

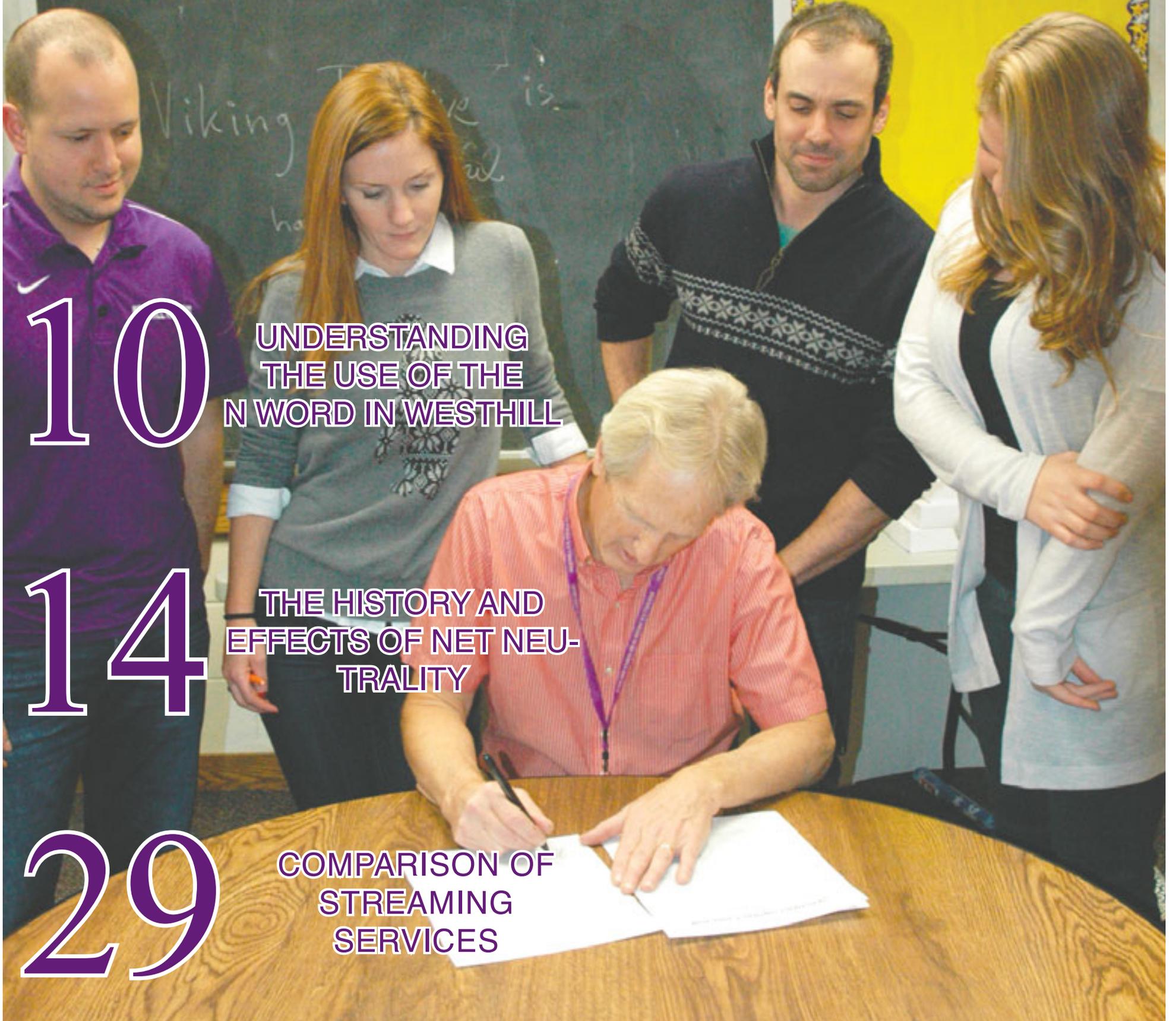
# The Westword

*Student voice of the Westhill community*

*"The test of good journalism is the measure of its public service."*

## Teachers agree to new contract

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# The Westword

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Paulina Seremetis

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**Columnists**  
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Jack Williamson,  
Max Zussman

**The Westword**  
**Westhill High School**  
**125 Roxbury Road**  
**Stamford, CT 06902**

(203) 977-4894

westwordwhs@gmail.com

thewestwordonline.com

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## December 2017

# Note from the Editors

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the third issue of the 2017-2018 school year. We hope everyone had a great winter break. We look forward to bringing our readers another year of student-journalism.

Our Editorial this month proposes replacing French and Italian with Mandarin and Arabic for the benefit of students.

In News, read about Mock Trial's recent success as well as the field trips that students and teachers plan on taking in the near future.

In Viewpoint, take a look at an OP-ED discussing issues with teacher consistency at Westhill. Moving on to Las Noticias, vemos el proceso de aplicando a la universidad y como mejor prepararse. Spe-

cial Reports dives into the history of Net Neutrality as well as the impact it will have on society.

Our Supplement this issue takes a look at standardized testing from all angles. In Feature, we have an interview with Mr. DeVellis, as well as an opportunity to get to know Westhill's new security guards

Limelight sheds light on streaming services alternative to Netflix, along with a look at ESports. Taking a look at Scatterbrain, you can read about Isabella Adamo, our Slay of the Month, as well as a guide for regifting.

In Express, we feature our Artist of the Month, Julia Fredrick, as well as other student work. In Sports, we take a look at multiple previews and updates on Westhill's

winter sports.

Online we continue to bring current news from the community as it happens. Be sure to check out our daily Morning Briefings, as well as an online version of The Hungry Vikings. We also encourage our readers to listen to our new podcasts. They can be found on [thewestwordonline.com](http://thewestwordonline.com).

We encourage any and all readers with comments, questions, or concerns to contact us by either dropping a letter into Noah Klein's mailbox in room 224 or emailing us at [westwordwhs@gmail.com](mailto:westwordwhs@gmail.com).

Sincerely,  
Noah Klein & Addison Magrath  
*Editor-in-Chief & Executive Editor*

### Editorial Policy

*The Westword* will be guided in the publication of material by a concern for truth, human decency, and human benefit. It is published during the school year by the late night staff, along with the Journalism and Communications classes. Letters to the Editor, advertising requests, comments, criticism, or suggestions are always welcome. The views expressed in Viewpoint and the Op-Ed page do not necessarily represent the opinions of *The Westword*.

The Editorial Board consists of Noah Klein, Addison Magrath, Josh Eimbinder, Max Zussman, Daniel Greco, Rachel Plotzky, Nicholas Zarrilli, Lexi Boccuzzi, Bailee Esposito, Alexandra Watkinson, Molly Cannon, Jude Ponthieu, Tamar Bellete, Guilmar Valle, Mr. von Wahlde, and Mr. Wooley. The Editorial can be found on page 3.

### Announcements

*The Westword* would like to wish everyone a happy new year and remind our readers that our next issue will release in February due to midterm exams.

### Corrections

*The Westword* misspelled Caitlin Covello on page 24 as "Caitlyn Covello." On page 9 *The Westword* incorrectly referred to Ms. Tobin as "Ms. Tintle" as co-director of the lip dub.

If you have an announcement or an advertisement you would like published in the next issue, please e-mail us at [westwordwhs@gmail.com](mailto:westwordwhs@gmail.com).

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## Switching up the languages

Effective communication based on knowledge of language and cultures will be a key to success and prosperity. This is the mission of the Stamford Public Schools World of Languages Program. At Westhill, foreign languages are a crucial part of the educational experience for many students. Students in foreign languages classes, typically will complete at least three full years of classes because that is what most colleges require. Through this experience, most students gain a basic sense of how to write, read, and communicate in their respective languages.

At Westhill, four foreign language courses are offered: Spanish, French, Italian, and Latin. While Spanish can prove to be a useful language to speak and understand, French and Italian are becoming increasingly less useful. The number of French and Italian speakers globally is far less compared to more prominent languages such as Chinese Mandarin or Arabic. According to Vistawide, a website that focuses on statistics regarding languages around the globe, Mandarin is the most spoken language in the world with over a billion speakers, while Arabic ranks fifth with 255 million speakers, respectively. In comparison, there are only about 130 million French speakers and 64 million Italian speakers - both ranking outside the top 15 in the most common spoken languages globally. In future years, Westhill students would benefit much more if Mandarin and Arabic were taught as up-to-date foreign languages, replacing French and Italian.

Learning Arabic or Mandarin is no easy task. French, Italian, and English all are considered Indo-European languages and all use the Roman alphabet, which makes it easier for English speakers to learn these languages. Arabic and Mandarin on the other hand, each have completely different alphabets and also incorporate tone so one word can be pronounced in unique ways, and each pronunciation has a different meaning. For instance, in Mandarin, according to Babel.com, "...the word ma can mean 'mother,' 'horse,' 'rough' or 'scold'—depending on how you say it." However, the benefits of learn-

ing these difficult languages are far superior compared to French and Italian. Being able to speak Arabic or Mandarin is a valuable skill for business. According to Rype Magazine, "Trillions of dollars worth of products are made and imported from China every year, and it's only increasing by the day... doing business with Chinese clients, partners, or suppliers is unavoidable."

If you want an edge in international business, Mandarin is

**Bottom line: Replacing French and Italian with Arabic and Mandarin—or at least adding these languages—would be very beneficial for all of Westhill, setting students up for a more successful future, specifically students going into business.**

likely one of the most important languages to learn for business." Mandarin is also spoken in eight other countries. Not only would this language be useful for travel, but it is useful to students for their future. Accent.gg, a website specializing in linguistics, reported that many CEOs will learn Mandarin in order to communicate with important business executives in China.

The Arabic language is not as widely spoken as Mandarin, but it is spoken across 60 different countries. The Middle East's growing involvement in international affairs causes a high demand for more speakers of Arabic. Learning Arabic could be beneficial to a student's future and help them in the long run. With regards to business, Rype explains, "With over \$600B in GDP, the Arab World is quickly becoming one of the wealthiest areas of the world. It's the home of wealthy nations like Dubai, and new career opportunities are constantly opening up in this part of the world... [Additionally] there is a short supply of Arabic speakers compared to the demand that's available today. If you're able to get to a conversation proficiency level, you can bet there will be a flow of job offers that will be showing up at your door."

Some students at Westhill seem to understand the benefits of learning one of these two languages. "I have always wanted to learn Arabic. I feel like as Asian countries become more business based, more people

should learn the language," said Amruta Viswanath ('18).

Mrs. Dunsmore, a guidance counselor at Westhill, also sees the potential benefits of these new language courses. "I think the variety is always good and the more languages the better. It might be difficult to find teachers [for those classes] but I think it would be better for our students," said Dunsmore.

However, not everyone agrees with replacing Italian/

French with Mandarin/Arabic. Mr. Magnifico, an Italian teacher asserted that if a student's reason for taking Mandarin is that it will further them in the business world, that argument is not exactly valid. Many of the top companies today are Italian as well. Magnifico continued saying, Mandarin should be offered, it is clearly beneficial, but it should not be added at the expense of other languages. Furthermore, the languages currently being taught is not as important as the effect on the students, promoting critical thinking in all subjects.

11th grade administrator, Mr Wax, also sees the benefits of Mandarin/Arabic but agrees that they should not necessarily replace the current foreign languages offered, "I do not feel that we should be replacing world languages with new world languages, we should be expanding them. Eliminating them would not help, only adding would help and be an enhancement...As the world gets small, to compete globally we need to speak multiple languages." Ms. Herz, World Language Department Head, also believes there is a misconception with the French language and business. "French happens to be the most prevalent international business language after English, so I think it is a misperception in the eyes of the people who think that Mandarin and Arabic are business languages."

Learning Italian can give students a head start if they wish to pursue learning any of the other

seven Romance Languages such as French, Spanish, Portuguese and Romanian. As mentioned before, there are 64 million speakers of Italian worldwide. However, according to Babel.com, Italy holds roughly 84 percent of the previously mentioned 64 million speakers.

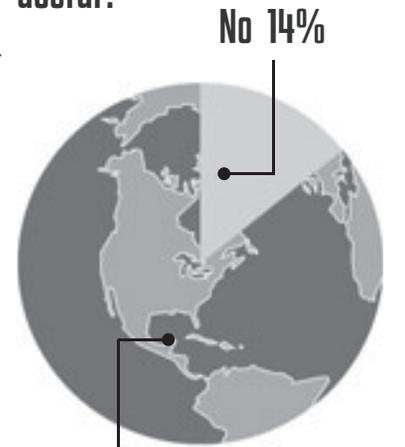
This leads to the idea that Italian may not be useful other than to visit the country, but it is also an official language of the European Union. Yet, the importance for an American high school student learning Italian may not be up to par.

In Westhill, replacing the existing French and Italian classes, or at least adding or expanding with Arabic and Mandarin would be highly beneficial. Students enrolled in the Academy of Finance, a member program of the National Academy Foundation, take specialized courses each school year in addition to their required classes for graduation. According to the Stamford Public Schools' Program of Studies, students in the program "gain the necessary technical, analytical, and communications skills needed to succeed in the business world." Though, by adding Mandarin and Arabic as business-oriented languages, Westhill students would gain experience in the most crucial tool for their future career: language.

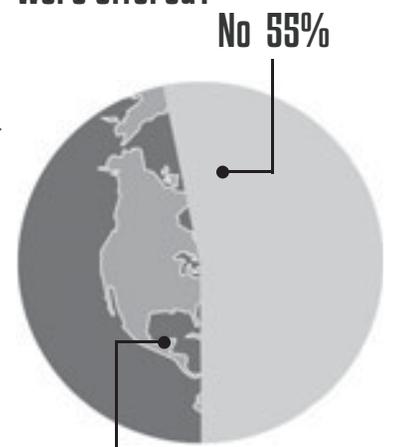
With over eighty students enrolled this year in the academy, the need to incorporate Mandarin and Arabic into Westhills course offerings is evident. Students in the academy will be able to further increase their practical experience if Mandarin and Arabic were to be added to Westhill's current languages.

Having practiced communicating in either language, academy students will have an advantage over others within the same field. Students not enrolled in the program can also benefit from these changes, as they can gain insight to potential career opportunities that require previous study of either the Mandarin or Arabic language. Through taking unique language courses, Westhill students would also be able to stand out among the plethora of college applicants.

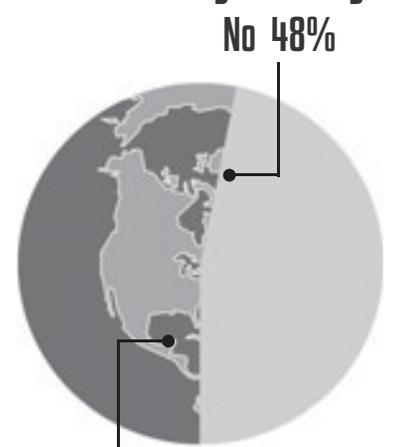
**Do you find foreign languages in general to be useful?**



**Would you have taken Arabic or Mandarin if they were offered?**



**Do you think that Arabic and Mandarin are more useful compared to French and Italian to know in today's society?**



# Bathrooms under lock and key

*Students and teachers notice locked bathrooms are keeping students out*

**Alyssa Goldberg**

Staff Writer

If a student finds themselves having to go to the bathroom in the mornings, they might want to consider going at home, as the bathrooms at school will be locked.

Everyday, security locks all the bathrooms until 8:00 am in hopes of keeping students from vaping and smoking inside.

“It has been more of an issue recently because we are catching more and more kids. [We have] no idea what we can do to prevent it. [Locking the bathrooms] is just one measure of slowing it down,” said head of security, Nick Wright.

However, when one bathroom locks, what stops students from

going to another? Some would say lock all of the bathrooms, but there needs to be restrooms available to students who are actually there for acceptable reasons.

The 100s seem to be the most affected, as Wright describes them as a “constant headache.”

*The Westword* consulted with Dr. Migiano, a teacher who is located in the 100s building. “It was so bad on Friday,” said Dr. Migiano, “I told the students to go to the gym, as I think that’s the closest open bathroom, [but] security was stopping them. So, they had to go to the 200s, but then the 200s were locked. [So they went to the bathrooms] by the cafeteria. We do not even know where to send them.”

Dr. Migiano describes that the bathrooms have only been open for three or four days in the 100s, and even then not for the entire day. This can be seen as both an inconvenience to students and a nuisance to teachers, as it causes students to miss valuable class time. A normal trip to the bathroom, which would typically last no longer than five minutes, can be doubled just due to travel time in attempts to find an open bathroom.

“It is inconvenient because if you go to the bathroom and find it is locked, you have to go to one in a different building. You miss more class than you would if the ones nearby were open,” said Maeve Breen (’18). Olivia Berni (’19) also feels as

though the locked bathrooms are a disturbance. “It is so annoying because not everyone does it, and if you are just trying to go to the bathroom, the doors are always locked. In the freshman wing they are always locked so I have to run somewhere else, and then I am late to class,” said Berni.

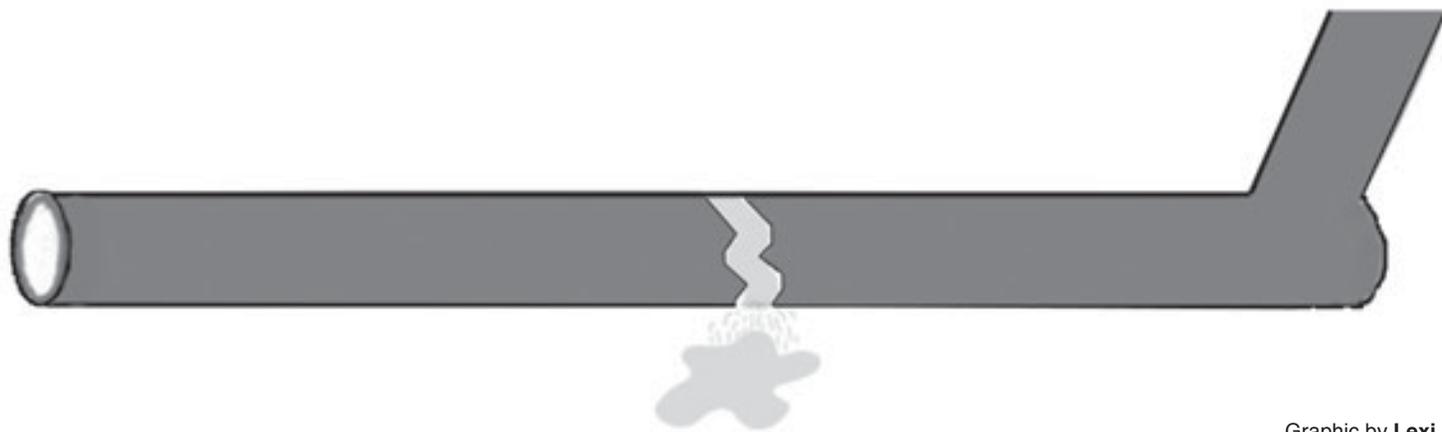
Berni is not the only student to feel this way, as many have expressed continuous aggravation over the inaccessibility of bathrooms around the building.

“It affects most of the people in buildings [where they are locked] because during long block, the 500s bathrooms are locked, and then my teacher gets mad at me when I have to go upstairs and there are a

bunch of people out there,” said Christopher Gaitan (’19).

The trickiest problem with the locked bathrooms seems to be simply finding another place to go. “If you are a girl and you have to use the bathroom, let us say you are on your period, you can not even go because they are locked. Then you can not even go to other buildings, such as the freshman because it is for ‘freshman only,’” said Shaunna Alexander (’19).

It is uncertain as to how long the lock on bathrooms will last, but it surely will continue to affect the teachers and students of Westhill. There are both pros and cons to this new procedure, however, it is the current solution.



Graphic by Lexi Boccuzzi / Section Editor

# Pipe burst over winter break chills cafeteria

**Josh Eimbinder**

Online Executive Editor

This past winter break was one of the coldest weeks of the year and saw temperatures on many days as low as single digits. As a result of this, a heating coil in the Raynor Cafeteria froze and broke while students were away on vacation. Principal Rinaldi broke the news on his Instagram, in a clip that garnered over 800 views. “We’re all systems a go as far as lunch is concerned,” said Mr. Rinaldi. “But, we are Vikings and we’ll get through it. We might just have to wear coats to lunch,” he continued. Certain students

have felt the effect of the heating coil more than others with some feeling that it is a distraction to their learning.

“It is the responsibility of the school to make sure that everything is working properly so that we feel comfortable in this environment,” said Brey Salguero (’18). “I’m more focused on the fact that it’s cold,” she said. The majority of students have brought heavy coats to school and have continued to wear them throughout the school day. In years past, even in the dark, dreary days of winter, students have shied away from wearing their coats.

“I really dislike the winter, and

now I have to wear three layers to keep warm. It’s a lot harder to learn when you’re in an uncomfortable environment regardless of if you’re in a hot or cold place,” said Etan Gabay (’18). “I understand it’s something that’s expensive to fix, however it’s something that should be checked regularly to ensure it’s not a common occurrence,” he said.

“The coil cracked. That’s the simple version of the story,” said head custodian Dominic Plateroti. “We are in the process of having it welded until a new heating element arrives. We’d rather do that than have no heat

at all,” he continued. While some students have complained of the cold, Plateroti hasn’t heard any of these complaints. “As far as the cafeteria goes, I haven’t gotten any complaints. Mr. Rinaldi went to check during lunch and he thought it was good too,” said Plateroti.

The school has portable space heaters on hand if it does happen to get too cold. They have not taken them out yet. As of right now, they expect the issue to be resolved with few disruptions. “At the end of the day, it is not as bad as we think,” said Jared Goldstein (’19). “I would rather the classrooms be very cold compared to

the 90 degree heat we have to endure in the beginning of the school year,” he continued.

The cold did not stop the majority of students from enjoying their lunch in the Raynor cafeteria. Even if it was warm, the only other location where the hundreds of students (who attend each lunch wave) could eat is in the courtyard. Kids bundled up in gloves, hats (to the dismay of teachers), and coats from brands such as North Face, Canada Goose, Under Armor, and Nike. Students huddled together with their friends and braved the cold for a 26 minute lunch while they waited for class to start.

