NOVA Times

Op-Ed: Community Is Not Something That Should Be Enforced Through Spirit Days, but Rather It Should Stem From the Students

By Leona Krstevska-Simeonova

The sense of 'community' that the school is trying to mimic is, quite logically, not something that should be enforced through Spirit Days or Cocktail Parties for the Staff, but rather it is something that should stem from the students. The 'community' should be created by the students, who assume the lead roles in that play, with the administration and school leadership as the backup roles, and the parents as the audience.

And, it is not enough to state that the sense of community should stem from the students themselves, but it should also be divided based on age group.

Courtesy of Stefan Nikolaj

Emily in Paris: A Perfect Way to Waste Your Weekend!

By Jovana Vasilisa Jovanovikj

Have you ever wondered about the decision-making process at Netflix? Who chooses which script would actually be produced because I really need to talk to that person … especially after binge watching the two seasons of *Emily in Paris* and wasting my first free weekend after a barrage of tests, essays, projects, summatives and home assignments by the teachers here.

Trust me! I really tried to avoid watching *Emily*, knowing full well that it would heavily disappoint...

Disney Is Creating Childhood Dream Houses and the Fans Are Not Happy

By Andrea Karchicka

We have all had that thought during visits to theme parks. We have all imagined what it would be like to live in the happiest places on Earth. What if I told you that the Walt Disney Company has already been making Disney neighborhoods where fans could live?

According to Disney, these neighborhoods are 'energetic communities with the warmth and charm of...

Social Standards of Beauty: The Halo and Devil Effect

By Bisera Gogovska

First and foremost, what is beauty? One definition states, 'a combination of qualities, such as shape, color, or form, that pleases the aesthetic senses, especially the sight.' We, humans, have been taught to like things that are more pleasing to our eye. We find babies cute and we get a chemical reaction in our brains which makes us feel good, same goes for physically attractive people no matter their real characteristics.

Beauty standards switch out every decade or so. You could say they are closer to trends rather than standards. In the 2000s the extremely skinny, toned stomach body was ideal. Today having big hips, thighs, and a big chest are trendy, all whilst having a tiny waist and flat stomach.

If the internet didn't exist and we weren't exposed to this appearance, I don't think people would be obsessed with having it. However this isn't something new, people have been preoccupying themselves with their looks since the beginning of time, but why?

Beauty isn't just a trend we are experiencing today, it is engraved into the human instinct biologically. We are attracted to people who are more appealing to us because they look less harmful. It makes us feel safe...

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News from NOVA

Speech for Peace

By Vedrana Serafimovska-Miloshevska

It has been a long-standing newspaper tradition that papers publish transcripts of important speeches. A grade 9 student from NOVA, Vedrana Serafimovska-Miloshevska organized a march for peace on April 9, 2022. We are publishing the speech she gave in front of the Government of the Republic in full:

Courtesy photo

Firstly, I want to start off by giving a huge thank you to everyone who identified the true intention behind the idea of this march and managed to provide their support together with us in order to help spread the message regarding peace.

I also want to show my appreciation to Luka Pavikjevikj (president of the Union of High-School Students) who unselfishly helped with a big part of the organization for this event.

When we talk about peace, we need to have one thing in mind - As people created war, in that sense war also created people. But, is this the way it should be? Are the only choices we have plain old black and white? Should we allow rage and hate to rule over the world?

Our fellow citizen and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, Mother Teresa, whom all of us hold in high regard, once said, 'If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.' And precisely because we belong to each other, we need to raise our voices against wars.

Do not ask us young people to pick a side, our choice is and always will be peace. Each and everyone of us has gathered here today in order to shed light on what is being kept in the dark. From a young age we have been taught that violence is not the answer, but it seems as if this saying is inaccurate as it is evident that the only way unresolved issues are being solved is through violence.

The concept of violence itself has become so frequent in our everyday life that we are now desensitized to it. Precisely this allows the many global leaders to think that they can be in possession of great power and control over the citizens. They view the world as a game of chess and everyone else is considered as the figures used to play with. Innocent lives are constantly being lost due to the ignorance shown towards the people. Think about us for a change. Acknowledge our existence and hear our cries for help.

How about instead of playing with our lives, you come to the realization that our futures are in your hands. Think about us for a change!

In this way, we are attempting to influence the leaders of this world to take a second look at the consequences that are to follow from their actions. Additionally, our aim is to encourage other young individuals around the world to speak up and take action as well. We need your help, we need your voice!

My experience today has shown me that for change to happen we, the young people, the present and the future of the world, must take action and make our voices heard. We do not deserve to live in fear, we want to create, we want to be educated, we want to evolve. We are not only a generation who lives in a world of phones, virtual contacts and social media platforms. We are a generation full of potential. We are a generation of the modern world, a world without violence. Yes, we demand that leaders stop creating wars around the world. Yes, we request the end of all violence. And yes, we expect to live in peace.

The leaders will have to listen if and only if we work together equally hard to make the world a better place. Not tomorrow, not in a few days, not in the future. Now. Think about us. Now!

News from NOVA

Internet Debate Divides: Doors or Wheels?

By Galena Kuzmanovska and Vanja Estatieva

We all know the huge impact that one post on a social media platform can have. The most recent internet-breaking post is a tweet that was created by Ryan Nixon and posted on March 5, 2022. It suggests a debate between Ryan and his friends over the question whether there are more doors or wheels in the world.

Ryan Nixon
@NewYorkNixon

My mates and I are having the STUPIDEST debate...

And I am here for it.

Do you think there are more doors or wheels in the world?

| Doors | 46.4% |
| Wheels | 53.6% |

223,347 votes · Final results

7:49 AM · Mar 5, 2022 · Twitter Web App

4,004 Retweets **2,900** Quote Tweets **11.4K** Likes

Courtesy photo

More than 100 thousand people voted for wheels. Other than the tweet itself, this debate has spread to other social media platforms such as TikTok, which is flooded with videos of people explaining their views and providing reasoning for them.

