

Staff Editorial

The true meaning of Christmas (music)

A debate has emerged about the political correctness of listening to Christmas music in public places. The whole separation of church and state in the Constitution is being called into question because of “Jingle Bells.”

But religion is intertwined within the music we listen to everyday --even non-holiday music-- whether we like it or not. Try turning on the radio to any station. You’ll find Luke Bryan bellowing out praises to Jesus on one station and Kendrick Lamar rapping “This what God feel like” on another. Modern music can be just as religious as Christmas music, if not more at times.

Music is ultimately a form of self expression, meaning that religious sentiments are likely to be expressed in music.

Even then, the point of most popular radio-worthy Christmas music is not to be inherently devout. While “O Come All Ye Faithful” is an actual hymn, you don’t often hear it while shopping around Macy’s. You hear Mariah Carey, you hear Michael Bublé, but never the German church choir.

“Santa Baby” isn’t talking about the true religious meaning of Christmas, but it’s a song to have fun with, dance to, and make some money for the original artist (and Ariana Grande with her recent cover).

Christmas music has become so commercialized that it overpowers the religious messages that the holiday may include. For example, “Santa Baby” is a song about wanting more presents, not about the birth of Jesus. The song includes the verses, “a ‘54 convertible too, light blue...I want a yacht and really that’s not a lot,” and not one mention of religion in the whole song.

Additionally, thinking of festive Hanukkah or Kwanzaa songs is much more difficult than coming up with a list of Christmas songs. There’s “Dreidel-Dreidel-Dreidel,” but that’s about it. Adam Sandler even parodied the lack of Hanukkah songs with his iconic SNL skit, “The Hanukkah Song” (look it up, it’s worth it being stuck in your head for days).

Christmas songs are mainly about presents, spending time with family, chestnuts roasting over an open fire, and a fat man in a red suit.

While we can’t speak for Michael Bublé, it’s unlikely that he sang “Holly Jolly Christmas” with the intention of converting people to Christianity. Many of the songs heard around this time of year have more to do with hopes of a snowy winter and baking cookies than with nativity stories.

So the next time “All I Want For Christmas is You” gets chosen on the advisory playlist, realize that these songs are not about the importance of religion, but instead about ideals that everyone can get behind: giving and getting material things. Oh, and family too.

Guys need to say the F-word



by Danielle Kurensky

Beware, I’m going to use the F-word a lot in this piece. I’m just saying you’ve been warned. So here it goes, I am a feminist.

That probably wasn’t the F-word you were expecting and while it might be disappointing to some, today I am going to talk about feminism.

Ever since I was old enough to form my own ideas I have considered myself a feminist. It only seemed natural to me. I knew that my sisters and I were as worthy as any of our male counterparts and that we should not be viewed as less worthy solely because of our gender.

Everyone in my family, my dad included, are proud feminists. I emphasize my dad because throughout high school, I have realized how rare it is to find guys who openly identify as feminists.

I want to clarify one crucial notion before I continue though, I am not bashing guys.

This is not a hate piece where I claim that all men are trash or that all men are to blame for sexism. Those are not my beliefs. There are good men out there who routinely help combat societal gender roles, and I believe there could be so many

more if they were included in the discussion.

Society has many systems that routinely work to oppress women and while we don’t discuss them often, there are systems that oppress men as well.

Too frequently, we cast feminism aside and simply view it as a woman’s issue. But feminism advocates for gender equality, meaning that it is beneficial to all people. While feminism fights for equal pay and for women to be able to wear whatever they would like, it also fights for men to be able to express their emotions without shame or judgment.

But since feminism is viewed as a woman’s issue, many people don’t see the need to include men. While that might seem odd, it happens every single day.

I am a member of Girl Up, a club which fights to bring things like health care and education to girls in developing countries. Since Girl Up was founded at New Trier, we have struggled with getting guys to come to club.

I have also been a member of UNICEF club, which usually has equal male and female members. UNICEF and Girl Up have many similarities. They both work to provide healthcare, education, and safety to people in developing countries. The major difference is UNICEF focuses on children, while Girl Up focuses on girls.

So I know there are boys who are interested and want to support

Girl Up’s message. Yet it is still difficult to find guys to come to Girl Up or openly support feminist issues, and I believe a large part of this is because they are not included in the discussion.

