



New Traffic Rules at Marblehead High School

Adam Sherf, Senior Reporter

Several weeks ago, the town of Marblehead enacted a pilot program that prohibits all drivers from taking a right on red when exiting the Marblehead High School Parking lot. Such a decision is well supported by the local police department that considers such a turn to be a safety concern in that drivers are often overly focused on the oncoming traffic, and in their ensuing timing of joining the rush they often fail to account for the crosswalk on Pleasant Street. To no surprise, such a disregard poses a great threat to any pedestrians whose travels depend upon said crosswalk.

Although such a decision is intended to address a potential safety concern and better protect pedestrians during school hours, the prohibition of this right on red will result in several inadvertent consequences. The most prominent of which being a drastic increase in traffic both immediately before and immediately after the school day. Considering that there is just one exit consisting of just two lanes, every vehicle that enters the parking lot must leave from the same designated exit area. As a result, every student, parent and teacher that has either parked in the lot or collected a student from the roundabout nearly simultaneously moves towards the exit of the parking lot. In simpler terms, a vast majority of the parking lots' capacity is forced to consolidate within just two lanes, which in turn creates immense traffic jams. Prior to the recent enactment of the pilot program described above, the right lane would generally move slightly faster and more consistently than the left lane, as vehicles were able to exit by taking a right turn after coming to a complete stop during a red light. So when drivers are no longer able to make such a turn, the exit of the parking lot is practically a standstill, taking upwards of 25 minutes for every car to be able to exit the lot. With that being said, the current departure system within the Marblehead High School parking lot is very inefficient and, quite frankly, illogical.

So while safety most certainly comes first, I believe that there are more efficient methods and techniques that can be used to protect pedestrians of the Pleasant Street crosswalk. For instance, pedestrians may benefit from the presence of a crossing guard so that drivers are better able to see and recognize pedestrian presence in the crosswalk without necessarily having to remain still for the entirety of the red light interval. Additionally, it may be beneficial to post a sign just beneath the traffic light that brings awareness to the existence of said crosswalk.

Hopefully, it does not take all too long for the town to recognize the inadvertent consequences of prohibiting a right on red when departing Marblehead High School.

Ignorance is Bliss, Especially for Generation Z: Opinion

Jillian Lederman, Junior Editor-in-Chief

On Youtube, hundreds of videos decry people's ignorance. Reporters stand in busy streets with microphones, asking dozens of pedestrians common knowledge questions. Who was the first president of the United States? Where is North Korea on this map? Who is our vice president right now? The interviewees stumble over their words. "Abraham Lincoln," they say. They point to Canada. They cannot even provide an answer to the last question. And, watching these people on our screens, we laugh, unaware of the fact we ourselves are also worryingly ignorant of many aspects of the world around us.

Every generation is born into a world that is different and more advanced than those in the past. I am a member of Generation Z, a group typically comprised of those who were born between 1995 and 2010. In my world, nearly every screen can be operated by swipes and taps of fingertips. In my world, free wifi is the most effective advertising weapon of restaurants. In my world, adopting the language of social media is as automatic as speaking English.

I have vague memories of playing tetris on my parents' flip phones, of living in a world without laptops, of cheering when teachers rolled a big, black, bulky television into the classroom and turned on Bill Nye the Science Guy. But for all of my recent life, during the years that I remember best, at least one technological device has been within my reach at any given moment. My teachers expect every student to bring a personal laptop to school every day, and I rarely leave home without my cell phone. Almost all communication is online. Even at school, when I am with my friends physically, we are texting each other constantly and sharing pictures via social media.

And it is not just communication between friends that is transported online. It is through technology that memes go viral and talented nobodies become famous. It is through technology that terrorist attacks reach our ears. It is through technology that new movements gather followers and spread across the nation. It is through technology that we are able to access news pouring from hundreds of sources 24 hours a day. We should be the most informed, the most educated, the most motivated generation, simply because every area of knowledge is so accessible to us. We should be the generation with the most tolerance to other viewpoints, with the most potential to create a less polarized world. But many of us are not, and we are not for all the same reasons that we should be.

