

As graduating seniors, our staff has decided to examine our high school experience through society's lens. Our past experiences at New Trier are effected by our previous expectations of them. We've grown up with pop culture catering to high school, depicting the typical American teenager over time. From Danny Zuko and John Bender to Cher Horowitz and Regina George, we know and love their stories, but do they depict the reality of high school? How have clichés influenced what we see in the hallways and the cafeteria? Is high school every thing we were taught it would be?

# Freshman year fears extinguished

*How to deal with the first day of high school and the beginning of a new chapter of life*

by Danni Leserve

I have spent nearly 720 days, 432,000 hours, 25,920,000 minutes at New Trier.

I still remember the night before my first day of high school freshman year. I felt incredibly nervous, but I was also excited to go to high school and to finally be a "cool" high school student.

My mom told me the night before my first day that high school is a new chapter in my life and it is going to be a totally different experience than junior high.

She told me that I was going to change, and that by the end of my senior year I would be a totally different person than the person I was freshman year.

She also said that I would find my own way and have my own niche.

To be totally honest I thought my mom was full of crap.

I already had a plan for my entire high school career and it didn't involve

me changing who I was and finding a new niche. I was going to play basketball all four years, maybe do a spring sport, join Girls Club or maybe Pep Club, have a boyfriend, and be super popular.

Looking back now, I was totally wrong about what my high school experience was going to be like. I quit basketball after sophomore year after realizing how bad I was at it.

I never joined Girls Club or Pep Club because I forgot to turn in both of the applications freshman year and I never filled them out again in the next three years.

I never found a boyfriend, but I'm still playing the field. And I would like think that I'm pretty popular.

What I found out about high school from my four years is that there is so much to do and so many new opportunities that it's hard not to change and it's so awesome when you do truly find your niche.

During my freshman year, I met new people who



New Trier's Northfield campus, where over 1,000 new freshmen come from all around the North Shore area each year | NT News

didn't go to my junior high and they became some of my closet friends. I ended up joining the lacrosse team freshman year and fell in love with the sport. I got to be on the varsity team for three years and met some of the most amazing people that I have ever met.

I joined two clubs sophomore year and I quit them both the next year. I

joined the cross country team junior year and I ran again senior year. I began writing for the newspaper junior year and I became an editor my senior year. I also became a senior helper and a KW leader.

I hate to be cheesy, but high school is truly what you make it. Every activity that I tried or did during my high school career was not what I

thought I was going to do that night before the first day of freshman year.

But I think that I truly found out where I fit in and I think that I found my high school niche. I figured out that the more involved I got, the more I got out of high school.

Now that I'm graduating, I have a whole new chapter in my life. College is going to be

an even more challenging and interesting experience.

I'm nervous to go but I'm also excited to become a cool college kid. I'll always remember what my mom told me: that I'm always going to be changing. And by the time I'm a senior in college, I'm going to be totally different.

# Cheerleaders and jocks no longer rule the school

*A look at the evolution of high school hierarchy; it's not like the movies anymore*



NT cheerleaders, photographed in New Trier; Portrait of an American High School | NT Archives

by Ben Portnoy

At New Trier, people are often quick to point out the stereotypical high school

hierarchy that exists.

In examining how social hierarchies can be portrayed in movies like "The Breakfast Club" or "Mean Girls," two

movies allegedly based on New Trier, one can also see that the high school social pyramid has always existed.

The real question that

arises is whether this social construct has changed, particularly since the time our parents were in high school.

In talking to my parents and reviewing what other parents of *The New Trier News* writers have said, I learned that although times have changed, parents felt that fundamentally the social construct of high school has remained the same.

At New Trier what separates the "popular" kids from the less popular kids seems virtually the same. For boys athleticism reigns supreme, while for girls it tends to be looks.

However, at New Trier it doesn't seem that the "popular" and "unpopular" kids are defined as easily. As Danny Schuman, father of Joey Schuman, said, "The Breakfast Club" was true. There were the jocks, the nerds, the smokers. It seems

like there's more blurred lines for those crowds now."

In examining our school from my experiences at New Trier, I feel that the clichés of high school are ever-present in our community. While the lines are absolutely more "blurred," as Schuman noted, fundamentally the cliques remain the same.

As a society we often mythologize the idea of the quarterback going to prom with the head cheerleader.

Hollywood too has helped to further high school stereotypes with movies like "Sixteen Candles," "The Breakfast Club," and "Mean Girls."

And while some of these movies are dated, they do serve as good representations of generational issues and high school stereotypes.

As each generation reaches adolescence and

experiences all of what high school has to offer, generational changes occur. Our parents had "The Breakfast Club," depicting the stereotypical high school hierarchy; we have "Mean Girls," displaying the issues of self-image and popularity, the next generation of students will have their own movies with its own set of new issues.

However, what remains constant is the similarities between the social constructs of each fictitious school.

What people consider the social construct of high school remains more or less the same as when our parents went to school.

But what have changed are the issues within the school. There will always be the popular and the unpopular cliques; it's simply a part of high school.

How have students' attitudes changed over the years?

*Students are too stressed out over their ACT and GPA and how they think it is such a big deal in their life in regards to getting into college.*

- Patricia Bowler-Johnson, math teacher

What were some of your expectations about New Trier going into your freshman year?

*I thought it was going to be hard but at the same time I knew it was gonna be really fun. I knew I was going to meet a lot of new people that I'd become friends with for life.*

- Matthew Horvitz, Senior

What did you expect from high school? What were you surprised by?

*All the extracurricular opportunities are beyond amazing. Everybody can get involved, there's something for everyone.*

- Wendy Schuman, Maine East Class of 1983