Take the recent Bright Pink assembly which was only for girl advisories. While male breast cancer is rare, it is possible, and even if they don’t experience breast cancer, it is likely that someone close to them will. The assembly wasn’t just beneficial to girls, but since it was discussing breast cancer guys weren’t even invited.

Additionally, there was initial hesitation from the administration to let Girl Up go to male advisories for our Period Product Drive. While we were eventually able to go into all advisories, this reflects how our culture often doesn’t think it is necessary to have men involved in these discussions.

It’s no wonder guys are deterred from feminism when they only see girls in the conversation.

I know many people have been advocating for the need to include boys in these conversations, but we can’t do it alone. It is much more convincing if they advocate for these topics rather than girls claiming there are guys who are interested.

So men, say the F-word and say it loudly, and if you are interested in advocating for these rights come to room W306 after school on Tuesdays.

Life lessons from Flat Stan Lee



by Ezra Wallach

A couple weeks ago, Marvel comic book writer Stan Lee died. I didn’t know someone named Stan Lee existed, so when someone told me he died I was like Stanley??? Stanley died? Stanley who? Stanley from the office? Flat Stanley?

Then, my ADHD took over and I proceeded to think about Flat Stanley and I thought it would be funny to create a “Frat Stanley.” So, I went into Snapchat and edited the cover of the “Flat Stanley” book to make him look like he was in a frat. Overall, it was probably a 8.5/10 meme but that is beside the point.

The point is that I didn’t know who Stan Lee was, and more importantly, I wasn’t sure why my feeds were full of people treating him like a god. I mean, all he did was come up with stories and draw stuff...or so I thought.

I went to go see the new Spiderman movie this weekend, and it was dope. The animation was unreal and it was really funny but then at the end, the audience was reminded that “Spiderman could be anyone.” Peter Parker just happened to get bit by that spider, but it really

could’ve been anyone.

For the past couple of weeks, many seniors have been hearing back from colleges, hoping to get the opportunity to continue their education at their dream schools.

My connection between college and Spiderman comes in the quote: “with great power comes great responsibility.” Every Spiderman ever, whether it be Tobey Maguire, Tom Holland, or my doppelganger Andrew Garfield, has always had to come to terms with the fact that they had the responsibility to fight crime even when they didn’t want to.

But, this quote goes further. We all hold power in our lives and the lives of others, even if we don’t realize it. While none of us have the power to shoot webs out of our wrists, we all have the power to do incredibly influential things; you don’t get to choose how smart you are or the wealth your family has, but you do get to decide what you do with it.

First off, we have the power to do the things that make us happy. We are all responsible for our own happinesses. We have the power to spend time with the people who we like to be around. This all humans have in common—we try to take what we have, and make the most out of it for ourselves.

The second, more special power, is that we all can change the world around us. Last week, when so many people I knew got in to

amazing schools, I realized how blessed we all are for the education we have received so far and will be receiving in the future.

But, like Spiderman was told by his Uncle Ben, this blessing comes with responsibility, too.

We each have been presented with the power to change our own lives and the lives of others, and I think it’s important to keep that in mind as we get decisions back from colleges—the prestige of every college won’t matter if we don’t do anything important with what we get out of our experiences there.

We are the generation that all old people call “the worst ever,” but we are also the generation that has the opportunity to fix all the screwed up things that generations before us have done. We are the ones who will be around during the “catastrophic” climate change, we are the ones who will be alive when the world’s water supply runs out, and we are the ones who will be alive when the amount of plastic in the oceans starts to outnumber the fish.

Higher education gives us knowledge, and knowledge in and of itself is a form of privilege. This privilege can be power too.

Some kid named Stanley taught us that when you somehow survive getting flattened by a bulletin board, you can use your elusiveness to catch thieves. Stan Lee taught us that we can use our powers too, even if they don’t seem that super.



Letter to the editor

I read the article regarding underclassmen excluded from AP courses and think it should be known the interesting situation relating to the 4 level geography course. The majority of students who take 4 level geography are sophomores and do take the AP Human Geography exam in May. While it is not officially an AP course, and taking the exam is entirely optional, we do encourage students to consider the option and provide review sessions and such to those interested. We explain to the students that in taking the exam it will give them an idea of

the AP experience going into their junior and senior years and that the majority of the students who have taken the exam over the years do quite well, most earning scores of 4 and 5. Just thought I would share a bit about this unique course option at NT.

by Ian Duell
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