People are examining the criteria required for an object to be considered either a door or a wheel. Even the legitimacy of the definition door is being questioned, and people are wondering if toilet seats are a type of door, as it is a hinged barrier at the entrance to another room - the sewers. While this may be funny or complete nonsense, the toilet seat as a door theory is not the most questionable proposition out there.

door
/dɔː/

noun

a hinged, sliding, or revolving barrier at the entrance to a building, room, or vehicle, or in the framework of a cupboard.
"she looked for her key and opened the door"

Courtesy photo

The Oxford English Dictionary defines wheel as 'circular object that revolves on an axle and is fixed below a vehicle or other object to enable it to move easily over the ground'. Taking into account all mechanical wheels inside different objects, as well as other items such as chairs which roll on wheels, it is incredibly difficult to estimate which product is more numerous.

Jameson Thatcher, @SirEelBiscuits on Twitter, commented the following, 'Every drawer with a runner (like a kitchen drawer) has four wheels. A car has four wheels on the floor, but it also has any number of cogs and wheels involved in its engine (not to forget the steering wheel and spare). My living room has at least 62 wheels in it, just 5 doors.'

On the other hand, there are people like Justin Hubert, @justinhubert on Twitter, who state the opposite, 'Doors. Four door cars and trucks nullify themselves. All ships have doors, no wheels. All buildings have doors, no wheels. Doors.'

We asked 50 students at random, in order to see the difference between people voting doors and wheels. 24 students chose wheels, while 26 opted for doors. A lot of students also asked what would qualify as a door, and what would qualify as a wheel, naming examples such as lockers, and others thinking about the amount of Hot Wheels produced yearly.
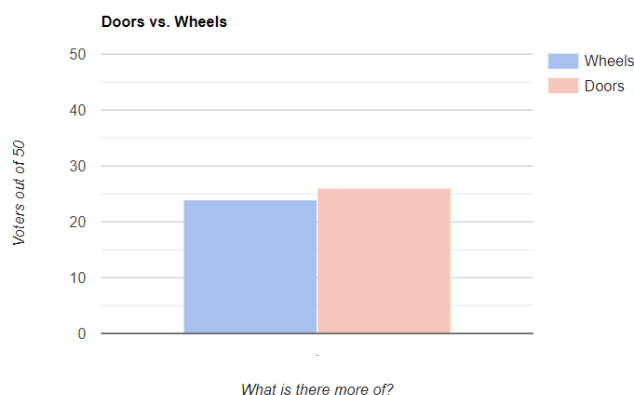
Courtesy photo

One person took it to Twitter and had some calculations about this debate. He stated that from the US door market's 14 billion dollar revenue, if one door costs 20 dollars, around 700 million doors will be made and sold in 2020, just in the US. Hot wheels however, produce roughly 500 million cars a year, each with 4 wheels and many more mechanical wheels inside of them. In this way, the US produces much more wheels than doors, and it can be estimated that the same happens in other countries, with different toy car brands.

Nathan Rudolph
@Nathan__Rudolph

The us door market produced 14 billion dollars in 2020.

$20 a door which is insanely cheap that 700 million doors.

hot wheels produces 500 million cars a year.

That roughly 2 billion wheels,

more than enough to cover any of their doored products.

a toy company alone covers.

3:01 AM · Mar 8, 2022

Courtesy photo

So now, we invite you. What would YOU choose? Wheels or doors?

International News

Welcome to the Brave New World of Cultivated Meat!

By Jovana Vasilisa Jovanovikj

The developments in agriculture and animal husbandry have always driven the progress of humanity. The First Agricultural Revolution brought the invention of agriculture and domestication of animals, which secured the food supply and settled the previous hunters and gatherers into the first villages. The Second Agricultural Revolution brought crop rotation, selective breeding and led to urbanization and industrialization, or the birth of the modern industrial world.

The Third Agricultural Revolution happened in the mid-20th century when the new seeds, fertilizers, farming and animal husbandry methods, pesticides, antibiotics, mechanization, and new management methods brought secured supply of food for all humanity and virtually eradicated hunger and malnutrition around the globe, triggering the exponential rise of the global population. However, the newest revolution in food science, the Cellular Agricultural Revolution, may alter the way humans see agriculture and animal husbandry, destroying the traditional food industry and reinventing food, as we know it.

The Cellular Agriculture Revolution started on 5 August 2013 in London. On that specific day, during a news conference, Dutch scientist Mark Post, a professor of tissue engineering from Maastricht University, has presented to the world the first-ever lab-grown hamburger. The cow that provided the cells for the hamburger was miraculously still alive, even though a hamburger made of her meat was served during the news conference.

The technology for producing lab-grown meat involves extracting the stem cells from the cow muscle tissue. Stem cells are crucial building blocks of life because they are like blueprints to produce various specialized

Image by World Economic Forum via Wikimedia Commons

tissues, such as muscle, skin, nerves, etc. Once extracted, the stem cells are cultured in the laboratory in bioreactors where they are submerged in a 'broth' filled with nutrients and other necessary chemicals, enabling them to grow and multiply. And, voila! Here comes your hamburger!

There were three major issues with the first hamburger. The price was too high; it was composed of pure muscle tissues, while its color was white. Nonetheless, the food critics who tasted the hamburger were impressed because it tasted like meat, although some additional work was still needed to achieve the typical taste of a beef hamburger.

Lab-grown meat is seen as a solution for the environmental and animal rights issues associated with the production of animal proteins. Furthermore, according to the studies lab-grown beef uses 45% less energy than the average global representative figure

for farming cattle. It also produces 96% fewer greenhouse gas emissions and requires 99% less land, substantially reducing the global carbon footprint. Another huge advantage of the cultivated animal protein products is the fact that their production doesn't require antibiotics and that there is no danger of bacterial or viral infections of the lab-grown meat which makes them the cleanest and the safest meat products.

A combination of private companies, start-ups, research institutes and business moguls are driving the progress of the cultivated-meat industry. Nevertheless, cultivated animal protein (meat, fish, milk, eggs) faces an uphill struggle. They remain being heavily priced, rendering them unaffordable to most people. There is also the cultural issue.

