

Peeing with impunity



by Sam Blanc

In our country's recent political turmoil, a lot of important issues have come to light. Finally someone is talking about the important things like inauguration crowd sizes, twitter typos, and maybe most importantly, bathrooms.

And I have a fairly controversial opinion on bathrooms, which is not something I think most people can say.

Some people argue that the bathroom you use should be dictated by gender identity. Some people argue that the bathroom you use should be dictated by biological sex. I argue that we should all get over ourselves and use the same bathrooms.

In an attempt to be more progressive, and we applaud the effort, New Trier has created 'gender neutral bathrooms.' The only thing is, they're single stall.

Single stall bathrooms are not new, they're not innovative, they're not even particularly practical. Lines down the hallway outside the doors of these bathrooms confirm that.

Real progress would be to create a bathroom that both boys and girls could go into *gasp* at the same time.

One of the arguments used against allowing transgender and transsexual individuals into their preferred bathroom is the threat of sexual misconduct.

I would assume that this same objection would apply even more

strongly here. I will admit that there may be increased risk of this sort of behavior--peeking through doors, etc.

Sexual misconduct is a significant issue and if the concern is sexual assault, that's an even bigger issue. It's so big an issue, in fact, that if the only thing protecting you from sexual assault is a separate bathroom, then you might have bigger problems.

If someone is going to assault you in a public place, they're certainly not going to let a girl's bathroom sign stop them (or a boy's bathroom sign, I suppose). A gender-neutral bathroom is not going to turn a perfect gentleman into a creepy peeper.

These types of arguments appeal to the worst in people. Most people, believe it or not, just want to pee.

According to an article in Time Magazine, the idea of separate bathrooms was put into place as women entered the workplace in factories.

Policy makers argued that because women were inherently weaker, they needed protection from the harsh outside world. It was not only bathrooms that were segregated by sex, but things like train cars and library reading rooms.

Train cars are no longer segregated. Just this last week I read a book in the general vicinity of a male (I know, scandalous). So what makes bathrooms so different?

Some would probably say it's the private nature of using the restroom, but, at least in women's restrooms, there are stalls. I've never felt overexposed.

Of course, the argument is that it would be more uncomfortable with the opposite gender. That may be

true, but it's not any worse than the way men's bathrooms are now.

As a female, I may be biased, but I am very much against how men's bathrooms are set up. The only difference, as far as I'm concerned, is urinals, and they have always made me conceptually uncomfortable. I just don't understand how someone decided:

"So, like, we have all the guys stand next to each other half-naked and just go to the bathroom."

Single stall bathrooms are not new, they're not innovative, they're not even particularly practical.

That's objectively weird. And, as implied by the 131,000 results the search "men's bathroom etiquette" yields, it is very complicated as well. As much as sexism is generally skewed against women, this seems like a pretty harsh injustice for the male population.

Getting rid of the urinal system seems like the only just thing to do. It's not even that you have to get rid of the structures; you can just put them in stalls. Then everyone can do what they've got to do in the privacy of a lockable five-foot box.

And after that, what's the difference between a men and women's bathroom other than the faceless figure on a plaque outside the door.

Unless washing your hands is just too scandalous for someone of the opposite gender to see, there's really no reason to keep bathrooms separate anymore.

Embarking on an Insta-venture



by Max Minogue

Get ready, world: on Feb. 5, I, Max Minogue, got an Instagram.

This is after years of pretending I was better than that. Such a waste of time! So egotistical! I was such a great person for resisting this millennial trend. So what happened?

For the first two years of high school, I avoided social media like Instagram for this kind of pseudo-intellectual reason.

After all, everybody knows that social media is what prevents people from the face-to-face conversation that our grandparents used to have. But once I got past that rather pretentious phase, I was starting junior year.

I knew all too well that I would waste hours of precious time, and so I held off.

By hold off, of course, I mean rely on my friends to text me the screenshots of the more important or infamous posts (shoot out to everybody's favorite NT alum's finsta with more than 1,000 followers).

But now I'm a second semester senior. So, I treated myself the free app that I've been avoiding for too long, after being pressured into it.

One thing I found, at least upon the first impression, is that Trevers are pretty friendly people on the

Gram. It was like being welcomed onto AIM way back in 7th grade but without any of the horrible middle school cringe.

The Monday after my Insta debut, I was surprised to find people not greeting me with the regular "Hey" in the hallways, but rather with a cheerful "Welcome to Instagram!"

It felt like I was being indoctrinated into a cult full of filters and followers, and I was more okay with it than I expected.

Get ready, world: on Feb 5, I, Max Minogue, got an Instagram.

There's plenty to be said for the evils of social media, but most of it has already been said.

In the news and recent studies, there's evidence of social media addiction, and the bad mental side effects of the extensive use of apps like Instagram. But that's true of anything done without moderation.

It's also a huge waste of time, but I haven't felt like it's been overtaking anything important. If anything, I've just been on Instagram using time that I would otherwise be wasting on Netflix, Snapchat, or doing anything else equally pointless.

I'm just generally not a productive human being, and that's more my fault than my phone's.

Then there are shows like Black Mirror, where in one episode society revolves around an app where people

rate each and every interaction with others. A high ranking out of five stars always corresponds to prestige and real life perks in the show, and thus has obvious adverse side effects.

That's probably the real-world equivalent to being Instagram famous, which as an occupation is still mind boggling to me.

I won't pretend that Instagram isn't many times used for this exact reason, to amass a certain amount of likes and comments and have that high ratio of likes-to-followers.

