

# Coping with and crushing mid-year stress



by Max Minogue

High school is stressful. If you're a senior, you're currently drowning in college everything: the uncertainty, the applications, and dealing with every single person in the world feeling obliged to know the intimate details of where you want to go. If you're a junior, you've already realized the sharp difference in work levels between underclassmen and upperclassmen, not to mention constantly hearing that junior year is the most important year for colleges. If you're a sophomore, you're in a new campus and everything feels official; congratulations, you're in high school, but odds are you still don't feel settled in. Freshman year? If it's going anything like it did for me, it's just a total mess. But let's focus! Mental health, at least according to health class, is important. By now, I've mastered my routine for those nights where just thinking about what I have to do makes me want to cry. The first step for me is mental preparation. If you're a stronger soul than I, you can skip this step, but it's a personal necessity and prevents later breakdowns. After 8 hours of school and god-knows how many hours of extra-curriculars, I always needed it. Go ahead and have a therapeutic

snapchat response session to save those streaks. Watch a single episode of "Gossip Girl" or "The Office." You've already completed half a day, you've earned it! Next up, begin. Pull yourself together. Get off of the bed or the couch; crank out the easier stuff. You should always be keeping that Trevisan tracker filled with a list for the day, and the satisfaction of crossing out that Spanish worksheet is great. By now, an hour or so in, when presented with fight or flight, you've chosen fight. Spanish and math have been conquered. Take a productive break. For me, this means getting settled in for the next grind. Brew your favorite dose of caffeine (Harney & Son's tea is my personal favorite). Treat yourself to a bagel or a quesadilla or some microwaved leftovers. Get a Spotify playlist set up, or get an album ready to go. Personally, I prefer some Lana del Rey or Sufjan Stevens if lyrics won't get in the way, and Yann Tiersen if classical is needed for that extra focus. Get those scented candles burning. Fifteen minutes later, start anew. This is the time to study or take notes. Never, ever save studying for the last if there's other assignments to do. Every time I've ever attempted to study after cranking out every other assignment, I convince myself to bring the textbook into bed with me and fall asleep face down in the pages. Waking up with the details of the War of 1812 on your face is never a good start to the day. So you've gotten this far, and all there is left to do is English, that

dreaded paper that you've been putting off for weeks, but those past two weeks were so busy already, and there was just no time! So, start. For me, this is always the best time to write an assignment, once it's the time that looking at the clock is just painful. Knowing that sleep is so close should be motivation to focus and put away the procrastination snapchats. Most importantly, set a hard deadline for when to throw in the towel; for me, that's 2:00 am, but it'd probably be healthier to call it quits earlier. Either way, don't let an assignment take over your life. Sleep is good, prioritize it. You can figure it out the next day in a free period, advisory, or lunch. Reaching that hard deadline is proof that you've worked for half a dozen or more hours consecutively, and that anything else was out of your power. Never let the feeling of being overwhelmed dominate. That's why I take a to-do list so seriously; it breaks the toughest night down into chunks. Lastly, accept that high school sucks at times. The stress is real, and sure, changes could be made and a lot of work might be busy work, but people survive and graduate. To everyone's astonishment, every grade level even survived last year's construction schedule. If looking forward, you think that your schedule truly isn't survivable, maybe consider cutting yourself some slack and dropping a club or moving down a level. Now treat yourself to a huff of scented candle, gulp a shot of espresso, swaddle yourself in your baby blanket, and go.

## Letter to the Editor

Student Alliance and New Trier News have long since maintained a positive relationship as voices for the New Trier student body. It therefore came as a surprise to us when we found not one, but three negative features about Student Alliance in the paper from two weeks ago. The article, editorial, and student perspectives column all featured misinformation, quotes taken out of context, and false assumptions. On behalf of Student Alliance, I would like to express my disappointment and clear up any misconceptions about our club. Unfortunately, the front-page article written about Student Alliance painted an unrealistic image of our new sponsorship. Members of our club are excited about the new sponsors, just as we are sad to see the old ones go. Beyond this, I personally felt that my quotes were taken extremely out of context. I hold nothing but respect for all past and current sponsors of Student Alliance; however, this was ignored in the article. It is important to remember that Student Alliance sponsors are real teachers at our school, not anonymous subjects of an article. Referring to them as 'threats to autonomy' is disrespectful to them and to Student Alliance. On a similar note, we found elements of the staff editorial to be offensive and misinformed, especially in regard to our email policy. The editorial claims that our new system has taken away Student Alliance's voice and marks our alleged failure as a club. Both of these are completely untrue assumptions, so I would like to dispel any confusion: Members of Student Alliance can continue to email administrators from their own personal accounts and from a separate Student Alliance Gmail account. The only time that sponsors act as a third party is when students submit suggestions online. In that case, student messages are sent to our teacher email and then forwarded directly to our Gmail. These details were changed and exaggerated in last week's editorial, ultimately presenting a false explanation of our new policy. We ask that in the future, editors fact check claims about Student Alliance before publishing it to the rest of the school. Lastly, we were taken aback by the negative scope of the student perspectives column. Although we understand the duties of investigative journalism, we are confused by New Trier News's choice to cast Student Alliance in such an extremely negative light. The article gave the impression that Student Alliance lacks transparency and communication; one student stated that he doesn't know what we do on a daily basis. We would like to point out that no one knows what a club does every day if he or she is not part of that club. That student's assertion could apply to any group at New Trier, and it is frustrating that it (along with several other quotes) was pinpointed only at Student Alliance. We recognize that journalism often entails harsh criticism and strong opinions. As our school's primary news outlet, we respect your prerogative to report such information to the student body. However, the repeated negativity and extreme focus on Student Alliance in the September 30th issue seemed unprecedented to New Trier News, as was the delivery of false information. We ask only for mutual respect between our two clubs, which we feel was violated in that paper. Please remember that when you write about us, we read it. Our three sponsors and nineteen students are proud members of the New Trier community who do not deserve to be bashed and singled out in three different segments of the school newspaper. We work diligently every day to make New Trier as safe and productive of an environment as possible; please keep that in mind the next time you write about us. With that said, we do hope to move forward together as student-run organizations. Student Alliance regards New Trier News with only the utmost respect, and we truly hope that the sentiment is mutual. Our clubs are the two primary voices for students at our school, and it's important that we work together. We look forward to rebuilding a positive relationship in the future.

