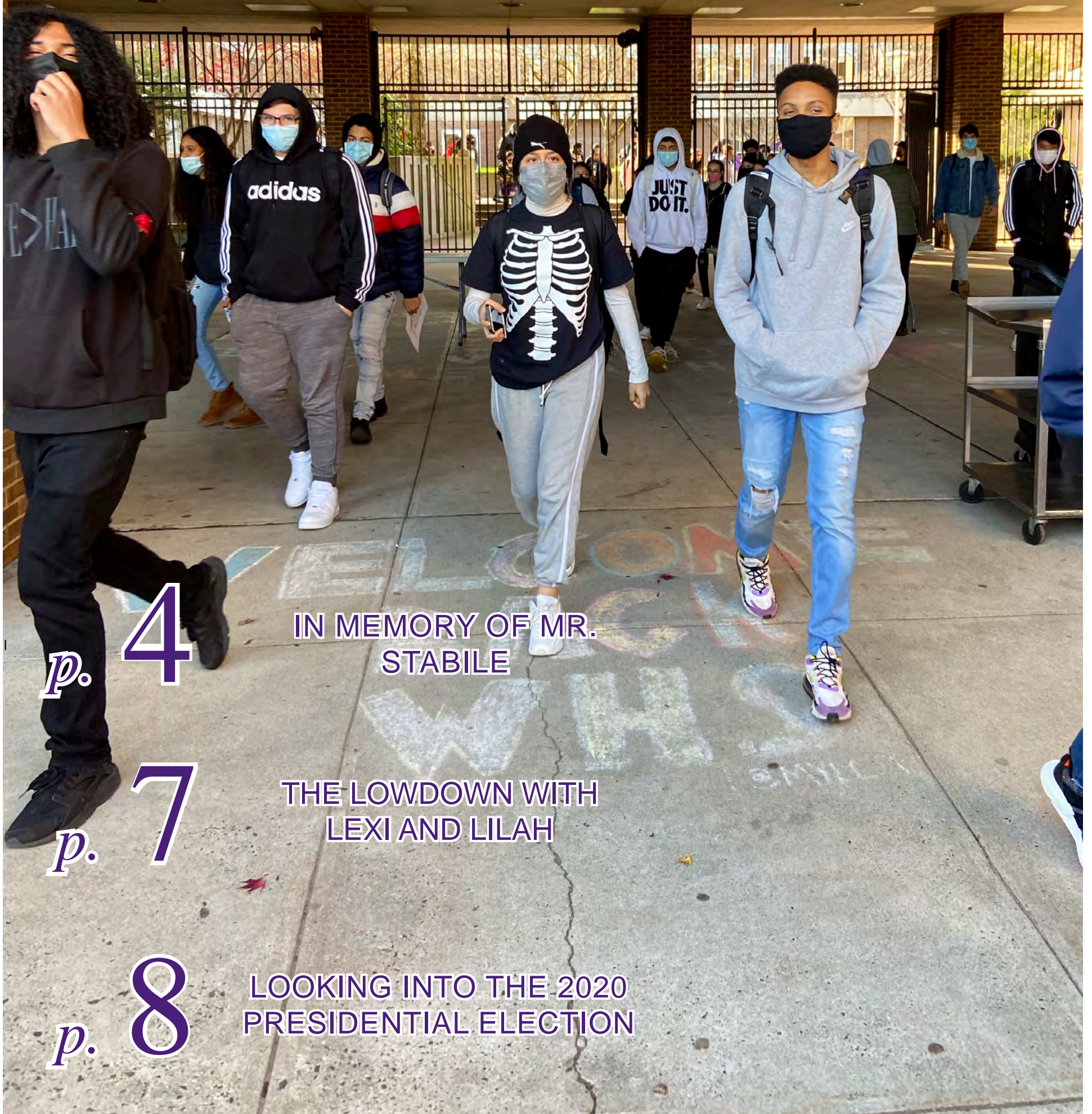


# The Westword

*Student voice of the Westhill community*  
*"The test of good journalism is the measure of its public service."*

Contact tracing helps combat the spread of COVID-19

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LOOKING INTO THE 2020  
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION



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## Note from the Editors December 2020

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the first issue of the year. We are excited to start a great year of serving as the student voice of the Westhill community.

Our Editorial this month analyzes America's ideals of democracy and how recent events in the 2020 presidential election affects them.

News pays tribute to Westhill science teacher, Mr. Stabile and looks into the process of contact tracing.

In Viewpoint, we consider the pros and cons of the electoral college and if masks should be mandated outside.

This issue, Special Report delves into the 2020 presidential election, looking at the views of both

candidates and some of the controversies.

This Supplement insert celebrates the legacy of Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

En Las Noticias recordamos al profesor de ciencias de Westhill, el señor Stabile. Así como también seguimos con el proceso de rastreo de contacto en las escuelas públicas de Stamford.

Feature this issue highlights The Lowdown with Lexi and Lilah as well as how clubs are running online this school year.

Limelight looks into COVID-19's affects on the arts and an album review of Positions by Ariana Grande.

In Sports, we sit down with our Athlete of the Month, Jack Engel and continue Max's Corner.

For more, visit [thewestwordonline.com](http://thewestwordonline.com). Be sure to check out our Instagram account for updates @thewestword.

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

Sincerely,  
Veda Bhalla & Jason Zarrilli  
Editor-in-Chief & Executive Editor

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### 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 Westword staff, along with the Communications class. 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 Julia Afsary, Hailey Baloutch, Veda Bhalla, Mary Chobanyan, Mariana Cifuentes, Kristina DeLelle, Niki Economidis, Ava Maubert, Joaquin Monteclaro, Luis Padilla, Evan Roth, Vana Servos, Caitlyn Tyrrell, Jessie Velishka, Elizabeth Watkinson, Jason Zarrilli, Mr. von Wahlde, and Mr. Wooley. The Editorial can be found on page 3.

### Announcements

There are no announcements at this time.

### Corrections

There are no corrections in this issue.

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Front cover contributed by **Ava Maubert** / Managing Editor.  
Back cover photos by **Charlie Schwartz** (top), **Dharana Alilaikannan** (bottom left), & **@boscobiology** (bottom right) / Photographer & Contributor.



## The threats to American democracy

Democracy can only exist when all voices are heard. In the United States, citizens have the right to decide their leader. But how effective is this system really, when attempts to silence voices and overturn results are staged? Any attempt to tamper with the outcome of an election is a violation of the fundamental principle of American democracy, that the people have a right to choose. Election tampering is a direct violation of the Constitution, and therefore a threat to American liberties as a whole.

For example, the Grandfather Clause, passed in 1895, denied suffrage to most African Americans. This law restricted people whose ancestors had not been able to vote from partaking in elections, thus impeding African-Americans from voting, as the cut-off for eligibility dated to before most black people were allowed to vote. It also included a literacy test and a poll tax, which intentionally targeted disenfranchised minorities. Voter suppression in the United States has often been aimed towards people of color, denying minorities the Constitutional right to partake in democracy.

Even today, Native Americans report that it is extremely difficult to access polls and ballot boxes, which are far removed from Native American reservations. Furthermore, voting materials are not required to be translated to languages below a certain number of speakers, often leaving out minorities who do not speak a widespread language.

Absentee voting locations are also difficult to access. With many voters choosing to not vote in person as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, absentee voting has become increasingly popular. However, ballot drop-off sites are, in some cases, difficult to find and reach. According to npr.org, 4.7 million people were limited to using one ballot-drop box in Harris County, Texas. This could be deterring enough to influence people to not cast their vote.

Additionally, certain verification laws have caused difficulties for some voters. Those who elected to vote in person are required to display a government-issued ID in 35 states, which many do not keep on hand. And in South Carolina, absentee ballots required a witness' signature, creating another barrier to vote.

In conjunction with the clear hindrances provided by a global pandemic, there were many internal issues with voters being limited in the 2020 presidential election. Misinformation, access to polls, and stringent identification laws worked together to block people from casting ballots. The public vote is essential, so when turnout is obstructed,

there is clear threat to the integrity of the election.

"The foundation of this nation is built on our democracy and ability to vote. While it is the most important thing that we make sure votes are counted and acquired legally and correctly, individuals should not believe ballots to be fake because they are not in favor of their choice. However, if evidence is provided of ballots being acquired or counted wrong, we must then question the legitimacy of this nation, recount, and determine who shall be elected. Currently, there has not been much evidence at all, as much of it has been

years. In the age of digital information, one would assume that the truth would become common knowledge. But as shown throughout this election cycle, social media has made it more difficult to ascertain what is real and what is fake.

"Since they abandoned the fairness doctrine in the late 80s, it has allowed groups to sensationalize and distort events. Therefore, people tend to follow social media that they agree with rather than broadening their background. I think that with some groups it's by sensationalism they can drive up their ratings

fraudulent posts on social media during election week.

These measures may have combated confusion, but nothing could undercut the building tension as election night came and went, when the entire country awaited the results with baited breath.

Trump supporters became increasingly agitated after Trump claimed that Democrats were abusing mail-in ballots to steal the election. Supporters took their arguments to the polls, where their protests gained traction on social media and TV outlets. According to BBC.com, Trump supporters chanted "stop the count,"

in Michigan, where Trump had been ahead in the polls, while other Trump supporters shouted "count

ing counted from in-person ballots for Trump. Although elections aren't perfect and there are bound to be some votes uncanceled, there are lots of Trump votes being recounted because of the Trump campaign lawsuits," Jason Busche ('22) said.

Since the results of the election were announced, the Trump legal team has continued to pursue legal action to overturn the verdict, taking to court Pennsylvania, Arizona, and Michigan. Judges dismissed cases in both Pennsylvania and Michigan, while the Trump legal team withdrew from their case in Arizona, citing that even a win would not be significant enough to affect the election, according to The Guardian. One judge in Pennsylvania, Matthew Brann, condemned the case, specifying its "strained legal arguments," and that it was "unsupported by evidence," according to npr.org. Taking into account the baselessness of these claims, these court cases can only be viewed as attempts to thwart democracy, and to undermine the will of American citizens.

"If it were any foreign leader doing it, the people of the US would be so quick to label it a gross threat to democracy, but when it happens here, we are blinded by our own nationalism," Andrew Hicks ('22) said.

Trump's continued denial of this loss, as demonstrated in his insistent November 22 Tweet, "we also won the election," suggests that he is unfazed by an inability to win judicially. The implications of this are unnerving, and not to be understated. If his ambitions to hold onto power are not reliant on the courts, then his only hope lies in forcefully maintaining his stature.

Unless the Trump campaign performs a legal miracle, Trump will be expected to vacate the White House on January 20, when President-elect Joe Biden assumes the executive role. If Trump continues to delude himself and refuses to step down, it is assumed that he will be forcibly removed, as would be any intruder to the White House.

Tactics to illegally influence elections have taken many forms over the course of American history, many of which coalesced under the unique circumstances of the 2020 election, when the nation was at its most vulnerable during Covid-19. Despite any obstacles to vote exacerbated by the virus, the American democratic process persevered, as it has many times throughout the country's history. Overall, any attempt to control the results of an election is an attack on the United States' democratic ideals, and the fundamental liberties of American citizens.



debunked," Milind Sharma ('23) said.

Another obstacle unique to modern elections is not legislative, but on social media. For a democracy to run smoothly, citizens must be well-informed in order to make decisions. Unfortunately, fake news runs rampant online. One example of this is a video tweeted by Eric Trump, where a man is shown supposedly burning ballots for President Donald Trump. Politifact.com debunked this claim as false, asserting that only sample ballots were burned in the video.

Misinformation, like any factor which unjustly influences elections, poses a serious threat to the democratic systems the United States has enjoyed for well over two hundred

which drives advertising dollars," Mr. White, Social Studies teacher, said.

Instagram played a role in trying to stop this misinformation during the 2020 election. The social media app placed a banner on the bottom of election-related posts to link users to the Voting Information Page. The page has a large variety of information including a description of how the election process works, an accurate count on electoral votes, and news summary. The Voting Information Page also links all the sources that were used to compile its data, which were displayed in simplified graphs. This tool provides quick, easy, and trustworthy information about the election. This feature insured against

the votes," in Arizona, where Trump was falling behind. These contrasting statements suggest that the aim is not to avoid election fraud, but to advocate for one candidate to take office regardless of the election results, violating the fundamental principle of democracy.

The situation escalated further when the Trump campaign took legal action to halt vote counts in several key states, according to ABC News. Trump, alongside his supporters, claimed that the influx of ballots were illegal or otherwise suspicious.

"I think that the results of the election were certainly miscounted in some way and there have to be some votes missing. Suddenly since Trump has been aggressive with his lawsuit to find missing votes in counties, now there are thousands and thousands of votes that are be-



# In Loving Memory ... Giuliano Stabile 1955 - 2020

"Mr. Stabile was the most vibrant and enthusiastic teacher I have ever had. He did not teach conventionally but taught in a way students would want to come to class. He made my junior year of high school the best one."

—Valeria Carias ('20)

"Mr. Stabile was one of my favorite teachers at Westhill. He was one of the funniest, coolest, and 'realest' teachers I have had. He was always understanding and wanted the best for everyone."

—Kayla Mendiola ('20)



Mr. Stabile was a beloved teacher and an inspiration to his peers and friends. His memory will live on in the Westhill Community.



The science department has raised money and donated to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society in honor of Mr. Stabile's passing.

"He even bought each science teacher a very long thin pencil from a museum he visited while he was sick – thinking of us even when he was battling his cancer. He would always speak about his grandchildren and was very close to his family. He loved to visit his relatives in Italy, where he was born, and keep in touch with those relatives. He volunteered with the Boy Scouts of America and just was a people person."

—Ms. McNamara, Science Department Chair

"Every other Thursday he would pay a visit to every single person in the science department and it was, of course, a joy that he would bring our paychecks, but it was lovely to see a smiling face on the regular. He also had amazing fig trees and would bring in figs for everyone, and he will be greatly missed."

—Ms. Grant, Science teacher

"I always looked forward to going to his class, and always knew I would enjoy being there. He was a great teacher, and I will never forget what he taught me, physics or not. I know that everyone at Westhill who had him as a teacher always enjoyed his company, and he will never be forgotten."

—Julia Reilly ('20)



## Good Month Bad Month

Column by  
Jessica Matloub & Jeremy  
Matloub



### Good Month for...

**Etsy** Etsy, an online marketplace for creative and uncommon goods, has seen a significant rise in prosperity throughout 2020. Due to an increase in free time in combination with lost jobs as a result of the pandemic, many people found pleasure and a new source of income in creative activities. An abundance of new small businesses emerged on Etsy and a small business movement arose. Furthermore, as masks became necessary across the nation, Etsy businesses became essential to meet high demands. The price of Etsy Stocks has skyrocketed by more than 250 percent this year. Etsy's growth is pleasant news for small business owners nationally and is comforting during this challenging era.



