

Local libraries offer incentives for studying

by Anna Ferguson

Over the past couple of years, the week before finals has changed from being a reclusive week during which the majority of students hole up in their homes, to the one time a year students flock to their local libraries in search of free pizza and, for lack of a better term, study-buddies.

Libraries on the North Shore have had these Teen Pizza Nights in place for about ten years now and the attendance has been steady from the start, garnering between fifty and sixty students a night. However, recently, these numbers have skyrocketed to between seventy and eighty students a night.

The Teen Pizza Nights at the Wilmette Public Library are organized and conducted by Jill McKeown, the new Teen Librarian. Every January and June, McKeown opens the doors of the library to be taken over by stressed-out teenagers.

Studying at the library has gained a lot of popularity among students over the past couple of years.

“The library is a great place to study. You can meet up with your friends and study, use the library



Wilmette Public Library offers Teen Pizza Nights in their Teen Room | WPL computers, and get some free pizza,” said junior, Peter Hayes.

On a purely clerical level, libraries always want to increase the number of teens utilizing their facilities.

The logic behind the Teen Pizza Nights is simple: “We want teens to come in here and study and we want people to come and enjoy the library, and pizza’s a good incentive,” said McKeown.

The increased foot traffic does,

however, have some drawbacks. Rules that are ordinarily strictly enforced, for example, eating in the library or keeping your shoes on, are abandoned entirely during the Teen Pizza Nights, in order to create a stress-free environment.

“It’s important for me to let little rules be broken, like eating in the library and taking off shoes,” said McKeown.

“We always order food to the library,” said junior, William Kirby,

The seven types of kids to avoid come test days

by Carly Travis

As students, we have taken ample tests. Standardized, written, fill in the blank, matching, you name it, we’ve probably struggled through it.

Saturday, Feb. 7 New Trier Juniors gathered their number 2 pencils and TI-83 calculators for the ACT and presumably sat outside their assigned rooms awaiting instructions to “open their test booklets and turn to page one.”

Funnily enough, sometimes the test proctor is the worst of it all. Senior Max Kleinberg joked, “The teacher took about a half hour to figure out what the papers said to do. She couldn’t explain any of it for the life of her.”

Not just juniors, but eighth graders took the standardized placement test on Saturday, Nov. 26. The 13 and 14 year old students were in a frenzy as they filled in bubbles determining what level classes they will enroll into come fall of 2015.

These tests generally bring out a sleep deprived, jittery version of ourselves too. We slowly develop over caffeinated eye twitches and find ourselves sulking through the halls flashcards in one hand, Starbucks to-go cup in the other.

But what is happening during the test itself? Now that you’ve studied, you know your stuff.

Ideally, the classroom environment should be up to par. Except here is the reality: your fellow classmate, let’s call her Sophie, forgot to take her Zyrtec and Claritin combo and, well, she has the sniffles.

I present to you 7 different types of test takers. Everyone from “the one who finishes first” to “desk kicker kid”.

Sniffles Sophie

Sophie’s got a cold and

everyone NOSE it. Anyway, Sophie will knowingly walk to the front of the classroom every few minutes and put on a show before the entire class.

In fact, she’s timed it perfectly so that her act is orchestrated to the beat of the page flips and bubble fill-ins. But wait! Now Sniffles Sophie has rearranged the room to fit her nose blowing needs. Instead of ascending from her seat, this girl has the waste bin adjacent to her desk, the box of extra soft Kleenex over her plethora of papers, and the Purell in the middle of it all (because god forbid any of her germs get onto her hands).

The Loud Breather

Cousin to Sniffles Sophie, The Loud Breather is absolutely clueless of what he or she is doing. I’m not saying they should stop breathing altogether, but maybe just for a minute.

The One That Finishes First

Finishing first during a test is probably the worst feeling ever. Enter “the walk of shame”: You slowly make your way up to your teacher only to realize you probably got the first question wrong. You finally relax back into your seat now remembering that you forgot to put your name on the test as well.

On the other hand, the one who finishes first may also be the one with the most confidence and automatically assumes the role of the catalyst. He’s created the domino effect that will result in everyone following his lead with fifteen minutes left to spare [insert sigh of relief].

The Cheaters

In their case, each test is more of an “accidental partner test,” and that is perfectly fine.

Desk Kicker Kid

Beware: the Desk Kicker Kid

is out there. If said person is sitting behind you, ensure that you are not wearing braids because DKK will probably pull them. And don’t even think twice about slowly inching your desk closer and closer to the front of the room. DKK will most likely follow, establishing their feet at the hind of your chair, yet again. Feel free to shoot dirty looks to DKK throughout the quiz.

Anxiety Annie and Manic Mike

These two study together every day after school and never start their homework past 4:00 p.m. They’ve reviewed so much that they make all their classmates look bad. Really bad. Instead of indulging their Sunday evenings watching Keeping up with The Kardashians and watching Sunday Night Football, Annie and Mike are playing quizlet and re-reading sparknotes, all while speed walking on the treadmill. To their demise, they’ll probably just receive an A- on the test.

