# Point / Counter-Point

## Purpose Gets Lost in Protest

**Kristen Wehling**
Feature Editor

The Day of Silence is a student-led day of action to take a vow of silence in support of ridding schools of anti-LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) bias that LGBT students face in our society, but is silence really golden? Remaining silent for an entire day can be taken advantage of by students who do not understand the full meaning behind this day of remembrance and support of those who are LGBT.

At Loy Norrix in past years I have seen many students actively participate in the Day of Silence, and I have witnessed several who are passionate about the day and what it stands for. However, for all of those actively participating to support this cause, there have been others who do not understand the Day of Silence and abuse this project of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN).

Year after year I overhear students making such remarks as, "Hey, if I participate in the Day of Silence I don't have to talk in class today!" These students are being disrespectful towards those who have suffered because of their sexual orientation in which their supporters are trying to stand up for ending the abuse. Not only are these students are being disrespectful, but it is likely they are ignorant of the day's meaning. It is a day meant to commemorate someone who has been ridiculed because of their sexual orientation, not to get out of participating in class which is a common misconception. Those participating must answer questions directly asked by their teachers, otherwise the Day of Silence would not be allowed on school property.

Because of the silence, students participating cannot fully express their reasons for participating in the Day of Silence.

The lack of communication is essential to the purpose of the Day of Silence, but participators cannot explain to a curious student what the Day of Silence stands for. Instead, participators must take a few precious minutes out of their silent day to write answers, conversations, or statements on pieces of paper. This wastes time and defeats the purpose of the absence of communication to represent the silence LGBT citizens experience when they face violence and prejudice on a regular basis. Communicating with others via paper does not represent the silence that suppresses these individuals.

A better way of expressing your reason for participating is to simply state it. I know that these participators are trying to prove a point, but speaking out for the rights of LGBT people would seem more effective. This makes people aware of the problem and can bring about active discussion. Remaining silent contradicts the desire for freedom of speech and expression for LGBT rights.

Unfortunately, the Day of Silence prohibits the action of speaking out. Therefore, students who would like to know more about the day or would like to know why a student is participating must wait a few moments for it to be written out on paper. This does not convey the true emotions of the person participating no matter how heartfelt or descriptive the message they write out is.

Instead of being silent, students should speak out about the violence towards LGBT students. The silence is in honor of those who have fallen victim to violence and abuse who have remained silent themselves. A peaceful assembly and commemoration can still be initiated while talking.

The purpose of the Day of Silence is great and its intentions are whole-hearted, but the Day of Silence loses its meaning when students participate in order to not speak in class. In this sense it can be more disruptive than the act of speaking. The Day of Silence hinders the rights to freedom of speech. The purpose of not communicating is defeated by writing on paper and does not represent the silence faced by LGBT citizens in our society. Speak out peacefully about your cause instead of suppressing your true feelings. Speaking out is a much better way to express yourself than joining unruly acts of protest or remaining silent.

## "What are You Going to do to End the Silence?"

### Day of Silence Appropriately Combats Harassment

**Alison Alessi**
Assistant to the Editor-in-Chief

The Day of Silence, which was founded in 1996, is primarily a student protest that calls attention to the many ways lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students are silenced about their sexual orientation by bullying and harassment. Participants do not speak throughout the day to represent the many ways that LGBT students must remain silent about their sexual orientation.

On February 12, 2008, Californian eighth grade student Lawrence King was silenced forever, killed by a gun shot, because of his sexual orientation. This year's Day of Silence on April 25 will be held in his memory. King's murder on school property represents all that the sponsors of the Day of Silence the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network hope to call attention to with their yearly protest. His death serves as an example to all that bullying and harassment are not the only means that are used to force LGBT students into silence. His death is an extreme case of how LGBT students are silenced by their own peers.

Some people feel that a day of silence is not an effective way to spread the message of LGBT support because it is just that, silent. Silence may seem like a odd way to protest bullying and harassment, but when it is examined properly, the Day of Silence is the perfect course of action for students who want to show their support.