# Mock trial secures first win of the year

*Westhill mock trial advances to next round after winning first tournament*

**Caitlin Covello**  
Staff Writer

Mock Trial is an academic club that re-enacts court cases in a school setting. Westhill's team is coached by Alex Troyb, a lawyer from Stamford. The team recently won their first competition of the year for both the prosecution and defense. This win has moved them on to the next round of the season.

To prepare for the competition, the team is split into groups: prosecution and defense. Each group consists of three lawyers and three witnesses. The teams are presented with previously occurring cases, and each side is responsible for coming up with their own theory of the case.

This year a program known as "Civics First" gave the team their case. The case they were given is a criminal case. Specifically, the case examines a complicated boating accident that was later reopened creating questions about illegal drug sales, murder, arson, and memory manipulation. Each team is then responsible for analyzing the case's details and coming up with their own solution for what happened.

From this point, each lawyer is paired with one witness and is responsible for preparing a direct examination based on the witnesses' affidavit (an account of the events while under oath). The lawyers are also responsible for creating the cross-examination for the opposing team. The law-

yers must also write and memorize an opening or closing statement for the case.

Students work with William Evans, a former Westhill student and experienced witness to help them understand what it is like to be a witness in a real court case.

"It really is a learning experience and the whole team is very close. We take each other's constructive criticism and we all work to improve," said Isabella Adamo ('20).

After preparing months in advance, both the defense and prosecution sides of the team compete against another school with the same exact case. The team will only continue forward this year if both the prosecution and defense win.

The teams recent competition

took place at the Stamford Superior Court House against Fairfield and Stonington High School.

The competition starts with the lawyers' opening statements followed by the prosecution's direct examination of their witness. The school's witnesses have studied the real witnesses from the case and answer the questions from their point of view. The witnesses then get cross-examined by the defense, exposing any inconsistency or holes in their story.

The defense then does the same cross-examination with their witnesses and the case is finished with the lawyers' closing statements. After all teams compete, the judges give out notes and critiques for each team's prosecution and defense.

Westhill's team will continue to compete with the hopes of making it on to further rounds. Before their next competition, the team will use the critiques given by the judges to strengthen their performance. Mock trial combines acting, reasoning, and law and unsurprisingly attracts a wide range of students with many interests.

"I always knew I wanted to be a lawyer or be involved in the legal system, so being on the team has made me more passionate about it," said team co-captain Diana Bustillo ('18). "Some students simply like to act, while for others, they are just trying to find something new." The Mock Trial Team will head back to the courts February second to hear their fate.



**ORDER IN THE COURT** Westhill Mock Trial team pictured at the Stamford Superior Court House where they won their last competition.

Photo courtesy of Lexi Boccuzzi / Section Editor.

## New teacher contract in Westhill

**Shaira Sunbeam**  
Staff Writer

Labor unions are meant to be a type of security blanket for employees jobs. A union acts as the middle ground between workers and the business that employs them. The union gives employees the power to negotiate for better working conditions and benefits. It is a way for employees to be protected from suddenly being fired or taken advantage of. Now, teachers are rethinking whether or not the union has been doing its job.

The Stamford Education Association (SEA), which serves

as the labor union for Stamford Public School teachers and the district negotiate over new contracts every two years. Drafting a new contract is a delicate and time consuming process. Negotiators from SEA will discuss contract details until they have finally agreed on what they believe is a fair contract. One of the new items in this year's contract is the 1.24 percent raise for higher paid teachers, and a three percent raise for lower paid teachers. The district determines raises through two specific factors: the number of years a teacher has been teaching in the district and their level depending

on their teaching degree.

However, some teachers feel there are some mathematical issues with the calculations. "The increase is not mathematically correct; it is all just kind of backwards. At this point, the salaries are only drawn out for a year. This is the first time in my career as a teacher, where they have had the salaries for one year," said science teacher Dr. Migiano.

It is not only the benefits or salaries teachers are concerned about, but the conditions that they must work in. "The fact that I am an AP teacher and have to do cafeteria duty along with my crazy workload is ridiculous,"

said Spanish teacher Ms. Alvarez. Teachers have other tasks that they must complete and some are upset with the added responsibility. The added pressure and time consumption of cafeteria duty during long blocks along with less prep time can lead to a stressful environment.

Many teachers are not only upset with what is on the contract, but also what was not given attention. Teachers who go on maternity leave, get only 12 weeks of paid leave. This causes teachers to get back before they may be physically ready to, since they cannot continue on without a paycheck after three months.

Ms. Walden, an English teacher, also serves as an SEA representative. "I think that given the economic strength and the current climate of the country it was the best deal we could get," said Walden.

At this point, some are disappointed by the new contract, while others are accepting it. "As a new teacher, I am just happy to have a contract," said Social Studies teacher Mr. Hill. We have to wait until next year to see what the union and district decide on for salaries. Right now, it seems there will be a raise increase, since it was so small this year.

# Upcoming school field trips

**Nicole Vantman**  
Staff Writer

There are many school trips in the making this year for Westhill students. Some have already been approved and have a specific date, while others are still in the beginning stages of approval.

One trip in the works is to Hawaii, orchestrated by Curri. "The trip was originally for the choir students but is now open

to all Westhill students upon request," said Mr. Curri. Students will be required to pay for their own air fare, but it is bound to be a priceless vacation and experience.

In March, *The Westword* is continuing the annual trip to Columbia University's CSPA Annual Convention where students will join Mr. Von Wahlde and Mr. Wooley to hear from teachers and professional journalists. Every year, 30 to 40

students attend the conference. This trip is expected to stay a tradition for years to come.

Ms. English, a freshman social studies teacher spent months planning an exciting trip that takes off during the summer of 2018. English and students will be boarding a plane for a one-week trip through Poland and Germany. Students will be able to experience the rich culture for themselves and study the

history of the Holocaust first hand.

"A really good field trip should have educational components as well as fun activities for the students. It should be something that resonates with kids for years in the future," said Mr. Rinaldi.

There are more trips coming this year for after school clubs. Mock Trial will be competing throughout Connecticut showcasing their months

of hard work and preparation. The math team will also be traveling and competing with other schools in the area.

Every year, the French Club takes its students on a three day trip to Quebec, Canada. The tradition will continue this year. With so many different departments planning trips, there is no shortage of opportunities for Westhill students to gain a once in a lifetime experience.

## VIKINGS TRAVELERS



Photos courtesy of [commons.wikimedia.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org)

## Good Month Bad Month

Column by  
**Matthew Greenbaum  
& Max Zussman**



### Good Month for...

**Star Wars** *The Last Jedi* the eighth installment in the *Star Wars* series premiered on December 14. The movie had an extremely successful weekend in the box office being the second biggest opening weekend in North American history. Disney reported that the movie brought in an estimated 220 million dollars over opening weekend. The movie has made over 450 million dollars since being released overseas which is extraordinary considering China—the world’s second biggest film market—will not see the new *Star Wars* film until January 5.



**Eminem** On December 15, the legendary M.C. released his ninth studio album titled *Revival*. This album was released with much anticipation surrounding it, being Eminem’s newest album in over four years. The album is quite lengthy at 77 minutes and contains features from some of the industry’s top artists such as Beyonce, Ed Sheeran, Alicia Keys, and P!nk. *Revival* is a heavy listen with Eminem rapping about politics, his struggles with drugs, and even an apology to his daughter.



**Blindness** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved a type of gene therapy that may help patients with the rare eye disease, retinal dystrophy. This disease results in the loss of peripheral vision and eventually blindness. Patients who have had a mutation of the RPE65 gene will be eligible for treatment. Luxturna neparvovec is the name of the drug, and scientists hope that this breakthrough will lead to many more cures to blindness in the future.

### Bad Month for...

**Winters** This year, the season is expected to be one of the coldest and snowiest in recent history. Meteorologists predict that an above-average snowfall will bury the Northeast, and temperatures could potentially be dropping below zero. Both the New York City and Boston areas could see an extra six inches this season. According to *cnn.com*, New York City just experienced its second coldest New Years Eve in history, with 1917 still holding the record. Be prepared for warm clothes, shoveling, and of course, hot cocoa.



**California** Thousands of people in Southern California were forced to evacuate as a raging wildfire swept through Ventura County. The “Thomas Fire” started on December 4, and since then it has scorched roughly 272,200 acres—the largest wildfire in California history. Already, 50,000 people have been forced to evacuate and one firefighter has been killed while trying to tame the fires. American’s thoughts and prayers reach out to all the citizens who have been affected by the relentless fire.



**Trade Deficit** Congress has recently passed the first significant tax reform since 1986. Many experts believe it will increase the countries trade deficits. There is a chance it can increase the countries deficits by 1.5 trillion dollars over the next decade. Americans will have more money in their pockets, which leads to more spending. Companies in the United States likely will not be able to meet the sudden demands of the consumers, which will lead to consumers buying more imported goods.

# Lip dub becomes a hit

**Phoebe Lukaswitz**  
Staff Writer

Weeks have passed since the Westhill Lip Dub was released, and the number of views has begun to rise. The lip dub got over 100,000 views totaled from Facebook, Vimeo, and YouTube in only five days. The video now has over 20,000 views on YouTube, 9,000 on Vimeo, and a soaring 83,000 on Facebook.

There were so many positive reactions about the video going viral. “We are so excited that so many people have been enjoying the Viking pride. We were hoping to get 1,000 views, but when we hit 100,000 we were so excited,” said co-director Mrs. Cohen.

“We were not sure if we were going to go viral. There are so many lip dubs out there and we just tried our best to represent everything that is Westhill,” said Cohen.

Ms. Tobin, who joined Mrs. Cohen in co-directing the lip

dub, added that a lot of Westhill graduates have watched and shared the video as well.

“I especially love that so many of our views are by alumni, and that they continue to share it. Knowing that all these Westhill graduates are out there and keep watching it and loving it—that is true Viking pride. Once a Viking, always a Viking,” said Tobin.

Since the amount of feedback and the number of views is so high, rumors of it becoming a Westhill tradition floated the hallways.

“We would love to have the lip dub be a tradition every year. It is such a fun experience and we hope that even more people will want to be a part of it, either as a dubber, decorator, or someone who contributes ideas,” said Cohen.

One student, who did not participate in the lip dub disagrees with making it annual. “No, I do not think it should be every year, even though it looked fun. I just think that

most of the kids in school do not have that much school spirit all year round,” said Alyssa Guadiano (’19).

Since the first Westhill Lip Dub of 2017 has been noticed so much in such a short amount of time, speculations of a Lip Dub 2018 arise.

“Lip Dub 2018 is in the works. Everyday we write down new ideas and have welcomed anyone who has ideas to send them over so we can keep track. “Our goal is to be all inclusive, a lip dub where no Viking is left behind...and of course, to outdo ourselves every year,” said Cohen.

Lip Dub 2018 will likely be filled with many new ideas and even more views than this year.

The views are not the only thing that matter to the directors, though. The school pride is important as well. “We think the school spirit this year has felt a big boost and we love seeing everyone here have such pride in our school,” said Cohen.

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## The low down on tax reform

**Bailee Esposito**  
Supplement Editor

After almost a year under the new, turbulent Trump administration, the Republican Tax Reform Bill has been proposed. This bill received a great deal of scrutiny as well as praise from different groups as it made its way through Congress. With President Trump's approval rate being at a low of 35 percent according to CNN, it seemed that people passed judgement on this bill, as well as other proposals of his, without much research into the matter. As a citizen, it is essential to be educated on the issues regarding the welfare of one's own country.

This plan echoes Trump's key points which he has stated for years, both throughout his campaign, as well as when he secured the role of Commander-in-Chief. President Trump vowed to enrich the United States' economy and bring large corporations back to the country.

While it may seem like a tax break for the big corporations, the new lower rates are more incentivizing to big corporations than

anything else. Many companies simply cannot survive in the United States with high property taxes and wages, among other financial woes. This is why large companies move to other countries. By lowering the tax rates for these corporations, they are likely to move back to the United States, provide jobs to numerous people, and, in turn, feeds more money into the economy.

"The plan basically gets done what it needs to: it enacts permanent, pro-growth tax reforms in combination with tax cuts and simplification for the middle class. That was the mission, and the mission has been accomplished," said Dr. Forbes, the head of the history department.

The "simplification" Dr. Forbes speaks of refers to the consolidation of tax brackets. According to *Business Insider*, "the final bill proposes eliminating the personal exemption and increasing the standard deduction." This would benefit those in the lower to lower middle class, by allowing them to gain more benefits than they do with the current brackets.

"The [Republican Party] tax

reform bill is not for the middle class. It saves the big corporations thousands of dollars and is just a test of trickle down economics, a tried and flawed theory," said Sydney Steinberg ('19).

While this is a valid opinion, it is important to look at all parts of the tax reform. Anything could be made out to be exclusively negative, which is why taking a look at the benefits is crucial. "Trickle down economics" is a theory that has been tried before, but it is wrong to say that it will never work just because it did not work under different administration.

In order to combat the top one percent of the population from reaping the most benefits, what is known as the "bubble rate" will be set in place. This rate denies individuals with income over one million dollars a year, or those who are married with a combined income

over 1.2 million dollars a year, the chance to gain benefits of the top twelve percent bracket. In order for the bubble rate to work, there is a six percent surtax on all incomes aforementioned.

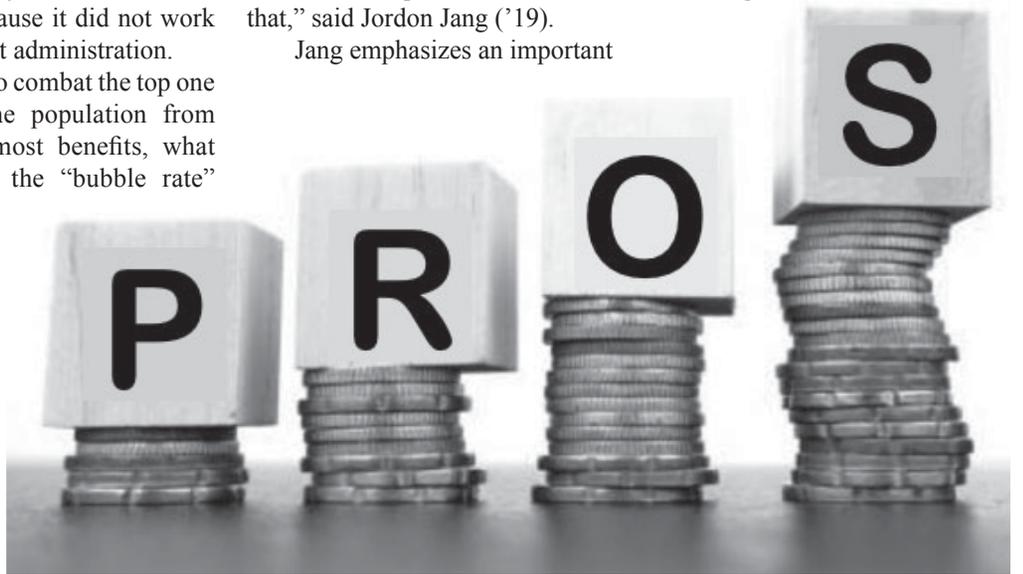
"Some people want lower taxes while others want them higher. However, no one really wants higher taxes for themselves, they always say the rich should be paying more. The top 20 percent in the United States already pay almost 100 percent of all federal taxes and the tax reform plan does not lower that," said Jordon Jang ('19).

Jang emphasizes an important

point. Many are led to believe that this plan was created to make the richest people in the United States even richer.

"It is definitely a change. It shows a different outlook for the future of our country," said Samuel Spingola ('19).

No plan produced by the government will satisfy the entire population. However, as for now, we should try to understand the bill as best as we can to highlight the benefits rather than focusing on the negatives.



**Samantha Hamilton**  
Staff Writer

There is a lot of debate on how to accomplish the goal of keeping the United States economy flourishing and creating growth and stability for workers. The current tax plan being pushed by Republicans in Congress and President Trump seems beneficial to lower and middle class families, but the largest

tax breaks will be for the wealthy.

According to Fox News, 80 percent of all cuts in the house bill will be for large corporations, businesses and wealthy families. These corporate tax cuts will exist permanently, benefiting the big businesses for years to come. However, individual rate cuts will expire in 2025. This expiration will cause taxes for families making under 75,000 dollars to increase, and families making more than 75,000 dollars to decrease.

This is extremely controversial because the Grand Ol' Party (GOP/Republi-

can Party) could have decided to make corporate tax cuts temporary and the individual rates permanent, but the GOP claims the economic growth of these corporations will make up the deficit. The GOP openly admit that their priorities lie with the corporations and that their plan is meant to make United States' companies competitive and bring jobs back to our country. The disparity of wealth between the rich and poor will only grow under this plan.

While the growth of our economy is important, there is no evidence that jobs will be created or that our lower middle class will be helped by the creation of these jobs. Yet the corporate tax cuts were deemed more important than the individual rates which influence the taxing of the entire country.

The poor will see a slight tax cut for now and by the time

our current president and Congress are gone, their taxes will likely be higher than they were before the cuts.

Meanwhile, the rich can possibly continue to get richer. The idea that wages will increase is backed up with no evidence. Without wage increases, the only other way for low and middle class families to gain is through higher tax cuts, which will likely go away in eight years.

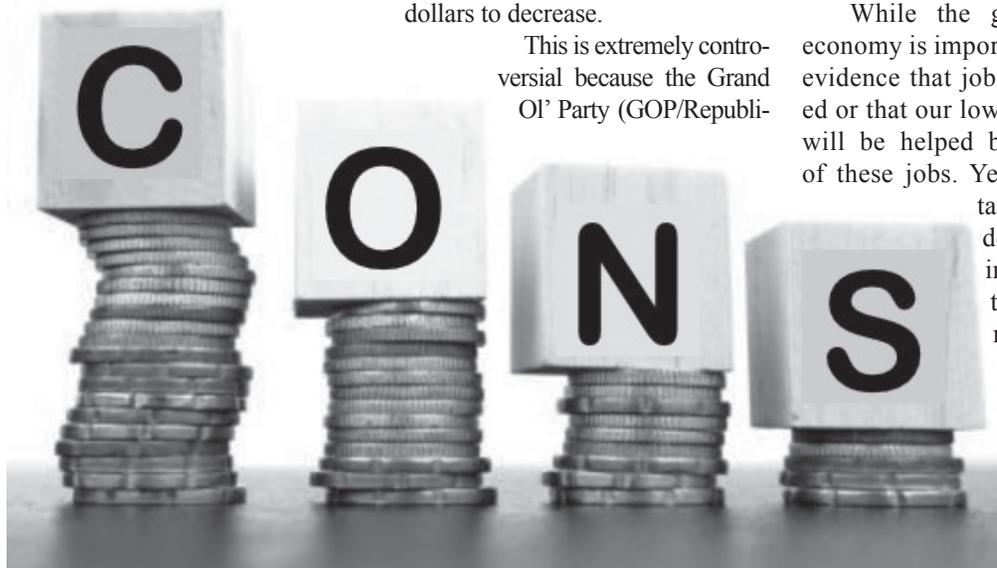
The heavy reliance on trickle down economics to help our middle income families may be described as scary. Trickle down economics is a theory that giving tax cuts to the rich and high income companies will boost the entire economy, and that the wealth of the upper class will spread down to the poor as they invest their money into succeeding companies.

While it would be nice to see the working class reek benefits of the upper classes success, these investments are rarely used to pay the working class more, rather, they are put back into the infrastructure of the company, which ultimately creates benefits for the heads of these companies and not the working tier of the corporate ladder.

The heavy push for this bill may appear as though it is all due to President Trump, but the Republicans in the Senate are likely using him as a mask to gain the tax cuts of their dreams. It is likely that Republican senators have supported the bills Trump suggested in 2017 in order to gain support for their tax plans.

However, some are hopeful. "I hope that this tax bill will do as it has promised and serve my generation well during our wage earning years. While there are some aspects that concern me, I'm optimistic about it," said Grace Savage ('18).

Based on the results of the recent election in Alabama with what may be seen as a surprise loss from Republican Roy Moore, the people who do not support the agenda of Trump-like candidates are ready to rise to the occasion and vote. With mid year elections approaching, it is likely that the Senate will no longer hold a Republican majority and this may be their last chance to achieve what they were unable to do under the Obama Administration.



# Parking spots and pride

**Andrew Lappas**  
Staff Writer

Juniors in the past years have looked forward to decorating their assigned spots as a senior. Some students plan their spots all summer, just waiting to decorate them. Students spoke about what they were going to put on their spots and were excited to try to get spots close to each other.

Imagine how students felt when they found out the school was taking away this senior privilege. By taking away this privilege, the administration took away something fun that many students were planning and looking forward to throughout high school.

Decorating a parking spot shows school spirit and can help build the school community. Also, Westhill was the only school in Stamford that allowed seniors to feel unique

through decorating spots. Westhill should bring back assigned parking spots and the ability to customize your spot. The spots previous seniors had designed were an example of this. Last year, one student had a mustang symbol to symbolize how much he loved his car.

There is something students can do to bring this great idea back. Students can try to bring this privilege back by proposing to customize their spots, for the sake of school spirit.

This can be achieved by requiring administration to approve of design ideas to be forehand. A contest could be held for the best parking spot, that shows the most school spirit. The contest would be a great class building activity to create epic spots that represent Westhill's old traditions.

It is not only about decorating a spot, but it can also relieve stress for many students.

Everyone has bad mornings and it is made worse by rushing to school, only to find there is nowhere to park. Having assigned spots will make those hectic moments a little more bearable. In school few things truly belong to you, but having a spot shows responsibility and the ability to be trusted as a senior.

"[Having assigned parking spots] decreases anxiety for students because instead of choosing a spot every day and fighting over spots, everyone can have their same spot everyday. This will help decrease risks of road rage and accidents," said Jason Bria ('18).

Bria would like to represent himself through his parking spot by showcasing his love for the Red Sox and Westhill. Bria believes that it represents Westhill in a different way from others as, "it is a gift for seniors."

"[Doing this] was a fun

way of making the senior class seem more like a family," said Mrs. Cohen, who attended Westhill and loved assigned parking spots. Seniors would pick a weekend before school started and they would come and paint their spots together.