For centuries and millennia, humans obtained their proteins by slaughtering domesticated animals, or by using their milk and eggs. People are usually slow to adapt to new scientific discoveries and technological advances, especially when it comes to food, nutrition, and health. Therefore, the public won't be as enthusiastic about the introduction of cultivated animal protein products on the market as the technology fans.

As usual, science and technology advances offer huge potential for prosperity, but also destruction. Cultivated animal protein products will come to our tables very shortly. However, its success will depend on strict regulation, culture, and people's taste, and largely on its cost. History has shown that once the product is safe and affordable to the vast majority, it is quickly adopted. So, welcome to the brave new world of cultivated meat!

Image by Kampus Production via Pexels

International News

Disney Is Creating Childhood Dream Houses and the Fans Are Not Happy

By Andrea Karchicka

Image by CNN

We have all had that thought during visits to theme parks. We have all imagined what it would be like to live in the happiest places on Earth. What if I told you that the Walt Disney Company has already been making Disney neighborhoods where fans could live?

According to Disney, these neighborhoods are 'energetic communities with the warmth and charm of a small town and the beauty of a resort'. The first Disney neighborhood Celebration was constructed in the 1990s, located in Florida. It is a small place of 27.4 square kilometers with a population of approximately 10 thousand residents.

A new community called Cotino is coming to life, located not far from where the co-founder of Walt Disney has lived. The place will be located in Rancho Mirage, just outside of Palm Springs, California.

The architecture of the community will be inspired by the local landscapes, history and the culture of the area. In the middle of the community, there will be a grand oasis with crystal lagoons technology, allowing up to 100 times less chemicals than those used in conventional swimming pools. The residents will have many activities to do, such as shopping, dining, entertainment and leisure activities. Hotel accommodation will be provided to guests.

However, Disney has been getting negative comments from the fans. The fandom has been claiming that these communities are targeted for wealthy people. A fan on their Youtube video said, '[I] can't help but feel they've really lost their way lately. It seems to be all about catering to the wealthy and to their shareholders, and forgetting the fans and cast members who made/make them a success. Whoever is in charge of their promotional videos is really missing the mark lately.'

Has Disney really lost touch with their new projects?

Telegram: Truth Is the First Casualty of War

By Teodora Risteska-Daskalovski

Hiram W. Johnson once said, 'The first casualty when war comes is truth'. We have seen that, over the course of these past few months, war has been the headline of all major news outlets. Yet the question still remains, has all of it been the truth?

The app Telegram is primarily used as a messaging app that boasts about 500 million users who share information individually or in groups. Telegram is not just that, it also hosts one-way broadcast channels in which followers can easily receive content from different accounts such as cryptocurrency groups or news outlets.

As the war on the battleground between Russia and Ukraine continues, it does so in the news, too. Telegram has been in the front row of the news battle for relevant and concrete information. As many of the Russian news outlets and news channels are banned in many countries, these news broadcasters take to this messaging app.

The app has been popular for years in Eastern Europe and Russia. Last year, it reached a landmark of 1 billion downloads. Since its launch,

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Telegram has marketed itself as a bastion of free speech, a message that has resonated with users who live in countries with heavy online censorship and state surveillance.

Ukrainian citizens during the pandemic turned to Telegram for daily updates which have now turned into updates regarding the attack. Millions of videos, information, and data are being shared in different channels which help Ukrainian citizens and people all around the world gain relevant information. The messages help keep people safe, debunk potential Russian and American propaganda, and counter emerging threats. Everything is happening in real-time, with accounts sending out hundreds of messages per day.

A channel named UkraineNOW sends out information by the Ukrainian government in order to keep its citizens safe. For example, UkraineNOW posted 'How to distinguish our equipment from the enemy?', sharing pictures of Ukrainian and Russian tanks. Three separate posts in the space of just six minutes warned of imminent airstrikes across Ukraine. Instances such as these have saved thousands of lives, making channels like these really important since millions of people are dependent on these daily updates.

While Ukrainian officials have utilized Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, among other social media platforms, to disseminate war reports, bolster morale, and draw international attention to Ukraine, Telegram stands out. The hybrid form of the app makes it an effective instrument for mass communication. UkraineNOW and other public or private channels can have an unlimited number of subscribers.

Public and private groups on Telegram can have up to 200,000 members, while the maximum number of participants in a WhatsApp group is 256. Even different American news channels such as the New York Times have created their own channels where their fans can follow and read news in a more accessible way.

Although there are major positive sides to the app, there are also some disadvantages that may discourage many when using the application. Telegram has always had a problem with handling the spread of misinformation. Although this is a common problem of all social media
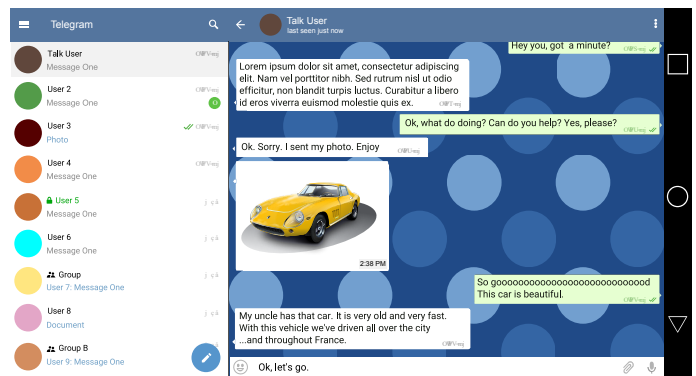

Image by Diego Sanguinetti via Wikimedia Commons

platforms, it is especially prominent on Telegram because of the large amount of propaganda that can be sent through its channels.

Yet the app is uniquely popular for being immune to censorship. Russia and Belarus have both tried and failed to block Telegram making it the only way that their citizens can get alternative information about the invasion of Ukraine.

Citizens of the West, who are faced with censorship of Russian media, can also use the app to get alternative views and information on the war in Ukraine. Telegram has played a vital role in spreading news and information during these hard times and has not only helped save millions of lives but has also allowed for different sides of the story to be shown without government interference.