**Paying off Past Dues** Michael Esmond, a Florida businessman has been helping people out over the past two years. He has been generously paying for others utility bills, and in doing this he has helped many families in need keep their lights on, stay warm, and have running water. This year however, due to the economic instability from the hurricanes ravaging the Florida coast and the pandemic, he decided to go above and beyond. This December alone, he donated over \$7,500, keeping 114 families lights on for the holidays and continues to spread kindness.



**A Step Forward** Pfizer has developed a COVID-19 vaccine with a 95% efficacy, and with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) majority approval, it has been authorized to go out to the public for emergency use, prioritizing healthcare workers and the elderly. The vaccine has very limited and temporary side effects, such as headaches and fatigue, that are shown to subside in a matter of days. Different vaccines have already been distributed overseas, and this vaccine has been shipped out to hospitals, and vaccinations are scheduled to start on Monday, December 21 in the US.

### Bad Month for...

**Steelers** The Pittsburgh Steelers' perfect season came crashing down as the Washington Football Team emerged victorious in their recent game. The Steelers came into the game with a 10 game streak of victory, the longest in the team's history. It appeared that their success would persist as they acquired a 14 point lead throughout the first half of the game though this success was soon stolen by the opposing team. Washington dominated throughout the second half leading the team to a 23 to 17 win. Steelers fans can only hope that this loss will remain an anomaly and their beloved team will continue along the path of their prior prosperity.



**Record-Hot November** To add to the endless list of horrors throughout 2020, it has been reported that this past November set record high temperatures. Global temperatures throughout November were about 0.2 degrees Fahrenheit (0.1 degrees Celcius) above the previous record temperatures set in 2016 and 2019. This increase in heat only continues to point at the disastrous effects of human habits upon the environment. As humans continue to consume greenhouse gases and pollute the environment, these temperatures will continue to increase and nature will grow more devastated. Hopefully, the world can globally unite and put a halt to the endless ramifications caused by climate change.



**Stealing to Survive** Due to the loss of COVID-19 financial aid, More Americans are shoplifting food and hygiene products. The economic recession because of the pandemic has caused high unemployment rates, economic instability within households, and subsequently increased rates of theft by nearly double. The government \$1200 stimulus check that prevented millions of Americans from descending into poverty previously is no longer here to help, and new aid is still not to be expected for a while, even after months of congressional debate. Hunger in the United States is at levels not seen in decades.

Illustrations by **Caroline Blum** / Head Illustrator.

## Contact tracing's effectiveness is strained as cases rise

**Veda Bhalla**  
Editor-in-Chief

While hybrid learning was in effect, contact tracing throughout the Stamford Public Schools (SPS) was one of the many practices used to combat the spread of COVID-19. Contact tracing is the process in which those in contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 is notified and told to quarantine for 14 days. A contact is someone exposed to the virus either by spending at least 15 minutes within six feet of the person infected, or through unprotected direct contact with infectious secretions or excretions.

"I have total faith that our administrative team and our nurses have conducted contact tracing with complete fidelity throughout this school year. However, over the past few weeks, the numbers of cases have increased to such an extent that that may no longer be possible," Principal Rinaldi said.

According to Principal Rinaldi, the increase in cases is one of the reasons that the Board of Education (BOE) decided to temporarily move to 100% Distance Learning.

As cases have been rising in Connecticut, the BOE had a meeting on November 4 to discuss the process of contact tracing in detail and plans to keep schools safe. Once someone tests positive for COVID-19, they report the case to the contact tracing team. The person is then interviewed to find out what specific exposures occurred on days that the individual was in school while infectious, if there were any exposures confined to limited spaces such as a single classroom or bus, if control measures were in place to mitigate exposure, if it is feasible to identify exposed individuals or if wider exclusions are needed. After this, the contacts are then notified. They are told to stay home for 14 days after their last known exposure, stay away from others, and use a separate bedroom and bathroom at home if possible. They are also recommended to get tested but still must complete the quarantine even if they test negative.

At Westhill, the majority of student cases are reported through the Stamford Health Department. The Health Department then contacts the school nurse who lets administration know. Most of the time, the contact tracing effort is led by the administrator for the infected student's grade.

While this process is being done for ev-

ery positive case in Westhill and all of SPS, many students and staff worry that it is being rushed and that they are not informed enough to feel safe in school.

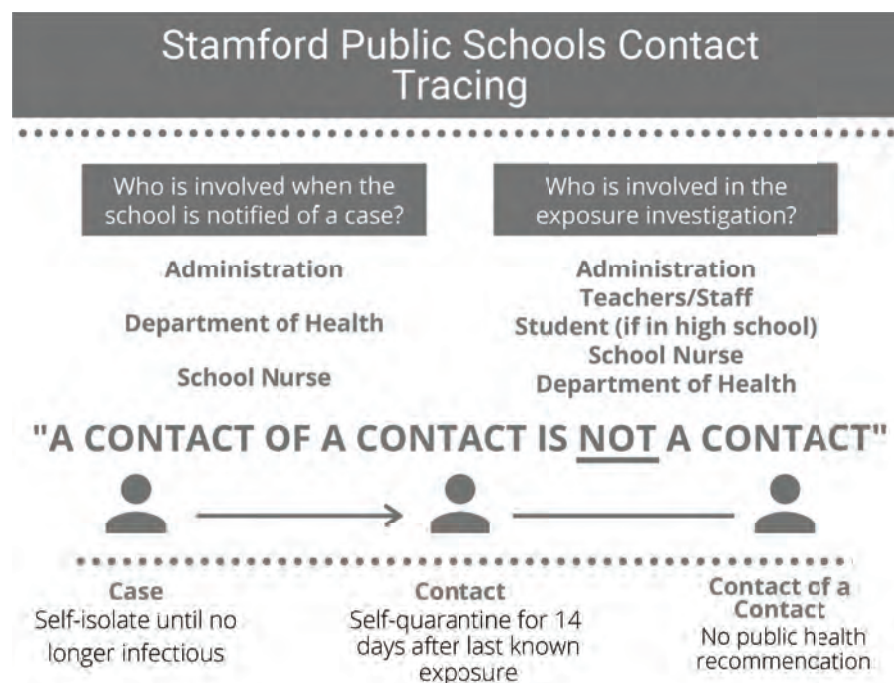
"The school has not been very open with students and their families about the contact tracing process. It worries me and my fellow classmates because we do not know what precautions they are taking and it makes us feel a bit unsafe. I am not sure if the school ensures that students who may have been in contact with someone who has tested positive quarantine until contact tracing is complete, or if those students go to school during contact tracing, possibly spreading the virus. In general, the protocols that the school is following are unknown to students and parents, and I wish they would be more upfront with us," Cece Coleman ('21) said.

As part of the process, every desk in the lunchrooms have a QR code and desk number that students are asked to scan everyday. The code leads to a Google Form in which students write their name, desk number, cohort (blue or green group), lunch room, lunchwave, and their period five classroom. This is used to look out for possible contacts.

In addition, when a student is told to quarantine, teachers are notified through PowerSchool. "RPQ" (Remote Present Quarantined) would be next to their name so that they know they are not supposed to be in school. If they are in school, then teachers have to send them to the nurse's office to be sent home.

According to *The Stamford Advocate*, everytime there is a confirmed positive case, the entire class and staff associated with the individual must immediately quarantine for 14 days. During contact tracing, if they determine that select individuals were not exposed, those individuals may return to school. Prior to this, the entire class of the person who tests positive would not be automatically affected, only those who were determined as contacts during the contact tracing process.

As of December 17, there have been 413 cumulative confirmed positive cases in all of SPS (2.20% of total staff and students), 1,103 have been in quarantine from school-related exposure which is 5.86% of total staff and students. At Westhill specifically, there has been 57 positive cases as of December 16.



Graphic by **Eden Cheung** / Graphic Designer.



# How clubs adapt to the new normal

The Northstar Playmakers have struggled to adjust to new COVID-19 protocols since acting in plays requires not only close gatherings, but also sometimes requires physical contact and less than six foot distancing as well as an audience to perform in front of. In order to conform to the protocols, Northstar has turned to online recording and meeting services.

"We are planning on doing a virtual play and we have started doing improv as well as play readings over Zoom," Caroline Klumac ('21) said.

While not the same, the Northstar playmakers continue to think creatively and produce impressive work through Zoom.

Mock trial is another club that utilized the gathering of members and other teams in order to conduct meetings, competitions as well as other club activities. This of course was also modified to conform to COVID-19 protocol and standards.

"Mock trial certainly has not been easy with everything going on, but we are making the most of it. The team's practices are scheduled over Zoom at our normal time. Although the format is different, the team is still thriving," James Grosso ('21) said.

The mock trial team continues to thrive despite challenges of the pandemic.

The Debate Team continues to function despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Normally the team would meet up to debate topics in the same room, however that is no longer possible.

"We are utilizing platforms such as Zoom and Band in order to have meetings, and the debate association that we are a part of. The Connecticut Debate Association (CDA), hosts tournaments on a platform called Tabroom. So it may not be in person, but the spirit of debate lives on," Lilah Steinberg ('21) said.

The Young Political Scientists of America (YPSA) club has also struggled with adapting to the new restrictions and has also turned to online platforms to meet.

"We run weekly Zoom meetings to have our discussions. Recently we have adopted a new strategy to the meetings. Before selecting a topic, we think about what we have seen on the news and our personal social media accounts. Oftentimes, there is a trending subject. In an effort to engage our members, we use the subject that gets the most attention or highest post count. Then we dissect it by pulling out the facts and cut through the bias to create an educational PowerPoint and an enlightening discussion," Talia Kunin ('21) said.

The spirit and determination of the club lives on through their intuition and adaptivity.

Blurbs by Jason Zarrilli / Print Executive Editor.

## Westhill welcomes Mr. Pazmino back as Dean

**The Westword (TW):** How are you adjusting to Westhill and how has your time here been so far?

**Mr. Pazmino (JP):** I used to work here years ago so it was an easy transition as I already knew the staff and administrative team. The staff has been very flexible, accommodating, and supportive of my learning curve. It has been great!

**(TW):** How and why did you become the Dean of Students at Westhill?

**(JP):** I was the administrative intern at Academy of Information Technology and Engineering (AITE), so I have experienced what it is like to deal with discipline and attendance. I have always wanted to support this school because Westhill has a very diverse community that is unique in many ways. I want to support and help as many students as possible, and since I am a former social worker, handling social-emotional issues are my specialty. Becoming the Dean gave me the opportunity to continue the same work of attendance and support of the community. I am connected to this community and it feels like I am

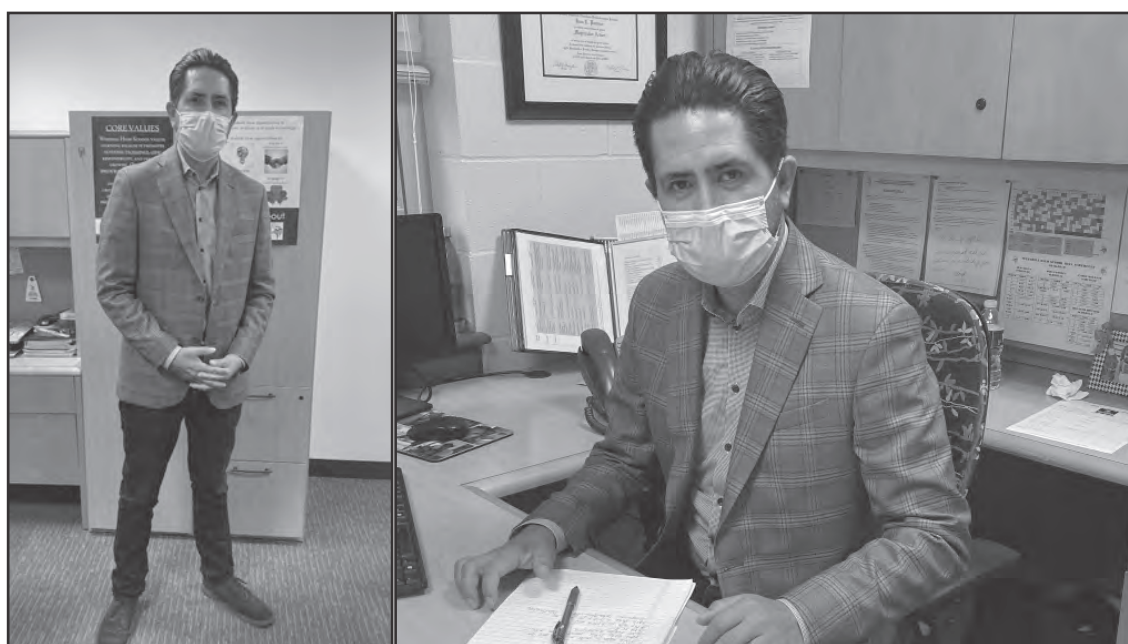
coming back home.

**(TW):** What do you do as Dean of Students?

**(JP):** I am in charge of disciplinary actions for students and I am the point person. I do attendance records and make sure that students are attending both remote and in-person classes. I also do substitute coverages, so when a teacher is out I find them a replacement for the day. I ensure that there are no hallway issues and that students are going to their classes. I am the bridge between teachers, students, and parents. Connecting with parents and making sure that they are involved in our school is also a very important role that I have.

**(TW):** Have you worked at any other schools previously, besides AITE?

**(JP):** I worked at the central office when my career began in Stamford Public Schools. I worked on engaging with difficult parents and supporting all 21 schools. I was the leader of the School Governance Council for the entire district. I was also the director for the after-school program, Aspiring Leadership Through Ac-



**WESTHILL WELCOME** Mr. Pazmino is welcomed as the new Dean of Students.

Photo by Dharana Alilaikannan / Photographer.

tion Academy (ALTA), which was recognized as one of the best programs in Connecticut.

**(TW):** Were you always interested in education and administration?

**(JP):** I have always been fascinated with the idea of helping students achieve their goals. I wanted to help teachers and students because there is a vast variety of students from different backgrounds. I want parents

to understand the perspective of the students and know that there are resources available for them to access. My mom is a former teacher who recently retired, so education was important in my family. This is what drove me into the field of education.

**(TW):** What is your favorite part of Westhill from what you have experienced so far this year?

**(JP):** We have a very strong

faculty that loves the kids and loves teaching as well as supporting the needs of the school. For example, when teachers are absent many jump in to cover and support the community. What surprised me the most was the willingness of our staff to make sure that the school does well and is able to support students in any way possible so that we have a successful school year.



# Westhill students start a new and upcoming podcast

**Caitlyn Tyrrell**  
News Editor

With podcasts experiencing a surge in popularity, it was only a matter of time until two of Westhill's very own would decide to make one. Enter Lexi Boccuzzi ('20) and Lilah Steinberg ('21).

Over the summer during quarantine, Boccuzzi and Steinberg noticed many of their peers taking to social media to display social advocacy to spread awareness on different issues. However, they soon recognized that many of these posts were factually incorrect and under-researched. To combat this spread of misinformation, Boccuzzi and Steinberg decided to create *The Lowdown with Lexi and Lilah*, a podcast aimed at informing their peers to create more well-rounded, informed, and civically engaged citizens. This podcast is available to stream on all major platforms and delivers relevant, insightful, non-partisan takes on many political issues.