Next year, any senior who wants a spot should be able to make it their own. "It is only November. I think there is enough time to earn the privilege back of at least painting the lot," said Cohen.

"I would want a parking spot for myself because, I hate panicking and with the new rule of being allowed to miss first [block] when having study hall. I would hate to not have a spot," said Dylan Sparks ('19).

Sparks believes that every spot that is painted displays personality. "Walking through the lot seeing the painted spots trying to figure out whose [spot] is whose can be fun," said Sparks.

"Spots were taken away from the seniors because I think it was unfair for the students to have some and not the teachers. It interrupted learning because of people who parked in the wrong spot and caused problems," said Principal Rinaldi. However, a compromise was brought up and discussed.

"I 100 percent [understand why students are upset] because it shows maturity and ownership. This is why I am going to hold a contest for the best parking spot custom made. I understand you do not have permanent spots but the person who creates the best looking parking spot judged by me and administration will win free lunch and the choice of brining four friends along," said Rinaldi.

This is the best students will get for now, but the fight is on for seniors to create the best spirited spot.

# A call for basic life skills instruction

**Rachel Plotzky**  
Managing Editor

Home Economics is a single class dedicated entirely to the future. It is a class that would teach students how to take care of basic life skills after high school.

Although the curriculum of this class was originally created to teach women wifely duties, in today's world it has the ability to teach so much more. With all of the diverse classes that Westhill already offers, it is surprising that home economics is not one of them.

There are numerous skills that could benefit the average student. In the Academy of Finance, an exclusive club in Westhill, students are taught certain skills that they could easily benefit from learning. These skills could also be used in the financial world. In specialized classes, the members learn how to write checks, make resumes, and interview professionally.

Although every student would not need to learn these skills, students should have the ability to learn similar skills that will give them an advantage later

on in life.

"[Home economics] should be available for anyone that wants to take it. Some people would not be able to learn these skills otherwise," said Simone Kenny ('18).

According to the Library of Congress, home economics began to be integrated into the curriculum of schools after the Morrill Act was passed in 1862, which gave grants to colleges and prompted more women to begin going to school.

The Library of Congress also states that, "over the following decades, home economists [graduates of home economics] worked as homemakers and parents, and also played significant roles in diverse areas of public life. Many pursued business careers such as the food industry, textiles and clothing, hotel and restaurant management, and interior design."

The class provides students the ability to succeed after they finish school. Home economists are able to get jobs and have the confidence to go into fields

they otherwise would not have looked into.

Currently in society, one of the primary focuses is on technology. At Westhill we have a multitude of computer classes offered. These teach

home economics] because right now no one focuses on that... We should start to focus on stuff we do use. Before everyone had to learn these things," said Lupe Tamayo ('19).

By not having this option in school, many students are missing out on the ability to learn the basic skills many of their parents were able to master and use in their daily lives today.

This provided them with a foundation for success that is unfortunately no longer available.

As stated by School is Easy Tutoring, home economics opens the mind to a more creative way of thinking. Home economics developed the thinking that has

lead to Nobel Prizes being won and entrepreneurs being born. Learning to cook, sew, and budget could be the key to success. If the class was created at Westhill, it could open the door to motivation, innovation and graduates

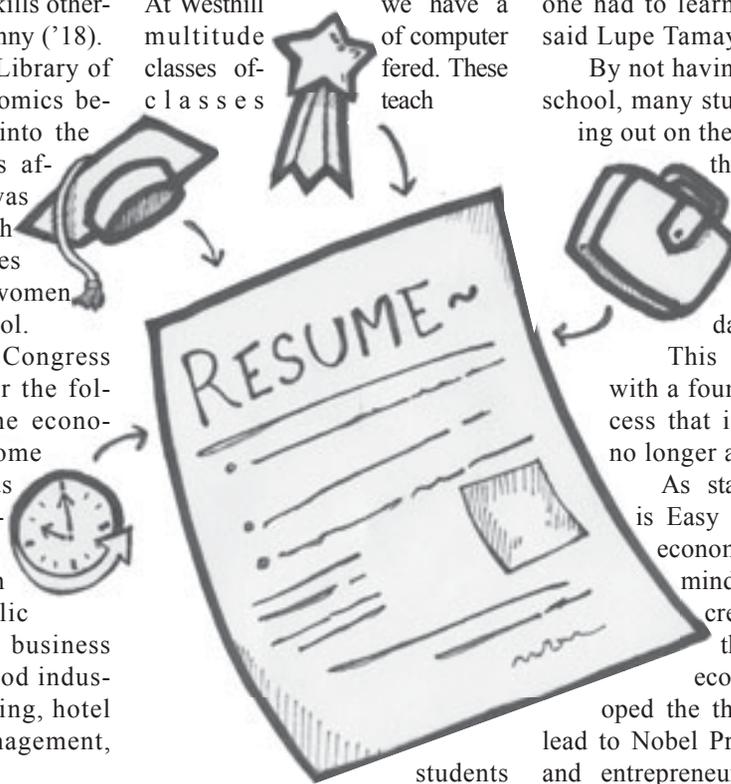
becoming more successful.

According to the *Boston Globe*, home economics classes became optional after the radical feminist, Robin Morgan, began speaking out about the issues of teaching only women the skills of how to be "a limp, jibbering mass of jelly waiting for marriage."

However—although it was not everywhere—men were taking home economics as well. If this class were to be added to the repertoire of Westhill's class options, both genders would have an equal chance to participate in these learning activities.

"[Home economics] would help people who are not going to college with the skills they would need. It is also a fun and different elective that people would enjoy. If it is alternative most people would take it," said Divya Gada ('20).

Westhill would be creating an easy and clear path of how to live after high school whether you are joining the workforce or attending college. It would be the bridge from student life to adulthood.



students the basic skills in the world of technology. Yet, Westhill does not extend classes that teach the basic skills of adulthood.

"I believe we should [have

# The use of the “N word” in society

**Jude Ponthieu**  
Limelight Editor

The N word is a single word that has been used to degrade and shatter the image of an entire race. Overtime, the N word has adapted from a word of complete hatred to a word of camaraderie amongst African Americans. People of another race using the word bring many to the question, what races should truly be allowed to use the N word?

Joyner Lucas’ song “I’m Not Racist” has brought to light the never ending topic of a racial divide in the United States. Lucas speaks from both the African American and the white perspective on the topic, highlighting the disconnect between each side and how little they agree with the other race’s opinion.

One line in the song from the African Americans perspective is about the N word and how they feel about white people using it. “N\*\*\*a, that word was originated for you to keep us under, and when we use it, we know that’s just how we greet each other, and when you use it, we know there’s a double meaning under,” said Lucas.

Though there is not a set origin of the N word, it is often traced back to the Latin word Nigger, which translates to the color black. This word over time turned into the noun Negro, meaning African American person, or the color black in the Spanish language. The full N word is said to have been the phonetic spelling of the southern white mispronunciation of the word Negro.

The full derogatory usage of the term came in the 1800s, in which it was used as a term of exclusion and hatred towards African Americans. Though back then African Americans used the variations of the term to refer to each other. Nat Turner, who

headed Turner’s Rebellion, may have used it when referring to his fellow slaves. It may also have been used by Martin Luther King Jr. during the Civil Rights Era to describe the oppression of his fellow Negroes in his speeches. Now the slang term is used commonly by African Americans to refer to each other as a term of inclusion.

Even in current day music such as hip hop, the N word is used only acceptably by African Americans, though not only to

used as a term of persecution towards African Americans, so only they should be able to reclaim the word as a term of endearment.

However, some whites would argue that they mean no harm when they use it, and the fact that only African Americans can use it creates reverse racism. This could not be true since white people never experienced the racial oppression that goes along with the N word. Many also argue that people of color in the present day

color. This, in part, is another reason why only African Americans should be able to say the word. White people do not have anything to reclaim from the N word, except for its derogatory terminology, as whites were never on the receiving end of the harm of the term.

“Black people should use the word, because white people abuse the word,” said Lisa Felix (’18). This is true, because a word that was used so heavily to undermine a race should not be coming so

the word needs to die down.

Sava Logvinski (’18) and Brendan Pierre (’18) both agree that while they do not feel comfortable with white people using the word, African Americans should not be using it as much as they do. It has become a word almost as common to hear in the halls of Westhill as the word hello.

“Black people should try and say it less because if we use it as frequently as we do it kind of gives them the right of way to say it,” said Pierre.

“Although for the most part when I hear whites say it, it means no harm, I believe all races should be saying it less,” said Logvinski.

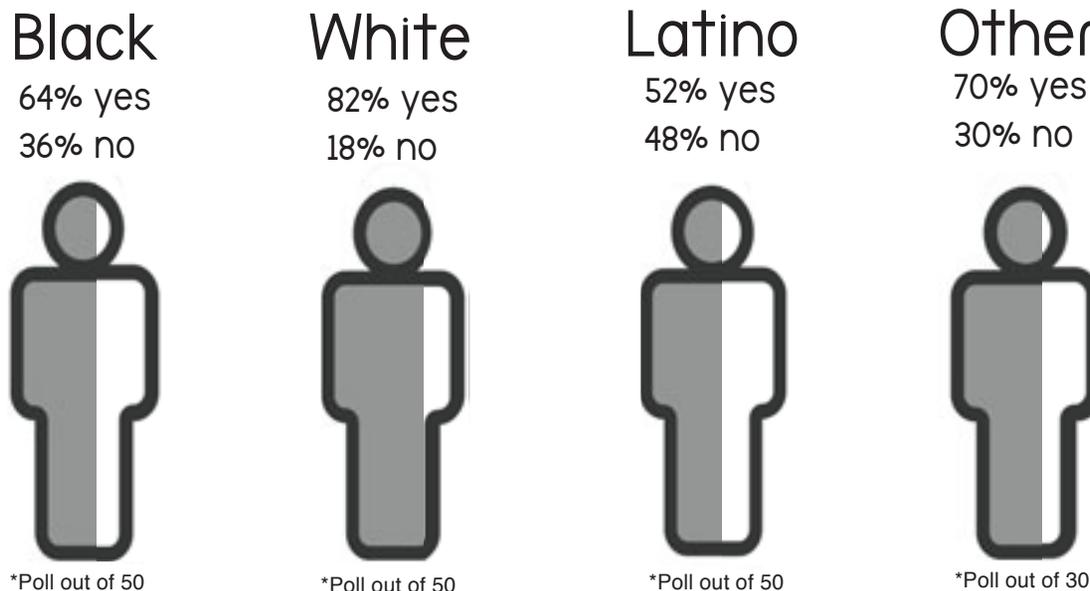
Even though the word is used more commonly as a term of endearment between African Americans, why not use something more empowering and unifying than a word that still has that negative meaning close behind it?

The N word is not the only word that has been reclaimed and certainly is not the only word that people believe should belong to them. Words like queer in the LGBTQ+ community are making waves to be used only by the people that identify that way. Other words like spic, nerd, and faggot are also on the way to being reclaimed and causing a stir as to why only one group should have a right to say it.

“If it is offensive it should not be used at all. It is one thing for someone to say something about themselves, but when another person says it, it brings a completely new meaning to the word,” said Sofia Hardman (’20).

These words have a similar use in society as the N word, in that if one did not face the oppression or deal with the hardships that comes along with these words, then they should not have a right to use them, no matter what way they are used.

## Are you offended by the use of the N word?



refer to African Americans. There are some songs where a rapper will use the N word to refer to an individual of any race either as a term of endearment or negatively.

Although the punch that comes along with this word is no longer as strong, many African American students agree that it does not take away from the fact that the history of the word is a reason why African Americans, and African Americans only, should be able to use the term. The word was

have not gone through the oppression that African Americans in the past have faced.

“Even if I wasn’t picking cotton physically, that don’t mean I’m not affected by the history,” said Lucas later on in the song. This explained that even though African Americans in the present day United States have not gone through slavery and intense segregation, they are still facing and affected by many of the pitfalls that come along with being a person of

frequently out of the mouth of just anyone. When someone uses the word they integrate themselves into a race of people who were formerly oppressed and belittled, without ever experiencing any of the hardships that come with it.

Even though some white people acknowledged their misuse of the word, it should not give them the privilege to use the word as one of endearment when they used it for years as a term of degradation. As a result, frequent usage of



## When my B equals your A *A need for consistent grading in core classes*

Westhill has over 2,000 students which means there is great demand for a variety of faculty, each with their own approach of running their classroom.

Westhill offers many different classes at a variety of levels three different levels College Prep (CP), Honors, and Advanced Placement (AP). There is usually more than a single teacher teaching each course at the same level. This means that when a student signs up for a class, they do not know who their teacher is going to be.

Since each teacher has their own way of running the classroom, there will likely be diversity across classes. Especially with more than one teacher teaching the same level class. However, it is the differences in how teachers assess their classrooms that some students find troubling.

For example, one class may be offered test corrections while another is not. Although two or more teachers are teaching the same course, it is possible for a student with a stronger grasp of the material in one class to score lower on an evaluation from one teacher versus another.

Any letter grade a student receives in a class impacts their grade point average (GPA), the grade also affects their student ranking. For many students, it is frustrating to know that the teacher they receive will impact their academic career. While it is unrealistic to expect our teachers to teach in the same way, there should be mandated guidelines for teachers to follow when evaluating their students' performances.

The student that receives exams with greater detail, limited amount of test time, and no extra credit will likely feel pushed to work harder and longer for that class. A student in a comparable class with a different teacher, who allows extra time on tests, test corrections or extra credit, lets as well as allows students to take heavily weighted assignments home, may not feel the same way. The latter student is potentially more likely to receive a higher grade.

"Having a teacher that teaches the curriculum in a different way is not always beneficial, especially if you get the harder one. With more

work than the other class, and less time to do it in, [students with the 'easier' teacher] end up having a better quarter grade, less stress, and enjoy the course a lot more. I know that I have been very overwhelmed and upset with the way certain teachers have taught me, and constantly complained about the unfairness of the situation," said Nikola Newcomer ('19).

There are numerous courses where this situation occurs. Students are constantly frustrated with the disparity in teachers' styles. It is upsetting to think that a student's grades could have been higher in another class, regardless of how well they knew the material. When signing up and taking a specific class, students should feel that all of their learning and testing options will be equal.

"In Honors Chemistry I had a teacher who had a very strict way of running her class. On labs you were on your own and did not get extra time at home, unlike the other Honors Chemistry teachers allowed. Her tests were much harder and we did not receive test corrections as other classes did. However, I can confidently say I learned chemistry and got more out of it than students who did not have my teacher," said Amanda Veseli ('19).

These situations regarding consistency occur across many subjects and affect students heavily. "In my three years of English classes there has never been any consistency between my class and the others. While we are doing multiple timed writes, other classes are reading books that our class [did not] get to read or studying something completely different. My grades therefore are heavily weighted on the timed writes while other classes are heavily weighted on tests they take on the book their reading," said Grace Hansen ('19).

For years both students and faculty have reached out to teachers and administrators regarding these inequities, but there has yet to be any sort of major change. "Adults that I have consulted with tell me that I am learning more, but how much does that help if I get a bad average? I have ended up not liking the class, overly stressed with everything piling up, and not getting a good grade, wondering if I would be dealing

with this if I had gotten the other teacher," said Newcomer.

Both the district and administration are aware of these inconsistencies in the classroom. "The district is working towards standardizing grading [between teachers, but] it still has a long way to come," said Assistant Principal Mr. Rinaldi.

"I think that inconsistency is natural when it comes to academics due to a variety of teaching styles and differences in class composition. Regardless, I feel that it is necessary for everyone involved to work together, communicate effectively, and

be held accountable in order to support our students to the best of our abilities," said guidance counselor Mrs. Mitchell.

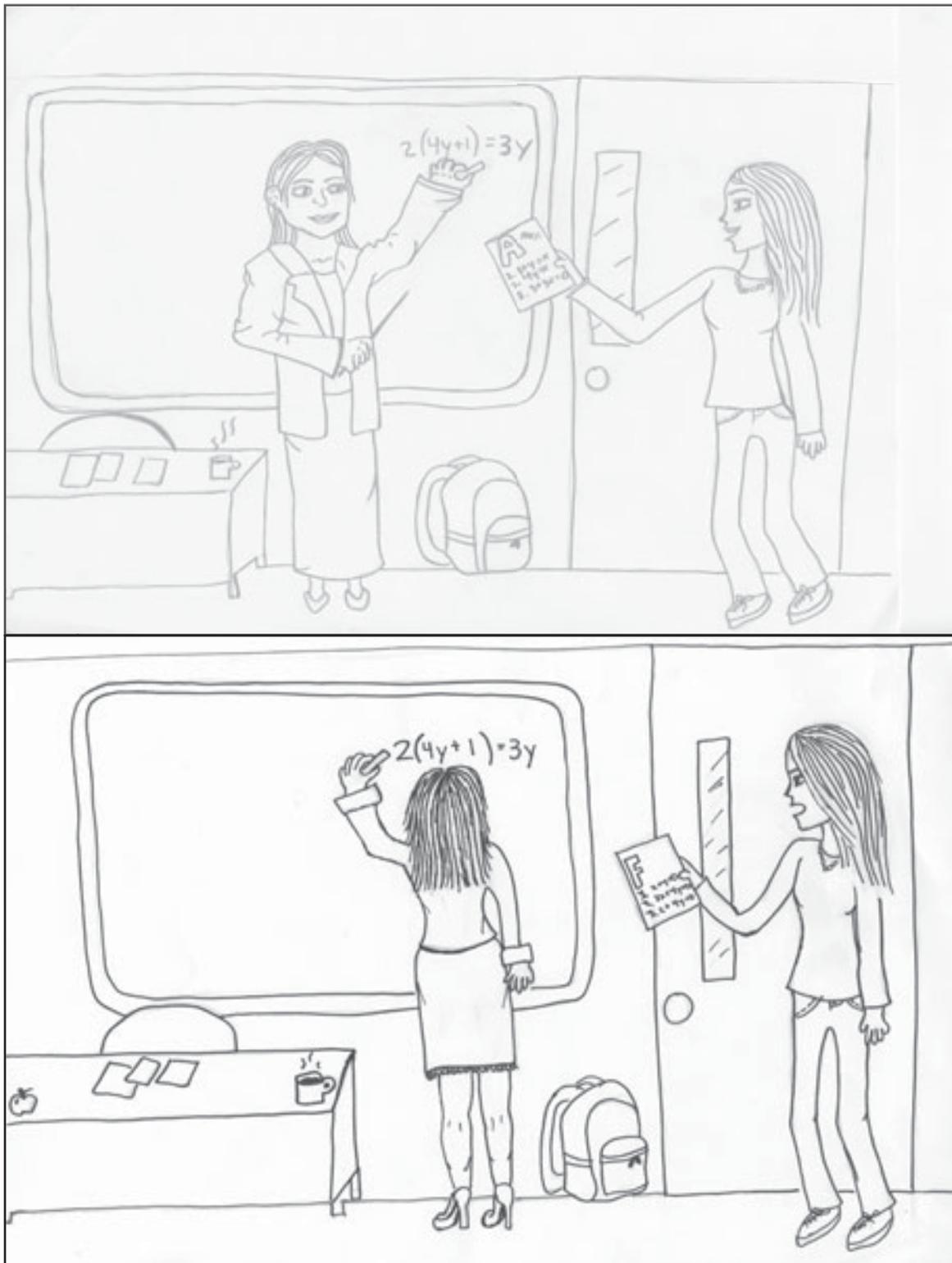
Students understand that education is not only about the grade that students receive, but when it impacts their GPA and student ranking, it is impossible for them not to be bothered by the situation.

"I understand we should learn to work hard for our goals and that is how it should be, but it is frustrating when we know what a big part our grades play in our future and college applications," said Julia Hassantalebi ('19).

However, there are grading guidelines that core classes must follow in hope that it keeps courses consistent. Although, AP grading is up to the individual teacher, as long as the syllabi is approved by CollegeBoard.

The diversity and different teaching styles are some of the benefits of a large school like Westhill. However, we would like to see our faculty become more consistent on assessing what students have learned. Hopefully, we soon see a change in equal grading procedures.

— Maura Johnson ('19)



Illustrations by Paulina Seremetis / Illustrator.

## Las tradiciones festivas de estudiantes en Westhill



“Antes de la media noche, nosotros intercambiamos regalos por la chimenea. Después, comemos tamales, carne con vegetales, y tomamos ponche. A la media noche, nos damos abrazos, es la tradición. Finalmente, hablamos un ratito y después nos vamos a dormir.”

– Diana Aguilar ('19)



“Nosotros nos reunimos en la casa de algún familiar o amigo, oramos, comemos y bailamos. Nosotros intercambiamos regalos, y comemos pavo con arroz. Finalmente, cantamos—esa es nuestra tradición de Navidad”

– John Aldaz ('19)



“Para mis vacaciones yo voy a ir a maryland, ahí voy a pasar La Navidad, y el Año Nuevo. Toda mi familia va para Maryland, y es por eso que voy ahí. Ahí vamos a comer Panes Rellenos—algo tradicional que nosotros Saladoreños nos encanta comer.”

– Maria Vega Dominguez ('19)



“Esta Navidad, nos vamos a reunir en mi casa. Vamos a comer tamales y pastel porque mi cumpleaños y Navidad es el mismo día. Entonces intercambiamos regalos por las dos ocasiones. Después jugamos lotería al final de la noche.”

– Yeniser Recinos ('21)



“Para las vacaciones, voy a ir a Miami y a Australia, sólo para conocer. Espero jugar fútbol durante todas mis vacaciones.”

– Cesar Caballero ('21)



## The history of Net Neutrality

Samantha Hamilton

Staff Writer

Since the beginning of the internet, politicians and internet providers have debated on the best way to regulate and protect the free and open internet. Net Neutrality is a topic that has been discussed since 2005 and was popularized under the Obama administration. Net Neutrality entails that all information on the internet is treated with equal importance.

Without current Net Neutrality laws in place, providers would be able to give faster and more reliable service to companies, but at a price. This would ultimately eliminate the competition of smaller competitors who cannot afford to pay for the fast and reliable service.

In 2005, the ongoing arguments related to the laws in place for cable providers. This would allow people to choose which networks they wanted to include in their plan, thus creating competition and offering cheaper options with fewer channels. While this makes sense for cable, when it comes to the internet there are more issues to tackle.