Telegram is an app that can be very resourceful and important. Regulating internet platforms as far as posting (mis)information, comments and opinions, and news is concerned is a major issue for all the major media such as Facebook, Twitter, Gab, TikTok, VK, WeChat, WhatsApp, Instagram, and so on. Telegram's rise in popularity adds to the debate on this serious issue which revolves around the question: how free should free speech be?

Opinion

The Gossip Behind Gossip

By Teodora Risteska-Daskalovski

You, me, them. We have all gossiped. The spreading of information in a casual way is the easiest way to define it. It is viewed as a negative concept, a damaging one. But is it really? This topic can be looked at from different perspectives each putting forward a different point of view to the table. Some would say it is negative and something that must be shunned while others advocate for gossip and its importance in society.

It is true that gossip has a negative impact. Those who are the victim of negative gossip are most likely to find it as a painful experience, even contributing towards one's degrading mental and physical health. Gossip is used as a way of bullying, spreading someone's personal information in order to gain something - the act of extortion.

Yet it is believed that gossip is not inherently bad and that it plays an important role in keeping our society connected. In a study that was published in the Social Psychological and Personality Science journal, 467 people wore electronic recorders. They were recorded for 5 days and their conversations were classified into good, neutral, and bad gossip. It is safe to say that although women gossiped more neutral gossip, men and women had an equal amount of bad gossip. This study concluded that gossip is just the communication of information about

Image by Yan Krukov via Wikimedia Commons

the world we live in.

What really makes gossip good, bad, or neutral is how we use the information that we learn and not the actual content. Someone who is a good gossiper is trusted and uses the information that they know in a responsible way to help people, while a bad gossiper is usually not trusted and uses gossip to get ahead of others. The study even suggests

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that gossip can maintain social order, with gossip being a force that promotes cooperation among groups as well as deterring "bad" and untrustworthy behavior due to the fear of being gossiped about.

When people hear the word gossip they mostly associate it with women which is the prime factor contributing towards the bad reputation that it has. Historically, the term gossip actually meant close female friends before its meaning was changed by the patriarchy and turned into idle backstabbing talk. Back in the day, gossip and therefore the deep understanding of society made women powerful, as through gossip they had an effective way of spreading information. Therefore, gossip has been viewed as a negative social skill and still has negative connotation. Yet, the studies as the one cited above show this is simply not true and has been proven otherwise. Gossip is not a women's characteristic only,

and women as much as men engage in bad gossip.

So what can we take away from this? Gossip has been painted as evil for years because of the misogynistic propaganda that has not let the truth be told. Gossip is to all intents and purposes not bad and the stigma around it is untrue. Yet the things that we do with that kind of information are what defines gossip as good, bad or neutral, not the content. It is important if we gossip to be good gossipers, male or female - for the right reasons and in the right ways.

The views expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the editorial policy of NOVA Times. If you want to reply to an article, write an email to lp14699@nova.edu.mk.

The Student Council Has NO Power or Authority

Sine Nomine

The Student Council is supposed to represent our NOVA community, but are they really doing so? We all remember that one week when wherever you went, there were posters made by candidates, running for either co-presidents or grade representatives. All candidates wished to gain our votes by portraying themselves as leaders who would respect the student body and strengthen our community. Many people believe that the Student Council of NOVA, including its leaders, does not actually have any power or authority over what happens in our school or the ability to talk to the administration.

In my opinion, the main attraction that causes people to apply to be a part of the SC is - let's face it - because it looks good on a CV. I believe that this led to many students who do not actually care about making a difference to be voted in as leaders or members, instead of people who can actually help our school become a better place. The Council has repeatedly held meetings, yet has made few differences which have had a direct impact on the student body.

The first reason for my opinion is the weak arguments that the Co-Presidents made in the case of open campus. They held a meeting with the Health and Safety Committee (HSC) and gave arguments which were not persuasive. As the Council's main goal is giving a voice to the student body, they failed at doing so. To strengthen the reasons to attain the privilege of having an open campus, the leaders should have requested the help of the student body and could have used the grade representatives to do so. The HSC would have seen how many students are engaged in the "protest" for this issue and we would have provided better examples of the benefits. Instead, the leaders took it upon themselves and did not even ask for the aid of the grade representatives during the meeting. While the whole issue of open campus was obviously hard to achieve, through this meeting, the result was that the

biggest concern and wish of the student body was so easily shut down. In the end, only the seniors achieved open campus privileges.

Another thing I would like to mention is that while the Student Council is constantly "busy", they really have only made small changes which rarely impact students' everyday experience. The first case is the morning music, which changed to a 15 minute difference in its start time. This does not do anything for the students, and only implemented some times, as the time of the music constantly changes. Moreover, the SC also "helped" with the ping-pong equipment, by making it harder to access by students because it requires a sign-up. A small note that these are the only real changes in our community since the establishment of this years' Student Council, and instead of asking the community more frequently on changes we would like to make, they focus on the issues talked about at the beginning of the school year, and still have not progressed further on those.

Let's talk about the grade representatives. They all promised to do so many things for their grade levels, but the promises are far off from the results. Personally, I haven't received any emails from my grade level's representatives on any matter, and I have not seen any of the changes which were "promised" happening. My opinion is that this is due to the leaders not implementing them in any of the bigger decisions, once again with the open campus communication, and with other big issues the student body has. This strictly goes against the point of having votes for grade representatives, because if they are acting as any other member of the council, then why go through the trouble of stressing about winning the votes of their classmates?

Even some of the Student Council members I've spoken to agree that the SC has not done anything productive, including in the previous years. They said the same that I did, that the SC is more about gaining a new addition to

their CV, and not about changing the school.

Overall, the way the Student Council is operating so far is, plainly put, inefficient. When comparing progress to what was promised, the student body is generally unhappy with the results of the council's leaders and members. While acknowledging how hard it is to establish communication with the school's administration, the connection between the Council and the rest of the students is almost non-existent. We should be more informed on up-coming discussions, such as the one between the SC and the HSC, as it is something which concerns the student body directly and we can help. Needless to say, while sending emails every week would be exhausting for everyone, having updates or requesting for our aid is something that many students would enjoy volunteering in and offering their perspectives and outlooks on certain topics.

