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The purpose of the Northern Lights is to serve the school audience, including administrators, teachers, faculty and staff, parents, community members and most importantly, the students as an established open forum. Since this is a school newspaper, the content and character of the paper will cater to the student body's interest and ideas by covering a wide variety of events and issues concerning the students of North Central High School.

The newspaper will serve as a medium for student opinions and ideas. The staff strives to achieve objective, accurate content to cover and feature a well-balanced variety of different students and their viewpoints.

Because school officials do not engage in prior review, and the content of the Northern Lights is determined by and reflects only the views of the student staff and not school officials or the school itself, its student editorial board and responsible student staff members assume complete legal and financial liability for the content of the publication.

Student journalists may use print and electronic media to report news and information, to communicate with other students and individuals, to ask questions of and consult with experts and to gather material to meet their newsgathering and research needs.

The Northern Lights and its staff are protected by and bound to the principles of the First Amendment and other protections and limitations afforded by the Constitution and the various laws and court decisions implementing those principles. The Indiana State Constitution, section 9, also provides all Hoosiers the right to a free press.

The staff of the Northern Lights operates under the six Metropolitan School District of Washington Township's District Values: respect, responsibility, honesty, caring, courage and self-discipline, however, with the coverage of news, one must remember content may not always reflect the same values.

The staff of the Northern Lights will strive to report all issues in a legal, objective, accurate and ethical manner, according to the Canons of Professional Journalism developed by the Society for Professional Journalists. The Canons of Professional Journalism include a code of ethics concerning accuracy, responsibility, integrity, conflict of interest, impartiality, fair play, freedom of the press, independence, sensationalism, personal privacy, obstruction of justice, creditability and advertising.

The adviser will not act as a censor or determine the content of the paper. The adviser will offer advice and instruction, following the Code of Ethics for Advisers established by the Journalism Education Association as well as the Canons of Professional Journalism. School officials shall not fire or otherwise discipline advisers for content in student media that is determined and published by the student staff.

The student editor and staff who want appropriate outside legal advice regarding proposed content – should seek attorneys knowledgeable in media law such as those of the Student Press Law Center. Final content decisions and responsibility shall remain with the student editorial board.

The Northern Lights will not avoid publishing a story solely on the basis of possible dissent or controversy.

The Northern Lights is a member of the Indiana High School Press Association, The National Scholastic Press Association and has access to its resources as well as those of the Student Press Law Center. The adviser maintains membership in the Journalism Education Association. The staff adheres to the four core values of the IHSPA: truth, courage, integrity and freedom.

The Northern Lights will not publish any material determined by student editors or the student editorial board to be unprotected, that is, material that is libelous, obscene, materially disruptive of the school process, an unwarranted invasion of privacy, a violation of copyright or a promotion of products or services unlawful (illegal) as to minors as defined by state or federal law.

Profanity may appear in the newspaper, but only in cases of direct quote or if the profanity is necessary to the content of the story. In questionable cases, the editorial board will discuss whether the use of profanity is vital to the story.



The 2007-2008 editors-in-chief speak during the 2008 banquet. Pictured are 1801 editor Max Shelton, newspaper editor David Ong and yearbook editor Kirk Taylor.

Please do not confuse profanity with obscenity. No articles or pictures of an obscene nature will be published. Definitions and examples for the above instances of unprotected speech can be found in Law of the Student Press published by the Student Press Law Center.

All stories written by an individual will receive a byline with the exception of the lead editorial. Any photos that appear in the paper will receive photo credit only if the photographer initials the photo. Photographers are expected to write their own captions.

The views of columnists are not necessarily those of the newspaper staff.

The goal of the newspaper is to have no errors; however, that goal is not easily accomplished. The staff apologizes for such errors and will run corrections whenever possible.

Letters to the editor are welcomed and encouraged, but will only be published if they are signed. The Northern Lights reserves the right to edit letters for length, grammar and unacceptable content. Each issue will feature a lead editorial, which reflects the viewpoint of the majority of the staff. An editorial board consisting of the adviser, the editors in chief, the copy editor, the managing editors, the design editor and the photo editor will review the lead editorial and help edit it, especially in case of questionable material. Letters to the editor should be delivered to K634.

In the occurrence of the death of a faculty member or student, The Northern Lights will print the yearbook photo of the deceased with his or her name, survivors list, school activities list and student quotes.

All obituaries will be handled in the same, fair manner.

If a student or faculty member at North Central commits a criminal act, it is considered newsworthy and will be reported within legal confines.

The Northern Lights will accept any advertising that does not promote illegal services or products to the students of North Central High School.

The editor and adviser reserve the right to accept or deny advertisers, along with the prepayment from any business that does not already have credit history with North Central High School.

Electronic manipulations changing the essential truth of the photo or illustration will be clearly labeled if used.

The duly appointed editor or co-editors shall interpret and enforce this editorial policy. The Northern Lights recognizes the policies set forth by MSDWT concerning student publications and covering controversy.

As preservers of democracy, our schools shall protect, encourage and enhance free speech and the exchange of ideas as a means of protecting our American way of life. The staff embraces the free press rights granted to all citizens and encourages all people to positively exercise their rights.