With so much disagreement and negativity in today's political climate, Boccuzzi and Steinberg sought to expand their viewer's mindset and prove that people who have ideological differences can discuss their views as friends, and simultaneously discover policies or ideas that they can agree on. Their listeners appreciate this professional level of civil discourse, and admire the way in which Boccuzzi and Steinberg are able to have meaningful discussions and inquire about each other's differences, rather than immediately invalidating them.

"I think the podcast does a good job of addressing multiple perspectives. There are obviously limitations to what Lexi and Lilah can offer in terms of their perspectives, as certain issues do not affect them directly,

and Steinberg adds something new to the flooded realm of political podcasts. Their ability to have thoughtful, informed discussions about topics they may disagree on is especially impressive to their listeners. The duo

novative and different.

"My favorite segment, although I enjoy them all, was the one about Women's Rights. Lexi and Lilah did a "Social Hour Sunday" about the misogyny they have experienced in their

As alluded to in Coleman's statement, the podcast has special episodes on Sundays.

"On our Sunday episodes, we do what we call "Social Hours," in which we discuss our lives in the context of that week's political topic. For example, we talked about our own experiences in leadership on Sunday when our "Topic Thursday" was on the craziest presidential elections in our country's history." Steinberg explains.

While the podcast may initially have started as a way to inform their peers, teachers also love it.

"I listened to an episode over the summer and thought it was so awesome that students were getting involved in politics and contemporary issues. Both Lexi and Lilah are bright, articulated, and well rounded thinkers that presented an educated, yet approachable discussion on important topics, I especially appreciated that they relied on credible sources from multiple outlets to gather their information. I would highly recommend to any students looking to get involved in their conversations," Ms. Cahill, English teacher, said.

The podcast is extremely active on social media, as well. Listeners can follow them on Instagram @thelowdown.podcast, and on Facebook at "The Lowdown w/ Lexi and Lilah". On these platforms, Boccuzzi and Steinberg urge listeners to think about different topics and often produce polls for their audience to take part in. Highlights of their episodes can also be found on these pages. As Boccuzzi and Steinberg say, "...and THAT'S the Lowdown!"



Image courtesy Lilah Steinberg / Contributor.

but they are objective when they talk about history and policy. They do talk about their personal opinions, but never fail to address the counter-argument," Cece Coleman ('21) said. The dynamic between Boccuzzi

has tackled many issues including gun control, sexuality in current time and its history, policing, and more.

Another aspect of the podcast their audience greatly appreciates is their ability to make each episode in-

own lives, which I could totally relate to. Then, in the following episode, they discussed the actual history and policy behind Women's Rights in the past century, and it was super informative," Cece Coleman ('21) continued.



## The Hungry Vikings

Column by Noa Brudny, Elizabeth Watkinson, And Caitlyn Tyrrell

### Olé Molé

Service: ★★★★★  
Taste: ★★★★★  
COVID-19 safety: ★★★★★

After being locked in their ship for eight long months, The Hungry Vikings emerged onto land to find a satisfying dining establishment. The new crew mates were eager to venture out into the world again, at a distance of course! Due to a strange 21st century plague, the Vikings could only take their food back to their ship, instead of staying on land. The Vikings were craving a good Mexican dish and "Olé Molé" fit the bill.

Each of the Vikings got their own separate dishes in different ways. The Vegetarian Viking used a funny contraption called "the internet" to place an order online to bring back to the ship. The Adventurous Viking called upon the restaurant to make her meal using a "cell phone" and the Peckish Viking walked right up to request her dinner.

The Peckish Viking ordered a lovely plate of enchiladas suizas. This consisted of red corn tortillas filled with chicken, vegetables,

and cheese with salsa verde and mole negro, along with a side of rice and beans. The melty cheese combined with the tangy salsas and veggies cooked just right, creating the perfect flavor for the Peckish Viking. However, the salsa was just a tad bit spicy for the Peckish Viking. Adding the rice and beans to the meal filled the Peckish Viking right up and toned down the spice of the salsa. She was left with a full stomach and satisfied taste buds.

The Adventurous Viking ordered the verdura tacos. These veggie tacos consisted of two soft tortillas filled with black beans, spinach, grilled onion, cheese, lettuce, tomato, and Salsa Fresca. The Adventurous Viking also ordered guacamole and chips, and decided to put the guacamole on the tacos to make them even more flavorful and to add a little bit of spice to the meal. The Adventurous Viking loves spicy food, so she was sad-

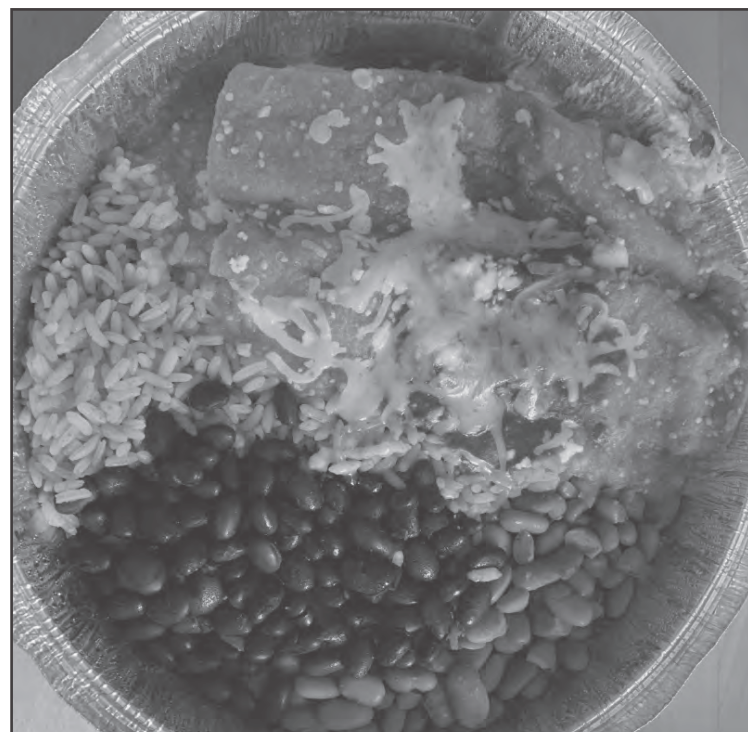
dened when the tacos were not spicy on their own. Even though the tacos were tasty, they were not very big, so she was left a bit hungry and decided to finish the rest of her guacamole and chips.

The Vegetarian Viking ordered a vegetarian burrito. The Vegetarian Viking enjoyed the first few bites, but the tortilla quickly became unraveled. Her plate became a sea of vegetables, beans, cheese, and salsa. Luckily, she had ordered chips and guacamole as well, so she was able to use the chips as a vessel for the filling of what was once a burrito. This method satisfied her hunger and left her quite full. However, the Vegetarian Viking found that her meal was not as flavorful as she had hoped. She will most likely not make the voyage there again.

Overall the Vikings felt relatively satisfied by their delicious takeout orders and loved being able to eat at their own ship. The best part about

the experience was that they got to venture into the world for something delicious while

still being safe during the 21st-century plague, which Ole Mole helped with!



**ENCHILADAS SUIZAS** A delicious and stuffed red corn tortilla.

Photo by Elizabeth Watkinson / Online Executive Editor.



# A roadmap of the 2020 election

**Hailey Baloutch**  
Ombudsman

The 2020 presidential election will not be easily forgotten for its unprecedented nature, characterized by the unique circumstances of COVID-19. Mail-in ballots, extensive tallying periods, and bizarre debates

riorate into childish slander and discrediting. The debacle was considered immature enough that the debates were almost immediately set to be restructured afterwards, according to *The Washington Post*, to ensure that such a performance would not find its way to the national stage again.

The path to the White House continued to unravel unpredictably as the next debate was cancelled altogether in favor of rivaling Town Halls. Essentially high-stakes interviews, these Town Halls were broadcasted simultaneously with *NBC* hosting Trump while *ABC* hosted Biden, as reported by *New York Post*. Although many voters were relieved to find the town halls to be rather uneventful, as compared to the

affected by COVID-19. Since its announcement, the proposal of expanding the nation's postal voting system had been subject to extreme controversy. Some argued that voting fraud would be rampant if more votes were cast by mail, while others pointed to the effectiveness of the existing mail-in voting system, where the fraud rate averaged to 0.00006% over the course of twenty years, according to *Wgbh.org*. Despite these challenges, mail-in ballots persevered, and citizens in 46 states became eligible to vote by mail.

"I think mail-in ballots are a great way to help people who are worried about COVID-19 to get their votes in," Gavin Stops ('22) said.

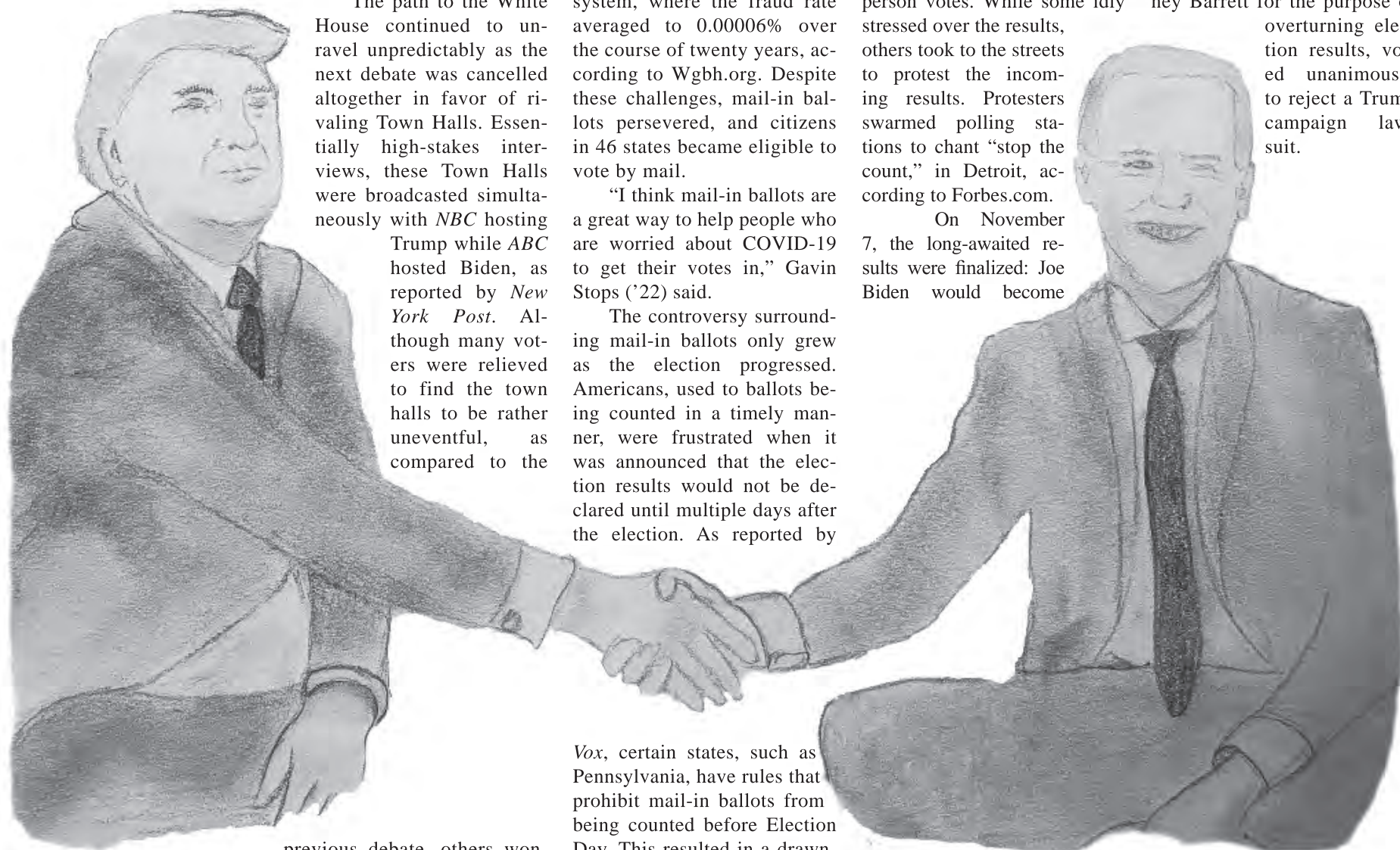
The controversy surrounding mail-in ballots only grew as the election progressed. Americans, used to ballots being counted in a timely manner, were frustrated when it was announced that the election results would not be declared until multiple days after the election. As reported by

times," Wyatt Lisack ('22) said.

Biden's margin began to grow more promising for Democrats with Georgia leaning blue for the first time in two decades. According to *The New York Times*, this late-rising Democratic trend was due to mail-in ballots which were counted much later than in-person votes. While some idly stressed over the results, others took to the streets to protest the incoming results. Protesters swarmed polling stations to chant "stop the count," in Detroit, according to *Forbes.com*.

On November 7, the long-awaited results were finalized: Joe Biden would become

which were successful. Judges overturned many cases for lack of evidence, while one other was cancelled by Trump's own legal team as the court case would not be influential enough to change the results either way. The Supreme Court, which many believe was rushed to accept Amy Coney Barrett for the purpose of overturning election results, voted unanimously to reject a Trump campaign lawsuit.



*Vox*, certain states, such as Pennsylvania, have rules that prohibit mail-in ballots from being counted before Election Day. This resulted in a drawn-out election results process.

As the balance of electoral votes barely led towards Biden in the days after the election, many Americans found themselves glued to their televisions awaiting the results.

"The long waiting period for results gave me extra time to make important political satire to bring joy to these stressful

the next President of the United States of America.

As a direct response, the Trump Administration jumped into action, taking cases to multiple key states in an attempt to overturn the results. *USA Today* reported that over 48 lawsuits were filed by the Trump campaign, none of

"It does not seem very useful," Navin Ponnusamy ('22), said on the Trump Administration's legal efforts.

A plethora of factors, including COVID-19 and the highly-conflicting personalities of the two major candidates resulted in the memorable election of 2020.