In 2007, before any Net Neutrality or the equal treatment of internet traffic was a law, it was promoted by regulations. There were no major controversies of breaching these regulations until the internet provider, Comcast, was accused of blocking internet traffic to a program named Bittorrent.

Bittorrent was developed to easily upload and download files within a company. Bittorrent was a budding example of what would happen if large internet carriers were not stopped from providing preferential treatment to companies that would pay them a fee. According to *The Washington Post*, Comcast, which was the second largest provider at the time, denied the accusations and claimed that slowing down the speed of Bittorrent was necessary to keep net connections running smoothly.

After a formal complaint was filed, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) stepped in and forced Comcast to stop discriminating against Bittorrent. This was when many citizens realized that unless large companies were directly prohibited from doing so, they would capitalize on their power by showing preferential treatment to

those who could pay for it.

A year after President Obama was elected, the FCC began its proceedings to implement official Net Neutrality laws. Throughout 2010 the FCC was under fire from companies such as the D.C. Circuit, which questioned the FCC's authority over the internet.

Despite controversy the FCC and Obama Administration continued to push for Net Neutrality laws, and major corporations began taking sides. Companies as large as Verizon teamed up to oppose Net Neutrality and large companies' plans left major pieces of the internet unprotected. The plan ultimately failed.

On December 21, 2010, the FCC was finally able to reclassify their authority over the internet and they established the Open Internet Rules. These rules prevented corporations from hiding their intentions and blocking and discriminating against content. Then around 2014 the FCC began to question what way was best to protect the free internet.

"I strongly support an open internet. This agency supports an open internet ... There is one internet, not a fast internet, not a slow internet," said FCC Chairman, Tom Wheeler. Despite this comment, the FCCs seriously considered two options going forward. One option would leave the internet in two tiers that would make some websites fast and others at a "hyper speed." The other option was to leave the internet as it was.

Large corporations heavily pushed for the first options while popular websites such as Netflix, Google, Facebook and Amazon teamed up with activists to advocate for the second option of a free and open internet. While the majority was on the side of option two, the large corporate superpowers wanted the change so badly that Verizon sued the government in hopes of pushing them to make a two tiered internet. Comcast spent 18,810,000 dollars on lobbying in 2013 alone to persuade the FCC.

John Oliver brought light to the subject on his late night television show, *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*, on June 1, 2014. The angry comments received by the FCC the following day crashed their website. Later that year, President Obama endorsed Net Neutrality and asked the FCC to

reclassify internet service under title two of the telecommunications act. The FCC ultimately decided to back Obama's statement and did classify Net Neutrality under title two.

The reason net neutrality is up for debate so soon after the last ruling is because on April 26, 2017, FCC Chairman, Ajit Pai, announced his plan to rollback on current Net Neutrality laws. The FCC's new plan will create internet fast lanes, block apps and services as well as hand privacy issues over to the Federal Trade Commissions (FTC). As stated in *Inc.*, handing privacy over to the FTC is highly controversial because they are willing to sell private browsing histories to companies in order to sell more ads to their target audiences.

Recently, pictures have been posted online with internet services clumped into a bundle set at a certain price. This concept can be scary when one considers the price of combined bundles. Luckily, these bundles are unlikely to become a reality if Net Neutrality laws were to be rolled back. It is more likely to see internet providers offering high speeds on preferred websites and then charging extra for each website people want to add to high speed services. This could still have the potential of being extremely damaging and expensive.

For small startups, this rollback could be dire. The repeal of Net Neutrality would make it incredibly difficult for new and less frequently visited websites to get any visits. Getting included in one of these "high speed bundles" would be nearly impossible considering how difficult it would be to get a meeting with big internet providers.

On Friday, December 8, the Young Political Scientists of America Club at Westhill met to discuss the impacts of Net Neutrality and how they believed this step could impact the U.S. government. There were very varied opinions, but one thing became very clear. Nobody attending the meeting understood why the FCC decided to go back on their initial judgement that the internet should treat all information equally.

"Net Neutrality as a whole should not be repealed, but in its current form it is less effective than other means of internet protection," said Alex Mcleod ('19). Some students argued very passionately that

the new plan would help the poor by providing cheaper options to limited internet sites.

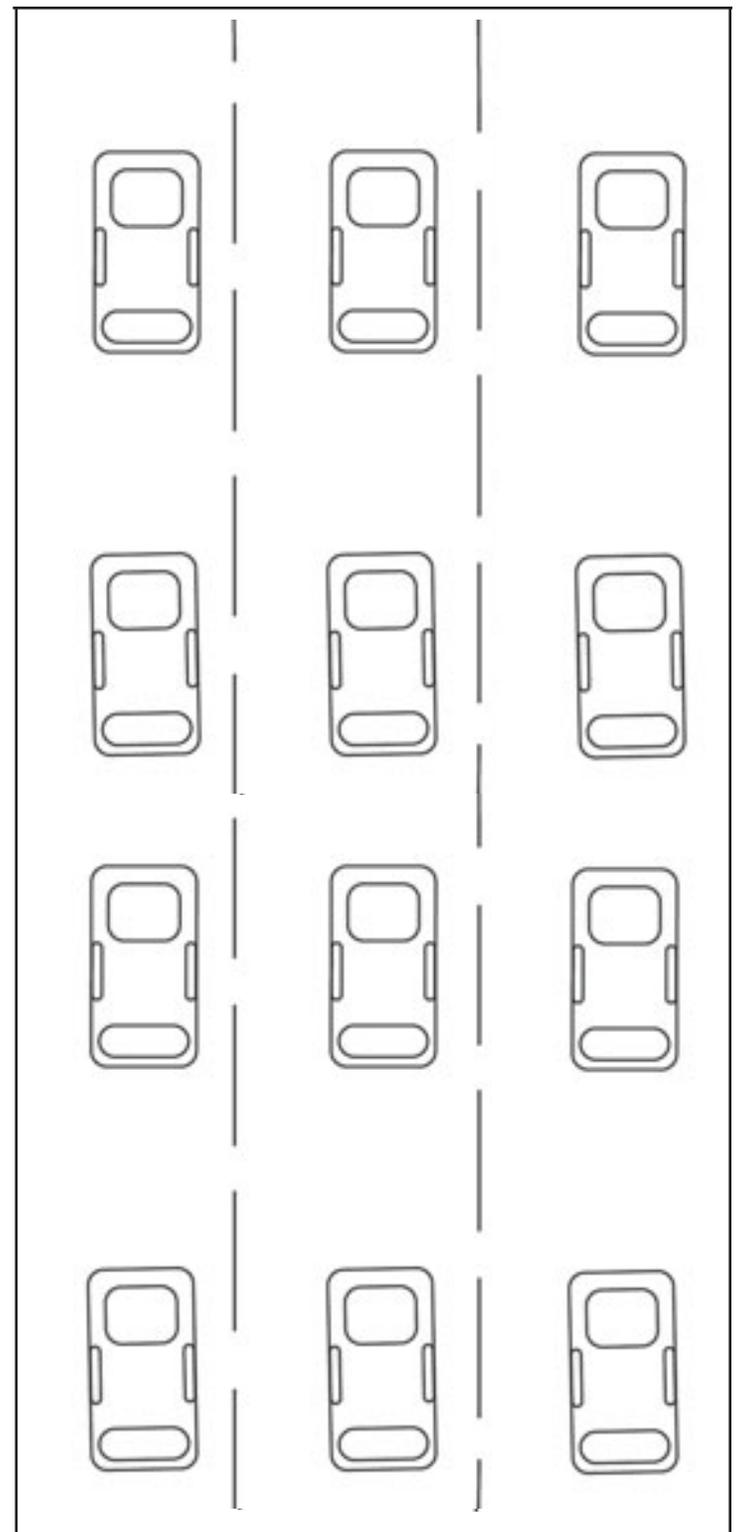
On the other hand, people worried this may just be a way to capitalize on people who can afford to pay higher prices and limit the poor from information.

Whether one is for or against the repeal of Net Neutrality, the decision made on December 14 may change the face of the internet as we know it. This issue is not solely American. Other countries may

begin to follow our influence. This could create a world of disconnected individuals who all have access to different sources of news and entertainment because of what each online superpower is willing to pay in each country.

There is no definitive answer as to what our internet will cost or look like once these new laws come into action. However, it is clear that Americans are fearful of the uncertain future of their right to information.

## Equal Lanes with Net Neutrality



# What ending Net Neutrality means

**Daniel Greco**  
Managing Editor

In this day and age, our daily lives revolve around and depend on the internet. Our financial records, purchases, and general information is routed through miles of cabling, turning the entire world into a data-driven civilization. Schools are shifting to online alternatives to outdated teaching styles, in turn furthering our society's dependence on internet based tools. The exponential growth of such dependence only raises

questions on how the internet shall truly be governed, as the internet is neither owned nor created by a national government.

Recently, the words Net Neutrality have been plastered across news media in the United States. The reason for this is the recent Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) affirmative three-to-two vote on December 14 to repeal previous Net Neutrality laws. The plan to repeal the laws was drafted by FCC Chairman, Ajit Pai. The main initiative Pai's

method takes is halting the "micromanaging" of the internet by the government.

Unlike phone services, the repeal removes internet provisions as a utility, now treating it as a consumer service. Pai believes that this action will spark competition between Internet Service Providers (ISPs), increasing the internet's coverage around the United States. "It would certainly make the ISPs more competitive with each other, but at the cost of happiness of customers," said Willis Williams ('19).

Net Neutrality is the basic principle that ISPs must treat all data that passes through their network the same. This means that ISPs cannot discriminate against certain factors of use, such as the user, content, website, or platform. In other words, ISPs would not be able to charge users an added amount or limit access to services based on what data they are trying to access.

"Since society is drifting towards technology it is going to have to be regulated by the government," said Kevin Zyskowski ('19). The removal of Net Neutrality worries the general population due to the possibility of censorship by ISPs. Providers may have the ability to mandate which websites can be accessed by their users and which cannot. Providers can also intentionally limit the speed of certain competitor services in order to increase traffic to alternate websites that will increase profit.

Though part of Pai's plan is to increase internet access, doing so could be considered an unfair use of such a widespread and community-driven service for financial gain. The internet was

a facilitator for small businesses, and startups, PayPal, Amazon, and Ebay are examples of businesses built upon the idea of an interconnected world.

Directing traffic towards larger ISP-approved corporations would inhibit the growth of similar small companies. In addition to this, ISPs could potentially block access to websites affiliated to specific religious, ethnic, or LGBTQ+ communities that rely on the internet to have their voices heard in the midst of discrimination. Disabling an outlet for these communities' grievances would halt their progress and instead voice only the messages that are deemed "fair" by ISPs.

Startups within the United States aim to act as a solution to the battle for Net Neutrality through an "Open Internet." The idea behind an Open Internet is that all internet resources are easily accessible with no censorship or meddling by a third party—this is the basis for Net Neutrality.

Such startups leverage new technologies such as Blockchain or use a structure called a Distributed Network. One new startup technology, dubbed the InterPlanetary File System (IPFS), is a peer-to-peer (P2P) distributed network developed by Protocol Labs. While their technology is a method of transferring and storing files at its core, the intent of IPFS' are to replace the currently standard Hyper-text Transfer Protocol (HTTP), originally developed by Tim Berners-Lee, in order "to make the web faster, safer, and more open."

HTTP is the original process by which all data was exchanged throughout the internet, though today it is deemed outdated by

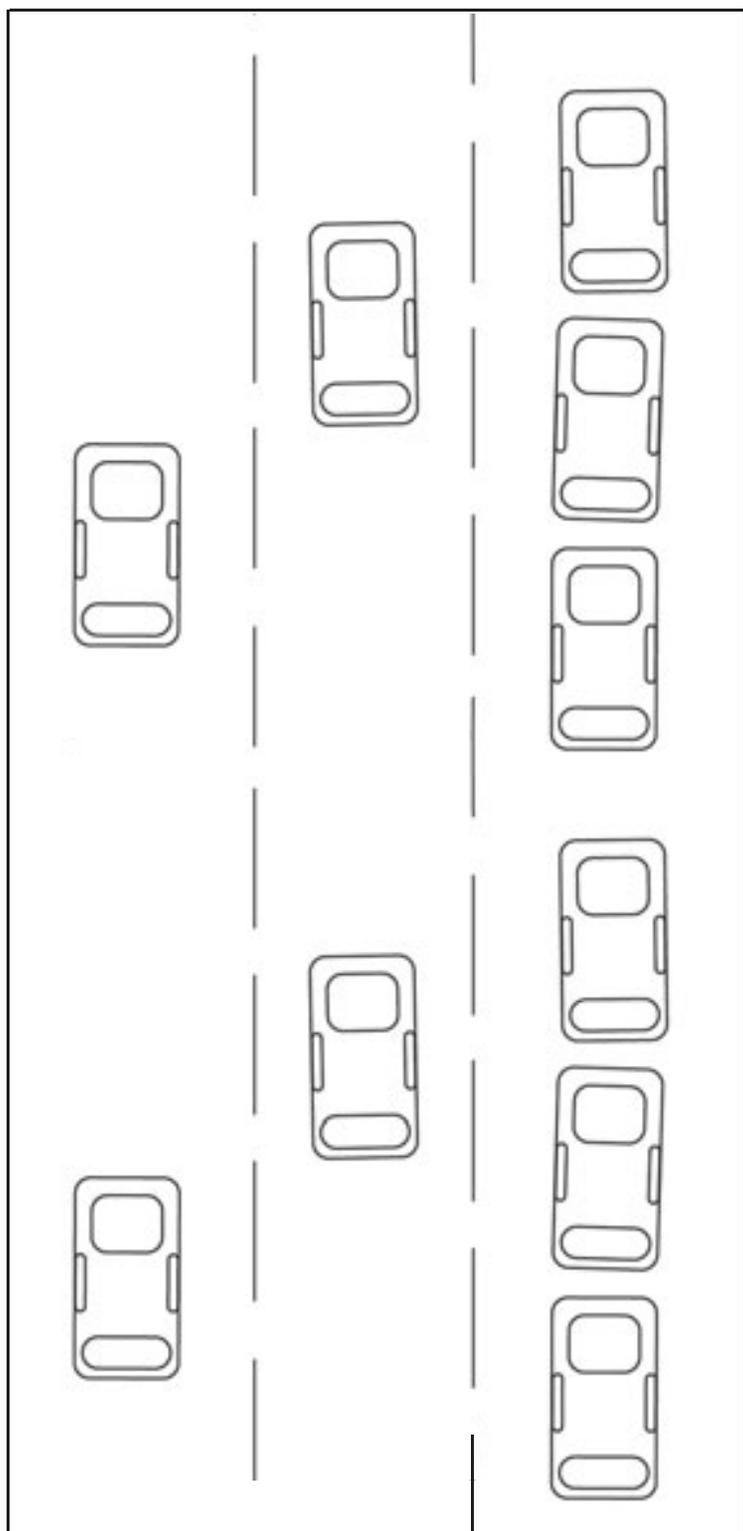
many for its use. Protocol Labs' IPFS is a distributed network, meaning that every user of the network is considered a node and all of the data on that network is securely spread distributed among each user node. Each file and its data has a digital 'fingerprint'; an ID that is unique to that specific data. Every node stores a certain amount of data, along with a record to help other nodes find data. By spreading the data to multiple sources, the ability for ISPs to limit access to a specific data source is rendered almost impossible, requiring them to block all communication through their network.

While the repeal of former Net Neutrality laws stands, many non-profit organizations strive to reverse the actions of the FCC. *Fight for the Future*, a non-profit organization based in Boston, MA, aims to "ensure that the web continues to hold freedom of expression and creativity at its core." Led by co-founders Tiffiny Cheng and Holmes Wilson, *Fight for the Future* created the popular webpage "Battle for the Net" in the months approaching the December vote.

The webpage presents the user with information regarding Net Neutrality, as well as areas to either email or call local congressmen who support the repealment of the previous Net Neutrality laws. *Fight for the Future*, alongside many other non-profits, continue to fight for Net Neutrality laws, hoping to strip the business oriented treatment of the internet.

"I think Net Neutrality laws will see a quick return. Just about everyone I have talked to about Net Neutrality has said they are in favor of it, even Republicans," said Cristian Smina ('19).

## Unequal Lanes without Net Neutrality



## A Simple Definition:

Net Neutrality provides an open internet, which is the idea that all Internet Service Providers (ISPs) should give their consumers access to all legal websites and apps equally. Net Neutrality prevents ISPs from charging extra for certain websites and apps. Without Net Neutrality, ISPs have the right to favor certain sources and block others.



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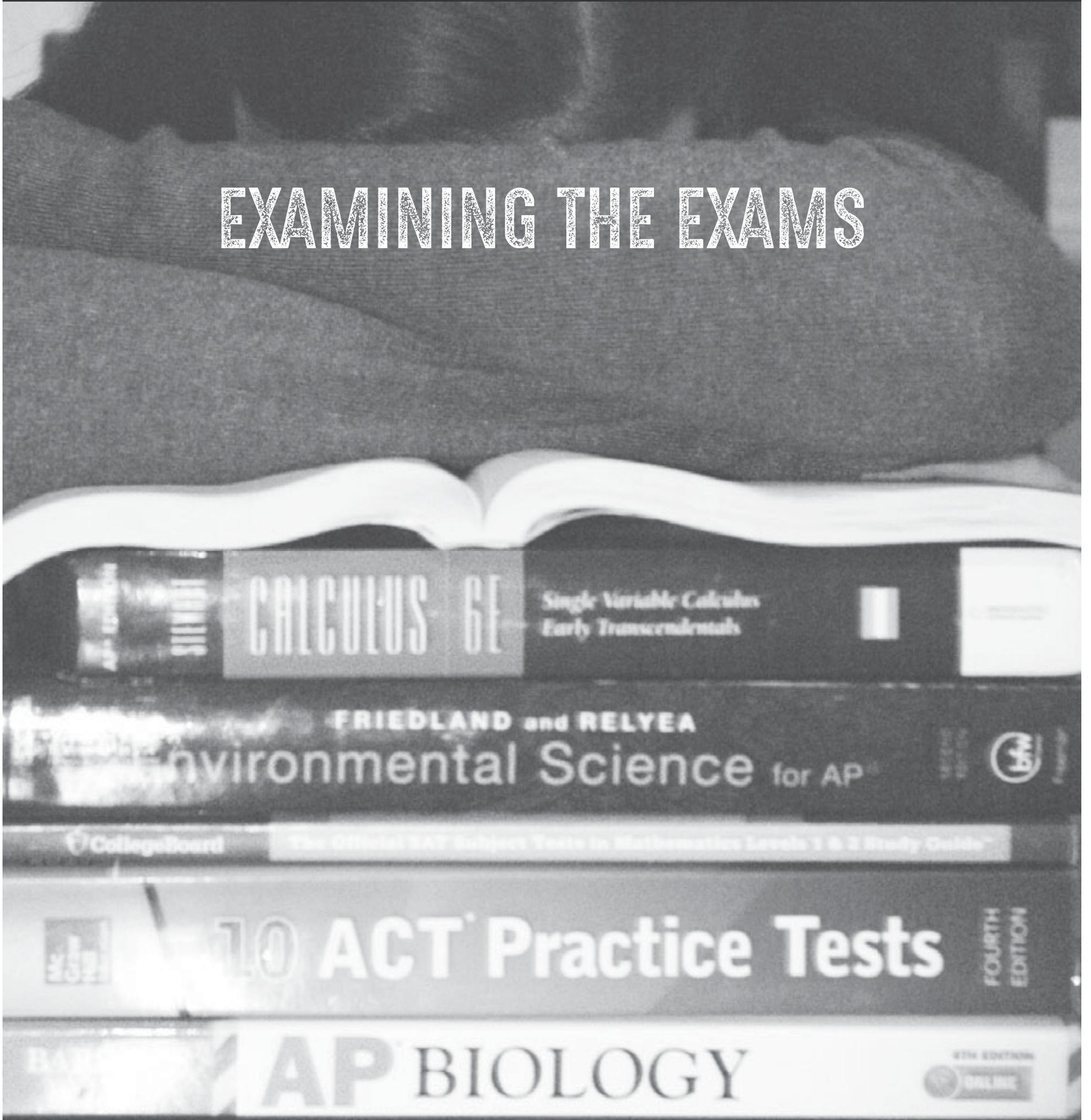
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The Westword

# Supplement

## EXAMINING THE EXAMS



# How stress impacts test scores

**Devonte Atwell**  
Staff Writer

Stress can develop due to students' frustration before a test. Different variables lead to various amounts of stress.

One example of increased stress levels, according to brain-connection.com, is that in classrooms that have few resources and an uncomfortable room temperature can lead to students often having negative feelings.

The amount of time before a test and how other classmates are reacting to the test can also impact stress levels.

Similarly, according to the American Psychological Association, stress for students before an exam can lead to disturbed sleeping patterns, fatigue, worry, increased infections, irregular eating habits and the inability to concentrate.

The prefrontal cortex in the

brain deals with the cognitive and emotional area. The prefrontal cortex is responsible for the interpretation of sensory stimuli. This is the area where danger is first assessed. The second area of the brain that involves processing fear is the amygdala.

The third area that processes fear can be found at the base of the brain, is the hypothalamus. The hypothalamus responds to signals sent from the prefrontal cortex and amygdala, and releases hormones that drives a person's responses to threats.

"Stress makes testing much more difficult, since it is hard to focus on studying when you are worried about trying to do well on the test. When I am super stressed, it causes me to do worse on my tests," said Taryn Duncan ('19).

According to *The Washington Post*, around 50 percent of United States college students end up not graduating. It is possible that drop-out rates of students increase as

their stress levels increase about their education.

Stress can also lead to physical ailments such as headaches, high blood pressure, heart problems, diabetes, skin conditions, asthma, and arthritis. Other side effects of stress include anxious thoughts as well as constant worrying.

"People stress out so much for tests which can cause them to freak out in the moment and second guess their answers," said Abigail Lupinacci ('19).

Time pressure and grade expectations in class or during tests can also increase anxiety. When someone's stress level is too high, he or she may end up worrying about the stress itself and nothing else.