Being fed likes after a new post obviously feels pretty great, and I love indulging myself in some fresh new comments and followers.

But in the end, Instagram is all a matter of how you use it. I can use Instagram as the means to base my self confidence on, or I can use it to find memes. I can focus on the rinsta scene or the underground world of finstas.

On the topic of finstas, people need to recognize that finstas are for friends and for actually cringe worthy and uncomfortable content.

I shouldn't be getting follows from finstas that consist of decent selfies and captions like "I just ate an entire roll of girl scout cookies. I'm so fat!" That just shames the people who already do that on the regular.

Most importantly, I can use Instagram to pretend to future college roommates and friends that I'm a normal human with normal human interactions.

Follow for follow, please and thank you.

Staff Editorial

Seminar Day is for students. Let them decide

At New Trier we are very lucky to have involved community and caring parents. It's not unusual for every seat to be taken at the Board of Education meetings because parents want to know what's going on at our school.

NT parents are organized too, with an active New Trier Parents' Association (NTPA) and Facebook groups like "New Trier Parents."

However, when it comes to the All School Seminar Day, parents need to let students make the ultimate decision on attending or not. They need to let students take the lead in supporting or opposing this day.

Yes, parents do have a vested interest in this day as it is their kids who are attending, and depending on who you speak with, are gathering valuable information on civil rights or getting brainwashed by a "leftist administration."

However, the students are the ones who are processing this information, signing up for the seminars, and having thoughtful discussions about race.

The small, vocal, and well organized opposition movement seems to only be coming from parents. Parents created the Facebook group, the petition to "balance or suspend" the seminar day, and the website parentsofnewtrier.org to mobilize their displeasure with the content of the day.

While we appreciate our parents involvement, they should let students fight their own battles. Committing our own "minds to inquiry" and advocating for what we believe, whether it is for or against the existing seminar day. Parents forbidding their children to attend Seminar Day goes against all that we are taught at New Trier.

Denying us attendance is denying us the opportunity to evaluate, question and make conclusions regarding the content presented.

Our adult lives are not going to always be filtered or protected by our parent's views and the earlier we learn to think critically for ourselves, the more open we become to new ideas and learn how to evaluate them.

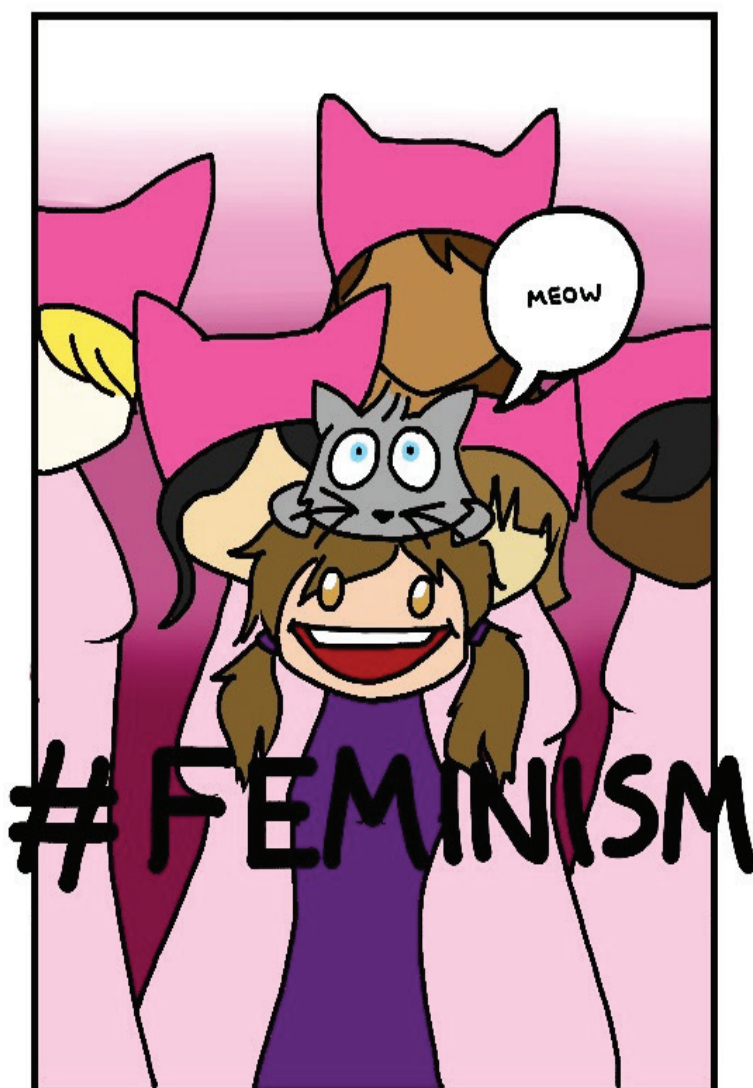
The majority of student voices that have been shared on this topic seem to have been in support of the program. Former and current New Trier students have written open letters on websites and created petitions supporting the seminar day as it currently exists.

Of course there are also students that are opposed to the seminar day, but their voices are drowned out by the opposition coming from parents or from people outside of the community.

We urge those students to come forward so they can be heard and there can be discussions to understand the day's purpose.

It is our job as students to tell the school and the community how the people who are actually involved and experiencing the day feel about it. This is an opportunity for student voice to shine through the fog of polarized parent opinions from the community and hyper-partisan websites such as Breitbart.

Our voice can be heard, not just through writing about it on Facebook, but also through action. So, show up to the Feb. 20 board meeting or go to the Seminar Day, because numbers are impossible to deny.



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