

Staff Editorial

Proposed Development will benefit Northfield

On Nov. 6, The Northfield Plan & Zoning Commission decided to not make any recommendation at this time in regards to the proposed multi-family residential planned unit development on Winnetka Road. When the committee reconvenes on Jan. 2, we strongly encourage the commissioners to provide their recommendation.

This development is a good opportunity that the village of Northfield would be foolish to pass up. One of the greatest weaknesses of the North Shore community is the lack of options for empty-nesters seeking to downsize. The proposed development would offer accommodation within walking distance of downtown Northfield, the North Shore Senior Center, the forest preserve, and New Trier's Northfield Campus. The proposed apartment would also be directly adjacent to two major bus routes, connecting residents to the community and allowing for an easier commute to the city.

Empty-nesters are a large but underserved demographic in this housing market, and they deserve attention.

This townhome development will also be a significant aesthetic improvement to the current unsightly parking lot and single story building on the lot.

Many of the townspeople opposed to this new development are in fact residents of the Meadowlake condominium complex across the street, which went through a very similar approval process in 1991. Ironically, these people don't want to share the benefits of medium density suburban living for fear of slightly increased car traffic. This dissonance is known by urban planning experts as the "not in my backyard" phenomenon. NIMBYism, as it is also called, regularly plagues wealthier areas and routinely stymies economic development.

The corner of Winnetka and Happ has now been outfitted with a traffic light, which would mitigate problems that could arise from the development.

Unfortunately not all opposition has been focused on issues of traffic and congestion. Others opposed to the development have pivoted to focus on the subjective notion of the character of the neighborhood and have made statements with considerable derogatory undertones reminiscent of the era of redlining. "This is not the Northfield we know" warns the group's website. They further caution "your block could be next."

The group's Facebook further claims that the presence of renters who allegedly "have no vested interest in the property or the community" would destabilize the community. We believe these claims are false and that rental properties would provide a means for families who are unable to afford homeownership to enter this community.

A study from the MIT Center for Real Estate found that "multi-family [rental] developments need not be feared in terms of property value losses."

We implore all readers to consider how the current parking lot is contributing to the neighborhood. Rezoning this land for denser residential usage will expand housing options and bring economic development to the village of Northfield.

I'm an only child, not a lonely child

by Michelle Yurovsky



If there's one thing I've noticed at New Trier, and the rest of my life, there don't seem to be a whole lot of only children.

Many times, the assumption is that there's a hush hush reason for why parents chose to have only one child.

I'm willing to argue that these perceptions don't have nearly as much to do with actual reasons as we think.

Recently, I have been asking myself if society has made it socially expected to have more than one child, why would any parent just have one?

Being an only child, I could list dozens of reasons. For the 80% of Americans who have siblings, on the other hand, let's just say the statistic speaks for itself.

Aside from this, there are many negative connotations associated with being an only child.

In my psychology class we were asked to raise our hands if we were an only child, if we only had one sibling, if we had two siblings, etc. I was the only one in my class who was an only child.

I have done this activity in

different classes before, and in some of the other classes I honestly felt judged and uncomfortable. In my eyes, this is a direct result of the stereotypes associated with only children.

Apparently, only children prefer being alone which may prevent them from developing social skills. We have a hard time sharing, we're overly sensitive and demanding, and we are misfits and loners.

Well that explains it.

Jokes aside, the list goes on and on. The amount of times people assume that I'm spoiled rotten, or that I must be socially needy is ridiculous.

During an Uber ride home, my driver was making small talk. He was an odd guy, and he kept asking my friend and me random questions that were not fitting for nonchalant Uber chit chat.

Eventually, he asked me if I had any siblings. I already knew where this conversation was heading, and I by no means wanted to deal with it, so I simply replied "I don't know."

The driver must have thought that I didn't hear him, so he repeated his question. Again I gave him the same response.

My friend Ally was sitting next to me and she clearly thought I was being a weirdo so she nonchalantly ended it by telling the driver that I was in fact an only child.

As soon as the words came out of her mouth I knew where the conversation was heading.

He started rambling about how

I must get everything I want and more, and that I must be so sick of my parents hovering over me.

It's just unfortunate that I would rather say I don't know how many siblings I have, than tell someone I am an only child.

Findings from Toni Falbo and her colleague Denise Pilot at the University of Texas have explored the question of whether only children are lonelier than those with siblings. Their findings suggest that solitude is not synonymous with loneliness and often strengthens character.

Does every only child end up having the same characteristics? Of course not. The environment in which the child grows up will have a big impact on their future and what kind of person they will become.

Research shows that adult behavior stems from what we experience as children. Everyone is different and is shaped by different things.

I hope I was able to correct some of the misinformation about only children without creating a new set of limitations to put them in.

The ups and downs people go through in life, as well as their overall experiences, are what mold their personalities.

Whether you have siblings or not, you are the only person who can determine where you will end up. Being an only child will only be a set-back to you if you don't choose to see it as an advantage.

Islam: the misunderstood religion

by Husnain Raza

With the increasing trend of Islamic terrorism through the world and closer to home in the United States, it has become essential to better understand a religion that over a billion people worldwide practice.

However, with the current political climate in America, no productive conversation on the religion of Islam can be had.

This problem can be seen on both the political left and right, although in different flavours.

Before I continue, I'd like to say that the following statements are not intended to be generalizations of a certain political orientation: making generalizations of groups of people is unproductive and morally reprehensible. People should be judged based on their individual traits and opinions, not based on their political orientation.

Nonetheless, it is undeniable that there are problems dealing with Islam across the political spectrum. In a Trump presidency, the issues of the political right have become clearer when it comes to dealing with Islam.

When you have people like former National Security Advisor, retired Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn calling Islam a "malignant cancer," there is no room left to differentiate an American Muslim who loves their country from an ISIS soldier

who wants to destroy it.

While the right's problems with Islam are more clear, the left also has major problems that need to be overcome before any productive conversation about Islam can take place.

In a list of "anti-Muslim extremists," the Southern Poverty Law Center listed Maajid Nawaz, a former member of an Islamist terrorist group and now-leader of Quilliam International, a counter-extremism think tank. Hence, critics of the religion of Islam like Ayaan Hirsi Ali or Sam Harris are labeled Islamophobes. But, as Nawaz states: "It's not Islamophobic to scrutinise Islam just as it's not Christianophobic to scrutinise Christianity."

I'd argue that these criticisms are important in order to further the conversations we need to have on Islam. When terrorist groups behead non-Muslims and burn them alive, take sex slaves, amputate thieves, stone adulterers and other atrocious acts, they do not do so out of a vacuum; these acts can be found within Islamic sources.

The reality that is often not conveyed in current discourse on Islam is the rich scholarship that has developed over a millennium after the death of the Prophet Muhammad.

The Muslim world has always dealt with extremists.

While the right sees Islam as a terroristic cult and the left sees Islam

as a victim of the "white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy," the reality is that Islam, like all other religions, is fluid and changes depending on the culture surrounding it.

This is why you see so much diversity in opinion and culture throughout the historical and contemporary Muslim world - the former Muslim world stretched from Spain to India, and Islam has impacted the cultures in all of those areas.

The best weapon against the current ignorance that surrounds Islam is education. Unfortunately, many Americans get their information on Islam from all the wrong sources.

I advise all people of different backgrounds to read the Quran and research the religion of Islam. It is only when people do this that we can have productive conversations regarding issues such as immigration and worldwide terrorism.

When you have terrorist groups using religion as a justification against people who do not know any better, we continue to let them have power.

While you can militarily fight terrorism, ultimately it is the ideology of terrorism that we need to fight.



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