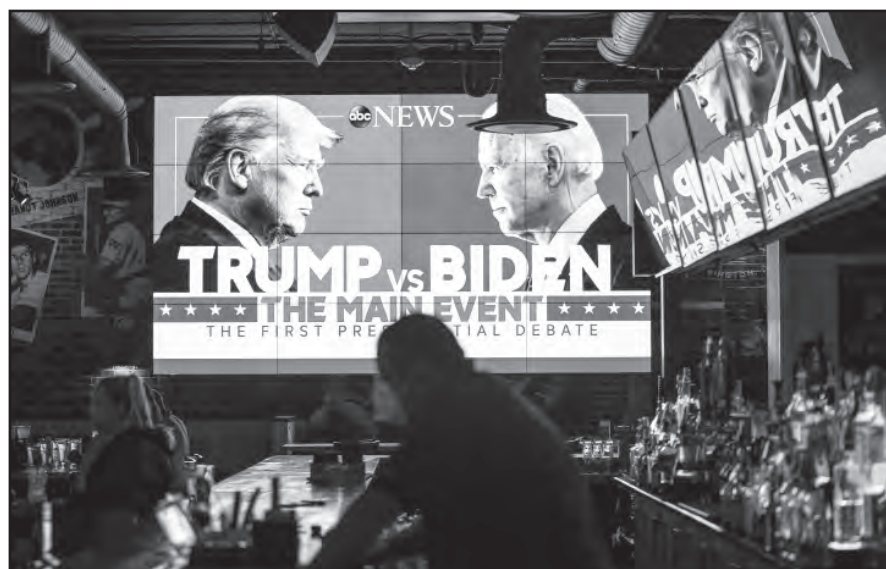
sparked an unforgettable election.

Campaigning kicked off with a debate that was widely regarded as "embarrassing," and "unwatchable," by *Politico.com*. Biden's insults, fueled by Trump's incessant interruptions, caused the event to dete-

previous debate, others wondered of their efficacy for the democratic process.

"Separate town halls forced people to choose which candidates they wanted to listen to, making voters less likely to change their opinion or gain a new perspective," Christie Blonkvist ('22) said.

The debates were not the only aspect of the election af-





# One country, two sides

With the election now over, former Vice President Joe Biden has won 306 electoral votes as of December 20 which exceeds the required electoral votes needed to become the country's next President-elect. Donald Trump will continue to lead the country until January 20, when Joe Biden will be inaugurated and officially become the President of the United States. However, it is still important to understand the views and beliefs of the two opposing candidates from this past election.

## BIDEN

## TRUMP

### HISTORY

Joe Biden was elected as a Democrat Senator in the state of Delaware in 1972 at 29 years old. He also ran for the presidential office in both 1987 and 2008. Despite withdrawing from both of them, Barack Obama selected him as his running mate in the 2008 election making Biden the Vice President from 2008 to 2016.

Donald Trump, the 2016 and 2020 Republican nominee, will serve until January of 2021 as the 45th President of the United States. While Trump's Presidency was his first time being in any political position, he had previously run for office in 2000 against George W. Bush but withdrew. He is well known for his wealthy businesses under the Trump Organization, one of the most prominent is Trump Towers.

### HEALTHCARE

Biden plans to expand on the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and emphasizes the importance of healthcare, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. *The Washington Post* states that he plans on increasing the coverage of already existing government programs, offering a public alternative as opposed to the private health plans sold through the ACA. This way, those who did not earn enough to pay for it would now be able to afford coverage. Furthermore, he wants to expand on who is eligible for federal subsidies to pay for health insurance.

Trump's healthcare plan, known as the American Health Care Act (AHCA), was passed in 2017 but has not been made into a law. It seeks to repeal many of the taxes put into place by the ACA as well as limit how much the government spends on Medicaid (a program that provides health coverage to those that are unable to work due to disabilities or other obligations) by limiting who is eligible for it and more.

### IMMIGRATION

Joe Biden's agenda for immigration for his presidency is largely based on reversing Trump's actions on immigration, such as his travel and immigration restrictions on 13 countries, as well as freezing deportation for 100 days. Biden proposes this would be done to determine who has enough ties in the US to remain here. In regards to the US Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE), he plans to make the organization more professional with higher standards and training. According to *NPR*, Biden has also promised to stop further construction of the wall which Trump initiated.

Throughout Trump's presidency and campaign, he has advocated for stronger restriction on immigration. A large part of his 2016 campaign was expanding a wall on the US-Mexican border. As a result, he expanded and replaced the previous 654 miles of barricade while also adding 15 new miles, for a total of 669 miles as of October 2020 according to the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP). In addition to this, he has regularly supported ICE and has pushed for more enforcement on illegal immigration. Furthermore, he has instituted a travel ban in 2017 on those coming from Muslim countries for 90 days, as well as banning Syrian refugees and other refugees indefinitely. This travel ban has been expanded to Asian and African countries and still remains to this day.

### ABORTION

Joe Biden plans to protect women's abortion rights through federal law. Protecting *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark 1973 Supreme Court ruling that safeguarded the right to an abortion on the national level according to *BBC*, will protect abortion for years to come. He also plans to repeal the Hyde Amendment, which blocks taxes from funding abortions except in the cases of rape, incest, or danger to the mother. This will allow for lower-income women who receive government healthcare to have access to abortion services.

The Trump administration has pursued a near-total ban on abortion by attempting to overturn federal protections. Trump himself has stated that he wishes to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. However, he does make an exception for cases of rape, incest, or danger to the mother's life.

### GUN CONTROL

Overall, Biden has pledged to reduce the amount of firearms in the US, limiting on what one can own and sell — such as assault weapons and high-capacity magazines. He also plans to limit gun violence through stronger background checks as well as ensuring that those who have their weapons confiscated are since then prohibited from possessing them.

Trump has openly stated that he wishes to "support the exercise of Second Amendment rights." He has continuously loosened restrictions on purchasing firearms as well as their exports during his presidency, and promised to continue this if elected for a second term. His administration has looked into mental health being the cause of gun violence, seeking to place background checks that will allow the government to take away guns if deemed necessary.





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# <sup>The Westword</sup> Supplement

## IN MEMORIAM...



### Ruth Bader Ginsburg

March 5, 1933 - September 18, 2020



# Ruth Bader Ginsburg

## *A justice for all*

**Hagen Williams**  
Staff Writer

Ruth Bader Ginsburg (RBG), the second female Supreme Court Justice and first ever Jewish Supreme Court Justice passed away at the age of 87 on September 18, due to complications from pancreatic cancer.

She served for 27 years and throughout her life she fought for women's rights as one of her central platforms. To quote her specific thoughts on the ACLU website, she herself said that "Women's rights are an essential part of the overall human rights agenda, trained on the equal dignity and ability to live in freedom all people should enjoy."

Although she was only one member of nine on the Supreme Court, she did her part to draw focus onto women's rights and support them at every opportunity. For example, she famously dissented against the Supreme Court's decision on the pay discrimination case: *Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company*. This action was described by Emily Martin, general counsel at the National Women's Law Center in Washington, as a "call to action inspired the public and Congress to change the law and strengthen equal pay protections." Although she was not able to initially overturn the decision, her act of dissension served as an important symbol of inspiration regarding equal pay among women.

"Ruth Bader Ginsburg was a role model for women because she demonstrated such a thorough understanding of the law. Her presence on the Supreme Court paved the way for many other women to fulfill leadership roles in our government," Ms. Cutolo, Health teacher, said.

Ginsburg, before becoming a Supreme Court Justice, was a judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia and then nominated to the Supreme Court by president Clinton in 1993, serving a total of 40 years in court. She also taught for 17 years, teaching at Rutgers University Law School for nine years and at Columbia for eight years where she became the school's first

female tenured professor.

Throughout this time she indeed developed a complex understanding of the law derived from her vast experience and teaching at Columbia Law School. Ginsburg's position as a justice in itself demonstrates how she helped other women fulfill government roles by acting as a symbol for advancement.

She also worked towards developing laws to help other women have a larger presence in the government. One such example is her effect on jury duty, as up until 1979, jury duty was optional for women under reason of familial and household obligations. But, Ginsburg fought to require women to serve on juries on the basis that their civic duty should be valued the same as men's. It is through such effort that Ginsburg helped to increase the participation of women in government and thus, improve upon their rights.

Ginsburg also paved the way for other such important proclamations such as the Equal Credit Opportunity Act that passed in 1974 and allowed women to apply for bank accounts, credit cards, and mortgages without a male cosigner.

"Her role as a female leader in the field, regardless of her decisions on the bench or any work specific to the rights of women, have inspired my wife, Lindsay, on a daily basis. If it was not for her paving the way for female attorneys, Lindsay would not have been able to pursue her profession-

al passion and work at a firm where she is treated as an equal. RBG's legal work and personal example have allowed countless women to enter the legal profession and pursue meaningful careers in an area that was once limited to them. Her legacy will be seen not just in the decisions she wrote but in the work of thousands of female lawyers that come after her," Mr. Stone, Social Studies teacher, said.

Ginsburg's work goes beyond

that of just laws — it is her significance as a symbol for women that also heavily contributes to her impact on women's rights. She inspired others to make changes and to pursue the careers that they may have been previously denied to them.

These types of opportunities are among the most important aspects of Ginsburg's impact on women's rights. For example, Ginsburg, in 1996, led the ruling decision in the *United States vs Virginia* case, in which the long standing policy of male-only admission in the Virginia Military Institute was struck down. Thus, further solidifying the idea that state-funded schools must admit women and further providing greater opportunities to women that were previously denied.

"I would like to start by saying that Ruth Bader Ginsburg was not only a brilliant justice, but an inspiration to women everywhere. Ruth Bader Ginsburg played a major role in paving the way for women's rights under the American government system, and her accomplishments in striving towards gender equality in the eyes of the law can certainly not be undermined. The policies Ginsburg implemented have been effective, and I think upon analyzing her career as a justice, it is evident that Ginsburg has used her knowledge to do all she could in the expansion of women's rights. It is now up to us to carry on Ginsburg's legacy and be utterly inspired by her commitment to her craft," Brynn Spingola ('21) said.

Ultimately, Ginsburg's impact on women's rights lies in what she has achieved for the cause and her developed status as a symbol for women everywhere.

# Westhill's view on Ginsburg

**Gregory Pannone**  
Staff Writer

**The Westword (TW): When was the first time you have heard of Ruth Bader Ginsburg (RBG)?**

**Ms. Taylor (ET):** Probably in high school, the first time I heard of when I was in a history class. Obviously she was a major female appointee to the Supreme Court.

**Jonathan Thomas (JT):** I would say the first time I heard of her was maybe a year ago, when talking to my girlfriend about politics.

**Principal Rinaldi (MR):** When she was appointed, I would not say prior to that. But when she was appointed to the Supreme Court, I certainly became aware of her then. When there is a Supreme Court vacancy I always pay attention to who the nominee is. So I would say that was the first time I heard of her.

**TW: What were your first impressions of RBG?**

**JT:** I just thought she was awesome, I enjoy the things that she fights for, gender rights, women's rights, gender equality, all of the things that she fights for.

**TW: Do you feel that RBG had a very big impact on you, your thinking, and on your values?**

**ET:** I would not say that she is somebody I thought of in doing the things that I do. But I know that I can do what I do because of her, because she has fought for women's rights. And do I think about that enough? No, but I know she was a major player. Looking back on it now, absolutely, my ability to be a working mom is something that she definitely provided for me.

**TW: Is there any major achievements you look up to?**

**ET:** I know she is a big proponent for marriage equality which is something very important to me. Beyond that, anything that involves women being able to work I think is very important. Her passing

away is a huge loss, for sure, but we will see how things change with the new appointment.

**TW: Is there anything you want to see done in the community or as a country as a whole?**

**ET:** Not overturning marriage equality, not overturning *Roe v. Wade*, not overturning everything we have accomplished in the last few decades.

**TW: Is there anything you think the Westhill community should know or do about RBG?**

**ET:** One of the classes that we are lacking is a women's studies course, and she would be a major, central figure in that. I do not know if there is anything we could do to honor her specifically, but I think that a women's studies course would be something important.

**JT:** Not only appreciate who she is and what she has done, they should definitely teach a little lesson, moroso of what she has done, which is so much, and you could definitely teach a lesson on that. But she was also a great and genuinely interesting person.

**TW: Do you feel like the Westhill community's educated enough on RBG?**

**ET:** Oh, absolutely not. I try to bring that into my history courses, and try to talk about not just her but the Supreme Court as much as I possibly can. But how much is sinking in, I

am not really sure.

**JT:** Absolutely not.

**MR:** Probably not, it definitely depends on our Social Studies teachers—and I know it is occurring across the spectrum—to take the time to, in that setting, have those teachable moments that help kids understand who she was and what she meant to so many in that work. Obviously those current topics, current events, are dependent on the teacher to be able to teach and be able to help students be aware. I know that when you have 2300 kids, it is hard to touch everybody with that. So it would depend on the courses you take. I could remember when I went to school at Westhill in the 70s and 80s, I learned about different political figures at the time from Social Studies teachers taking the time to help us understand.

**TW: Is there anything else you want to add?**

**ET:** I believe we are in the current situation that we are in because of her. While I respect the hell out of her, and I think she is an amazing woman and did so much for the country, where people are outraged right now that is one hundred percent on her. She should have retired a long time ago, and appointed someone with similar values but she wanted to ride it out as long as she could. And that was a very dangerous game to play, and so we are going to see a very conservative court for a very long time because she wanted to do it until she died. And you can respect her for that, but she is going to continue to impact history long after her death because of her decision to stay on.

**JT:** People should not be caring about her because she died and she is dead and replaced. People should be hearing about her for what she did and how much of an impact she had.

**MR:** No, I appreciate the interview and I think it is a wonderful topic. I think it is wonderful to have Ruth Bader Ginsburg be a part of *The Westword*, and to not have a story about her would be ignoring something very very important.

Visit [thewestwordonline.com](http://thewestwordonline.com) for full footage of the interviews!



# Ruth Bader Ginsburg's road to the Supreme Court

**Georgia Baer**  
Staff Writer

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, known affectionately by her devotees as “The Notorious RBG,” lived up to her title as an icon for equality and justice. Her judicial work paved the way for the underrepresented, especially women.

Ginsburg's journey started at Cornell University where she received her Bachelor of Arts degree in government before attending Harvard Law School. She then transferred to Columbia Law School where she received her Bachelor of Laws degree.

“Ruth Bader Ginsburg to me is the definition of a true leader. She went to Columbia Law School where she graduated at the top of her class. Law was also a very unusual thing for women to go into during her time period, as it was a very male dominated field,” Sophie Yellen ('21) said.

Early in her career, Ginsburg was rejected for a clerk position for Justice Felix Frankfurter of the Supreme Court because, “He just was not ready to hire a woman,” says *The New York Times*. Despite this, she then served as a clerk to Judge Edmund L. Palmieri of the United States District

Court for the Southern District of New York for two years rather than the usual one year. It was there that she had the opportunity to work with a judge who believed in the importance of women in the workplace.

In 1963, Ginsburg taught at Rutgers Law School and in 1972 she taught at Columbia Law School where she became the first female tenured professor. It was in the 1970's that Ginsburg prosecuted sex discrimination cases for the American Civil Liberties Union, opposing laws that discriminated against both women and men alike.

“She set out to prove that those kinds of laws in fact harmed women by contributing to a stereotyped view of their role,” said David Cole, a professor at Georgetown University Law School who wrote a law review article discussing Ginsburg's approach to the Supreme Court. It was these sorts of cases that helped propel her into the limelight as a woman who was determined to protect others and fight for equality.