We're all striding towards shaping up a better school community for both students and staff. The student body and the Student Council are all working toward the same goal. But while the Student Council proclaims to have some kind of power and authority over the students' wishes, and claims that they can help us, they are achieving nothing. The Student Council's leaders are inefficient and are not progressing toward helping the student body.

Let's hope to see some real change in the second half of our school year.

Editors' note: The editors and staff of NOVA Times would like to apologize to the writer under the pseudonym Sine Nomine for publishing their opinion article at this moment when the impact and the kairotic element of the article would have significantly decreased. Still, we believe that future student-council administrations may want to consider the author's viewpoints when leading the SC.

The views expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the editorial policy of NOVA Times. If you want to reply to an article, write an email to lp14699@nova.edu.mk.

Opinion

Op-Ed: Community Is Not Something That Should Be Enforced Through Spirit Days, but Rather It Should Stem From the Students

By Leona Krstevska-Simeonova

It is no secret that Nova International Schools coins the term 'community' as one of its most significant and identifiable characteristics. As stated in the NOVA Student-Parent Handbook, the first belief that the school upholds is: *"We are a community of learners, united by a common journey, where education is the collaborative endeavor of everyone involved, students, parents, staff and teachers (we are united by a common journey)"*.

The definition of a community, according to the Oxford Dictionary is: *"a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common"* or *"the condition of sharing or having certain attitudes and interests in common."*. These premises on paper seem wonderful; they seem to give the reader, particularly an outsider, the idea that the school functions with utter unity where education is the most important goal of said 'community'.

The reality is far from this premise, as the support that the school is willing to give is not unconditional, rather it is so conditional that it contradicts itself. The "Communication at NOVA" section within the Student-Parent Handbook opens with the paragraphs:

"NOVA International School endeavors to form a close partnership with all members of the school community. Communication and transparency form the basis of our school ethos…When there are issues that need to be resolved, engaging in constructive dialogue will enable questions to be answered and a feeling of satisfaction to be restored to students, parents, and/or staff. Our aim is to achieve a tolerant and respectful atmosphere in which our differences can also be seen as one of our greatest assets."

Starting from the opening statement, which claims that communication is what the school values as a vital element to its students' education, it refers to the communication between teacher (and the administration) – parent, which, when observed from a school-wide perspective, is absurd. If the statement were to be applied to the younger generations of students within the primary and lower secondary school grades, then it would be a commendable approach to learning and communication. However, when the same principle is applied to its Upper Secondary School students, it creates a source of frustration for the parents as well as the students.

Courtesy of Stefan Nikolaj

I would especially place the students in the HS building as the ones who are most affected by this frustration since by the age students reach high school, they have already acquired the necessary learning tools to be able to lead themselves through their own learning process and to navigate their own learning material. Parents get bombarded with emails on a weekly basis on the different behaviors/adjustments that the administration has noticed/implemented over the preceding week, some of which are purely irrelevant (such as the amount of 'inappropriate language' being used on campus), which only illuminate certain aspects of the school day, namely, only the ones that the school administration has noticed. It does not, however, fully reflect the student experience.

Additionally, with the inclusion of individual parent-teacher conferences, and the recommended use of ManageBac for parents, the 'community' creates an impression that its students are not apt to prepare, study and comprehend their class material by themselves; while at the same time, the students are expected to have roughly decided what and where they wish to study after high school. In this approach, the school's 'beliefs' contradict the reality that its students, a major part of the so-called 'community', experience daily.

Furthermore, the aforementioned paragraph states that in the instance of an issue, the school will make sure that constructive dialogue will take place, which will *"enable questions to be answered and a feeling of satisfaction to be restored in the students, parents, and/or staff."* This belief seems to have been placed on the backburner. Speaking from a strictly student's point of view, quite the opposite is true. Whenever the wider student body has

faced an issue, the chain of communication that takes place starts with an individual or group complaint that is then conveyed either in verbal or written form to the Student Council Co-Presidents. Upon which, the Student Council Co-Presidents reflect, and when deemed appropriate and necessary enough, the complaint is conveyed to the school leadership.

This chain of communication would be working in a practically seamless manner if the goal was to simply convey a message of dissatisfaction from the wider student body. However, the goal of the communication **Student - Student Council - School Leadership** is first to be heard, to engage in discussion, and secondly to implement change or come to a solution through means of compromise. This portion of the communication chain is disrupted by the unwillingness of the school leadership to participate in a discussion and resolution where a *"feeling of satisfaction is restored to students"*. Instead, the school leadership merely receives the information that the students are dissatisfied with and proceeds to take no action for it.

The sense of 'community' that the school is trying to create is utterly fabricated for the consumption of the ones ignorant enough not to see the difficulties that the students are facing, or for the ones who are outside of the 'community' - the media, the press, the general public. Instead of the 'community' appealing to the needs of its students, and nurturing a cohabitational relationship between the students and staff (as well as parents to a small extent), it focuses on fabricating an image, which from the surface makes the school seem admirable and commendable for its great involvement in their students' academic

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standing.

The sense of 'community' that the school is trying to mimic is, quite logically, not something that should be enforced through Spirit Days or Cocktail Parties for the Staff, but rather it is something that should stem from the students. The 'community' should be created by the students, who assume the lead roles in that play, with the administration and school leadership as the backup roles, and the parents as the audience.

And, it is not enough to state that the sense of community should stem from the students themselves, but it should also be divided based on age group. It is nonsensical to place a 12-year-old, who is still enjoying their preteen years, in the same basket as a 16–18-year-old adolescent, who is preparing to start an independent life. If we refer to the second definition of 'community': *"the condition of sharing or having certain attitudes and interests in common"*, we can clearly state that a preteen who is still of the lower secondary school has no major common interests nor shares a common attitude with a person who is a legal adult. On these grounds, the 'community' should not only be a product of the students, but individual separated groups of students.