Just because a protest is silent does not mean that it goes unnoticed. It may seem like a small act, but even if supporters only get noticed for the Day of Silence shirts, it's enough. It's enough for people to know that they are a supporter.

If there are some questions, Day of Silence participants are given cards to pass out explaining the event. It's all about showing that you are a supporter and that you are against LGBT discrimination. The day is about demonstrating that you are supporting those who suffer from bullying on a regular basis and letting them know that they are not alone.

The silence, though it is meaningful in itself, has purpose other than representing the silence that LGBT students face. Silence, unlike the traditional protest in which signs are carried and mottos are shouted, is non-disruptive to the school environment, allowing supporters to participate without causing a substantial disruption. This lack of a substantial disruption is very important, as the protest against bullying and harassment is for students to support other students in the school environment, where most LGBT students are bullied, harassed and verbally assaulted with terms like "that's so gay." This type of harassment can evolve into violence based on sexual orientation much like in the case of King.

The Day of Silence sends the message better than any loud march through the halls of Loy Norrix could. It is a non-disruptive, symbolic protest that allows students to speak out against bullying and harassment without saying a word.

## The D.O.S. is not for school!

**Xi'ange Shannon**
Staff Writer

Prayer was taken out of school, but The Day Of Silence has been brought into the school.

The Day Of Silence is a project that consists of a vow of silence for the entire school day to raise awareness about gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students who have remained silent through harassment. At the end of the silence participants can host a series of follow up events to educate their communities on how to keep the SILENCE FROM CONTINUING.

Why do homosexual, lesbian, gay, and transgender students need to call so much attention to their sexual preference? School is basically to prepare students for success, not to stress your sexuality. Some may say that it is educational to learn about sexual preferences, but we enroll in school to move forward, graduate and continue on to the job market and become successful. We are not in school to focus on which sex is with which.

Often occurring in public schools there's been bullying, harassment and prejudice. Many students have had to go through these things just to be an individual. For example, black students have been harassed and bullied for the color of their skin, which is something they can't change, hide or take back. Jews had to endure much suffering because their religious views were different from some people.

If there was a Day of Silence for every problem that you're going to face then we would never be able to get anything done in the school day. I also feel that your sexual preference isn't anyone's business and having a national recognition during the school day is very inappropriate. It distracts the students who are ignorant to why there are other students not speaking. It may take away instructional time from those who come to school to get their education.

The Day of Silence is not effective because if you want to demonstrate the suffering you have gone through keeping silent is not the way to do it. I don't see why you would want to be silent again; it defeats the purpose of being able to express yourself.

I embrace all people. It doesn't matter whether they are homosexual, lesbian, gay, transgender, black, white, U.S. Citizen or not. We are all God's children and deserve to be loved, but there is a time and place for everything and school isn't the place to discuss your sexual preference.

## The Overflow of Sex in the Media Brainwashes the Exposed

**Kayleigh Sholes**
Copy Editor

When I was a little tike, I was brainwashed by society. Britney Spears lured me into her world, full of dancing, singing and glamour. As the role model for little girls growing up in the 90's, Britney was my favorite pop star. I devoured her music, the same as countless other young girls did. I continued this idolization of Britney until, "Oops I did it again," became a little too much. It's a good thing that I stopped looking up to her when I did; look at her now. What if I still followed in her footsteps?

The problem is that many teens of my generation still look up to their pop star icon, icons that treat woman like they are good for only feeding this world with sex. Consequently, as a woman I have to experience the consequences of their bad decisions. Even when I walk in the halls at Loy Norrix, I feel like students don't give me or any other random girl enough respect because I am a woman, like getting barked at in the hallways. That is so uncalled for.

Everywhere you turn, you see girls half naked in magazine advertisments featuring clothes, yet barely wearing any because "sex sells. "What's next? Guys with their shirts off "sportin" their six packs selling fertilizer just to make soccer moms go out and buy a bag?