"When we are stressed, we usually do things out of balance. We sleep less, we eat unhealthy foods, we take on too many things. If students are feeling a lot of anxiety, I think it is really, really good and sometimes very

helpful to just come in and talk that through," said Dr. Sonya Gray-Belcher, a licensed psychologist at Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS).

As Gray-Belcher points out, lack of sleep is known as a major health issue to students. "If you are not getting at least six hours of good sleep, then you start running into a number of different health problems, or attitude problems, or even grade problems," said Gray-Belcher.

According to PBS.org, how well a person handles competition and stressful test-taking environments is called the catechol-O-methyltransferase (COMT) gene. Based on a test that took blood samples from Taiwanese students, scientists now know the COMT gene has two variants: one that works quickly, and the other works slowly.

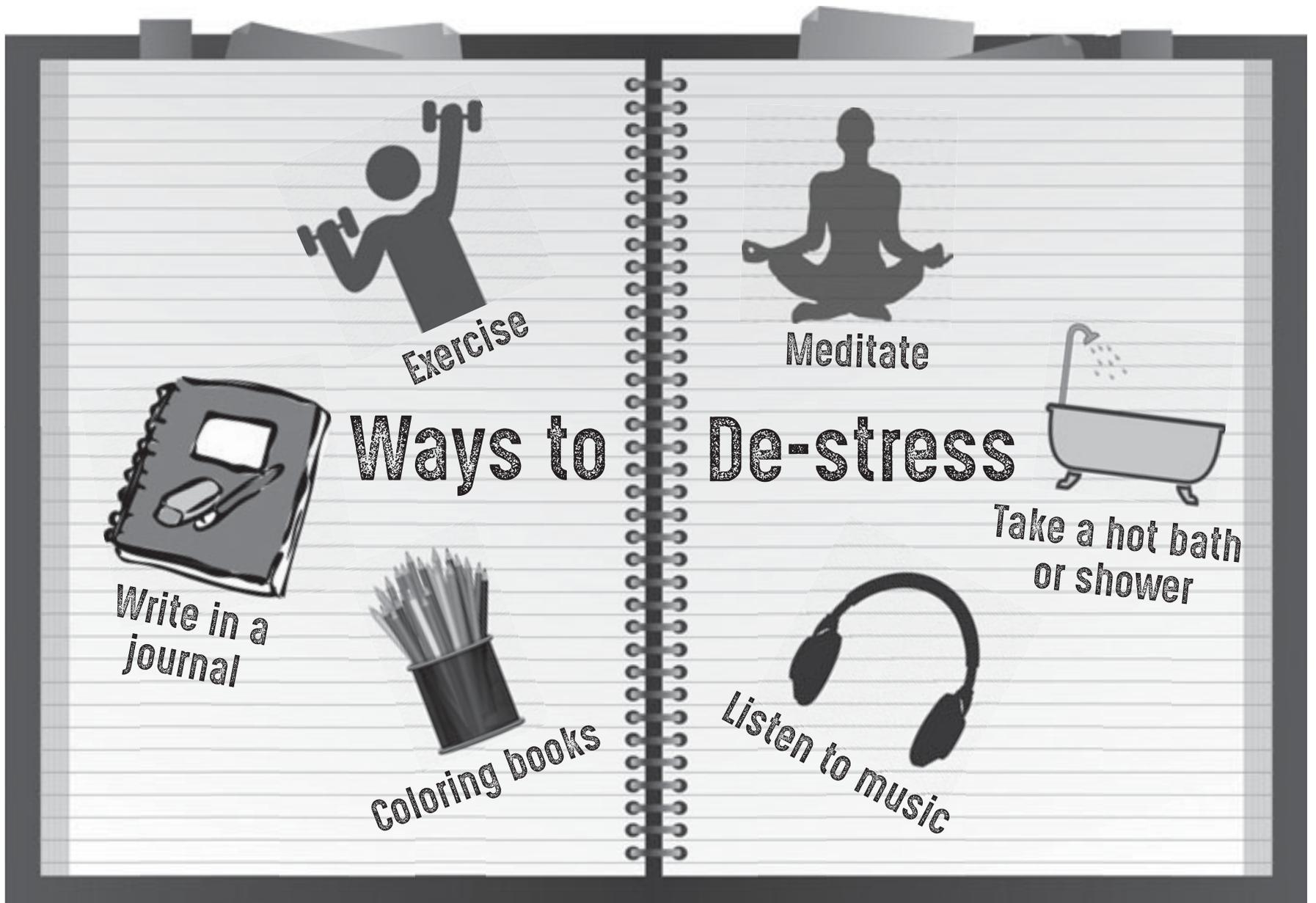
When someone is stressed, the brain is flooded with dopamine. The COMT gene clears that dopamine from the prefrontal

cortex. If there is too much dopamine, students will have a hard time concentrating and recalling facts.

During the study regarding Taiwanese students, those with the fast acting COMT gene were able to concentrate and take the test better because of the dopamine quickly being reduced in their brain.

Students with the slow COMT gene performed better outside of tests, these students performed better in day-to-day classroom assignments. Since the stress was cleared at a slower rate, there is a slight and steady anxiety that helps them complete daily tasks such as homework. Also, people with the slow COMT gene can use positive thinking and training to overcome their anxiety.

"For me, I feel like stress encourages me to study more for a test that is stressing me out which generally helps me do better on that test," said Ryan Kipp ('19).



# Values of taking the SAT or ACT

**Yulia Lozynska & Maria Marifuentes**  
Staff Writers

Many students may be unaware of the value and importance of taking the SAT or ACT for college. When it comes to taking the ACT or SAT, taking one or both tests are important because it offers a college admissions test, college course placement, and a career planning component for one modest fee. This can be seen as a positive and a negative.

“[Taking the ACT] is annoying because it is one test score that can have a huge impact on whether or not you get into college,” said Madison Cortell (’19).

Both ACT and SAT scores are used for college admissions and merit-based scholarships. Most colleges do not prefer one test over the other, so it is recommended that students explore both the SAT and ACT to decide which one is right for them.

The SAT and the ACT test one’s stress, time management, reading and following directions, and creative solutions. The

SAT contains four sections: reading, math with a calculator, math without a calculator, and writing and language.

The ACT also contains four sections: reading, math, English, and science. Both tests also have an optional essay. Each section is formatted differently in the two tests.

Currently, there is only one college that has a “test blind” policy, meaning the school does not accept any of your test scores at all, Hampshire College in Amherst. “Unlike ‘test-optional’ institutions, we will not consider SAT or ACT scores regardless of the score. Even if it is a perfect score, it will not weigh into the assessment of an applicant,” said Hampshire College when stating their current policy on

their website.

A few highly ranked colleges

include Sarah Lawrence, University of Iowa, Wake Forest University, George Washington University, and Wesleyan University.

Some well known colleges prefer to accept the ACT instead of the SAT and SAT subject tests, such as Texas

University and

University of Michigan.

Some colleges that do require the

ACT are Harvard University, Stanford University, and California Institute of

Technology.

Depending on where students want to go for college or what career students would like to

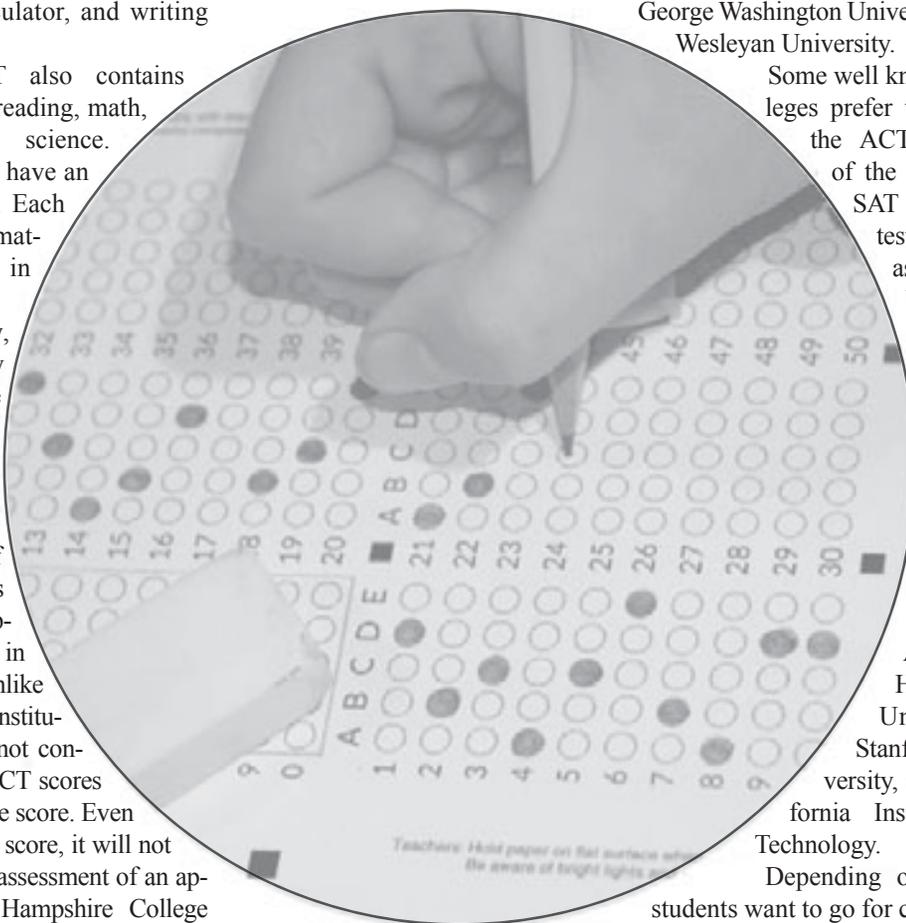
take on, it is their choice to decide if they want to take the tests and which one to take.

“I think [the SAT] is important, but not as important as people think. I will give you an example: I never took my SAT and I still got my master’s degree, I was still successful. The SAT tells you how good you are in math and writing but does not determine who you are,” said guidance counselor Mr. Agosto.

“The SAT equals the playing field for everyone, an A is not the same A in a different class. SAT levels out everyone’s score to make it easier for colleges to see. It is absolutely important to take it,” said head of guidance, Ms. DeLuca.

“Personally I feel like standard testing is not accurate. It does not prove your intelligence, you just have to be able to sit down and take the time to study,” said Brianna Hardy (’18) when discussing her experiences taking both the SAT and ACT.

Taking the SAT or ACT can have various benefits however, the tests do not define the future of students.



# Getting extra time and the use of 504s

**Ashley Shapiro**  
Reporter

For many students, the SAT or ACT are a source of stress and pressure in their junior and senior year. In addition, for students with dyslexia, anxiety, concussions, 504s or Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), the tests can be even more stressful. This is why there is an accommodation to assist these students.

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), “individuals with disabilities have the opportunity to fairly compete for and pursue such opportunities by requiring testing entities to offer exams in a manner accessible to persons with disabilities. When needed testing accommodations are provided, test-takers can demonstrate their true aptitude.”

This act requires the private organizations that run the ACT and SAT to provide accommodations to qualifying students. According to CollegeBoard, accommodations include extra time, a private room, large-print pages, use of computers, or a wheelchair accessible room.

The process of getting extra time is lengthy and selective. Due to the fact that there is a growing amount of disabilities and no fee for applying, if a student wants to apply for any accommodations, he or she will need a strong rationale. Rationale requires documentation, which could include a doctor or psychologist note or even an education evaluation.

“Just because you know that people get extra time on testing does not mean you can also get it. You have to prove

the disability. Not everybody can get extra time,” said guidance counselor Mr. Stepkoski.

Parents must contact their child’s guidance counselor and provide them with proper extensive documentation. The guidance counselor then directs the student to Mrs. Cuttitta, the Special Education Department Head, who will send the documentation to CollegeBoard. The request could take up to seven weeks to be processed.

“We have many students in this building that have 504 plans where we give them extended time, CollegeBoard has to also give them those accommodations. CollegeBoard makes their own decision, we have no control over what they say. There is an appeal process to try to get them to change their mind if necessary,” said Cuttitta.

CollegeBoard has a group

of specialists that review each case on an individual basis. This group is made up of psychologists and educators in order to evaluate each case both carefully and thoroughly.

Having a 504 is very beneficial for some students. It may help a student receive extra time on tests, but this is not a guarantee. However, with the right documentation and the proper reasoning, extra time can be granted to the student.

If approved for extra time on the SAT, the students will receive a Service Set Identifier (SSID) number. This is a code they will need to write on a form every time they take the SAT. For the ACT, the student has to re-apply each time they take the exam.

When taking the SAT in school a student with extra time can take the exam in a separate

room along with other students with the same accommodation. This may be seen as a tedious process but students who use this accommodation say it is incredibly helpful.

“I believe the extra time is extremely beneficial and if you have the ability to get extra time take it. Do not be embarrassed about needing extra time,” said Amanda Friedman (’18). For students who struggle in certain areas, the extra time can be a life-saver. “It is fair for students who have disabilities to get extra accommodations,” said Sydney Eben (’20).

While extra time on standardized tests is very helpful, students should be aware that it is not for an option available to everyone. The students must prove that this accommodation is vital to their success as students in examinations.

## TIPS FOR STUDYING FOR MIDTERMS

### Being Well Rested

Getting enough time to sleep is essential for studying. Being well rested helps the mind be more concentrated when it is time to study. According to the National Sleep Foundation, getting enough sleep can improve study behaviors and attention. Sleeping helps the brain relax and gives it a break from all the studying that has taken place in preparation for exams.

### Study Groups

Find a good group of people and schedule times to meet to avoid procrastinating. Receiving new perspectives can help with the comprehension and learning new studying skills. According to *SpeedyPrep.com*, joining a study group will give the opportunity to observe a wide variety of studying skills. Study groups helps students cover more material a lot faster than when doing it alone.

### Time Management

Do not start too late when studying for midterms; instead begin early to avoid anxiety. Studying ahead of time enables one to give each topic enough attention and give more time to the areas that are the most challenging. Create a checklist and make sure to be realistic, but flexible. Prioritize the materials that need to be studied to avoid leaving anything for the last minute.

### Color Coding

Highlighting and color coding can help make studying less boring and more pleasing to the eye. Highlighting helps with connecting multiple ideas, and is great for organizing notes. According to *JetPens.com*, the correlation between the colors and theme should be easily recalled. Use highlighters to point out important information that needs to be remembered.

### Study Area

Finding a quiet, comfortable, location to study in is important. Places like libraries, bedrooms, classrooms and coffee shops are perfect areas to study, as well as brightly lit rooms. Find a room with furniture that forces you to sit up straight yet allows for comfort. Libraries are a great place to study because they contain loads of information and are usually quiet settings.

### No Distractions

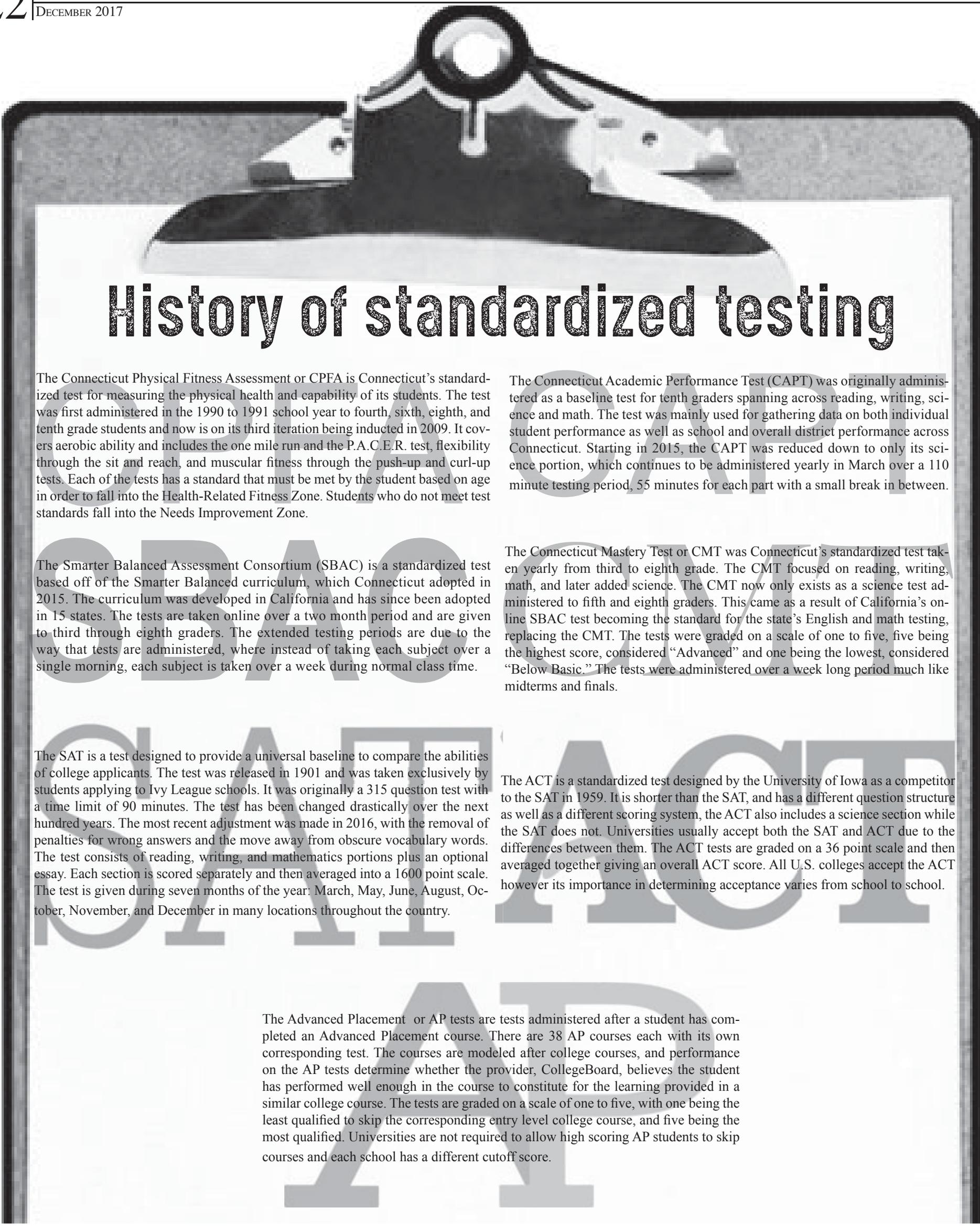
Put phones, tablets, and computers away to help keep your attention on studying, as these devices could be distracting. Music could also be a source of distraction. Disconnecting from the outside world while studying can help when trying to get things done quickly and efficiently. Put your phone on do not disturb and try to focus on studying and time management.

### Reward Yourself

After studying so much and being mentally and physically exhausted, you should reward yourself for forming good habits. Rewards after working hard will keep you motivated for the next time you have to study for another exam. It can also make you feel good about yourself and boost your confidence. It is also a reminder that hard work pays off and will be worth it in the long run.

### Healthy Decisions

It is extremely important to be healthy in our everyday lives especially when studying for exams. According to *NutritionLately.com*, nutrition has been linked with emotional, physical, and cognitive health. The way one eats affects the brain's neurochemistry which controls mood and the way one responds to stress. This impacts the way your brain and body interact, as well as control learning, memory, and intellectual functioning.



# History of standardized testing

The Connecticut Physical Fitness Assessment or CPFA is Connecticut's standardized test for measuring the physical health and capability of its students. The test was first administered in the 1990 to 1991 school year to fourth, sixth, eighth, and tenth grade students and now is on its third iteration being inducted in 2009. It covers aerobic ability and includes the one mile run and the P.A.C.E.R. test, flexibility through the sit and reach, and muscular fitness through the push-up and curl-up tests. Each of the tests has a standard that must be met by the student based on age in order to fall into the Health-Related Fitness Zone. Students who do not meet test standards fall into the Needs Improvement Zone.

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) is a standardized test based off of the Smarter Balanced curriculum, which Connecticut adopted in 2015. The curriculum was developed in California and has since been adopted in 15 states. The tests are taken online over a two month period and are given to third through eighth graders. The extended testing periods are due to the way that tests are administered, where instead of taking each subject over a single morning, each subject is taken over a week during normal class time.

The SAT is a test designed to provide a universal baseline to compare the abilities of college applicants. The test was released in 1901 and was taken exclusively by students applying to Ivy League schools. It was originally a 315 question test with a time limit of 90 minutes. The test has been changed drastically over the next hundred years. The most recent adjustment was made in 2016, with the removal of penalties for wrong answers and the move away from obscure vocabulary words. The test consists of reading, writing, and mathematics portions plus an optional essay. Each section is scored separately and then averaged into a 1600 point scale. The test is given during seven months of the year: March, May, June, August, October, November, and December in many locations throughout the country.

The Advanced Placement or AP tests are tests administered after a student has completed an Advanced Placement course. There are 38 AP courses each with its own corresponding test. The courses are modeled after college courses, and performance on the AP tests determine whether the provider, CollegeBoard, believes the student has performed well enough in the course to constitute for the learning provided in a similar college course. The tests are graded on a scale of one to five, with one being the least qualified to skip the corresponding entry level college course, and five being the most qualified. Universities are not required to allow high scoring AP students to skip courses and each school has a different cutoff score.

The Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) was originally administered as a baseline test for tenth graders spanning across reading, writing, science and math. The test was mainly used for gathering data on both individual student performance as well as school and overall district performance across Connecticut. Starting in 2015, the CAPT was reduced down to only its science portion, which continues to be administered yearly in March over a 110 minute testing period, 55 minutes for each part with a small break in between.

The Connecticut Mastery Test or CMT was Connecticut's standardized test taken yearly from third to eighth grade. The CMT focused on reading, writing, math, and later added science. The CMT now only exists as a science test administered to fifth and eighth graders. This came as a result of California's on-line SBAC test becoming the standard for the state's English and math testing, replacing the CMT. The tests were graded on a scale of one to five, five being the highest score, considered "Advanced" and one being the lowest, considered "Below Basic." The tests were administered over a week long period much like midterms and finals.