When it is easier to be informed, it is simultaneously easier to be ignorant. Members of Generation Z, who have their phones on hand at any moment, can very quickly access articles from the New York Times, or the Wall Street Journal, or the Huffington Post. At the same time, such availability allows them to choose instead to receive all of their information from only one source, or even not to receive it at all. With the advancement of technology, news is reported at such a fast pace that different sources simply offer differing perspectives on mostly the same events. A more right-leaning teenager can very easily rely only on Fox News for information about the world, while one on the left can solely watch MSNBC. And why, given this fact, would we ever willingly choose to expose ourselves to views with which we disagree? It is not easy, it is not fun, and most of us do not have the motivation to try.

We are wasting our privileges. We were born with technology and raised to know how to use it better than our parents and grandparents. We know what a meme is. We know every text abbreviation there is. We can type just as fast on our phones as we can on our computers. And yes, most of us know that George Washington was the first president of the United States. But while those in the past simply may not have had access to every perspective in the world, we are voluntarily choosing to embrace only a portion of information to which technology has given us access. For all people, ignorance is bliss, and for Generation Z, it is easier to attain than ever.

Eighth Grade Comes to the High School

Sophie Hauck, Sophomore Assistant Editor

When production company A24 announced the opportunity for 100 schools to host free screenings of this summer's indie hit, *Eighth Grade*, MHS sophomore Ann Sabin was inspired. *Eighth Grade* follows the final week of middle school for Kayla, the film's overwhelmingly relatable protagonist. Kayla's quirks resonate with viewers of all ages, but Sabin knew the character's experiences particularly mirrored those of high school students. "It's not really a documentary about eighth grade," she says. "It's more about explaining the feelings that we are experiencing right now in this weird time." What is this weird time? Sabin, along with many of her peers, expresses concern over the social media era, and the anxiety that comes with the internet. Social media gives users the power to control their identity; and as Sabin describes it, "You're putting out the way you want to be seen." Protagonist Kayla feels this pressure, laboring to maintain the image she projects online. "You're not quite developed yet, and [on social media] you're forced to be, 'This is who I am, and this is all I stand for,'" says Sabin.

With parallels to MHS in mind, Sabin first proposed the possibility of Marblehead's own *Eighth Grade* screening to English teacher Connor Ryan during a study hall. From there, the pair brainstormed how the event would run, taking inspiration from other students' ideas. With freshman Sophia Nickolas's offering, Sabin was able to make an argument: "Don't watch it! It's good, but extreme - actually you should," which Sabin believed, "summed up [the movie] perfectly." After submitting this quote as a part of her reasoning, she soon found out that MHS would be one of the 100 schools to win a free screening of the film.

Before the event, Sabin expected the audience's reaction to vary based on personal experience. "Some portions of the kids will relate to Kayla and feel emotionally connected to her," she explained just days before the screening, while others, "may not feel anything... Some people are like, 'This is too dramatic'... 'This is not accurate'... other people are like, 'This is spot on for me.'" In terms of her own experiences, Sabin knew the movie best compared to her freshman year at MHS. "I wanted to be a part of everything, but I also didn't think I was ready."

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Eighth Grade Starring Elsie Fisher

Headlight's Quote of the Week

"We must find time to stop and thank the people who make a difference in our lives" ~ John F. Kennedy

After the screening, Ryan reflected on these "fits and starts" of maturing, admitting that teachers often forget that their students do not grow in a steady rise. For him, the movie was a much needed reminder about the disconnect between students' behavior and their actual feelings. While *Eighth Grade* relates this balance between self-assurance and insecurity to teens, Sabin recognizes the universality of this feeling. "Thirty year olds and eighth graders should be able to be, 'That's how I feel.'" Indeed, they did, with 81 people showing up for the high school's evening screening of *Eighth Grade*: 76 were students, two were parents, and three were teachers. The response was overwhelmingly positive. Ryan cited how the movie, "benefitted from communal experience." One of his greatest concerns was that students would laugh at the film, denying its similarities to their own lives. Instead, he found students laughed not out of denial, but to deal with the film's occasional awkwardness. Sabin appreciated this audience interaction, extending it with a group dialogue after the film. A discussion guide from A24 and Common Sense Education challenged students to measure the film's authenticity, although students were able to carry out passionate conversation on their own. After all, as Sabin reiterated, "Adults are always trying to explain things [to teens], like why [we're] feeling that way." *Eighth Grade* is a refreshing shift in this pattern, as Kayla's experiences never meant to teach viewers, but rather to earn their sympathy. "The movie's about articulating a feeling," says Sabin, one that, if you have an hour and 34 minutes of free time, deserves to be experienced.

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