“She did not just fight for a woman's right to choose an abortion, she argued for a woman's right to choose not to have an abortion. She was groundbreaking be-

cause she did not just fight for the rights of people in her situation, she fought for everyone, man and woman, to have equality and freedom over their own choices. She was unique in her passion for true justice and liberty,” Emma Rimmerman ('21) said.

Ginsburg strived to create a society in which men and wom-

en were treated equally and ensure the legal system guaranteed those rights.

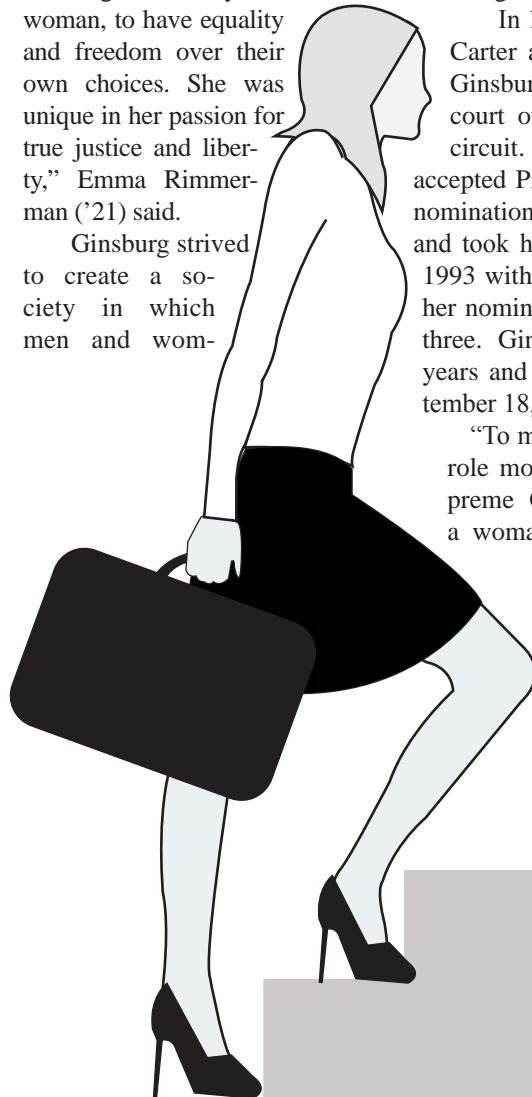
In 1980, President Jimmy Carter appointed Ruth Bader Ginsburg to the United States court of appeals for the DC circuit. On June 14, 1993 she accepted President Bill Clinton's nomination to the Supreme Court and took her seat on August 10, 1993 with the Senate approving her nomination with 96 votes to three. Ginsburg served for 27 years and passed away on September 18, 2020.

“To me she was an amazing role model not only as a Supreme Court Justice, but as a woman in America as she

strived to accomplish all of her goals and be the best version of herself,” Carly Fein ('21).

A prominent court case Ginsburg ruled in was *Obergefell v. Hodges* in 2015. This case had a five to four decision recognizing same-sex marriages in all 50 states under the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution.

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's work towards equality has had an everlasting effect on the US.



## Getting the gavel How to become a Supreme Court Justice

**Daniella Klein**  
Staff Writer

According to Supremecourt.gov, “The court is the highest tribunal in the nation for all cases in controversies arising under the Constitution or the laws of the United States.” The Supreme Court is relied on by the whole country, making it extremely important to the United States' affairs.

“While the political parties of Supreme Court Justices may be deemed important today, their true role is to interpret the Constitution and deem what laws to be constitutional and unconstitutional, not impose their political views within legislation,” Jenna Cohen ('23) said.

“Equal Justice under law,” are the words written above the main entrance to the Supreme Court building. It highlights the primary responsibility of the Supreme Court and its justices. The process of justice selection begins with the President and the final confirmation of the new justice is done by the Senate. However, it wasn't always this straightforward..

First, the President must choose someone to potentially

be placed in an empty spot in the Supreme Court. Then, a smaller group within the Senate must go through its own three step voting process.

Next, it goes through the Senate as a whole. Afterwards, a final voting process occurs. Ever since 1869, the Supreme Court has been consisted of 9 members; one chief justice, and 8 associate justices.

Despite this, this was not the case in the beginning of the United States.

According to *National Geographic* “For the first 80 years of its existence, the supreme court fluctuated in size from as few as five to as many as 10 before settling at the current number.”

As *National Geo-*

*graphic* states, the Supreme Court has changed over time. This is a result of the United States Constitution.

While the Constitution states that the Supreme Court Justices can serve for their whole lives, it does not specify how many justices would make up the court and left this and many other details up to Congress and the President.

The most recent effort to change the number of members

of the Supreme Court was in the late 1930s when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt proposed a law increasing the number of Justices to 15. This was rejected and since then no one has tried to change it.

For the last 150 years, the Supreme Court has had nine Justices. The nomination process resides under the current legislation.

However, in the United States the makeup of the legislators changes frequently as there are presidential elections every four years and congressional elections every two years.

“I realized that the nomination process is long and requires many checkpoints to ensure that the candi-

date truly is the right fit for the job,” Alexandra Deren ('21) said.

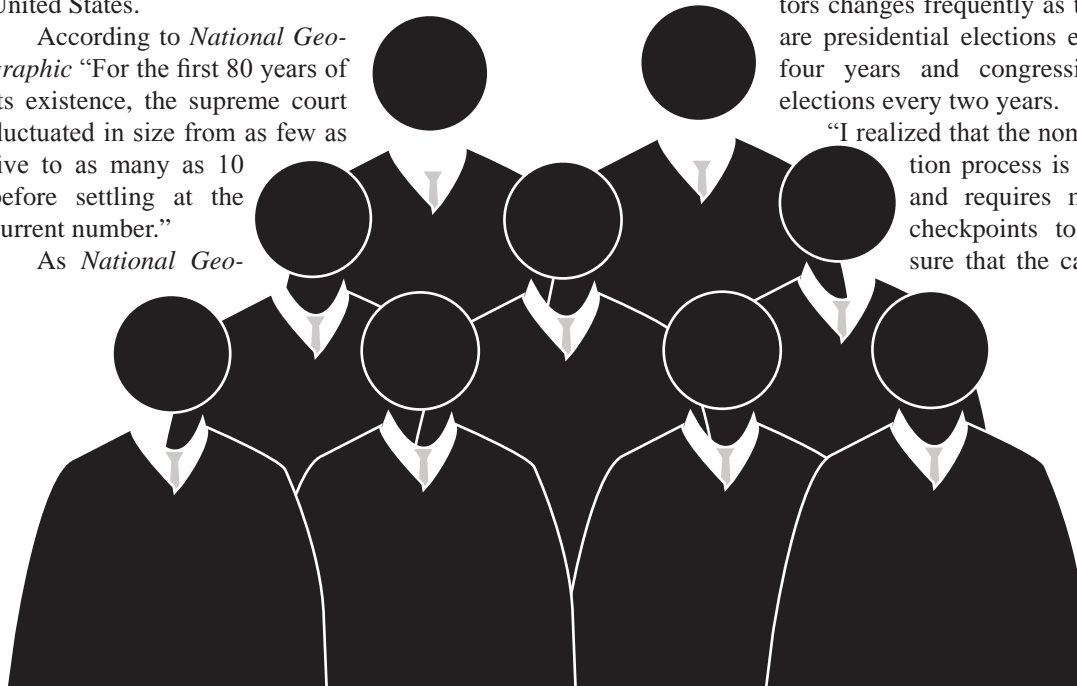
This raises the complicated and controversial question of how the court nomination process should proceed when either a president or senate majority is nearing a potential change.

The current President of the US, Donald Trump, would argue that as long as they are President, they have the legislative right to nominate justices. That is, taking a literal interpretation of the legislation.

However, some argue that when making a lifelong nomination to the highest court of the country within close proximity to an election, the spirit of the legislation calls for the voice of the people to be heard before proceeding with the nomination.

This dynamic is even more pronounced when the ideology and judicial philosophy of the incumbent president and presumably supreme court nominee is at polar opposites of the supreme justice whose vacancy is being filled.

Overall, the nomination process for a justice is complicated and meticulous in order to ensure that the nominee is fit for this lifelong career.





# LAS NOTICIAS

## Las elecciones Presidenciales

15

**Camila Miranda**  
Editora de Las Noticias

Las elecciones presidenciales fueron una muestra del poder que las personas tienen al votar y lo que ocurre cuando todos tienen un objetivo en común. El resultado final eligió a Joe Biden como el próximo presidente de los Estados Unidos. Este resultado se espera que beneficie a millones de familias y comunidades de bajos ingresos.

En los Estados Unidos, el 43% de la población son familias o comunidades de bajos ingresos. Esto incluye a 60.4% de afroamericanos, 64.1% de latinos, 40.8% de asiáticos, 58.9% de nativo americanos o indígenas, y 33.5 % de blancos. Las comunidades más probables a padecer de bajos ingresos son los afroamericanos, los hispanos y los nativo americanos. Esto es debido a que por lo menos 58% de comunidades o familias de bajos ingresos consisten de minorías raciales o étnicas pero solo ocupan 40% de las familias trabajadoras en el país. Considerando lo anterior, el desenlace de las elecciones tendrá un impacto positivo para

las comunidades y familias de bajos ingresos.

Una de las formas en que el resultado de las elecciones brindará una solución positiva para las comunidades de bajos ingresos es que asegurará la renovación de su cuidado médico. El presidente electo Joe Biden pronunció muy claro en su campaña su apoyo por el plan de cuidado médico Obamacare, algo que el presidente Trump agresivamente trató de destruir. Obamacare no solo es una forma más fácil y accesible de obtener seguro de salud, sino también provee muchos trabajos y oportunidades a mucha gente. Si Trump hubiera logrado quitar este plan, hubiera perjudicado a un gran número de personas.

“Yo creo que la elección pone más estrés a las comunidades de bajos ingresos porque el resultado puede afectar a sus familias en términos de trabajos y seguro de salud”, manifestó Alessandra Pinto (‘22).

En esta elección más de 150 millones de Americanos fueron a



**CADA VOTA CUENTA** Un restaurante se convierte en un estación de votación. Imagen cortesía de [gettyimages.com](https://www.gettyimages.com).

votar, rompiendo el récord de más votantes en más de un siglo. Esto significa que comparada a la elección del 2016, muchas más mi-

norías salieron a votar en esta elección. El resultado de esto fue una representación mayor de las minorías en la elección que tuvo una influencia positiva y los beneficiará en un futuro.

“El problema fue que Trump empezó a obtener más apoyo de ciertas comunidades por el hecho de que esta en contra del aborto ya que debido a los principios religiosos de estas comunidades es un punto muy importante para ellos. Yo creo que Biden puede ayudar a las personas de bajos ingresos pero sería muy temprano en realidad para saber lo que va a pasar y especialmente en estos momentos se dificulta más ayudar a las personas debido a la pandemia y la economía baja del país. Creo que Biden no discrimina tanto como lo hizo Trump”, según Fátima Santos (‘22).

Las personas de bajos ingresos tienen 22% menos probabilidades de votar en las elecciones nacionales. De las 225 millones de personas en el país elegibles para votar, 63% de estas

personas son de bajos ingresos. En las elecciones del 2016, 34 millones de personas de bajos ingresos que pudieron votar no lo hicieron. Es por este hecho que en estas elecciones del 2020 muchas más personas salieron a votar, aprendiendo sobre su valor y que cada no cuenta.

En las elecciones de este año, mucho estaba en juego. El resultado de la elección iba a afectar a personas de bajos ingresos independientemente de quien fuera elegido, la cuestión era si los afectará positivamente o negativamente. Debido a que el resultado terminó siendo Joe Biden, personas de bajos recursos pueden sentirse aliviados de que su futuro no será impactado negativamente ya que minorías típicamente se apelan al partido demócrata. Esta elección no solo afectó positivamente a comunidades de bajos ingresos en cuestiones como el seguro de salud. Sino que también moralmente en cuestiones de aprender la importancia de votar y que efectivamente cada voto cuenta sin importar tu estatus monetario. Al final, todos son representados con igualdad, por lo menos cuando se trata de votar.

## Examinación del rastreo de contacto en las escuelas públicas de Stamford

**Veda Bhalla**  
Director

Mientras el sistema de aprendizaje híbrido estaba en efecto, el rastreo de contacto por las escuelas públicas de Stamford (SPS) fue una de las muchas prácticas usadas para combatir el propagó de COVID-19. El rastreo de contacto es un proceso en el cual los que estuvieron en contacto con una persona positiva al COVID-19 es notificada y tendrá que estar en cuarentena por 14 días. Un contacto es alguien expuesto al virus aunque sea por 15 minutos entre seis pies de una persona infectada, o por un contacto directo sin protección con secreciones infecciosas o excreciones.

“Tengo mucha fe en que nuestro grupo administrativo y

nuestras enfermeras han hecho un rastreo de contacto con completa fidelidad durante todo el año escolar. Sin embargo, durante las últimas semanas, el número de casos confirmados han aumentado hasta el punto que ya no es posible,” dijo el principal Rinaldi.

De acuerdo con el principal Rinaldi, el aumento de casos es una de las razones por la cual la junta de educación (BOE) ha decidido implementar la enseñanza a distancia al 100 por ciento temporalmente. Adicionalmente, el correo electrónico que fue enviado por BOE dice que ellos anticipan problemas del personal, por lo cual este cierre es para “asegurar la continuación y calidad de el aprendizaje y enseñanza.”

Como los casos han estado

creciendo en Connecticut, el BOE tuvo una reunión en Noviembre 4 para discutir el proceso de rastreo de contacto en detalle y planear cómo mantener la escuela segura. Cuando alguien da positivo por el COVID-19, el caso es reportado al equipo de rastreo de contacto. La persona es luego entrevistada para averiguar cuales específicas exposiciones ocurrieron durante los días que el individuo estuvo en la escuela mientras estaba infectado, si hubo algunas exposiciones confinado al límite de espacio como en los buses o en las clases, si las medidas de control estuvieron en lugar para minimizar la exposición, si fue factible la identificación de los individuos expuestos o si exclusiones más amplias son necesarias. Después de esto, los contactos son

notificados. A ellos se les dice que se queden en casa por 14 días después de estar expuesto, mantenerse alejados de otros y usar baños separados así como usar solo los baños de casa si es posible. También se les recomienda hacerse un examen y seguir continuando con la cuarentena aunque su examen salga negativo. En Westhill, la mayoría de los casos de los estudiantes son reportados por el departamento de salud de Stamford. El departamento de salud luego contacta a la enfermera de la escuela quien le deja saber a la administración sobre el caso. La mayor parte del tiempo, el esfuerzo por el rastreo de contacto es dirigido por el administrador del grado del estudiante. Mientras que este proceso es llevado a cabo, por cada caso positivo en Westhill y en toda la SPS, muchos estudiantes y el personal se preocupan que es algo muy apresurado y que no están bien informados para sentirse seguros en la escuela.