The ACT is a standardized test designed by the University of Iowa as a competitor to the SAT in 1959. It is shorter than the SAT, and has a different question structure as well as a different scoring system, the ACT also includes a science section while the SAT does not. Universities usually accept both the SAT and ACT due to the differences between them. The ACT tests are graded on a 36 point scale and then averaged together giving an overall ACT score. All U.S. colleges accept the ACT however its importance in determining acceptance varies from school to school.



## Which test is right for you?

### How to sign up



Go to [collegereadiness.collegeboard.org](http://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org) and sign in. Follow the required steps to register for your chosen test and make sure to print your admission ticket. To register by mail, you need to get an SAT Registration Guide from your guidance counselor in school.

Register by mail or online at [act.org](http://act.org). The ACT recommends online registration because it is much faster, students can check the availability of test centers, and students can print their admission ticket immediately after payment.



### How many times a year it is offered

7

Seven times a year: March, May, June, August, October, November and December. The registrations deadline is four weeks before test date.

Six times a year: February, April, June, September, October, and December. The ACT registration deadline is four weeks and five days before the test date.

6

1600

### How it is scored

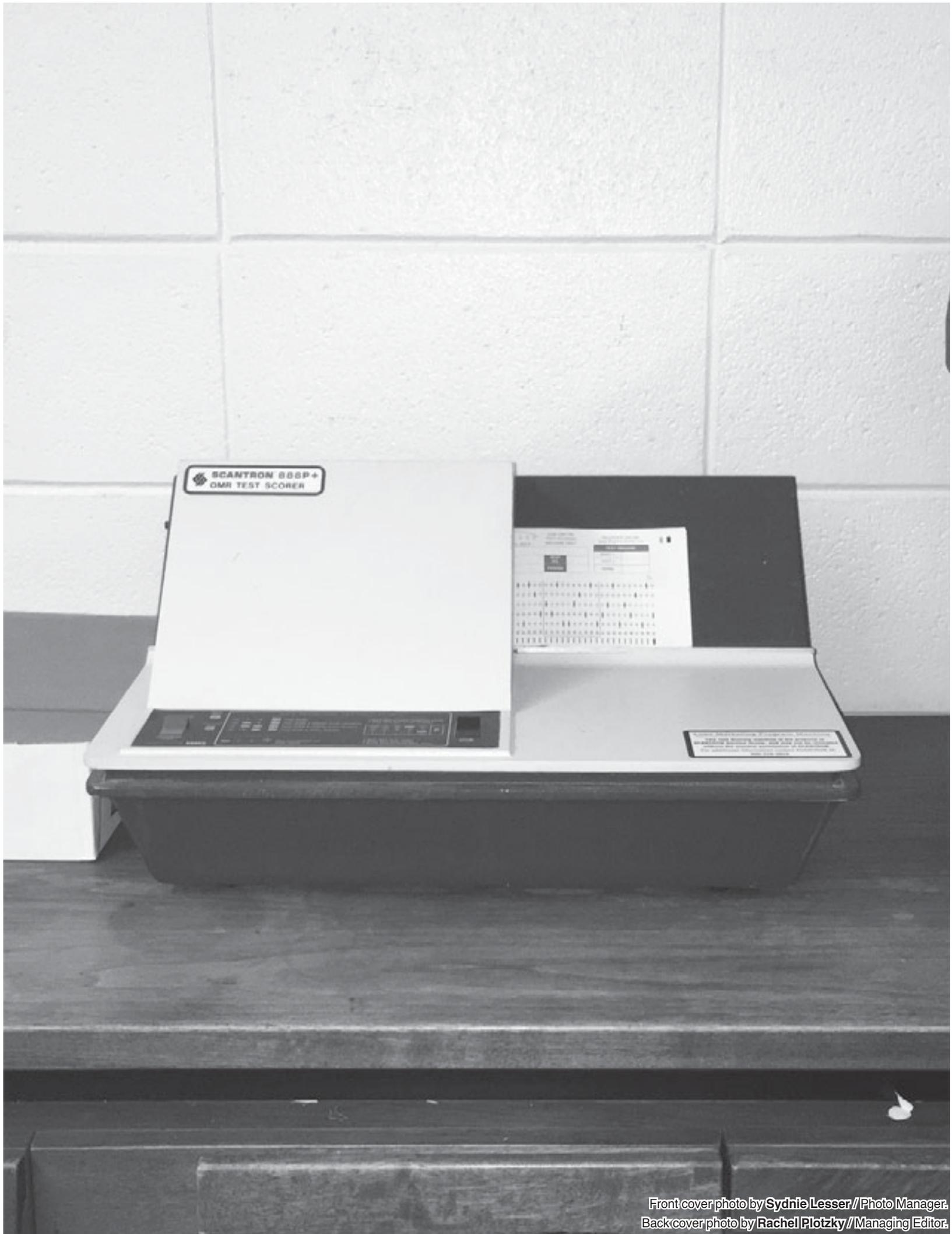
From 400 to 1600. From 1 to 36.

36

### The test

●	Subject	Number of Questions	Given time
	Reading	52	65 minutes
	Writing and Language	38	35 minutes
	Math (without calculator)	20	25 minutes
	Math (with calculator)	38	55 minutes
	Essay (optional)	1	50 minutes

●	Subject	Number of Questions	Given time
	English	75	75 minutes
	Math (calculator)	60	60 minutes
	Science Reasoning	40	40 minutes
	Reading	40	35 minutes
	Essay (optional)	1	40 minutes



Front cover photo by **Sydney Lesser**//Photo Manager.  
Back cover photo by **Rachel Plotzky**//Managing Editor.

## Teacher, Coach—DeVellis does it all

**Noah Klein**  
Editor-in-Chief

*Mr. DeVellis, commonly known by his players as “Coach Joey”, fills the dynamic role of being a teacher as well as a coach. The Westword sat down with Mr. DeVellis to talk about his unique experience.*

**The Westword: When did you realize you wanted to be a teacher and a coach?**

**Joey DeVellis:** I have always wanted to do both. I grew up with both of my parents being teachers; my dad had coached me since I was five years old. He coached high school baseball as well. Being around sports at a young age made me realize it was always something I thought was fun, it was something I was constantly around. Sports were a part of me growing up. I never thought of doing anything other than teaching and coaching.

**TW: Has anyone influenced your coaching/teaching style?**

**JD:** My dad has definitely been my biggest influence as a teacher and as a coach, seeing the passion and work ethic he had for both things. My mom has been my influence as a person in terms of how to treat people and how to act.

**TW: What is your favorite moment at Westhill?**

**JD:** When I think about favor-

ite moments I definitely think of senior days in any sport. Now that I have been here for six years, every senior that has a senior day from now until I am gone is someone that I have seen start as a freshman and grow into a senior. It is really rewarding for them and for me to see the influence you have in a really important time in kids' lives.

**TW: What do you believe is the best part of your job?**

**JD:** The best part of teaching is having relationships with kids after they graduate and having good relationships with previous students. The best part about coaching is watching kids grow from freshman year until they graduate and seeing the adversity they face, and how they respond as well as how they grow as people.

**TW: What advice would you have given yourself prior to teaching and coaching?**

**JD:** Be patient. Things that you or other people may find easy can be very difficult for other people. Being a Special Education teacher has really helped me to progress with patience and develop patience as one of my strengths. That was definitely not me when I first started here.

**TW: How do you balance being a coach and teacher?**

**JD:** I understand that my free time is limited so I balance it by being able to prioritize and being able



**VIKING PRIDE** DeVellis has been teaching and coaching at Westhill for six years.

to sneak five minutes here or there to get something ready for class, or go print out a practice script. It is all about learning to prioritize. The quicker you realize your free time is scarce, the better off you are

**TW: How would your players/students describe you?**

**JD:** Definitely energetic, as well as that at the end of the day I will always have their back.

**TW: Has one student or**

**player had an impact on your life?**

**JD:** I think the coolest thing about being here is the groups of kids that I have as students as well as the students I coach. Whether it is from the different socioeconomic backgrounds, or educational backgrounds, it forces you to develop as a coach and as a teacher. The groups of kids in the classroom, as well as on the field, have influenced who I am as a person. It is awesome. The best thing that has come out of having a job here is the types of kids and the different groups that are here.

**TW: Why did you decide to come to Westhill after growing up in Newtown?**

**JD:** I had a great opportunity right out of graduating. I had a long term sub job at Massack High school. Coach Marcucio got me connected here, it was the first place that I had an opportunity to do anything at, this was a completely different dynamic from Newtown. After I had gone to school at Southern Connecticut State University and I had worked in New Haven, it was the population I wanted to deal with and the city was a cool place. It was nice to feel like someone wanted you to teach somewhere. I met with Ms. Figliuzzi and Ms. Cutitta I felt like we had awesome conversation. Knowing I was going to be able to coach here just made it

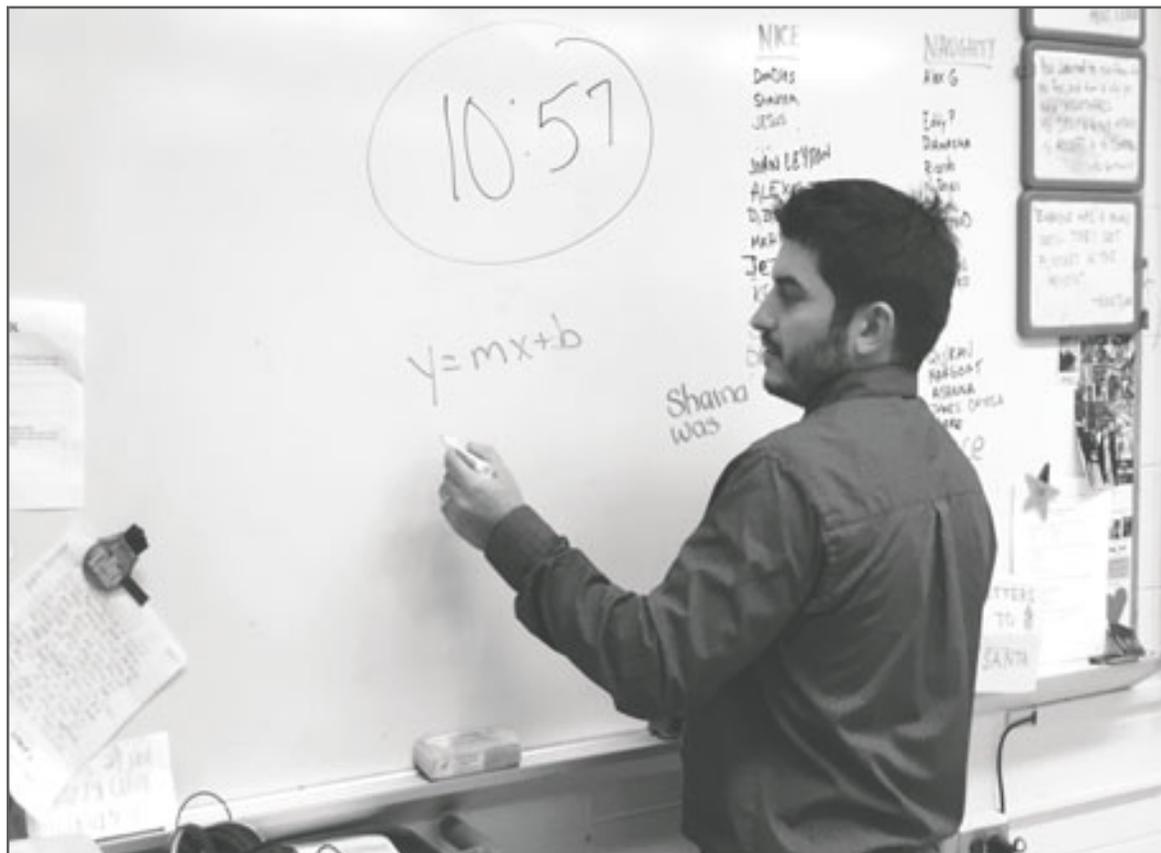
seem like a great fit.

**TW: What is it like coaching girls lacrosse with your wife?**

**JD:** The cheesy thing to say is to say the best thing that has ever happened to me is meeting my wife. The situation speaks to the opportunity that WHS gives to young teachers. We started here together. It is great coaching with her in the spring because during fall we do not get the chance to see each other too much because of me coaching football. Being able to see her and have that different dynamic where we are talking about a sport that we are both involved with at home is a really fun thing to be able to do. Our first year we were teaching two sections together. Going from the classroom to now coaching lacrosse together is just a lot of fun.

**TW: What are your goals on the field and in the classroom?**

**JD:** Whether it is school or sports, the one goal I always have is to be the best I can be everyday and always come with unmatched energy in whatever situation. My goal is to be able to instill the passion and excitement I have into the students and athletes I have in whatever they are passionate about. I try to make math exciting; if kids can find something they like and then at the same time be extremely excited about it, I know I did my job.



**DUAL THREAT** DeVellis works on inspiring students and athletes in the classroom and out on the field.

# Westhill's new Security Guards

**Laura Wilgus**  
Staff Writer

This year, quite a few things have changed around Westhill. We have a new principal, changed attendance policies, and additions to the Viking staff. The latter includes two new security guards. If you have not had the pleasure of meeting them, here is a bit about them, what they do, and how they have been influential in their duties here at Westhill.

In the freshman wing is Kareem, also known as "Fats." "I get to help shape and mold lives, and help the kids make better decisions, because this is one of the most difficult times for students," said Kareem when asked about the positives of working at Westhill. Kareem also has a great appreciation for Principal Rinaldi. Kareem believes that working with Rinaldi, amongst other things is what makes his job so great. "The fact that I get to work amongst, first and foremost, the principal, who was once my seventh grade teacher and that I am able to watch my friends and families children grow to be better citizens is great." Kareem's other interest in life is his music. "[I] love to write, produce and create music. That's my thing; Fats434 SUB-

SCRIBE!" said Kareem, citing his YouTube channel.

Kareem also believes he will be able to improve Westhill's environment. "I have suggestions and ideas which will help implement a more comfortable environment for students and teachers," he said.

Helping kids and the Stamford community is a recurring pattern with Kareem. "[Prior to working at Westhill] I worked at Rippowam Middle School. I currently work at the boys and girls club and take part in a mentoring program called Passport to Manhood/Fifth Quarter, I also run an open gym at Yerwood center." Kareem recently left his job at Rippowam to join the Viking staff. "The people at Rippowam were great; you always miss people you have to leave. I try and make everyone I work with family."

In the lower freshman wing is where students will typically find our other new security guard, Matt. Prior to working at Westhill Matt worked at Westover Elementary School, Turn of River Middle School, and Stamford High School. Matt recently left his job at Westover where he was responsible for the safety of younger students. "I was brought into Westover after incidents occurred in the area, I was

brought in to ensure the kids safety," he said. "I miss the little kids," said Matt, who will now deal with a much older demographic.

"The hardest part about working here is kids skipping class and the Juul epidemic," said Matt when asked about the more difficult aspects of making the switch to older students. He has also gotten involved in the athletic department at Westhill. "Getting to coach freshman football and lacrosse, while shaping and molding the youth of America are the positives of my job." In addition to coaching sports outside of school, Matt also has other interests—"I like going to the gym, playing with my nine month pitbull, Blue, going to sporting events, [and] playing with my Python, Cletus."

"Mornings are quiet when everyone eats, and around lunch it gets a little bit rowdy. But, it is overall a positive place," said Matt about the school's environment. "The best things are the logo, the availability of the weight room, and Principal Rinaldi," he added in regards to other great things about Westhill.

Students and staff have welcomed Kareem and Matt to the Westhill family.



**AT THE READY** Westhill's new security guards Kareem (top) and Matt (bottom).

Photos by Noah Klein / Editor-in-Chief.

The Westword would like to thank John the Baker for their support over the years.

Their generosity has enabled our paper to continue to share the many voices of the Westhill community.

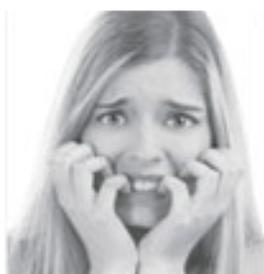
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# Don't Bully the Breed: Orcas

Column by Kelly Fox



Imagine being kidnapped and forced to live in a suffocating bathtub for the rest of your life. Imagine being a puppet used for entertainment and being forced to put on grueling shows three times a day. To make matters worse, the other captives are unfriendly, constantly starting fights and causing you harm. Every prisoner is depressed, desperately misses their family, and wants to go back home.

This is the heartbreaking reality of what happens to orcas at SeaWorld. This inappropriate organization ignores morality just to fuel their desire for money. In the wild, orcas have a whole ocean to get the proper exercise and nutrition they need. These creatures swim a healthy average of a hundred miles per day. However, in captivity they are forced to swim in the same excruciating circles for their entire life.

Orcas are predators, con-

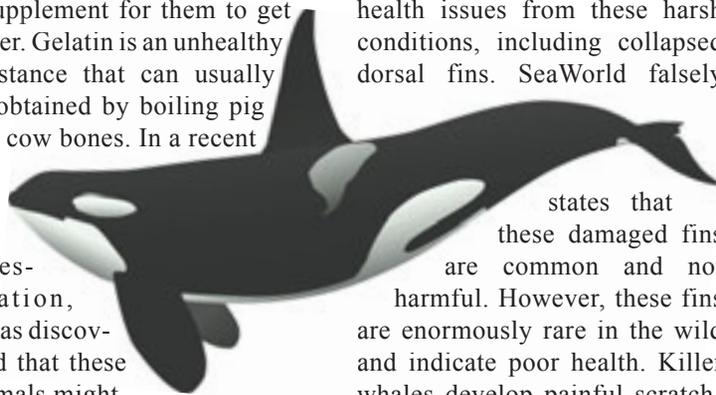
suming all types of food such as seals, fish, and great white sharks. But in SeaWorld, they're merely fed thawed dead fish. Orcas naturally take in water from prey. SeaWorld uses gelatin as a supplement for them to get water. Gelatin is an unhealthy substance that can usually be obtained by boiling pig and cow bones. In a recent

investigation, it was discovered that these animals might have many hazardous chemicals in their food.

There have been circumstances where trainers have used starvation as a training method, making numerous whales sick. This is physically and mentally taxing for the animals. Killer

whales typically have a lifespan similar to humans and live from 70 to 100 years. However, at SeaWorld, the average lifespan is only 13 years. These creatures are gaining a parade of health issues from these harsh conditions, including collapsed dorsal fins. SeaWorld falsely

states that these damaged fins are common and not harmful. However, these fins are enormously rare in the wild and indicate poor health. Killer whales develop painful scratches on their skin from engaging in fights with other whales. Additionally, there have been multiple occurrences where the whales gnaw on the iron bars in an effort to escape their horrible prison. This causes their teeth to break and can also be



the cause of severe mouth pain. An immense amount of orcas are being driven mentally unstable because of living in such awful conditions.

A large number of these creatures are agonized by being separated from their families. When killer whales are taken from the wild, their young are captured in tormenting nets and stolen from the rest of their pod. Orcas are highly intelligent creatures that form complex bonds. When the young whales are captured, they commonly make screaming calls to their parents while thrashing in the drowning ropes.

In one circumstance, a whale named Kasatka was separated from her daughter Takara. SeaWorld officials decided to do this because Takara was distracting Kasatka from their theatrical shows. For months after, Kasatka made screeching cries full of grief that had never been

heard before. Frustrating these animals can become a huge danger to humans. There is only one record of orcas harming a human in the wild, while in captivity it happens frequently.

Not only is holding killer whales for entertainment immoral, but it is also a threat to people. Orcas have started attacking trainers that are in the water with them. Horrified audiences have had to witness these people dying before their own eyes. Due to years of controversy, SeaWorld no longer breeds orcas. But the remaining orcas still have to live in these torturous conditions. The majority of the orcas were born into this ruthless prison, so they cannot survive living in wildlife. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) is fighting for these defeated creatures to be sent to sanctuaries to live out their last days in peace.

# 72 Hours: Binging a show

Column by Valerie Neyra & Jennifer Carias



*For three days each month Jen and Val will be challenging themselves to try something new and possibly fun. These challenges will consist of things they have never tried doing before and they will be documenting the outcome. This month's challenge: trying to finish a show in 72 hours.*

## Day 1

**Val:** For this challenge Jen and I decided to watch two different Netflix shows. My show was *New Girl*. The first day was Thursday, which consisted of me trying to juggle my work and trying to finish the first season. I really thought coming into this challenge that it would be easy, but then I realized that I cannot sit around all day and watch shows, even though I really want to. I got through three quarters of season one which is really weird, since I would have been on season two by this point. The reason I may not have finished season one is because Jen chose this show for me, so I am not really

watching the show at my own will. If I had chosen the show myself, I probably would have finished.

**Jen:** On the first day we decided to choose a show for each other, one that the other has never seen before. Val had chosen a show called *Schitt's Creek* for me. It is a comedy about a rich family that loses everything and now have to live in a motel in a small town in the middle of nowhere. Usually I would have never picked a show like this to watch, but I started to like it more. The next thing I knew, I was on season two by the end of the day. Granted, they are 20 minute episodes with 13 episodes per season, but that is still about four hours of watching the show. I had it on in the background as I did homework.

## Day 2

**Val:** On day two, I got through season two and I started to get really into the show. The only problem with getting really into the show

is that you neglect work that you need to do. The show has actually become one of my favorites. It has a little bit of drama but is mostly very funny. I played the show as I was doing homework, wrapping Christmas presents, and cleaning my room. I even downloaded Netflix on my phone so I could watch a couple of minutes while doing errands. It had pretty much taken over my life for the first two days. Since it was Friday, I stayed up until two a.m. watching *New Girl*.

**Jen:** Whenever I start a new show I do this thing where I just do not want to watch anymore. It tends to take me a good couple months or so to actually get back into it, so on the second day I really was not feeling it and only ended up making it to season two episode six.

## Day 3

**Val:** Day three was the final and the hardest day. I woke up and tried to put on *New Girl*, but found myself not really get-

ting into the show. I decided to stop watching the show for a little bit and focus my energy on trying to be productive in order to get some work done. Finally, around late afternoon, I decided to give the show another try. It was hard, as I barely made it to season three. There are five seasons, so I did not do too bad. Obviously, I failed the challenge, but at least I discovered a new show, so that is a plus. I had lost a lot of sleep and will continue to lose more as I will try to finish the show after this challenge, but now at my own pace.

