, could invoke such a monstrous inner turmoil?

Actually, I take back my earlier

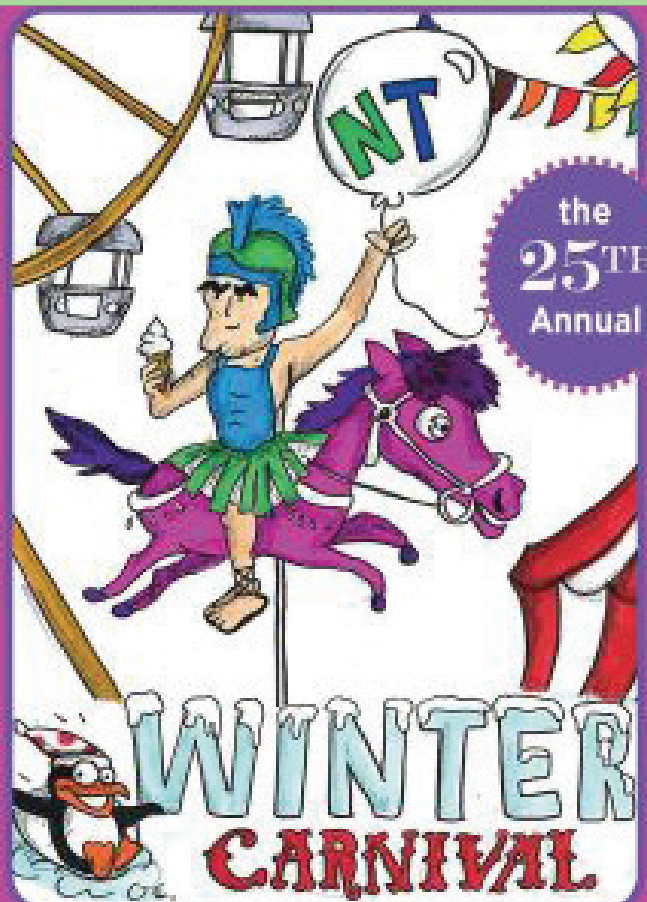
assertion. The real real issue is still having to depend entirely on your parents for transport needs when people know or realize that yes, indeed, I am a senior, in spite of the fact that I could still fly by as a 14-year-old freshman at the Lincoln Park Zoo.

Mom, Dad, relatives, I love you, I do. But times get a tad more trying when I have to be dropped off at track and field practice, and I’m wearing my Green Team sweatshirt as I step out of the car, and you yell my name out the window and tell me you’ll come get me in an hour, waving goodbye with vigor as a gaggle of freshman boys observe your cinema-worthy farewell on their walk past me.

I still love you, I promise, but I admit I pretend like I’m a freshman in those moments. Which also doesn’t work all too well, since right beside me are seniors parking their cars, some of which are my good friends.

I’ve thought twice about writing on this topic, because in some ways, it makes me feel like I’m needlessly complaining about something that is clearly a privilege. I don’t mean to whine or imply that I don’t feel grateful for what I do have. But in the context of the North Shore Bubble — which we’re all in, whether we decided to be or not — to not have a license, and to not have a license as an almost 18-year-old, feels somewhat... odd. Kind of isolating, to be frank. (Which it probably shouldn’t. That’s probably a whole other issue.)

But good grief, I’d like to be able to get myself some Band-Aids without parental supervision!



Friday, Mar. 15

5:30 PM - 9:00 PM