The Question Asker

She stands up every five minutes to ask a question about a question. Teacher responds by proposing another question. Student walks away crying and doesn’t know why.

There are probably many more test takers that languish in these florescent lit hallways.

There’s the kid that always forgets a pencil and the one whose phone goes off too.

I’m curious: what are some annoyances you’ve experienced during a test? Have you ever been one of the 7 prospects above? Check out newtriernews.org and tell us in a poll which test taker bothers you the most!

“We try to keep our area clean, but we always feel a little bad about breaking the rules.”.

Surprisingly, this is a commonly held opinion among librarians, according to McKeown, “Most of the patrons and most of the staff here think its really fun when teens come in and take over the library. They’re all laying in the stacks, shoes are off, recycling bins are turned over into desks”.

However, at a certain point, the breaking of minor rules stops being cute and starts being a nuisance, according to McKeown.

“I’m very pro-environment, and the teens never really recycle as much as I would like them to, and sometimes after the kids have been eating in the stacks of books, we will find food stuck in between the books.”.

Of course, it seems natural

Finals amplify student stress

by Nora Crumley

New Trier Students had their first semester finals starting Jan. 21, and because the test determined up to 20% of a student’s grade, anxiety and stress were abundant.

This calls into question whether finals are beneficial to students.

For students final exams result in many late night, caffeinated drinks, and stress. Tiffany Myers, Social Work Department chair, said, “Everyone gets more stressed around finals, and some anxiety is good. The difference between good and bad stress is when the stress starts interfering with daily life.”

Myers described two types of stress: eustress and distress. Eustress is a healthy level of stress that motivates people to do better, and to improve.

Distress is an unhealthy level of stress, that starts interfering with daily routines. “Students who are in the distress stage can’t eat, can’t sleep, and can’t function because their stress has taken over their bodies,” said Myers.

Though many students feel that they have crossed into an unhealthy amount of stress, especially during finals, Myers said, “all students get stress, but students who are in the distress stage usually have other issues.”

Finals may not cause all students to enter into an unhealthy level of stress, but for that one week, many feel unable to be cope with the pressure. Junior Lily Lyman said, “finals stressed me out very much. I was close to tears. I thought that I was going to fail.”

This fine line between eustress, and distress is often crossed by high school students, especially at New Trier. Many students complained of the pressure and stress added by going to a prestigious high school. Callie Kennedy, a sophomore, said “[New Trier] has unrealistic expectations for their students,” while senior, Amelia Barron said “there is definitely more pressure at New Trier because students are constantly comparing themselves to others.”

New Trier is one of the top-ranked schools in the state, coming in at 5th according to the Chicago Tribune’s list of the best high schools in Cook County. This esteemed reputation comes added pressure to

that there would be some push-back coming from library staff and regular patrons, something McKeown acknowledges.

“There are some patrons, and staff alike, who find the number of teens coming in overwhelming and they may not be as friendly”

It has become a general consensus among the library staff and New Trier Students that the library is a great place to study. The popularity of going to the library to study has been growing by word of mouth and the number of students going to the library to study has only increased as more people hear about all the tools libraries have to offer.

“The library is a great place for study groups and getting a lot done without distractions, I go as much as possible during finals week,” said junior, Carly Cao.

its students.

Liza Boscow, a sophomore, said,”as a student being expected to go to school, play a sport, and keep up good grades, it is a lot to ask for. Balancing your schedule is very stressful.”

Even staff members have seen the toll that students face. “New Trier is very competitive, students feel the need to do well. This need to succeed makes students forget about their own needs,” said Myers.

To the disappointment of many students, finals may always be part of the New Trier culture, and although they have a bad stigma of causing stress, they do help students prepare for college, where finals could be worth up to 50% of a students grade. Mercedes Lopez, a MCL teacher, “Final exams show what students learn in class, its a way for students to put in to practice what they have learned.”

“Finals test your knowledge and they prepare you for college where most of you grade is based off the final,” said senior Michael Burke,”Even though they make you stressed, it’s beneficial in the long run.”

Nevertheless, most of the time students look past the benefits of finals and look towards the negatives. Lily Lyman recommended to make finals less stressful, “I think New Trier should make the finals less high stakes. The percent that a final can be worth should be lowered by the school to make finals less stressful.”

“I’m sure there are a lot of things you can do to help make finals less stressful,” said Boscow. “But if you don’t ask you will never get the help you need.”

According to many New Trier teachers, finals are not as high stakes as they seem. “Well built finals that are fair, don’t cause final semester grades to change as much as students think,” said Lopez.

Math teacher Bob Berlin said, “In most cases finals don’t change kids’ grades, but students feel like it has drastically changed their grades until they see their final grades and realize nothing has changed.”

“Finals are just a piece of paper that shows what you as a student has learned,” said Lopezo.