**Jen:** The last day was Saturday, and I had to work until five p.m. I obviously could not watch then. Once I got home, I still did not feel like continuing the show, but I put it on anyways. I stopped watching once I reached season three. I did not want to continue after this. Do not get me wrong—it is a good show and I will most likely end up finishing it consider-

ing it is only three seasons long—but I would much rather have been watching something else. In the end I failed the challenge; not because I could not do it, but because it is really difficult to binge watch a show that you are not completely invested in.

In conclusion, everyone likes to sit down and binge watch shows once in awhile. It is a guilty pleasure for all of us, even though we feel and look horrible by the time we finish. If binge watching a show has taught us anything, it is to do it when you have nothing else to do. If you binge watch a show on a busy schedule it will become more of a chore and not something that one will enjoy.

We encourage you to grab some popcorn and your favorite blanket, and watch your favorite shows. Just make sure you get some sleep in between seasons—even if they left you on a major cliff-hanger—find out what happens in the morning.

# Alternative services to Netflix

**Allie Colorado & Nicholas Zarrilli**

Staff Writer & Managing Editor

If you have been on Netflix or any social media platform recently, news has spread that their current and new member standard and premium prices will begin to increase as of October 19 based on their billing cycle.

Those with the basic standard definition one screen eight dollar plan, do not fret—that price is staying put for now. However, the standard two screen High Definition (HD) plan price will change from ten dollars to 11 dollars monthly and the 12 dollar premium four screen plan will rise up to 14 dollars.

The main question facing current Netflix subscribers is whether or not they should convert to other streaming services. Currently, the two biggest competitors to Netflix are Amazon Prime Video and Hulu, as both

offer TV shows and movies from many providers, as well as exclusive original content, on demand anytime under a monthly premium.

Hulu has two base packages; the “some ads” eight dollar per month plan and the recently added “ad free” twelve dollar a month plan. This makes it both the most and least expensive of the big three, depending on which package you pick.

The movie library on Hulu is small compared to the others, but blockbusters cycle in and out every month so it is perfect for those who like something fresh for the occasional movie night. Hulu’s main draw is its TV library, the biggest of the major three streaming services. Major TV networks such as Fox, FX, Adult Swim, MTV, ABC, and Comedy Central have many of their shows on Hulu and most opt to simulcast new episodes



as they premier on TV. Hulu,

original exclusive programming, including the academy award-winning *Handmaid's Tale*.

All in all, Hulu is a great service for people who like cable TV offerings but want to watch it wherever and whenever they want.

Amazon Prime Video is a streaming service included within Amazon Prime. It is ten dollars per month for three simultaneous HD streams, and it includes free shipping for all products on Amazon. It is the cheapest of the big three (not counting Hulu’s limited ads plan). The service trumps both Netflix and Hulu in its movie library size, but has fewer TV series, most of which are less popular and acclaimed than those on the other services. Amazon makes up for this through its add-on Amazon channels. The channels include some separate services like BritBox and HBO that can

be streamed through Amazon Prime for an additional price. Amazon’s original content does not have as much buzz floating around as Netflix’s or even Hulu’s but content like *The Tick* could be worth checking out if you have the service.

Price changes for streaming services are not an unusual occurrence. In October 2015, Netflix raised its prices from nine to ten dollars but the U.S. subscriber base continued to increase with the additional dollar payments each month. Netflix has improved its service impeccably in the past year with the addition of the option to download shows for offline playback. With the production of Netflix Originals including *Stranger Things* and *Thirteen Reasons Why*, Netflix has big plans to expand its Netflix Originals program, so the price increase is likely to bring a better experience to its subscribers.

Graphic by **Nicholas Zarrilli** / Managing editor

## Top five Christmas movies

**Rayshawn Gipson**

Staff Writer

It is that time of the year, where the weather starts to get brisk, snow falls on the ground, and almost every store has a carol playing. There are a lot of movies that annually spark lots of Christmas spirit, but here are *The Westword's* top five holiday movies of all time.

Number one on our list has to be *A Christmas Story*. The movie is about a young boy named Ralphie in the 1940s who attempts to convince his parents that a Red Ryder B.B. gun is the perfect gift for him. The famous “you’ll shoot your eye out” line still appears today, especially when the holiday’s are approaching. Not only that, but every year on Christmas Eve, TNT and TBS both play the classic all day long until December 26 hits. This is the type of movie that makes one want to dim the lights, grab their hot chocolate, make some cookies, and sit on the couch with loved ones until it is time to go to sleep before the morning comes. *A Christmas Story* is also on Broadway at the moment.

Next on our top five holiday movies of all time is *Elf*. This classic is about Buddy, a human who is accidentally transported to the North Pole. He grows

up around elves, and is unable to shake the feeling that he cannot fit in with everyone else. He decides to find his real father in New York hoping to build the bond that they never had. You can catch this movie almost all the time on Freeform, during the 25 Days of Christmas special. Will Ferrell brings the same silliness to the table that is seen in his other popular movies. *Elf* is one movie that will likely not get boring regardless of how many times you have seen it. It is also a musical on Broadway at the moment.

Number three on the list is *Home Alone*. Eight-year-old Kevin McCallister gets in trouble with his mother, and she punishes him by

making him sleep in the attic. The next morning, Kevin wakes up late and his family accidentally forgets him when they leave for vacation, leaving Kevin home alone. Everything goes well for Kevin until two criminals realize that the young boy is all alone. The rest of the movie follows Kevin’s defense witty against the burglars. *Home Alone* was so highly rated that they made a sequel, which had a more ridiculous story than the first one.

*The Polar Express* is next on our list. The movie is about a doubting young boy who is skeptical about Christmas. On

Christmas Eve, he gets the opportunity to take an extraordinary train ride to the North Pole, and on this ride he discovers multiple things about himself, the true meaning of Christmas, and what it means to believe. Overall, this animation film is an exceptionally beautiful movie that is worth the watch during the holiday season.

Last on *The Westword's* Christmas movie list is another cartoon that was originally made in 1957 based on the Dr. Seuss’ children’s book: *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. In 1966 it was adopted into a cartoon, and eventually into a movie in 2000 starring Jim Carrey. The tale is about the green Grinch who hates Christmas. He returns to a town named Whoville after being bullied throughout his childhood years there and decides to make the town pay by stealing Christmas from them. The movie is unlike others; the Grinch sneaks into Whoville to take everyone’s gifts. It is different to see a Christmas villain as the main character of a film.

Christmas is great with or without movies. Hopefully *The Westword's* top five holiday movies of all time list will keep you in the holiday spirit even longer than the eminent death of your Christmas tree.

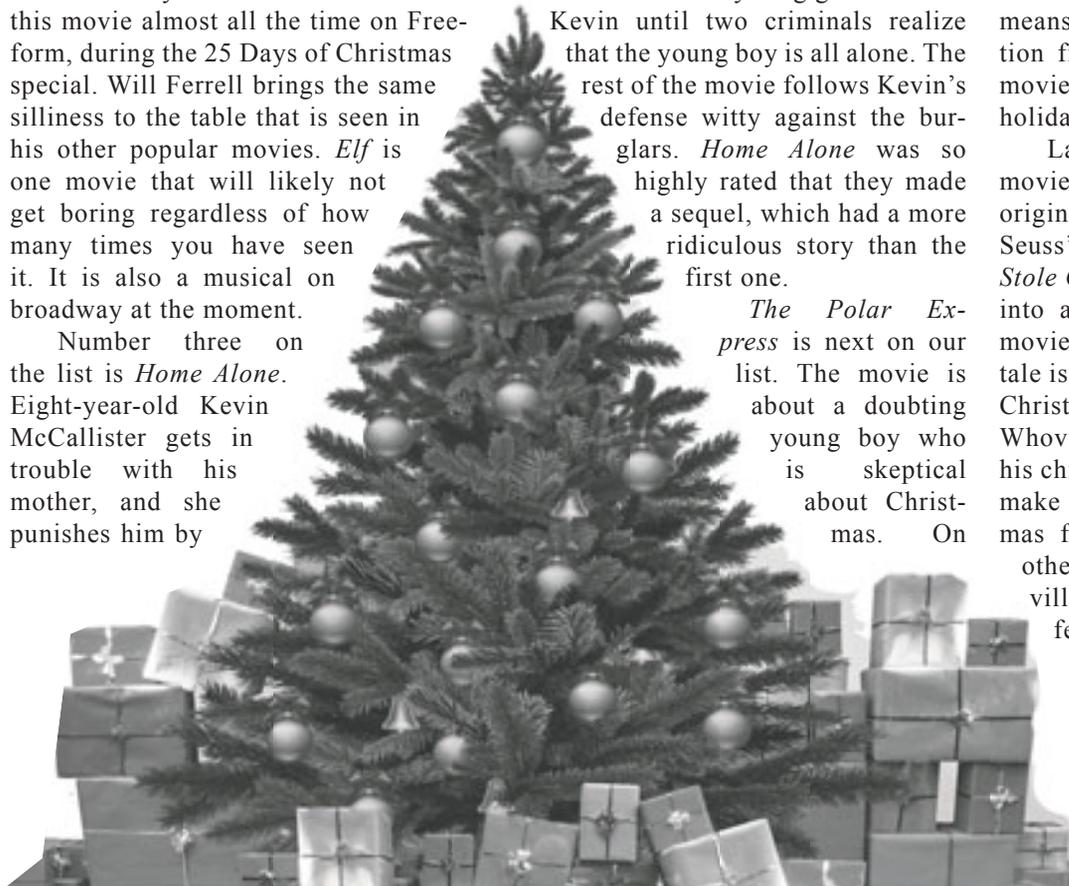


Image courtesy of **public.domain.net**.

# The rise of ESports

**Nathan Isenstein**  
Staff Writer

It is a cold evening on a Saturday night in at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. One may even hear the screams of cheering and excitement from the Staples Center, one of the most prestigious arenas in the United States. Whether it is sports or music, what definitely does not come to mind is the finals of the League of Legends World Championship. The month-long tournament features video game competitors from across the globe who will compete for millions of dollars.

Electronic sports, commonly known as ESports, are becoming a world phenomenon. ESports are a form of competition using video games, and is growing exponentially in terms of popularity. Popularity has grown for mostly every video game such as FIFA, League of Legends, Call of Duty, and even Super Smash Bros. The great majority of these professional video players make their careers being professional video game players, most spend anywhere between ten to fourteen hours practicing every day.

These players are contracted

by organizations or teams to play for them. ESports also contain some very notable sponsors, such as Geico, Coca-Cola, Axe, Nissan, Audi, Logitech, and HTC. Professional sports teams such as Manchester City Football Club and Paris-Saint Germaine (PSG) football club have professional players and teams playing video games under their organization.

ESports have sold out notorious arenas throughout the United States such as Madison Square Garden, Staples Center, Key Arena, and Nationwide Arena. International stadiums have also been used predominately through the last few years in ESports include the Birds Nest (Beijing's national stadium), Spodek Arena in Poland, and Mercedes Benz Arena in Germany.

ESports are also having more state and local impact. EGF, the Electronic Gaming Federation, runs a high-school ESports league in Connecticut. This league involves numerous teams across the state of Connecticut, such as Norwalk High School, New London High School, and numerous high schools in the New Haven area.

"Making a competitive video gameteam gives students in the Westhill community an opportunity to



**HIGH STAKES, BIG TURNOUT** Two teams square off in an intense match of League of Legends, in front of hundreds of watchers, both in person, and online.

Image courtesy of flickr.com

do something they love that most other students do not have the opportunity to do," said Ms. Berkley, social studies teacher.

"It would be fun and would bring the gaming community together," said Michael Berlingo ('19) regarding the possibility of creating a Westhill gaming team.

"With colleges now giving

out scholarships for gaming, I think it would be cool if Westhill had a gaming team," said Stanley Villard ('18).

Newzoo, the leading provider of market intelligence covering ESports and global games, estimates there are 148 million ESports fans and players around the globe. Newzoo also approximates that one of

every five American male millennials watch ESports. To put this into perspective, that percentage is equal to the amount of viewership for baseball and hockey for that specific demographic. With projections by Newzoo that the total ESports revenue will surpass one billion dollars by 2019, how far can ESports really go?

## This month in hip-hop

Column by Hudson Price

This month in hip-hop, Eminem, G-Eazy, and other artists made headlines. We were blessed with a Jeezy-J Cole-Kendrick Lamar song, and N.E.R.D. is back and better than ever with an album featuring artists such as Kendrick Lamar, Future, and Wale. *No One Ever Really Dies*, an album that covers many topics from racism to gender equality, is not your average listen. Songs such as "Secret Life of Tiger" make you work as an audience and force you to listen and dive into the lyrics. Next, the song, "Don't Do It!" Describes the struggle of police violence. "Don't Do It" is referring to pulling over and getting out of the car. Another song which is worth the time taking a listen to is "American dream" by Jeezy. The song discusses the American dream of today, and featured artists J Cole and Kendrick Lamar. The two are collaborating on an album together currently, so

seeing them come together again before the albums release, created lots of excitement for many fans.

As always, your throwback song of the month is, "NY State of Mind" by Nas. The song, a description of Nas's origin, shows the artist describing his thoughts and mannerisms that come as a result of growing up there. Not only did December bring us great music, but great music videos for songs like: 'Motorsport' and "No Limit Remix".

In other news, we caught wind of Offset of Migos proposing to Cardi B on stage, which is sure to be a great wedding. Last but not least, *Huncho Jack, Jack Huncho* released. A quality Quavo-Travis Scott album that's definitely worth a listen. Lots of music released this month and still more in the near future, January is going to be a good month for music.



**TRENDING ARTISTS** G-Eazy and Eminem recently dropped high ranking albums.

Images courtesy of flickr.com

## Top 10 New Years Resolutions

### 1. Start exercising

Likely the most common of all New Year's resolutions, many promise to adopt a regular exercise regimen at the start of each year.

### 2. Eat healthier

In addition to wanting to live healthier, many want to eat healthier, although improving general health is a popular priority.

### 3. Stop procrastinating

Many students struggle with procrastination. The new year offers a fresh start to those who tend to put things off.

### 4. Improve grades

Students in high school and college alike are bound to desire better performance in school. Whether this involves a greater focus on studying or seeking extra help, there is always room for improvement.

### 5. Reduce stress

As students, we are bound to suffer from a great deal of stress. For those with rigorous academic lives, extracurriculars, or after school jobs, taking some downtime is important.

### 6. Get a job

Whether you are saving for college or just want a little more spending money, getting an after school job can be beneficial, although it may add stress to a busy schedule.

### 7. Get organized

Cleaning out and organizing backpacks, bedrooms, and the like can reduce stress and make you feel more focused.

### 9. Get more sleep

It is no secret that students in general do not get nearly enough sleep. With packed schedules and early school start times, it is important to set aside enough time to snooze.

### 8. Spend more time with family

With students' busy schedules, it may be difficult to find time to spend with your family. However, the relationships we have with those closest to us are important to maintain.

### 10. Take up a hobby

Whether it be painting, cooking, or gardening, hobbies can be fun and satisfying!

Graphic courtesy of [pixabay.com](http://pixabay.com).  
Briefs by [Lucy Heart](#)//Staff Writer



## The Hungry Vikings

Column by Jackie Fahey, Jack Williamson & Kevin Costello

### The Village Table

Service : ★★★★★☆

Taste : ★★★★★★

Ambiance: ★★★★★☆

The time had come for the Hungry Vikings to continue their search to find the best sandwich in all the land. For their third voyage, the Vikings traveled long and far to The Village Table, where a culinary rivalry between the Crusaders, the Knights, and their very own Vikings persisted. Their ravenous stomachs directed them towards the quaint city of Stamford where they would work to officially settle the long, festering feud and name a victor. The trio arrived at the Village Table ready to eat and satiate the groans of their desolate guts.

Viking number one went to retrieve his food first as the rumbling of his stomach could be heard out the door as he waited a long five minutes to reach the front of the line. The Viking was delighted when the nice lady behind the coun-

ter called "next" and without hesitancy he relayed his order of "The Viking Sandwich." Viking number one obtained his food fairly quickly and was very content with the pleasant service he had received.

The Norseman was beyond excited to see a hefty serving of meat on a soft, fluffy roll paired with other mouth-watering toppings such as cheese, eggs, crispy potato skins and ketchup.

The Viking attacked his sandwich with gusto and devoured the entire meal in record time. The sandwich was a unique savory combination that had the Vikings tongue bursting from flavor. Viking number one could taste everything from the spicy seasoning of the potato skins to the sweetness of the red sauce, and everything in between.

Viking number one sat back in his chair with a completely sat-

isfied stomach and wondered how any sandwich could beat the one he just annihilated.

After patiently waiting, a famished Viking number two was next to eat. Our second Viking waited his turn in line and finally placed his order of "The Crusader" with the employee up front. The sounds of conversation buzzed in the ears of Viking number two as heavy traffic began to consume The Village Table. Viking number two was received his food in a timely manner and the sight of the extraordinary sandwich was met with a roar from his stomach.

Without hesitation the brute demolished the sandwich in a few bites, however he did not miss the impeccable flavor that burst from the combination of egg, cheese, steak, and hash browns sandwiched between the

delicious halves of a roll.

Satisfied, Viking number two reclined in his chair as he reminisced about the delicious meal combination, taking just a few sips of his beverage to ensure the taste was left to linger as long as possible.

Finally, it had come time for the starving Viking number three to quench her hunger. She did so by ordering the final competing sandwich "The Black Knight." The Vikings patiently awaited the last sandwich, while Viking number three was barely containing herself.

At last, the sandwich arrived at the table, oozing with Swiss cheese. As the sandwich was placed down on the table in front of her, the whiff of pastrami was enough to send her diving into the meal. Viking number three could not pull the sandwich away from her mouth

even as the Russian dressing began to dribble down her chin. She savored each and every bite of the sandwich which consisted of egg, Swiss cheese, pastrami, and grilled onions matched superbly with a rich and creamy Russian dressing.

Overall, the sandwiches, service, and ambiance of The Village Table made for a pleasant experience for the Hungry Vikings. Nevertheless, the Vikings came to Village Table to name a victor, and so a victor would be named. Although possibly biased by their heritage, all Vikings agreed that "The Viking Sandwich" was clearly victorious. The unique combination of ingredients paired with just the right amount of savory and sweet resulted in an award-winning sandwich that met the Vikings high expectations. The no longer hungry Vikings left The Village Table content and ready for their long journey home.

**A hippo's sweat is red and acts like a waterproof sunscreen.** About three percent of the ice in the Antarctica Glaciers is made of penguin urine.

# SLAY OF THE MONTH: ISABELLA ADAMO



Hello! I am Isabella Adamo and I almost miss my bus every morning because of how long it takes me to pick out an outfit. For most of my life, I went to a school with a uniform, so I never thought about fashion until my freshman year. My wardrobe has grown immensely since then, and now I love wearing all kinds of fun clothes.

I wear a lot of turtlenecks with the occasional oversized sweater. Just like Marcos, the previous Slay of the Month, I do love a good t-shirt and flannel combo. I own a lot of flannels, one of the best ones coming from my uncle which is kind of weird. I also hate wearing jackets, so my abundance of flannels and cardigans help out.

However, when the time comes I have three jackets I switch between. First, my brown golf jacket. I am told Mona's husband, Frank has the exact same one. Second, my handy dandy black jacket—it provides no warmth,

but it goes with every outfit. Lastly, my wonderful windbreaker that was once owned by a mini mart employee named Vivian. But wait! Do not forget the doggie pouch! I think this is the best accessory I will ever own. It holds Satchi (@satchitheshiizu) perfectly and he hates it.

I would describe my fashion as 80's punk mom. Most of my fun clothes are vintage or something weird I took from my uncle's closet. I also get a lot of my clothes from random thrift stores I find while traveling with my family.

Fashion has become so important to me that I feel insecure when I wear sweatpants or pajamas. It is ridiculous I know, but dressing up just makes me feel a bit more jazzed up than sweatpants. I do wear comfy sweaters and my one pair of leggings sometimes. When I get dressed I normally pick out pants and work my way from there. My two go-tos are my green velvet mom pants or

my ripped boyfriend jeans. They are both really comfortable and make me look cooler than I really am, like most of my clothes.

Because I dress a certain way it brings a lot of unwanted attention from weird guys. It has caused me to get catcalled a lot which is crazy considering how young I am. Rather than implementing strict dress codes to reduce this problem, men should be taught not to catcall. Women should not dress a certain way to avoid getting catcalled when men could just not catcall in the first place. Fashion is meant to be a form of self expression but it is twisted and turned into something that is used against me. Instead of fixing the problem, dress codes perpetuate the objectification of women.

Fashion has helped me become much more comfortable with my body and myself. I am excited to see how my style will change throughout high school.

## To Do Next Month: JANUARY

January 7th  
New Canaan Nature  
Center breakfast with  
the animals!

Eat your breakfast as  
a community and then  
give the animals their  
own breakfast

January 14th  
Ice Fishing Workshop

A day dedicated to  
teach you how to ice  
fish at the Lichfield  
Deep center.

January 10  
Bitter-Sweet  
Chocolate Day

Still craving some chocolate  
after the holiday season?  
This is your day to indulge  
on the unique flavor of this  
unique kind of chocolate.

January 16th  
National Nothing Day

This day is unevent-  
ful. The 16th is a  
day to do absolutely  
nothing.

January 28th  
International Fun At  
Work Day

If you do not have a  
usually fun employment  
or you just want to fool  
around at work, this  
day is for you.

Photos courtesy of [creativecommons.org](https://creativecommons.org/).

The strongest muscle in the human body is the tongue. Larry is the name of the well known Twitter logo. Ants never sleep.

# A Take on Regifting

**Rachel Deutsch**  
Staff Writer

Maybe Great Aunt Sally came over for Christmas with a box of wrapped tube socks in tow. Perhaps Uncle Jack bought your computer enthusiast brother a fishing rod, again. Can we “regift” these unwanted presents to somebody else, or should we just appreciate how fortunate we are to receive gifts in the first place and hold onto them indefinitely?

Is it not the thought that counts? If a loved one took the

time to buy a present, they should be adequately thanked and appreciated for their effort.