It is not impossible to create a sense of community within a school, in fact it is a very achievable goal, but for that goal to be achieved the community should be formed organically, stemming from the needs and interests of students, of a similar age group (especially within the HS building), and formed from a student's initiative.

It is my opinion that the student satisfaction level is increased when that student feels like they learn in an environment that supports and respects their needs and wants, and an environment in which the primary benefit is education, and the second is the sense of belonging. This, however, should and can effectively occur, only through spontaneous student social interaction, and not through leadership-enforced school events for which the students did not show a previous initiative or interest for.

The student-initiated sense of 'community' has in fact been noticed around the public schools within North Macedonia, where the student council, along with the student body and very importantly, the support from the staff, work together to create a better learning environment for its students. The students do not only convey the issues they are facing but are encouraged to make suggestions on how their learning experience can be bettered. The students are informed of enriching events that take place not only within the school, but outside it as well, and the same events are not enforced or created by the school leadership, but are rather student-led initiatives and events, and are entirely free for participation.

This kind of social symbiosis between students and teachers/school leadership not only caters to the different wants and needs of the students but creates a setting in which the students feel safe and welcome to express their wants and needs to the school administration, without being discouraged by the recurring theme of utter rejection.

In essence, the manner in which the school is trying to create and enforce a sense of community does not serve for the benefit of its students, nor does it focus on the students' wants and needs in terms of education, but it rather serves as a word used for marketing and appeal to the wider public. A sense of community when created by the students, who are then encouraged and supported by the teachers and school leadership, can have a major positive impact on the learning experience of the students. When this type of symbiosis and understanding is achieved, only then, can a sense of community truly have education and the best interest of its students as the focal point.

The views expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the editorial policy of NOVA Times. If you want to reply to an article, write an email to lp14699@nova.edu.mk.

Social Standards of Beauty: The Halo and Devil Effect

By Bisera Gogovska

First and foremost, what is beauty? One definition states, 'a combination of qualities, such as shape, color, or form, that pleases the aesthetic senses, especially the sight.' We, humans, have been taught to like things that are more pleasing to our eye. We find babies cute and we get a chemical reaction in our brains which makes us feel good, same goes for physically attractive people no matter their real characteristics.

Beauty standards switch out every decade or so. You could say they are closer to trends rather than standards. In the 2000s the extremely skinny, toned stomach body was ideal. Today having big hips, thighs, and a big chest are trendy, all whilst having a tiny waist and flat stomach.

If the internet didn't exist and we weren't exposed to this appearance, I don't think people would be obsessed with having it. However this isn't something new, people have been preoccupying themselves with their looks since the beginning of time, but why?

Beauty isn't just a trend we are experiencing today, it is engraved into the human instinct biologically. We are attracted to people who are more appealing to us because they look less harmful. It makes us feel safe, it is today's way in which our sense of survival is translated.

Beauty has a biological and a social dimension. That biological sense comes from liking people that look safe and pleasant, and this does not mean that people who don't have a traditionally desirable body or face repel this feeling of security. This is where the line between instinctive desire and trained desire crosses.

Through the internet, we are told on a daily basis that we aren't good enough, we don't have the preferred features, we are told to do everything in our power to change that and if we don't, no one will want us. Beauty has become a trend, people constantly change their bodies with plastic surgery just to fulfill the standards that are currently popular. This is when the social element kicks in.

Industries have capitalized on our insecurities for forever. You aren't at society's desired weight? Here's an only smoothie diet! You might feel miserable and hungry all the time, but hey you look so much skinnier already! People continue to be active consumers of these products and companies acquire more profit, so there's no reason why they would ever stop profiting off of impossible beauty standards.

While the other people exploit our insecurities for their benefit, it is not our fault for being sucked into this progressing loop. Yet, we continue to crave the feeling of validation and attention even if what we put out on the internet is a touched up photo that isn't real. This feeling has become like a drug to the newer generations, and is the reason why we keep maintaining society's standards, we simply just care too much about other people's opinions and whether we're good enough for someone else. Unfortunately for us, it's another way in which society, including me and you, continues to enlarge and create new hierarchies, as well as segregating ourselves.

The entertainment industry plays a crucial role: it is always the main characters in movies and TV shows who are skinny pretty girls, and the ugly witch who's the antagonist, which leads me to my next point, lookism and the halo/devil effect.

Lookism is defined as 'prejudice or discrimination on the grounds of a person's appearance.' A more frequent term is *pretty privilege*. It is the privilege or upper hand a

Opinion

person experiences if they are deemed as attractive by society, or the other way around, the hardships a person experiences in their life if they are considered unattractive by society. This is an extremely common thing I believe every single person in the world experiences on some end of the spectrum. Many studies show that bosses have a tendency of hiring people that are more good-looking. This isn't something people do consciously, which is why it is such a problem.

We don't even realize our natural instinct to act more distant and as if we're inferior to conventionally unattractive people. Whilst on the other hand treating attractive people with praise and as if they're superior to everyone else, deserving of more. The psychological rationale for this misjudgement is the halo and devil effect. This is why when someone possesses societies supposed attractive features they are associated with good personality traits no matter their true characteristics, and vice versa for supposed unattractive people.

Yes, the step-sisters in *Cinderella* have to be evil and bad, but do they have to be ugly as well?

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Arts Featurette

Emily in Paris: A Perfect Way to Waste Your Weekend!

By Jovana Vasilisa Jovanovikj

Have you ever wondered about the decision-making process at Netflix? Who chooses which script would actually be produced because I really need to talk to that person … especially after binge watching the two seasons of *Emily in Paris* and wasting my first free weekend after a barrage of tests, essays, projects, summatives and home assignments by the teachers here.

Trust me! I really tried to avoid watching *Emily*, knowing full well that it would heavily disappoint because I struggled to watch the first episode when it first came out and when it was a real hype. It still is unfortunately. After two years I finally gave it a go and it was a very good anger management therapy, as I constantly yelled at the TV and my parents were shocked by my sarcastic comments, wondering what type of person they brought up.

