

welcome to the FAN-MILY

Justin Bieber, One Direction, Ed Sheeran? Oh, my! To some students, these obsessions can seem a little bewildering. But for these Lady Norsemen, it's all a part of being a fan.

By Emma Ockerman
MANAGING EDITOR

the beliebers



What was once a flowing mass of dirty-blond hair became a half-shaved, gelled, manicured masterpiece. Clad in a white tee-shirt and purple designer sneakers, Canadian-native Justin Bieber always does his country proud – besides those few incidents his fans don't care to mention.

Loyal "Beliebers" cite Bieber as "down to earth," and choose to accept his recent illegalities as part of an all-too-common teenagedom.

"People only see what they want to see in him, and he's so much more than what they make you believe in magazines or on TMZ," senior Emma Abessinio, fan of four years, said.

"I think he's just growing up, and all the stuff he's gotten into ... it happens," sophomore Mackenzie Frame said. "People are comparing him to Lindsay Lohan now, but he's just going through stages where he makes mistakes."

North's collection of Beliebers pride themselves on staying loyal every step of the way, including senior Bieber buffs Stephanie Saravolatz and Meghan VanCleve.

"Stephanie Saravolatz and I, we went to the Justin Bieber movie *Never Say Never*, and became absolutely obsessed," VanCleve said. "We had never really listened to him before."

Saravolatz also recalls where their "Bieber Fever" began.

"We went to see the movie again," Saravolatz said. "She already had one of his CDs, and she let me borrow it. Then we bought all of them and listened to them all the time."

It wasn't too long before a handful of British-accented, floppy-haired teens came to contest Bieber's long-standing fame.

"His fanbase is dying a little I'd say, because of One Direction and all that," Saravolatz said, who is also a fan of One Direction. "It's always moving on to the next big thing. Music is changing."

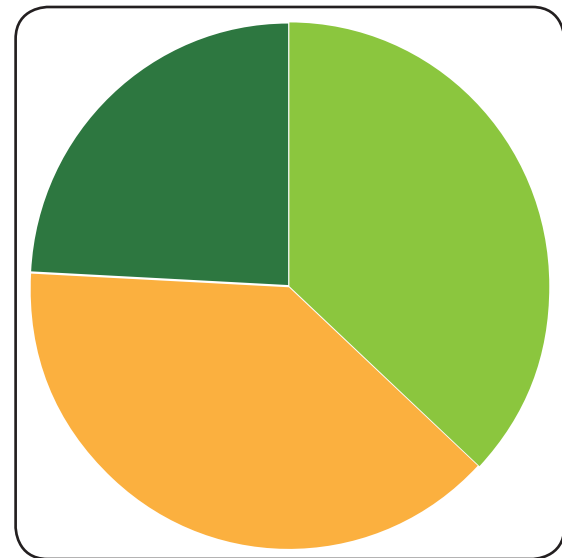
Frame said his fan population has leveled out, but cited that "real fans" are fans for an eternity. She believes, however, that fans who participate in "Cut for Bieber," an internet craze involving self-harm to discourage Bieber from drugs, detract from the true fanbase.

"It's a little crazy, just because he's doing that stuff doesn't mean you should cut yourself," Frame said.

There are many reasonings for a fan's decision to stick beside Bieber. Frame can think of a couple, but one really comes to mind.

"He's like, gorgeous."

the numbers



WENDY ISHMAKU

24% of students prefer Justin Bieber
37% of students prefer Ed Sheeran
39% of students prefer One Direction

the directioners

Take sculpted cheekbones and poreless skin, accents that melt the radio waves like liquid gold. Add talent that is certain to deliver chart-topping sales. Multiply by five.

These aren't just any boys. These are the boys.

"They're all really attractive, but they're all so talented. It's funny, because they're all just normal people. We all went through the process of knowing them as normal people, while they were getting popular," sophomore Nikki Haggerty said.

Those who knew of One Direction (1D) when the band started to circulate throughout the boy-band maelstrom, affectionately coined "Directioners," blossomed into full-fledged followers.