“I feel like it depends on the present. If it is something that somebody really thought about and is meaningful then [regifting] that is pretty disrespectful,” said Margot Buckley (’19).

Some argue that regifting prevents wasteful behavior. In our consumer culture, especially during the holiday season, so many presents are passed around that may be valuable to some, even if they were worthless to

others. Regifting prevents an influx of unwanted gifts and passes them along to someone who may have a better use and appreciation for them.

“I kind of like regifting, in the sense that if I have something that I have never used and it would be better used by someone else then I will give it to them instead.” said Caroline Ross (’18).

Regifting is sometimes looked at as rude if the person who received the present did not like it and it could also be rude if someone passed it off to get rid of

it. It has also been seen as offensive to pretend the gift they received was something purchased for someone else. Although if one regifts with good intentions, thinking another person would enjoy that present that is a completely different story.

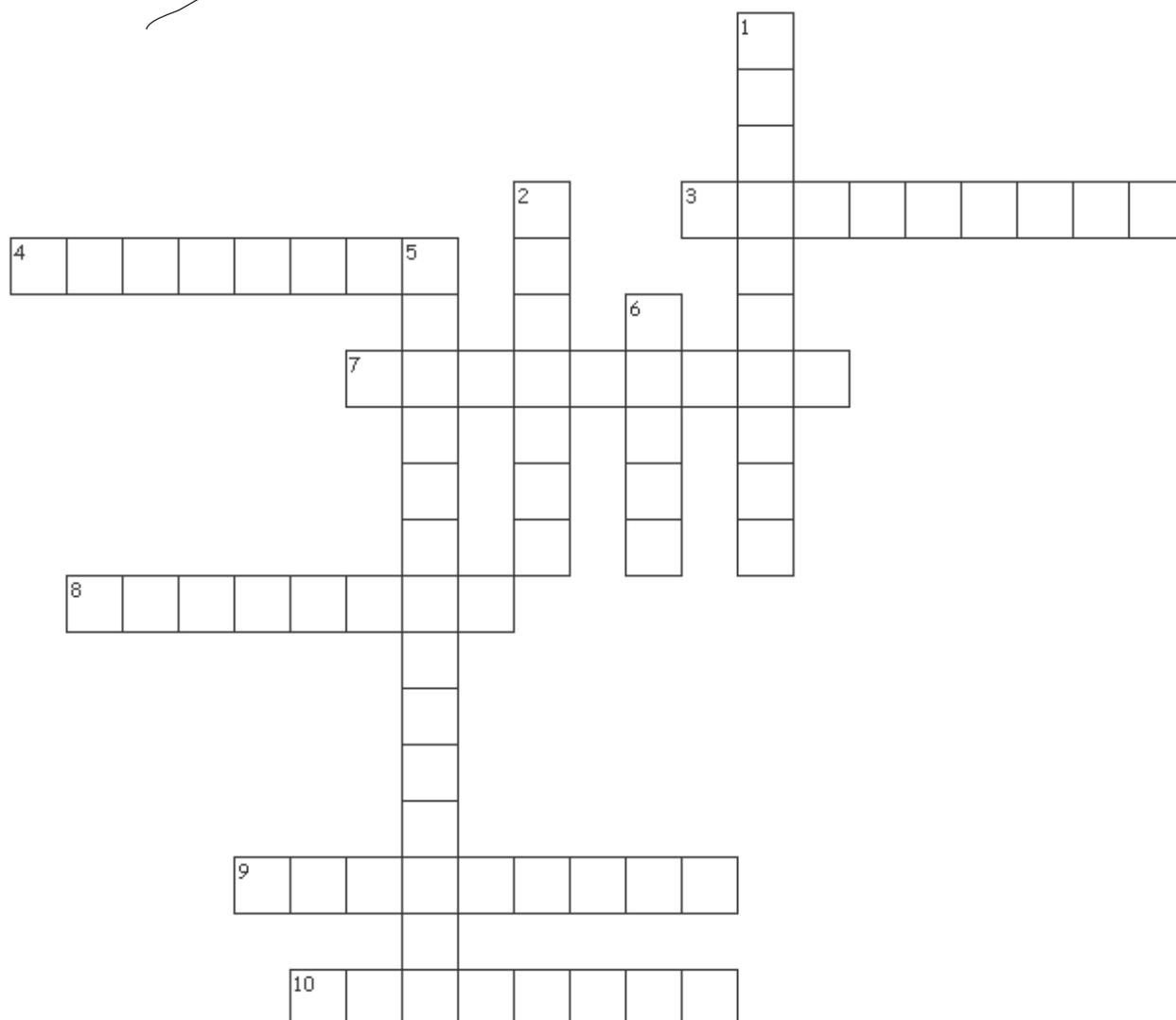
“I think if it is a gift you did not like then you should not give it to someone else, but if it is something you want and just do not have space or a current use for it then it is okay,” said Sara Gatz (’20).

“I think that there is nothing

wrong with regifting anything because if you have never used it, it is harmless and it saves money. As long as the person does not know it is regifted, no harm no foul,” said Andrew Dietzman (’18).

Regifting is part of the holiday season. It is an unavoidable staple in the world of gift exchanges. We should embrace this part of spreading holiday cheer and be transparent with regifting, so long as it is intended to help other people enjoy presents that might otherwise go to waste.

# New Years Crossword



## Down

1. A promise made to yourself for entering the new year.
2. You celebrate with your \_\_\_\_\_ and family.
5. The new year we are going into.
6. There is a huge one of these in New York City during the ball drop.

## Across

3. “Five, four, three, two, one, happy new year!”
4. The time of night when the new year begins.
7. Throwing a party in order to \_\_\_\_\_ New Years.
8. People tend to take these a lot, especially on holidays.
9. Loud, full of light and explosive.
10. People throw this when celebrating.

Answer Key: Across: 3. Countdown 4. Midnight 7. Celebrate 8. Pictures 9. Fireworks 10. Confetti Down: 1. Resolution 2. Friends 5. Twenty eighteen 6. Crowd

**Pirates believed wearing earrings would improve their eye sight.** *There is a company in Taiwan that makes dinnerware out of wheat.*

# EXPRESS



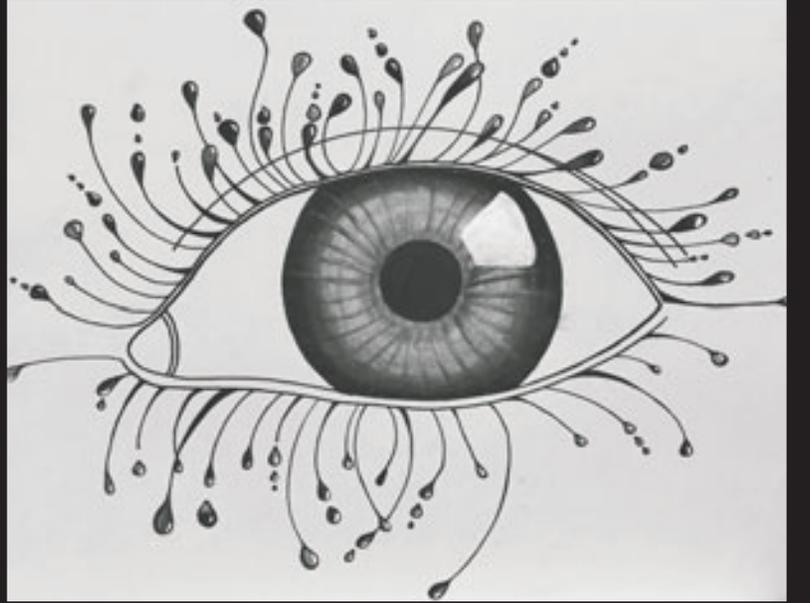
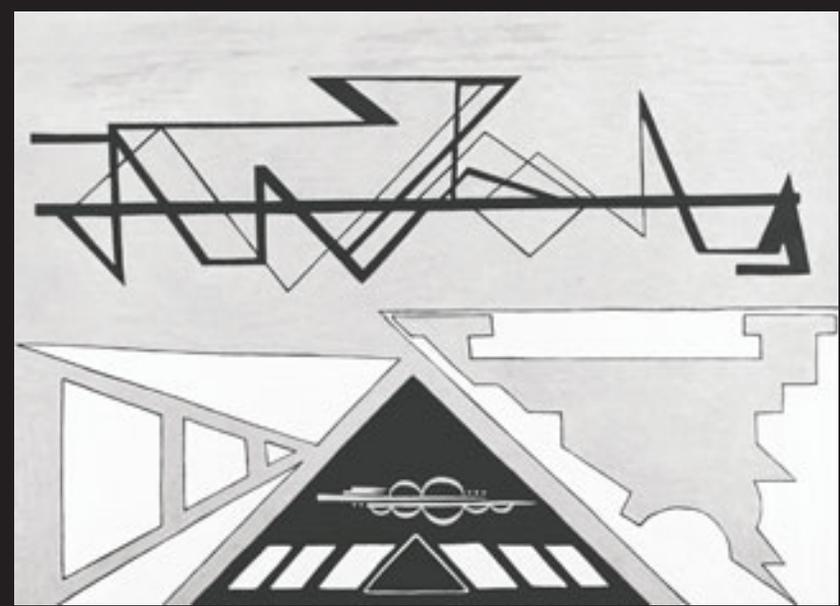
Alex Rocca ('18)



Anika Unizar ('21)



Salma Begum ('18)



# ARTIST OF THE MONTH

## JULIA FREDRICK

**The Westword (TW):** When did you first start becoming interested in art?

**Julia Fredrick (JF):** Freshman year, I was not really sure of what class to take so I took drawing and painting and really liked it.

**TW:** How would you describe your artistic style?

**JF:** I would describe it as bright, spontaneous, I would just say that every page is always full of something, my art is almost cluttered.

**TW:** What is your favorite medium?

**JF:** Acrylic paint, I like the way the colors come out. It is really easy to make the colors blend together and make it whatever you want the piece to be.

**TW:** What is your favorite thing to portray through your art?

**JF:** I like landscape-esque things, such as water. I like making things abstract, but also things that you see in real life. One of my pieces for example was lips, but the lips were over water and they were a different color.

**TW:** How has art influenced your life?

**JF:** Art has been a way to express myself. Art also takes away a lot of my stress. Whenever I am stressed I go in my basement and paint. It takes my mind off of whatever is stressing me out.

**TW:** Who or what has inspired you to create art?

**JF:** Mrs. Konrad influenced me a lot. She always told me I was not as bad as I said I was. She kept introducing me into different aspects of art and design, that interested me a lot.

**TW:** Is there a message you want to convey in your art?

**JF:** Not necessarily, but art is a really easy way to get a message out. Art is a great way to get recognition without having everyone know that you did something. One of my pieces was in front of the principal's office for three years and I did not notice until this year.

**TW:** Do you see an artistic career in your future?

**JF:** Hopefully I can do something with design involved in it. I would like to minor in some sort of art or design in college.

**TW:** How do people typically describe your art?

**JF:** People describe my art as very neat and detailed but also very bright and different. Most people's art that you see is portraits and things that you see in everyday life, a lot of things I do are more abstract and design as opposed to actual faces and people.

**TW:** Do you have advice for students interested in art?

**JF:** I would tell students not to get frustrated because everything takes a lot of time. I would also say even if you make a mistake, you can cover it up instead of starting over since everyone always just starts over.

**TW:** Do you have a favorite art piece?

**JF:** My favorite piece of mine is probably where I have a face over water. I like how it is a partial silhouette of a face in black and under it are really colors that you cannot tell are water but it is.





# Westhill Wrestling hits the mat

**Josh Eimbinder**  
Online Executive Editor

“Running, wrestling, running, and more wrestling,” said Mr. Pereira, Dean of Students and head wrestling coach. The 2017- 2018 winter wrestling season will be a season of grueling and demanding work. As the wrestling gets underway, the team knows what they have to do to be successful. The team kicked off their season against Norwalk on December 14, and then went on to Londonberry, New Hampshire for a match they compete in every year. “It is nice to get the kids up to New Hampshire and stay in a hotel. Not a lot of schools do that, so it is really neat,” said Mr. Pereira.

There will be tiresome moments, and matches that will be unfavorable, but the group knows to keep their head up and battle until the very end. “Everybody improves and gets better from the first match to the last match,” said Mr. Pereira. “We expect the varsity guys are going to perform at a level they did last year or exceed those expectations,” said Pereira.

The wrestling team features a schedule with many rivalry matches. Westhill took on Greenwich on

January third with Westhill emerging victorious. The Vikings will go head to head with Ridgefield on January 10, and Wilton on February sixth. FCIAC Trials begin three days later on February ninth where schools from all over the county will compete for first place. “I would love to win every match we played in. It is always enjoyable when we get to wrestle against Stamford High and Greenwich,” said Mr. Pereria. “We also like the matches where we get to test ourselves, especially against [Fairfield] Ludlowe and Danbury,” he continued.

With just five seniors out of a team of 24, the group is comprised of majority underclassmen. “We have a great group of guys who are competitive and push each other to better themselves everyday,” said Jaret Chase (’18).

“We are very strong at the lower weight classes so we are hoping we can score some bonus points in the matches to come,” said captain Marco Alvarado (’18). “We lost a couple of key seniors last year, but we are looking forward to the challenge,” said Alverado. The season concludes in early March, but every member of the squad will continue preparing for the 2018-19 season.



**BATTLE** Over the years Mr. Pereira made his players work to full potential to perform on a high level and improve players performance. Photos contributed by **Josh Eimbinder**/ Online executive

# Gymnastics team flipping into the season

**Maura Johnston**  
Staff Writer

The Westhill and Stamford High CO-OP varsity Gymnastics team is looking forward to a successful season this winter. They hope the closeness of the team brings them to success and allows for an enjoyable season.

The captains this year consist of Stephanie Melia (’18) and Samantha Page (’19). These girls hope to demonstrate team commitment and make the rest of the team feel welcome and ready for the season.

In the off season, the team did weight training two to three times during the week in order to stay in shape. The girls focused on developing skills, routine requirements, music selection, and how to earn bonus points for competitions. Hopefully this dedication will help boost their scores in the FCIAC

from last year.

The main goal the team is centered around is bonding with each other. The captains hope this strategy will lead them to a successful and fun season. The team hopes to prepare the underclassman so they feel ready and pumped for the season. Freshman Shayna Finkel is someone to keep an eye out for.

“My motivation for the girls is to become a very bonded group. I feel that this is one thing that will make us stand out the most,” said Stephanie Melia (’18).

Varsity Gymnastics holds practices not only in the Westhill gym, but at Chelsea Piers as well. There, the team has access to the gymnasium and equipment that neither Westhill nor Stamford High School owns. This helps get the team to the level they want to be at and allows them to practice routines for upcoming competitions.

The team is willing to dedi-

cate time on and off of the mats to become closer, and to perfect their routines.

“We may not win every competition but we try our hardest, work together, motivate each other, and always try to show our school spirit. I think that is the best thing you can have for a team,” said Melia (’18).

The team is looking forward to their annual ‘Rose Carlucci’ meet that is held at Westhill. This meet honors former Westhill gymnastics coach, Rose-Marie Carlucci who passed away in 2007. This meet allows for participation from the full team and they are joined by other FCIAC gymnastics teams.

“It is really fun to see the girls that have working hard all season compete,” said Samantha Page (’19).

Westhill- Stamford gymnastics looking forward to a successful season!



**MOTIVATION** The Westhill and Stamford High CO-OP varsity Gymnastics team is looking forward to performing well during the season.

Photos contributed by **Noah Tovia**

# Healy is a hat-trick

Meaghan Lavelle / Athletes of the Month / Cooper Healy



**Andrew Lappas**  
Staff Writer

*Cooper Healy fell in love with hockey after his father introduced him to the sport as a kid. Ever since then, Healy has taken part in the sport on a daily basis by training every day. The Westword sat down with Healy to talk about how hockey changed his life.*

**The Westword (TW): Why did you start playing hockey?**

**Cooper Healy (CH):** My dad wanted to watch me skate and he is the reason I started playing. I am glad he led me to this path.

**TW: How is the team going to be this year?**

**CH:** Pretty good. There are a lot of young kids but enough older ones with experience. We have been in tough situations before and we are ready to win some games. I am going all out since this is my last year

as a Viking.

**TW: Who stands out to you on the team this year?**

**CH:** Ryan Hart, Everette Dolan, Illarion Shaleav, Kyle Bernard, and John Kanaris. All of these players are leaders on and off the ice. We have all been playing with each other for a while, while also becoming close friends.

**TW: What is your favorite thing about hockey?**

**CH:** Being able to play with my friends and having a good time is something I look forward to everyday.

**TW: What is your favorite hockey team?**

**CH:** [The ] Rangers because I grew up a New York fan and being closest to New York, that is my team.

**TW: What National Hockey League player do you model yourself after?**

**CH:** My favorite player is Ryan McDonagh because he plays for my favorite NHL team, the Rangers, and is the captain.

**TW: Is hockey your favorite sport?**

**CH:** Yes because it is a part of me, and a team sport that once you get to know how to play, it is a fun activity and there is always something new to learn.

**TW: What is your favorite moment playing hockey?**

**CH:** My favorite moment playing hockey was winning the state finals two years ago as a sophomore.

**TW: What does it mean to you to be a captain?**

**CH:** Being a captain to me means being a role model to every kid on the team on and off the ice. It is also important to me to lead by example and show the younger guys the dedication and determination needed to be successful.

**TW: What is the most important game for you this year?**

**CH:** The most important game this year for me is Trinity. They have been our city rival since we combined with Stamford High. My brother plays for them, so we are going all out.

**PASSION** Healy loves anything and everything with hockey. He lives and breathes hockey and follows the NHL with a passion.

Photo contributed by **Cooper Healy** / Contributor.

# Lavelle shoots, she scores



**Yulia Lozynska**  
Staff Writer

*Meaghan Lavelle is a hard working basketball player who works to be the best each and every day. Her commitment and determination has gotten her the spot as one of the captains on the Girls Varsity Basketball team. Lavelle aims to be a leader and a role model for the young girls and will set good goals on her teammates. The Westword sat down with Lavelle to about her role as a leader and as well rounded player on court.*

**The Westword (TW): How long have you been playing basketball?**

**Meaghan Lavelle (ML):** I have been playing basketball since second grade.

**TW: What made you want to play basketball?**

**ML:** I started playing basketball because my cousin Katie played, and I fell in love with it from there.

**TW: Do you practice outside of school? If so, how do you do so?**

**ML:** Outside of school I try and go to weight room in the fall as much as I can to work with Ali,

the conditioning coach. I also play pickup games at the gym during the off season and try to shoot around as much as I can. We also play fall and summer league games as a team.

**TW: What position do you play in basketball?**

**ML:** I am a guard.

**TW: How does it feel to be a captain this year?**

**ML:** I feel honored to be named a captain this year. It makes me want to be the best role model that I can be for the younger girls on the team and be someone that they can look up to.

**TW: What are some of your basketball routines? Which are your favorite?**

**ML:** Before every game, I have a game day playlist that I have listened to since freshman year which gets me ready. I like having pasta parties with our team before games because I think it is great team bonding.

**TW: What individual goals do you have for this sport?**

**ML:** Personally, my goals for the sport are to do my best to help my team be as successful as possible.

**TW: What are your proudest**

**athletic achievements?**

**ML:** My proudest athletic achievement is being named a captain.

**TW: What is your favorite Westhill athletic memory?**

**ML:** My favorite Westhill athletic memory was the two weeks last season when our team was at States. There was great energy and a great atmosphere all the time and we had a lot of fun.

**TW: Are there any professional athletes that you admire or look up to? Why?**

**ML:** An athlete that I look up to is Mia Hamm because she is a very hard worker and a pioneer for women's sports.

**TW: Will you continue playing basketball in the future?**

**ML:** In college, I will probably continue playing for a club or intramural team. I hope to continue being around the sport as I get older through coaching, which I have already started to do for Stamford Youngtimers.

**TW: What life lessons has this sport taught you?**

**ML:** Basketball has taught me that to be successful you need to work together as a team and that hard work goes a long way.

**INFLUENCE** Meaghan Lavelle looks to produce results for her team this year while being a leader.

Photo by **Noah Klein** / Editor-in-Chief



# THE FINE & DANDY SHOW WITH JOSH & ANDY

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New episodes every week | @TheWestword  

## JANUARY SPORTS CALENDAR

### Week 1 (2-9)

**DATE:** 3  
**EVENT:** Varsity Boys Basketball  
**OPPONENT:** Bridgeport Central  
**LOCATION:** Away  
**TIME:** 7:00 PM

**DATE:** 8  
**EVENT:** Boys Varsity Hockey  
**OPPONENT:** Wilton  
**LOCATION:** Away  
**TIME:** TBA

**DATE:** 9  
**EVENT:** Varsity Boys Basketball  
**OPPONENT:** Norwalk  
**LOCATION:** Home  
**TIME:** 7:00 PM

### Week 2 (10-17)

**DATE:** 17  
**EVENT:** Boys Ice Hockey  
**OPPONENT:** Wilton  
**LOCATION:** Home  
**TIME:** 7:50 PM

**DATE:** 12  
**EVENT:** Boys Ice Hockey  
**OPPONENT:** Ridgefield  
**LOCATION:** Home Terry Connors  
**TIME:** 7:40 PM

**DATE:** 17  
**EVENT:** Varsity Boys Swim and dive  
**OPPONENT:** Norwalk  
**LOCATION:** Home  
**TIME:** 3:15 PM

### Week 3 (18-25)

**DATE:** 20  
**EVENT:** Varsity Wrestling  
**OPPONENT:** Warde  
**LOCATION:** Away  
**TIME:** 10:00 AM

**DATE:** 22  
**EVENT:** Varsity Wrestling  
**OPPONENT:** Brien McMahon  
**LOCATION:** Away  
**TIME:** 10:00 AM

**DATE:** 28  
**EVENT:** JV Boys Basketball  
**OPPONENT:** Wilton  
**LOCATION:** Home  
**TIME:** 5:15 PM

# Viking Sports

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**Previewing the wrestling season p. 37**

**Athletes of the Month *p. 38* / Checking up on Boys Basketball *p. 36***



**Cooper Healy**



**Meaghan Lavelle**