In a nutshell, *Emily in Paris* is an alleged comedy series of the romcom genre which follows the life and the endeavors of a young midwestern professional girl, with a horrible fashion taste, who is transferred from the Chicago to the Paris office of a well-established public relations company. Emily has never left America before and typically she even got her first passport to fly to Paris.

Of course, she doesn't speak a word of French, she is totally oblivious about the key features of French culture, let alone the nuances of the Parisian lifestyle. Her *bête noire* is her new boss, Sylvie, who is the only character with a normal personality in the whole show, and who really calls out Emily on her deficiencies. Along with Sylvie, there is Mindy, the stereotypical best friend who comes from a Chinese billionaire family and choses to come to Paris to escape her family obligations and become a babysitter!

There is Gabriel, a Parisian chef and Emily's love interest, who also has a girlfriend Camille, another close friend of Emily's (this *menage à trois* is so confusing and so irrelevant, but somehow the scriptwriter thought that it was an excellent idea).

There are also Emily's coworkers, Julien, and Luc, who should have made a perfect comedic duo. It goes without saying that throughout the show there are numerous other characters, especially men who are swept off their feet the moment they see Emily (in Paris, a city of over 10 million inhabitants), running at a rate of one new suitor for every episode.

The plot of the story is irrelevant, not even cheesy enough for a typical romcom. But the real reason that irritated me so much about the series is that they most probably wanted to make this show as a satire, criticizing both French and American culture. However, they failed spectacularly, and this show is a 'politically correct' offense and denigration of everything the France and the USA represent.

Apparently, Paris is just a backdrop for shooting Emily, French culture is all about stuck-up French people, perpetually late to work and obsessed with their arrogant manners and ludicrous love affairs. While the American culture is portrayed by a young woman with a very low self-esteem. The craziest part about the show is the fact that someone actually imagined that an American without any knowledge of French can work for a PR company in one of the oldest and deepest European cultures.

Another hilarious detail of the show is something I call 'Emily's fashion'. After every other scene I found myself screaming and gagging about this girl's clothing. The Macedonians say 'Боже ми прости' ('Lord, forgive me') to sum up the shock and the awe

Image by Mbzt via Wikimedia Commons

of her lack of taste.

There is no other comment I can make about her fashion sense that I can make and that can be legitimately published (even on Instagram comment sections). Fortunately, after the eighth episode you become used to it … but it still sucks.

This show is perfect when one functions in the braindead mode, like after NOVA's summatives. It is a perfect way to waste your time and energy. Fortunately, you didn't have the privilege to watch it … with me. You would have drowned in sarcasm, eye rolling and other verbal and non-verbal means of lashing at bad entertainment, if you can even call it that way.

Luckily, if you actually want to watch a good satire, the French cinematography is your perfect choice. They really know how to make fun of themselves, even stepping out of the Hollywood straitjacket of rigid political correctness, without offending or belittling anyone. The best recommendations I can give you are *Qu'est ce qu'on a fait au bon Dieu*, *Vive la France* and *8 rue de l'Humanité*.

So, binge-watching *Emily in Paris* is a very bad decision and a sign of a serious lack of good cultural taste. But it is good enough to irritate you and to provoke you to write a text for *NOVA Times* even in a period when you are completely drained of any inspiration. *C'est la vie!*

Arts Featurette

This Is Why I Plan On Traveling the World in My Twenties

By Aleksandar Atanasovski

When I was younger I didn't really think much about traveling. I honestly did not give it much thought. All that mattered to me was that I would go somewhere with a beach during the hot summer days. As time progressed, though, I realized that traveling holds a much greater value to me. Despite not being a fan of traveling in my younger years, I have always been adventurous. Anyone who knows me knows I have a burning desire to go outside and appreciate the beauty of nature. As I have grown older I have started to find myself wanting to visit more places around the world to fulfill this desire.

I started appreciating the value of going to different countries and seeing all the different cultures and architecture. As a matter of fact, I also love visiting natural attractions like beaches, waterfalls and national parks. One experience that I will never forget is when I went to Vienna with my family.

For a couple of days we walked around this large city with breathtaking architecture. But, then, we decided that it was time to have some fun, so we went to one of the world's most popular ziplining parks called *Waldseilpark Kahlenberg*. We spent the whole day there and even forgot to document this experience because of how much fun we had.

The main reason as to why I believe this was such a great experience was because as you zipline through this beautiful park you get to see the whole park from high up. I believe this was the pivotal moment when I decided I had to experience more things like this. As years went on I went on multiple other trips with my family or friends across Europe. Visiting countries like Slovenia, Germany, Turkey, Greece, Italy, Croatia and France. With every trip I go on, I get more and more excited for the next one. There is something I find very comforting about packing a suitcase and leaving home for a week or two to explore a new place.
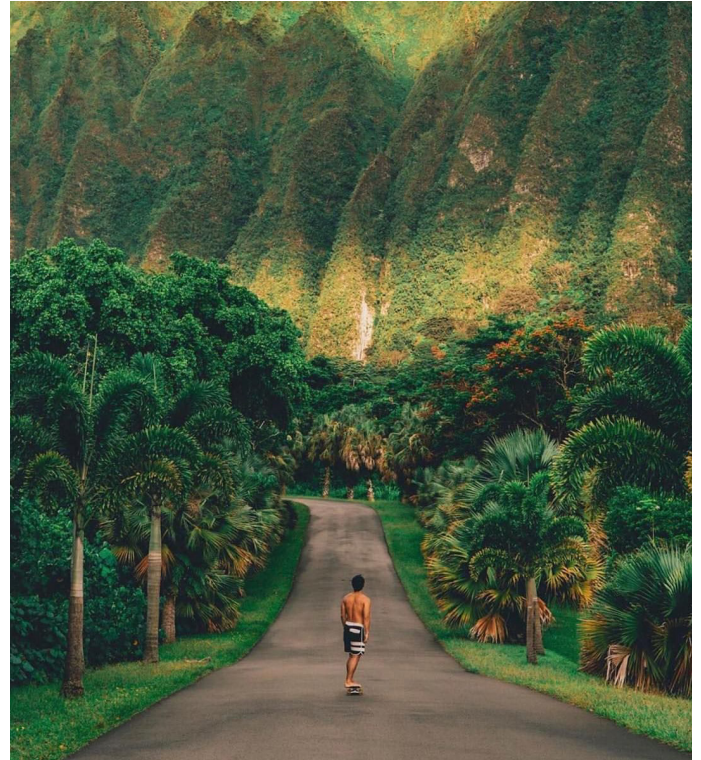
Courtesy photo

Something I find very interesting is how people in different countries have such different ways of going about their life. For example, people in Greece are very laid back and loud about their thoughts whereas people in France tend to be a little more reserved and go through life with a more critical way of thinking. Or, at least, that was my impression of the local culture.