The Fletcher sisters experience the "Direction Infection" first-hand.

"We get to be proud of them, and now they're doing what they want to do. They were just small-town boys before," junior Nicole Fletcher said.

Both agree the match that ignited their 1D flame was five levels of hot.

"We liked them for their sound, but then we watched the music video and were like 'Oh,'" freshman Natalie Fletcher added.

Enchantment with 1D started early for some fans.

"It was the summer of 2010, and I was on Tumblr and saw a picture of them, so I looked them up and saw them on YouTube when they were still auditioning on the *X-Factor*," junior Kaylin Causley said. "At first Harry was my favorite, because I thought he had the best voice. And he's just perfect-looking."

Others were quick to feed on the One Direction hype.

"There's two different types: One is the people that just started listening to them, which bothers me. I'm kind of creepy obsessed with them, I have a different Twitter for One Direction that just follows One Direction accounts. Then there's the people that know everything about them," Causley said.

With more fans, contention to occupy the boys' hearts strengthened steadily.

"There's only two that are single now, so there's more competition," Nicole said.

Haggerty said some fans can take affection to another level.

"There are some people that I know who have thought that someday that, 'Oh, once his fame has subsided he will love me.'"



the lingo

By Emma Puglia
STAFF REPORTER

Fandom (noun)- a group of people who obsess over the same person, television show, book or movie

ASDFGHJKL (noun)- expressed through typing, an interjection of extreme excitement, glee, or surprise over something the person has recently read and/or seen about the fandom

AU (adjective)- Alternate Universe; what could happen in the fandom

Canon (adjective)- a fact that's been confirmed by an author, director, or publicist

I'm so done (expression)- declared when the fandom has reached a high or low point to express overwhelming emotion

I can't even (expression)- a phrase to convey utter speechlessness

Feels (noun)- emotions based on something the person obsesses over

Shipping (verb)- the act of wanting two people the fandom supports to be in a relationship

OTP (noun)- One True Pair; a favorite ship

the sheerios



When Ed Sheeran crooned that he could do without a tan on his left-hand ring finger in "Wake Me Up," the female population promptly declared "Challenge accepted," and fought for the position. With an adorable mop of red hair and slight stubble, Sheeran accumulated a following at North.

"To be honest, I didn't think he was cute at first. I thought he was weird-looking, but I really liked his voice," sophomore Juliet Sonaglia said. "As soon as you start listening to him you can tell he's a good singer. I just listened to more songs and it grew on me. I can't even explain it; he's just perfect to me in every way possible."

With a more singer-songwriter image, Sheeran attracted those who were searching for deep meaning in their playlists. Junior Alison Fly, a fan of six months, said that Sheeran's musical talent earned her allegiance for the London bloke.

"I'm a big person for the lyrics and the meanings of the songs, along with how it actually sounds. His music to me is a perfect combination of both. I love how his voice is so raw and they don't have to do anything to it," Fly said. "I have a whole playlist dedicated to him."

Sonaglia has experienced Sheeran's glory twice in concert, but feels that perhaps this glory should be reserved for true fans.

"I don't like his growing popularity, I get bothered by it really easily, especially from people that go to our school that like only one song and nothing else," Sonaglia said. "People know that I like him a lot, so my friends used to send me screenshots of people on Twitter talking about him and I'd be like 'No, no' and then I'd see them at school, and I'd just be like ... 'No.'"

Sheeran is also set to tour with pop-star Taylor Swift, which could increase his fanbase substantially.

"I'm not a huge fan of Taylor Swift, I wouldn't be able to deal with her. I just liked seeing him when he was the central part of the concert," Fly said.

Sonaglia agrees, but holds another concern – that Swift could whisk Ed away into a relationship.

"I can't stand looking at her. That whole thing with Harry Styles? It just bothered me because she continues to be stupid about it. Now she's touring with Ed, and she's known for having all those boyfriends and everyone's saying that he's going to be her next one."

Photos from top to bottom: sophomore Mackenzie Frame, freshman Natalie Fletcher and junior Nicole Fletcher, and sophomore Juliet Sonaglia.