We see these advertisments all the time in our daily lives in magazines, on television, in music videos, on billboards and in pop-ups on the computer. Even if we just glance at these things everyday, it subconsciously sends a message to our brain. The message is that the people in these ads are what we need to represent in ourselves. So we as individuals and as a society start molding ourselves slowly into this national trend of being bawdy and vulgar.

For girls, we have more body parts that the media focuses on. It's not against regulations for movies to expose the full body of a woman, but it's considered (by the rating system) porn if you see mens', "sun don't shine" area. Why is this okay? This world is dominated by men, that's why.

Maybe, as females, our troubles start with us. Think about yourselves ladies, do we become sex symbols because society brainwashed us? Or have we always flaunted our stuff and society just endured it? If so, then this is degradation by the opposite sex is our fault. If we don't lower our standards, maybe more men will respect us as individuals, not inanimate objects to please their needs.

It's okay not to wear makeup sometimes or come to school wearing "sweats." There are guys out there that will love us because of our exceptional talents and how we laugh.

I know what it's like to feel like you need to live up to certain sexual standards to feel accepted by guys. Yet, the thing is no matter what, our friends will always be the people we come crying to. Let's focus on friendship, not sex, or feeding this sex-driven world with just some more junk.

# Props

- **New President-** After eight years, ANY change will be great!
- **Spring Break-** A week's possibility to escape snow in April!
- **Little Shop!-** Because Carl Depew as a greaseball, Annie Farner as a dumb blonde, and Ryan Smith as a nerd sure tickled our funny bones!
- **Barak Obama's Race Speech-** Honesty is a GOOD thing.

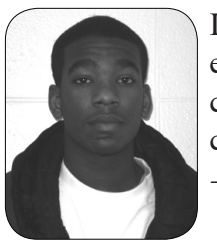
# Stops

- **School Shootings-** We're tired of violence in schools.
- **Hallway Wanderers-** No, we aren't trying to listen in class, go ahead and yell to your friend down the hallway!
- **Old weight room equipment-** The treadmill doesn't work, the weights are old, and half the benches are all torn up.... it's time for an upgrade!
- **Geese on the sports fields-** There's a fake fox to scare them away... Hopefully they won't get hit by a soccer ball!

## # 1 Stop: Public displays of affection (PDA) in the hallways

**What is it about the Norrix hallways that screams ROMANCE!? Here's what LN students have to say:**

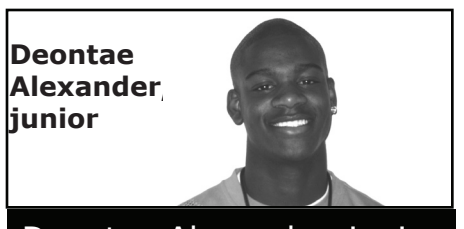
"Some people just need to get a room"
-Shelbie Quackenbush, junior



It's disgusting. especially certain couples.
-Lance Clark, senior

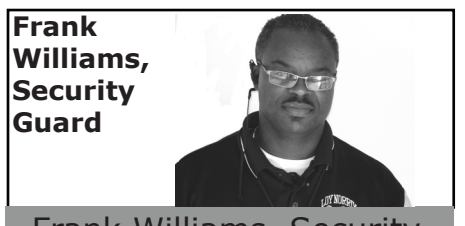
Deymeon Todd, junior

"I want to talk to my friends while I walk to the bathroom and [Officer Mc] Flether and the others watch me while I walk in the hallways"



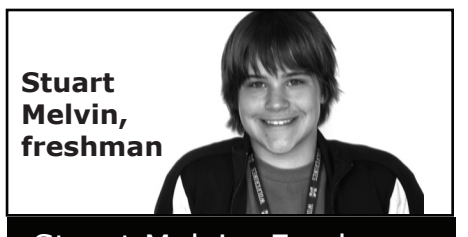

Deontae Alexander, junior

"I think we should be able to go to the bathroom on our own."




Frank Williams, Security Guard

"It's the only way we found to keep students in the classrooms with minimal interruptions from hall traffic."




Stuart Melvin, Freshman

"I don't like quiet halls, because if you are sick, you can't leave class unless your teacher calls security to escort you."