What I am trying to say here is that with a simple 2-3 hour flight you can be in a place that looks and feels completely different from the place you just came from. That gets me thinking about all the places I have never been to. There are so many different places around the world that I simply can not wait to visit. One of them being Hawaii.

I do not want to be the regular person who does a 9-5 job 5 days a week. I have never and will never be the type of person who will stay in an office all day and all night, repeating the same day over and over again. What I do want to do on the other hand is to be able to do my job overseas. I want to live a stress free life filled with adventure and excitement. The last thing I want is to be older and regret not living my youth to the fullest.

I believe that people should travel as much as possible since I consider voyaging as a true growing experience for everyone that will allow one to make connections that will last a lifetime. Traveling is one of the best things you can spend your money on. Practically, you are giving yourself the chance to experience things you never could in your hometown. So, the advice I would like to give is to not spend your hard earned money on useless material objects. Those will last for a couple months or years, whereas experiences last a lifetime.

I would like to end this off by saying that anything you want is possible if you set your mind to it. Travel, meet new people, document everything, smile, and most importantly spend time with the people that bring out the best in you.

Courtesy photo

Arts Featurette

Sex Education: A Show That Seems Too Good to Be True

By Bisera Gogovska

Sex Education, a British teen comedy drama, written by Laurie Nunn, raised the bar for TV shows on Netflix. The show stars Otis Milburn (Asa Butterfield), a socially-awkward seventeen-year-old outcast, who attempts to figure out his life. His mother, Jean Milburn (Gillian Anderson) is a sex therapist who has raised Otis in an incredibly open-minded and modern household. The seemingly too open relationship between parent and child, forces Otis to have an unusual amount of knowledge and maturity surrounding sex. His classmate Maeve Wiley (Emma Mackey), a broke and abandoned teenager, accidentally stumbles upon Otis' unusual gift and sees a business opportunity. They partner up and open an unauthorized sex clinic, and as a result of their business, help out confused and uneducated teens. It could be argued that the show is hypersexual, more than a regular cheesy teen drama. However, its motive is vastly different, which justifies its over-the-top coverage of sex content.

In the pilot episode, the show introduces Otis and Eric (Ncuti Gatwa), his lifelong best friend. Eric is a character who is gay and a person of color. At first glance, I was worried about the portrayal of Eric thinking that the show creators have included him just as a token character for diversity's sake, rather than creating him as a complex character, like all others. I have never been more glad to be wrong. Every single character in the show is primarily presented as the most basic archetype you could think of, but as the show progresses, all the characters' background stories are explored and not a single one is glanced over.

Let's take Eric as an example. He is not there to just be Otis' sidekick and throw in a couple stereotypical sassy lines, rather, he has a rich backstory about his father, his love life and the tribulations of figuring out who he is, like every teenage character's storyline focus should be. I have found the show to be a genuine representation of marginalized people. It includes characters like Ola (Patricia Allison), Rahim (Sami Outalbali), Cal (Dua Saleh), Lilly (Tanya Renolds), and Jackson (Kedar Williams-Stirling). All of them are either people of color or a part of the LGBTQ+ community, yet the authors have made sure to portray them as different as possible, showing the reality of the marginalized position.

The antagonists on the show, such as Adam (Connor Swindels), Mr. Groff (Alistair Petrie), Hope (Jemima Kirke), and Erin (Anne-Marie Duff) are portrayed as villains, yet their character development shifts towards the end of the first season. In a very real life representation, the show doesn't provide for someone you can point your finger to and blame for every plot turn, which is why I love how these characters are depicted.

They possess their own backstories that don't simply just help build sympathy to the viewer to justify awful behavior. Instead, they help represent real problems and different perspectives of situations where these people would usually be characterized as stereotypical bad guys. In the end, some of the characters, which were initially considered villains, ended up being my favorite, while in the beginning, I cold-heartedly hated them.

I would also like to talk about Maeve, one of the main characters in the series. As previously mentioned, she comes from a poor background and has been abandoned by her mother. She lives alone and has taught herself how to survive by whatever means necessary. As a result, in almost the entirety of the first season, Maeve is an absolute nightmare. She is unnecessarily mean to everybody, and has no time for creating relationships while she's barely surviving, grasping to anything she can in order to pay rent. Maeve is given the toughest deck of cards, which is why she can barely bring herself to open up and trust anyone, even though she eventually does. Maeve's closed off personality and difficult background doesn't glamorize her like it would in other shows. Alternatively, it presents her as someone in a situation you don't want to be or be in, while simultaneously presenting her as more than just a stereotypical independent female character.

While analysing some of the characters and general archetypes in *Sex Education*, they've all proven how this show is so much more realistic than any other teen drama. The average poorly-written teen show doesn't have a fraction of the consistency, storyline, and deep character development that *Sex Education* does.

Overall, the storylines in the show itself are nothing special. The show is a fresh idea and how it develops is phenomenal, proving that the story itself is not what makes it stand-out from the majority of teen dramas. The writing choices, dialogue, and depth it has is what sets it aside, along with the many taboo topics aside from sex itself, such as sexual orientation, gender identity, abortion, sexual assault, coping mechanisms, and breakdowns, it discusses.

The portrayal of these uncomfortable topics is what makes me love it so much, with the discussion of things considered private, things I couldn't imagine anyone in real life actually discussing being openly talked about and accepted.