“La escuela no ha sido muy clara con los estudiantes y sus familiares acerca del proceso de rastreo de contacto. Me preocupa a mi y a mis compañeros porque no sabemos qué precauciones se están tomando y nos hace sentir un poco inseguros. No estoy seguro si la escuela promete que los estudiantes que estuvieron en contacto con alguien que fue positivo estuvieron en cuarentena hasta que el rastreo de contacto fue completado, o si estos estudiantes fueron a la escuela durante el rastreo de contacto, posiblemente esparciendo el virus. En general, el protocolo que la escuela está llevando a cabo es desconocido para los estudiantes y padres y yo desearía si fueran más honestos con nosotros,” dijo Cece Coleman (‘21).

Como parte del proceso, cada pupitre en los comedores de la escuela tienen su código QR y su número de pupitre que a los estudiantes se les pide escanear todos los días. El código los lleva a un

formulario de Google en el cual los estudiantes deben escribir su nombre, el número del pupitre, su color, el número del comedor, la ola de su almuerzo, y su salón para el periodo cinco. Esto es usado para encontrar posibles contactos.

Adicionalmente, cuando se le dice a un estudiante que haga cuarentena, los maestros son notificados por PowerSchool. “RPQ” “Cuarentena presente remota” será el nuevo nombre para que ellos sepan que no están supuestos a estar en la escuela. Si se encuentran en la escuela, los maestros deben enviarlos a la oficina de la enfermera para ser enviados a casa.

De acuerdo a Stamford Advocate, cada vez que hay un caso confirmado, la escuela y el personal asociado con el individuo deben inmediatamente empezar la cuarentena por 14 días. Durante el rastreo de contacto, si determinan que los individuos no fueron expuestos, estos individuos pueden regresar a la escuela. Antes de esto, el salón de la persona que salió positiva no sería afectada automáticamente, solo esos quien fueron determinados como contactos durante el proceso de rastreo de contacto.

Desde el 10 Diciembre, han habido 387 casos positivos confirmados en todo el SPS (2.04% de los estudiantes y el personal), 1,008 han estado en cuarentena de la exposición relacionada con la escuela la cual es 5.32% de los estudiantes y el personal y 23 escuelas han sido impactadas. Especialmente para Westhill, han habido un total de 57 casos positivos desde el 16 de Diciembre.

### Rastreo de Contacto en las Escuelas Públicas de Stamford

¿Quién se involucra cuando la escuela es notificada sobre un caso?

La administración

El departamento de salud

La enfermera de la escuela

¿Quién se involucra en la investigación sobre los expuestos?

La administración

Los profesores/El personal

El estudiante (Si está en la secundaria)

La enfermera de la escuela

El departamento de salud

“El contacto de un contacto no es un contacto”



Caso

Autoaislarse hasta que no sea contagiosa

Contacto

Empezar la autocuarentena por 14 días después de estar expuesto

El contacto de un contacto

No hay recomendación de salud pública



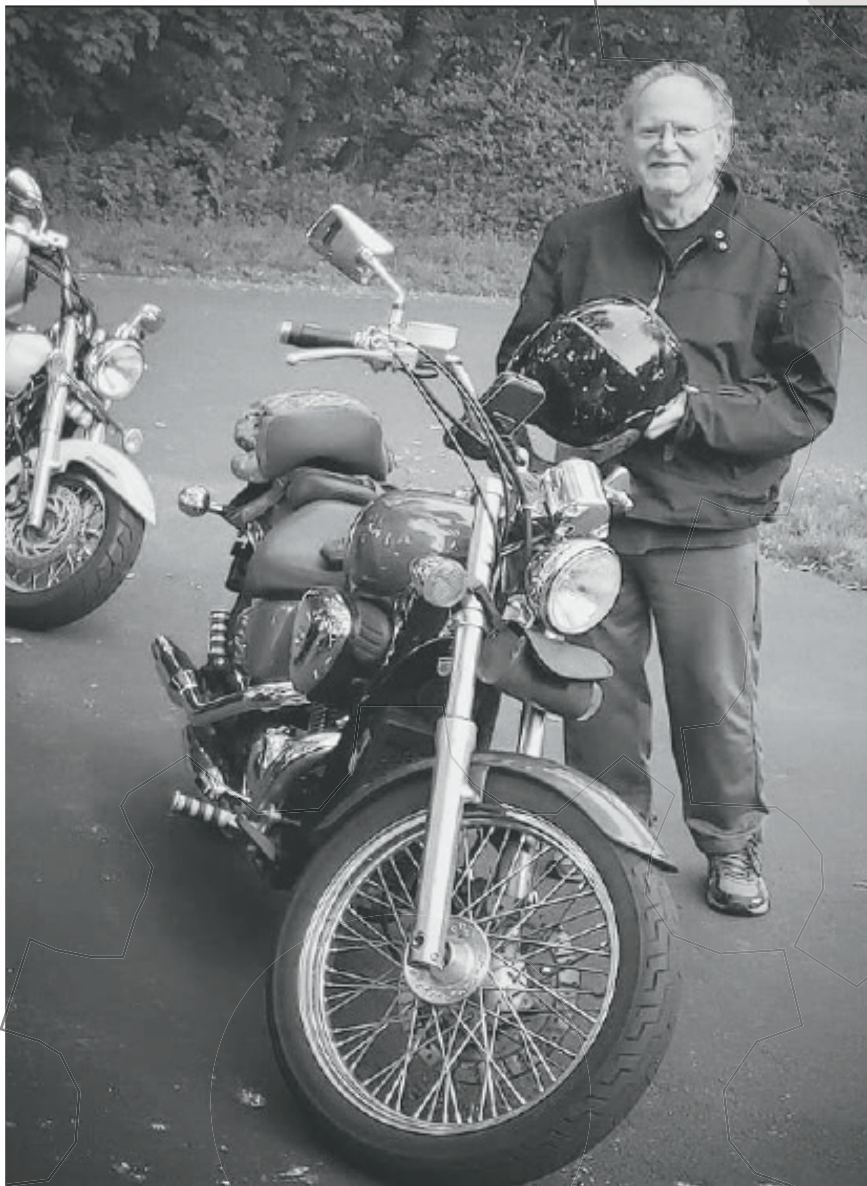
# En memoria de... Giuliano Stabile 1955 - 2020

“El señor Stabile fue el profesor más vibrante y entusiasta que he tenido. El no enseñaba de una manera convencional pero enseñaba de una manera que a los estudiantes les gustaba ir a la clase. El hizo que mi tercer año en la secundaria fuera el mejor.”

—Valeria Carias ('20)

“El señor Stabile fue uno de mis profesores favoritos en Westhill. Él era uno de los más divertidos, interesantes, y el profesor más real que he tenido. Él siempre fue comprensivo y quería lo mejor para todos.”

—Kayla Mendiola ('20)



El señor Stabile fue un maestro muy amado y una inspiración para sus compañeros y sus amigos. Su memoria vivirá en la comunidad de Westhill.



El departamento de ciencias ha recaudado dinero y donado a la sociedad de leucemia y linfoma en honor a la partida del señor Stabile.

“El hasta le compró a cada profesor de ciencias un lápiz muy delgadito de un museo al que él visitó mientras estaba enfermo--pensando en nosotros incluso cuando estaba luchando con el cáncer. Él siempre hablaba de sus nietos y era muy cercano a su familia. Le encantaba visitar a sus familiares en Italia, donde él nació, y se mantuvo en contacto con sus parientes. Él era voluntario en los Boy Scouts y era una persona muy sociable.”

—La señora McNamara, presidenta del departamento de ciencias.

“Cada otro Jueves él visitaba a cada persona del departamento de ciencias y era, por supuesto, era una alegría que él nos trajera nuestros cheques de pago, era encantador ver a una cara sonriente al regular. El también tenía increíbles higueras y nos traía higueras para todos, él será muy extrañado.”

—La señora Grant, profesora de ciencias.

“Siempre estaba ansiosa por ir a su clase, él siempre sabía que disfrutaba estar ahí. Él fue un estupendo maestro y nunca me olvidaré de lo que me enseñó, física o no. Se que todos en Westhill que lo tuvieron a él como profesor disfrutaban de su compañía, y nunca será olvidado.”

—Julia Reilly ('20)



# Is the Electoral College representative of the US?

**Kelly Aguilar**  
Staff Writer

The Electoral College is organized in a way that both parts are equal. The way the Electoral College works is that the people vote, and then whatever candidate has the majority of votes is who the state's electoral votes go to.

For example, in Connecticut, known as a blue state for leaning Democrat, Joe Biden won the majority so seven electoral votes went to him. Same goes for Donald Trump. Texas was a red state (Republican) and because of that, he won Texas.

By winning the states, they also gain the electoral votes of that state. The winning candidate's electors are then appointed as that state's electors and then vote for the candidate they represented in the general election.

The Electoral College is one of the most debated topics in American politics. Weeks after the Presidential election took place, many questioned why there even is an Electoral College.

"I agree with the Electoral College because it ensures us that we have an eligible president and

not someone that will not be representing us, we need someone who will take office and represent us, the people," Dulce Hernandez ('21) said.

The Electoral College was established by the founding fathers and can be found in the US Constitution. The purpose of the Electoral College is for a group of presidential electors to vote every four years for a new President and Vice President. The founding fathers did this in order to elect a President best suited for the position.

Article II, Section I of the US Constitution states, "The Electoral College is the formal body which elects the President and Vice President of the United States."

The founding fathers did not

want a president that gained majority vote to be voted in when they are not suited for the position of President.

The purpose of the Electoral College is to make sure a president is well equipped for the job.

Alexander Hamilton, a big supporter of the Electoral College, once referred to it as "at least excellent."

According to the Smartasset.com, reasons the Electoral College benefits the US in many ways includes providing a clean, widely accepted conclusion to the election, and it makes it easier for candidates to campaign. Meaning, it makes the complex process of choosing a new President a lot smoother.

The Electoral College makes

candidates pay more attention to what is known as swing states. These are states in which both political parties have a substantial amount of support, therefore making them more competitive.

The Electoral College prevents an undue influence and makes voting more fair and equal. The number of electoral votes per state is based on the population of that state.

If there was no Electoral College, small states, such as Rhode Island, would not have the representation that they do now. Only the more populous states would have influence on the election thus making it less fair.

"The Electoral College has its pros and cons. Pros for me being a civics teacher, and teaching the foundations of American

Government, I would definitely say that our founders created it for the purpose of it just being the best method at the time. There was not a public school education, people did not know what was going on in government, they just wanted to survive. So it is a much different time now but it was put into our Constitution for a very specific reason back then. Not only that, but it ensures that the entire country is involved in selecting the President. I mean some states more than others, but I think it is still pretty vital ensuring that everyone is participatory in the presidential election," Ms. Tintle, History teacher, said.

"It also guarantees a winner," Ms. English, History teacher, said.

Safe to say, the founding fathers cared for their people. They went for a process that was timeless and would work in the 1700s and in the future. This process ensures equal representation across the US and should continue to be used as a way for selecting the new President.



**Hagen Williams**  
Staff Writer

The Electoral College system was originally put in place in 1787 along with the original Constitution, but it has key disadvantages that could indicate there is a need for a change of policy. Essentially, each state is distributed a number of electoral college votes based on the percentage of people in America who live in that state. All states, except Nebraska and Maine, have a "winner take all" system where, if a candidate has the majority of the votes there (50% or more), they take all of the electoral votes for that state.

While Nebraska has a system where votes are given based on the proportion of voters won, this system was supposed to make it so that candidates would not only try to appeal to the most well populated states. Now, instead of appealing to the most populated, they are just appealing to the swing states, which does not solve the issue of focus on certain states. Focusing on more populated states makes more sense, as those states contain more people, therefore making them more important.

This system focuses on the majority opinion in a state rather than the individual opinions of the people, which has backfired several times. There have been five total candidates at this time that have won the popular vote but lost because of the Electoral College system, and two of these

events have happened in the last 20 years. It certainly indicates there are consequences to keeping such a system in place and the will of the majority is stifled under it.

"When discussing the Electoral College, though many pros, there seems to be many cons and disadvantages of the system. One being that the Electoral College ignores the will of the people. There are many instances of presidential candidates winning the popular vote yet still losing the election on electoral votes, like the elections of 2000 and 2016. Though there are over 300 million people in the United States, technically only 538 people decide who will be President. Secondly, I think that the Electoral College gives an unjust amount of power to the 'swing states,' allowing the election to be decided by a handful of states. Political parties often rely on winning electoral votes in certain states, such as California and New York for the Democratic Party and Texas and Indiana for the Republican party. Due to the system, presidential candidates only need to pay

attention to the limited number of states that swing from party to party. One can argue that a vote in these 'swing states' are 'valued' more than a vote in other states," Quinn McHale ('21) said.

Without the Electoral College, the election would only rely on a few key states. However, under the current system, the states where the population is split politically are the ones cared about rather than the heavily populated states. Although there is focus on the population as they pertain to the number of electoral votes, there is not as much of a focus as there would be with extremely populated states.

"Although it does raise certain issues such as the loser of the popular vote winning the electoral vote to become President, the focus more on swing states, and basically impossible for third candidates to get any attention because of the two party system. I think there are still ways to refine it so we do not have to completely get rid of it. Such as the example of rank choice voting, which states like Maine and

Nebraska are already doing, which in itself can solve many issues that the majority have with the Electoral College," Erik Lopez ('21) said.

This highlights another important issue within the system, which is the polarization of political parties and a lack of diversity among them. In order for any particular party to hope to have a chance at having a candidate be elected, they have to condense and shift their values to either be Republican or Democratic. If, say, the Democratic Party tried to split into two separate parties that both held democratic values, it is very likely that Republicans would win every election. This system discourages small parties from winning. However, it is good to also consider the other side, the reasons Electoral College should be kept.

"Personally, I am actually in favor of maintaining the Electoral College or something like it. If we were to abolish that system entirely, then we would be placing the outcome of the election in just a handful of the most populous states at the expense of the more rural and less

populated ones. When you consider an electoral (red and blue) map from any of the previous four to five elections, the issue is not so much Republican or Democrat, it is urban versus rural. An examination of an electoral map at the country level would lead you to believe that the country was overwhelmingly Republican and there are only a handful of spots around the country that typically vote Democrat. However, those blue spots are major urban centers, where a majority of the people in this country live. You would be silencing the large portion of the country that does not live near a major metropolitan area and, as such, has a different set of priorities and values. Though we are a Republican Democracy, we do not simply live by the 'majority rules' mantra that might imply. We work to protect the lives and interests of the minority groups so that their interests are not trampled by the majority," Mr. Stone, History teacher, said.

The system serves to protect the minority. However, candidates become more focused on swing states than highly populated states making it less representative of the population and it leads to the polarization of political parties.



# Westhill's take on hybrid learning

**Jayden Lesser**  
Staff Writer

As the summer came to an end, the talk of school reopening during COVID-19 had everyone buzzing. Teachers, students, and parents all wanted to know how Westhill would reopen and make sure that everyone was still safe.