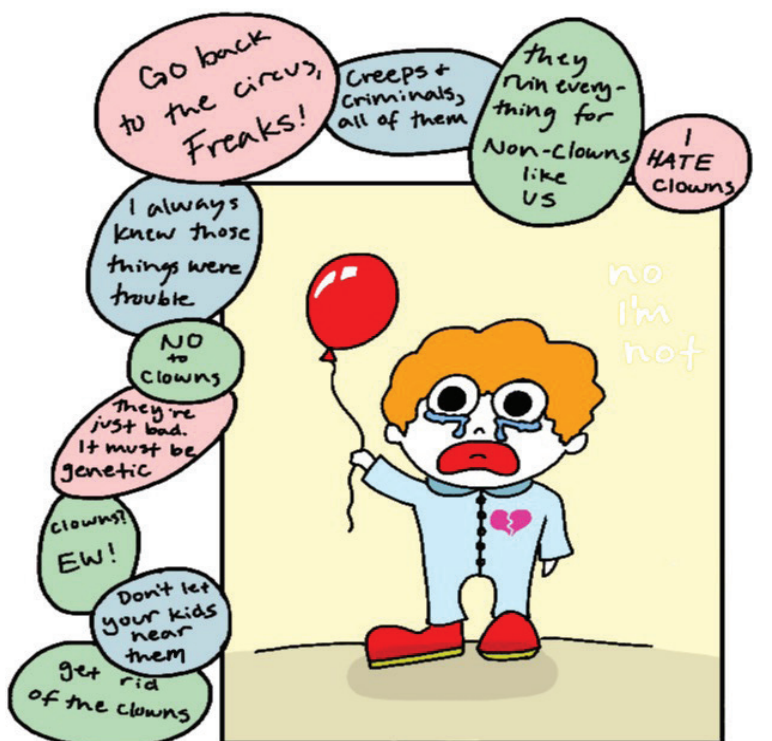
Sincerely,  
Jacob Imber  
Student Alliance Chair of Public Relations

# Staff Editorial

## The social media generation

Recently, the school has begun to crack down on VPN use to bypass the schools wifi restrictions. Students have noticed the crack down on VPN use and are frustrated with its interference in their daily life. However, the school's crack down on VPNs is not the problem. Specifically, stated in Section 14 of the Technology Acceptable Use Regulations, "Bypassing school security or internet access filtering software is a violation of the usage policy." By using VPNs you are breaking school policy and endangering yourself to data collection by strangers. Nevertheless, the problem isn't VPN use, but the filtering of students' internet access. Students cannot access some apps, specifically social media apps, like Snapchat and Facebook. The school claims to block some social media sites "in order to ensure student safety and to minimize the distractions available to students during class time," said Chief Technology Officer Stephanie Helfand. It is clear that there should be some filters in place for internet use. Students should not be able to access material outlined in the Children's Internet Protection Act such as obscene material, child pornography and material harmful to minors. Material like that can seriously jeopardize the integrity of an academic institution. But most social media, like Snapchat, Facebook and Instagram do not fall into this category. Administrators' concern with social media apps is that they will distract students from their academics. While this concern is justified, blocking only certain apps will not stop students from being distracted. With this argument of distractibility, couldn't all our non-academic activities be labeled distractions? If the school is so concerned with how social media interrupts academics, then why haven't they mandated the Winnetka campus to return to study halls because free periods are contributing to distraction? If these social media apps are a distraction from academics, it is the students' responsibility and the students themselves, who must be the ones to face the consequences of the distraction. If the student is on her phone in class, than she must encounter the reality of getting a bad grade or other potential repercussions. These consequences due to distraction could also teach students a better work ethic, which will help students learn to take responsibility and benefit them in the future. Social media can inform and connect us to friends, relatives, classmates far and near. Social media has also been the main source of communication for many service clubs students have been involved in, like Voices in Prevention and Safe Rides. This newspaper utilizes social media to link to articles and report on happenings around New Trier. Social media is not just a fad or a service that can be banned; we grew up with social media. Social media has become part of this generation's identity and has become an extension of our lives. To believe that social media can be removed from our lives is not practical. Despite the many positives of social media and the importance of it in this generation's daily life, the unfortunate reality is that cyber bullying can occur. However, most social media apps are not built for cyber bullying and almost any platform, social media or not, can be used for bullying. When an app is solely being used for malicious purposes, it is the students' and the student government's responsibility to make the administration aware and take actions to stop it. Most social media apps, specifically Snapchat, Facebook and Instagram, are not comparable. Students are granted many rights at New Trier, more than most other high school students. And yes, there have been incidents where students have tarnished their trust with administrators on social media, but the actions of individual students should not take away the online rights of the student body. If a few kids are fighting on the playground, we do not take away access to the whole playground.

## Consequences of Clowning Around



by Sam Blanc