With school opening in mid September instead of late August, the school had more time to organize their three possible reopening models which include: 100% in-person, hybrid, and 100% distance learning and teaching.

The 100% in-person model had the students in class for the whole week, being like a normal have school year.

The hybrid model consists of a blue and green group. The blue group has the first half of the alphabet by last name, and the green group has the second half. The groups alternate days in school per week, so one week blue group has Monday, Wednesday, Friday and green group has Tuesday and Thursday. The next week, the days for each group flips.

In this model, there is also an option to be part of the Distance Teaching and Learning Academy (DTLA) which would allow them to remain home and take classes virtually.

The third possible model, 100% distance learning and teaching, has students staying home full time and taking classes virtually.

The Board of Education (BOE) decided on using the hybrid learning model. However, there are pros and cons to this reopening model. Some students complain that in DTLA, the classes offered are not the same as if they were in school.

"I like being a DTLA student, but it is frustrating at times. It is nice that I can stay at home, but the trade-off was that I was not able to enroll in classes I wanted. It is also annoying not to have real teachers, especially for Advanced Placement (AP) classes. I understand the district is doing everything they can, but I really hope next year they can expand the courses available. I am a senior and was disappointed with the cuts I had to make to the schedule I had planned since the middle of my junior year. Overall, I am glad that DTLA was of-

fered, but it can be improved in so many ways," Elizabeth Gagarin ('21) said.

For the teachers at Westhill, this has been very difficult adapting to the new model. Many of them have been teaching for over 10 years and say that this is their biggest chal-

lenge yet.

"Teaching in hybrid is difficult because it feels like I am teaching double the number of classes I really am. Although, teaching science through COVID-19 is a challenge in and of itself. I have had to change almost every lesson to comply

with guidelines. However, being that these are extraordinary times, I do believe this model allows us to stay in session," Ms. Grant, Science teacher, said.

This is especially hard on the teachers everywhere because they are tasked with the

job to teach the upcoming generations. That being said, it is very difficult to teach when they only see their students half the time.

Many people, including teachers, are having a hard time adjusting to their new schedule. Teachers basically have to teach double the amount of classes and still be expected to have everything graded on time and stay organized.

"It has been a nightmare. While it is so important that students have in person contact with their teachers, the schedule provides minimal consistency; planning takes exponentially longer; grading is a never ending battle; participation is lackluster; not being able to do group work leaves each day feeling monotonous and boring. The usual relationships I develop with my kids is impossible when everyone is hidden behind a mask, and while Google Classroom and its extensions are fantastic resources, relying on them every day is less than desirable. I have been teaching for 17 years, and this year is by far the hardest," Ms. Taylor, Social Studies teacher, said.

Some students have used this model to their advantage as they are learning about new technology.

"Hybrid learning has allowed me to utilize the Internet in order to further my learning in many classes," Carly Fein ('21) said.

For many students it is easier to turn in their work because they do not have to worry about losing it. For others it has proven to be harder because they have to teach themselves on their days off.

Students also have to keep proper time management as they are on their own for many assignments.

In addition, some students find it hard to focus from their homes as there are many distractions from babysitting family to not having proper technology or workspace.

To help with this, the district has provided free Dell laptops to all high school students who need it.

As the year goes on the school is adapting and making the models better. Everyone is having to change their lifestyle during COVID-19 and school is changing with it.



Illustration above by **Cailey Koch**/ Illustrator  
Graphic below by **Jason Zarrilli**/ Print Executive Editor

**Out of the three reopening models, do you think the hybrid model is the best option?**

**57% Yes**

**43% No**

Poll conducted by **AJ Corelli & Annabelle Raz** / Pollsters.

\*Poll out of 264 students and teachers.



# Masks are effective both inside and out

**Georgia Baer**  
Staff Writer

Safety precautions are being taken in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and wearing face masks outside has turned into a debate.

Some people might say that wearing face masks outside is not necessary.

Hackensack Meridian Health says, "You do not need to wear a mask outside if you're in your backyard or on personal property and it is very unlikely that you'll end up within 6 feet of someone else or you're in any other secluded location where the likelihood of running into someone else is very low."

One side to this phenomenon is that wearing face masks outside is necessary only if the individual is within six feet of another person.

"I think that it depends on the situation. If you are standing in a group close to a bunch of people, then I think masks should be worn. However, if you are walking by yourself, distanced from other people, I think that you should be allowed to pull your mask down," Chris Ellis ('21) said.

Alternatively, others view



Illustration by **Caroline Blum** / Head Illustrator.

wearing masks outside as an essential factor to limiting the spread of COVID-19.

"Masks are just as important outside as they are inside. You do not know what the guy walking past you on the sidewalk could be carrying. However, with an outdoor mask mandate, you are safe to walk along the road with total strangers, even after they have

been partying in a crowd, as it is less likely to contract any disease with a mask on outdoors," Jessica Nirschel ('21) said.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) explains the science behind wearing masks saying that masks are a simple barrier, and studies have shown that masks can reduce the spread of respiratory droplets.

According to CBS News, face masks lessen both the amount of virus spread from the infected person and the chances of inhaling the virus.

"I agree with having masks being mandated outside. Even though there is fresh air outside, we are truly never safe. Wearing a mask shows that you are caring and aware about what is going on

around the world and have seen how this pandemic has affected everyone. Wearing a mask keeps others safe from you and is helping to reduce this virus. By wearing a mask you are helping out to bring the world back to 'normal.'" Dulce Hernandez ('21) said.

Wearing masks has decreased the spread of particles, but there are many unknowns.

According to ucsf.edu, health experts have made it clear that masks help to limit the spread of COVID-19. So, the more people wearing masks, the better.

Due to the fact that protocols are constantly changing within schools, hospitals, and businesses, erring on the side of caution is the way to go.

Researcher Baruch Fischhoff from Carnegie Mellon University states, "For the variety of masks in use by the public, the data are messy, disparate and often hastily assembled. 'People looking at the evidence are understanding it differently. It's legitimately confusing.'"

While research about COVID-19 is continuing, masks have proven to be effective in limiting the spread both indoors and outdoors. So, when outside in a public area, wearing a mask is the safer option.

## Should high school sports continue during COVID-19?

**Laasya Kasaru & Vishal Nayak**  
Reporter & Viewpoint Editor

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, sports organizations across the world have decided to suspend or even cancel their seasons. In addition to professional sports, high school sports have also been affected and have made major changes to their fall and winter athletics.

Sporting events such as the NCAA, Little League, Ivy League, National Football

League (NFL) and many more have been either cancelled or postponed. In addition to professional sports, high school sports have also been affected.

One of the advantages of keeping sports running through the pandemic is that it helps teens stay fit and healthy. During this time, it is difficult to go out to the gym or the park, or go sightseeing with family and friends and therefore, it is difficult to get physical activity. Being an athlete, it is also tough

to play tournaments, matches or games while adhering to proper social distancing per state guidelines. However, disadvantages include compromising the physical health of athletes.

In the fall, athletics were heavily debated and were eventually allowed to take place with some modifications.

"Even though I want to play normally, it is better to be safe. Hopefully Connecticut will be able to figure out a way to allow us to play while being safe

against COVID-19," Owen Perry ('24) said.

The Westhill girl's volleyball team had a shortened season playing only five other teams. They were allowed to play indoors with masks and no spectators. Fortunately, this meant that seniors who worked incredibly hard over the past three years were allowed to have a season and showcase their hard work and effort.

At the beginning of the season fall sports seemed unlikely. Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) announced that they would not host a state tournament for any fall sport at the end of the season.

Although some people may argue that missing out on the state tournament was unfair and took away from the season, the Fairfield County Interscholastic Athletic Conference (FCIAC) was able to host a modified playoff tournament within Fairfield County schools which divided teams into three regions and allowed for them to compete while taking precautions to contain the COVID-19 virus.

"As far as my opinion, I think sports are obviously great exercise and great competition

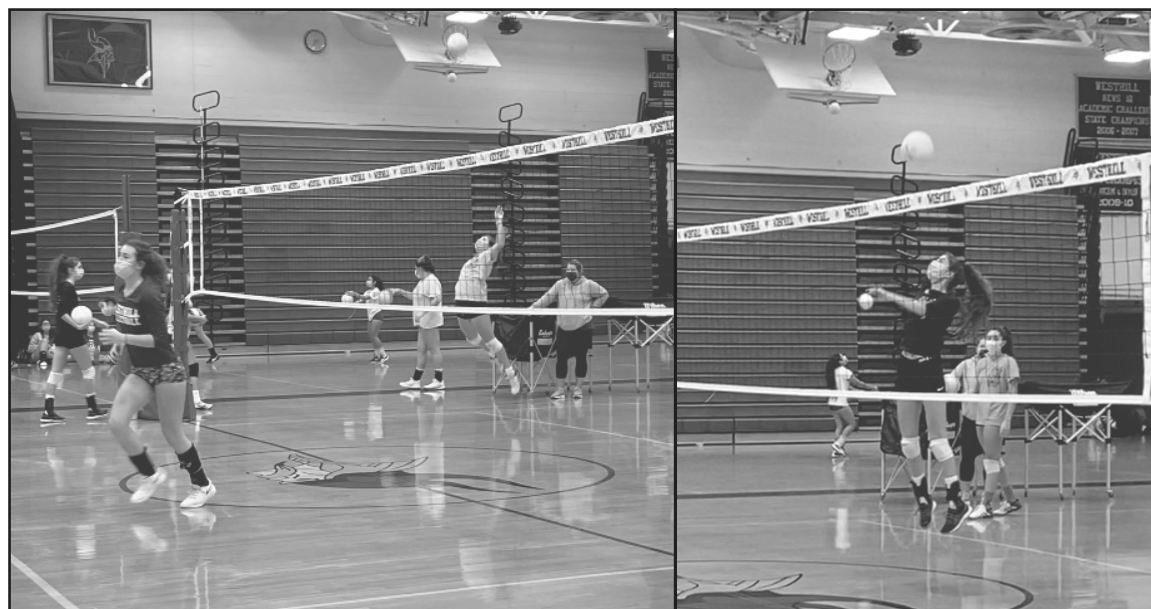
and I think it can be done safely during COVID-19 as long as everyone adheres to proper Centers For Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines," Mr. Bertone, Health teacher, said.

With the recent spike in COVID-19 cases in Connecticut, Governor Ned Lamont decided to postpone the start of winter sports until January 19, 2021. This decision ensures the safety of all athletes and limits the amount of in-school transmissions.

"Winter sports being postponed is probably the right decision given the state of COVID-19 as of today. Whether or not Winter sports should continue is up for debate, but if the situation gets better I think postponement is the right decision," William Snead ('24) said.

Student athletes are open to compromising some aspects of their sports for the safety of themselves and their community.

As far as COVID goes, it seems correct to take the precautions of delaying high school athletics and modifying the rules. However, with the recent development of a vaccine, there is hope for spring sports to play out with no adjustments.



**PLAYING SAFE** Girls Volleyball team following COVID-19 protocols at a game.  
Photo by **Lana Busch** / Photographer.



## Movie Review: *Borat Subsequent Moviefilm* provides comedic relief

**Nalani Zhuta**

Social Media Manager

Pranking the Associate Attorney General of the United States was one of the many crude things that occurred in *Borat Subsequent Moviefilm*. Other highlighted scenes in the movie was when Borat attended a Trump rally, an abortion clinic and a march for conservatives.

14 years ago, *Borat* premiered in theaters all over the world. Its sequel, *Borat Subsequent Moviefilm*, premiered on October 23 of this year causing just as much controversy as the first film.

The first film was released in 2006, starring method actor Sacha Baron Cohen. Cohen plays the role of Borat Margaret Sagdiyev, a Kazakhstan journalist. Borat is sent to America to create a documentary on the American culture and society. While in the US, Cohen pranks everyday Americans into believing he is a foreigner conducting a documentary. According to CBS News, within months of *Borat* being released, beginning with Kazakhstan, the movie was banned in every Arab country.

"Sacha Baron Cohen's humor is not for everyone. It is over the top and crude — but smart! It brought some much needed levity during a tough time. I would rate it four out of five stars," Ms. Taylor, Social Studies teacher, said.

*Borat Subsequent Moviefilm*, also known as *Borat 2*, takes place in 2020. Borat is released from prison to return back to America to give a gift to Rudy Giuliani to re-

store the integrity of Kazakhstan. The gift is his 15 year old daughter, whom he journeys across America with to learn how to be "a proper American woman." Borat and his daughter, Tutar, played by Maria Bakalova, visit various places all across the country, similar to the first *Borat* movie.

According to *Variety*, *Borat 2* was the second most watched subscription video on demand movie of 2020. It was released as an Amazon Prime original movie. It falls just below *Hamilton* which was released on Disney

Plus in July.

"I felt *Borat 2* was a stand out movie for 2020 as a whole. I would rate it 5 out of 5 stars. I think that it was the funniest thing I have seen all year, and that it provides some uncensored

commentary on what is going on in the United States." Matthew Diloranzo ('23) said.

After the release of *Borat 2*, the Kazakhstan government unbanned the movie and allowed for its sequel. According to *The New York Times*, Kazakhstan's tourism board even changed their tourism official slogan to Borat's slogan "Very Nice!"

"My favorite part was when Borat let his daughter eat a cupcake with a small plastic baby on top. She ate the whole thing, as well as the

baby, so they went to an abortion clinic to try and get the baby out. I would rate it four out of five stars," Ryan Basile ('22) said.

Towards the very end of the movie, Tutar, Borat's daughter, poses as a journalist while interviewing Rudy Giuliani. Once the interview has finished, Giuliani and Tutar make their way to the bed of the hotel room. Giuliani is then seen laying down and fiddling with his pants below the belt.

During the scene when Giuliani began to "tuck in his shirt," Borat runs in and attempts to stop him, shouting, "She is too young! She is only 15!" Giuliani then contacts the authorities while Borat and Tutar escape.

On October 21, two days before the release of *Borat Subsequent Movie Film*, Giuliani tweeted how he felt about his appearance in the "mockumentary" saying, "The Borat video is a complete fabrication. I was tucking in my shirt after taking off the recording equipment. At no time before, during, or after the interview was I ever inappropriate. If Sacha Baron Cohen implies otherwise he is a stone-cold liar."

Overall, *Borat 2* strikes just as racy as the first movie. The movie tackled many political issues and incorporated celebrities. Many people enjoyed it for its crude humor, others found it offensive.

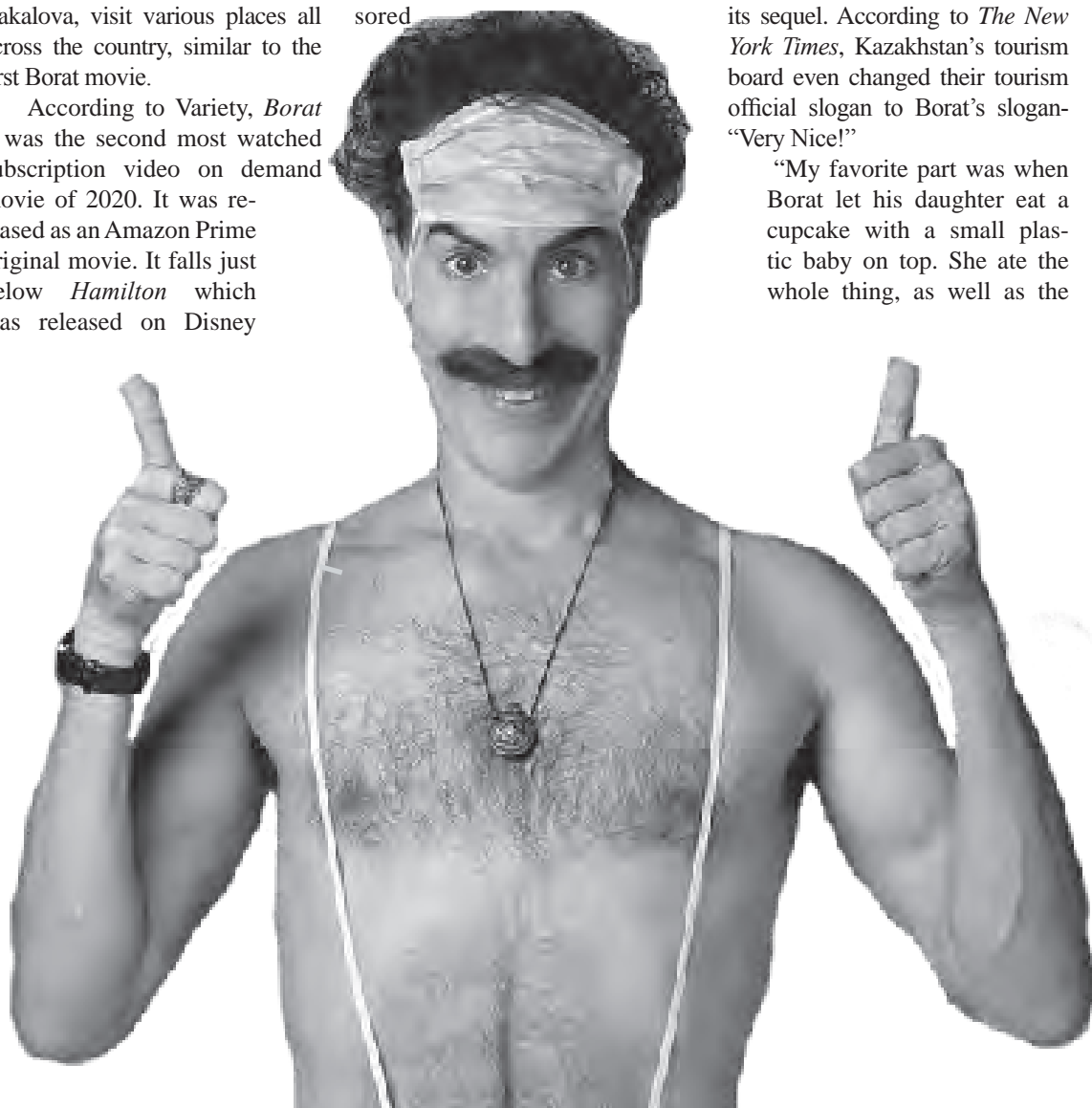


Image courtesy of pixabay.com.

## COVID-19 brings out new ways of performing

**Cailey Koch**

Social Media Editor

One of the main things that has been talked about since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak has been the art industry, more specifically, the performing arts and music industries. Those involved in these industries have been greatly impacted, whether they have lost their jobs or have had to put things on hold.

There was a lot of talk due to the fact that all Broadway shows had been cancelled, or put on hold. This led to some of the more popular ones being put online so that fans could stream them from their home. However, it also led to a loss of jobs for many.

No one was sure how long the Broadway shutdown was going to last, but many hoped that it would end quickly. However, with the rise of COVID-19 cases and new precautions being put into place, Broadway remains shut down. Recently, Broadway League

made an announcement stating that Broadway would be on lockdown until 2021, which further disappointed fans and performers alike.

Another big aspect of the music industry that has changed during the pandemic is the performance of concerts and live shows. Since large gatherings are not permitted due to risk of spreading the virus, live concerts are not possible at this time. However, many musicians have come up with an alternative: virtual concerts and performances.

"People want and love to be entertained. That is why we the artists, directors, comedians, and musicians must change the way we entertain during these hard times we are living in. We must explore every avenue, whether it is technical or virtual, to make what we do accessible to the public. That has been the biggest challenge during COVID," Mr. Pavia, para and former Northstar advisor, said.

One way to do a virtual

concert could be to live stream it and charge people to view it. Quite a few artists have taken this route, many of them performing in the comfort of their own home. Some are even performing at venues and broadcasting their shows. According to *Billboard Magazine*, some artists with upcoming virtual performances are Gorillaz, Andrea Bocelli, Liam Gallagher, and Evanescence.

A more creative approach artists have taken for virtual concerts is performing on well known video games or virtual platforms. Diplo and Lil Nas X have taken this approach, with Diplo performing on Fortnite over the summer and Lil Nas X performing on Roblox on November 14. Though seeing a virtual character perform is not the same as seeing the actual artist, this approach is still a unique and interesting one, especially for younger fans of the artists.

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only affected professionals. Many high school art

and music programs have been affected by it as well. At Westhill specifically, the Northstar Playmakers cannot put on shows as they usually would, and neither can the Chamber Singers or the other choir ensembles.

"Theater has definitely felt the effects of COVID. Typically, I would be in two to three shows right now, but really, Zoom shows just are not the same. They do not have that in-person 'theater magic' that I love so much," Lilah Steinberg ('21) said.

Despite the major effects on arts programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, Northstar is able to continue virtually, according to Mr. Pavia. However, some programs have not been as fortunate.

"The pandemic has been devastating for music education programs across the nation. Kids are not allowed to sing or play instruments in their vocal or band classes, so they naturally end up opting out of them. The silver lining is that it has forced many mu-

sic programs to utilize a lot of the technology that exists even on mobile devices like their phones," Mr. Curri, music teacher, said.

The end result is students now know how to use recording software and methods, preparing them for making music in the 21st century. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected people across the globe. Many are losing jobs, postponing their events, and not being able to do the thing they love.

Those working as music and art educators have been impacted by the pandemic as well. Many have had to adjust their teaching methods to fit the new protocols put in place due to the virus, and students taking these classes have had to adapt to these changes.

Overall, many artists had to adapt to this new situation, bringing new ways to perform and new ways for the audience to enjoy the arts.



# Artists turn to distanced entertainment

**Luis Padilla**  
Managing Editor

Say goodbye to local movie cinemas and hello to good old-fashioned 1950's drive-in theaters. As the pandemic rages on, the world has been slowly, but surely, adjusting to countless setbacks. While attending live in-person is the best way to experience events, social distancing protocols have initiated new creative ways for the entertainment industry to re-engage with its audiences.

"One time, my cousins and I planned on watching a movie together through the Netflix sharing program. We all did it to cheer up one of my cousins who was in a rough spot and it honestly created some pretty happy memories," Stephen Magnifico ('21) said.

Going to the movies nowadays is a little difficult but doable. However, if one seeks a little bit of adventure then drive-in movie theaters are non-negotiable. According to *CNN*, drive-in theaters across the US have been sprouting up again in large numbers. Business owners have been re-opening old drive-ins or building make-shift theaters and presenting all kinds of films to the public. Drive-in operators have stated that their tickets for films like *The Sandlot*, *Jurassic Park*, and *Sonic the Hedgehog* were all sold out within minutes.

According to *Axios*, Walmart also contributed to the sudden surge when it announced its partnership with Tribeca Enterprises during the summer. This partnership included converting 160 store locations into makeshift drive-in movie theaters. Walmart would then air films that work alongside the Tribeca summer series lineup.

Americans began facing a new wave of film watching that took them to the roots of American culture.

With physical interactions being limited but open, other sources

show garnered more than 12 million concurrent players which only kept increasing as more debuts occurred.

Since then, Fortnite has been establishing its foothold in the vir-

attend when faced with the fact that Fortnite is free and available on almost every household device. The new digital age of video games has allowed for a nice transition into the virtual concert realm which enables

streams from Rick and Morty, The Eric Andre Show, and Run the Jewels x Cyberpunk 2077.

"I like how the Adult Swim Festival has a wide variety of content for everyone to enjoy. I personally liked Kaytranada's chill music session," Andrew Ishikawa ('21) said.

The festival was streamed live straight from YouTube and featured countless hours of content to hundreds of audience members. The presentation was received very positively from its community and could lead to years of potential virtual concerts with artists from all types of genres.

Late-night shows are also making their way back to normalcy with their audience members. Hosts Jimmy Fallon, Seth Meyers, James Corden, Stephen Colbert, and Jimmy Kimmel have all returned to their respective studios. According to *Deadline*, crew sizes are limited with the majority of writers, producers, and editors still working from home. However, some guests have started to show up for in-person interviews while others are still more inclined to virtual interactions. These staples of the television industry are finally returning to their natural states, but it will still take some time until audience members can join in on all the fun.

As the world acclimates to its sudden changes, many of these new and exciting ways of experiencing entertainment are now springing to life. The potential they hold could spark a generation of creative forms of expression that eventually become a new normal.



are also making their way into the public view. Video games, specifically, are also chiming in on all the fuss.

Virtual concerts are being held through gamers' very own TV screens with Fortnite becoming a staple in the video game industry for having countless artists come to life within the game. Back in April, Fortnite took the world by storm with the Travis Scott live performance which featured a colossal version of Travis performing his songs as the stage transformed in many creative ways.

According to *BBC*, the first

tual concert industry with their new Party Royale mode which launched in May, following the Scott concert. This mode would mainly include a social hub where players can have fun with their friends as they explore an island filled with minigames, but, the main source of attraction is the Party Royale main stage where artists have had the opportunity to perform in front of millions of players. Some notable artists the game has included over the summer and into the fall season have been Diplo, Young Thug, Steve Aoki, Dominic Fike, Anderson .Paak, BTS, and J Balvin.

It is even more encouraging to

performers to engage with potential fans during these unprecedented times.

Adult Swim also made giant strides in allowing people to experience entertainment within the safety of their own homes. The Adult Swim Festival was advertised as a free, two-day, fully immersive global virtual event that would bring people closer to music, comedy, and mayhem — all from the comfort of their couches, according to Adult Swim. The festival featured musical performances by Robyn Presents Club Domo, Mastodon, and Kaytranada. It even included exclusive live

## Album Review: Positions by Ariana Grande

**Vana Servos**  
Managing Editor

Ariana Grande is an American singer, songwriter and actress who has released many chart-topping albums. After over one and a half years since her last album, *Thank U, Next*, she released her sixth one, *Positions*, on October 30.

It consists of fourteen tracks and a number of collaborations with popular artists, including "Safety Net" with Ty Dolla \$ign, "Motive" with Doja Cat and "Off the Table" with The Weeknd.

From a musical perspective, like her previous albums this one expands on pop and R&B sounds, while also incorporating hip-hop and funk elements.

"I love her new album. My

favorite songs are 'Positions', 'Shut Up', 'Safety Net' and 'POV'. Just like the other albums she has put out, this one is perfect for car rides with friends or just doing homework. Since I am a dancer, I love choreographing a few short dances to her songs," Amrit Samra ('21) said.

*Positions* searches for peace, tracing the work that one has to do to piece himself/herself together, and the frightening feeling of having to re-learn to trust. Lyrically, it discusses themes of romance and feelings after a tragedy. After it was released, it attracted generally great reviews from the general audience, and music critics complimenting Grande's amazing vocals. However, there were instances of criticism sur-

rounding the album's production and some of the lyrics.

"While I have not yet listened to all of the songs on the album, the ones I got the chance to listen to are very upbeat and always put me in a good mood," Afra Porbandarwala ('21) said.

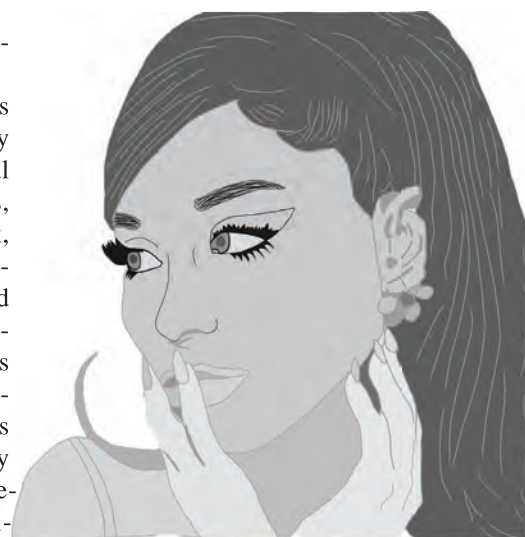
Her fan base, the "Arianators", once again did not disappoint with Ariana Grande tallying her fifth career No. 1 album on the US Billboard 200 chart, and becoming the fourth female artist album to reach that spot in 2020, with 174,000 equivalent album units, according to Nielsen Music/MRC Data. In addition, following *Thank U, Next* (twelve songs), a couple of weeks after the album was released all fourteen of the songs were charted at the

same time on Billboard's Hot 100.

Her album has taken over many music and social media platforms, including TikTok, with songs "Positions," "POV," and "34+39" becoming famous trends across this platform. These songs are performed by common users, celebrities and verified creators.

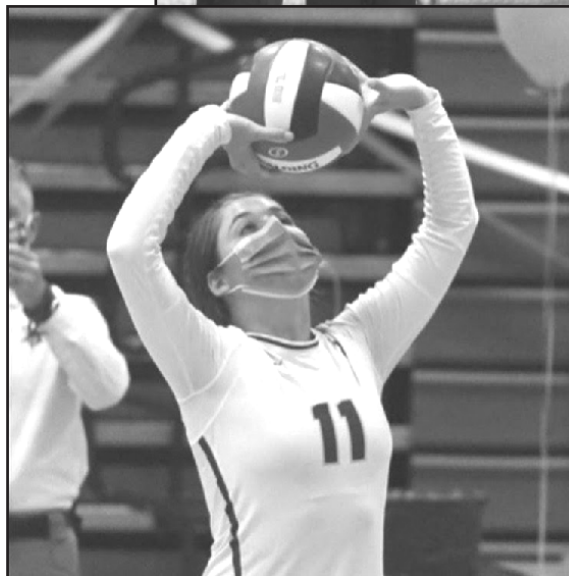
"It is not my type of music so I have not listened to any of the songs but they always seem to come up on the radio or sometimes I come across them on TikTok," Konstantinos Servos ('24) said.

*Positions* can be streamed on Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon Music, YouTube Music and Deezer, or purchased on iTunes and Amazon.





## Student athletes persevere through uncertain times



Photos courtesy of **Charlie Schwartz, Audra Hansen & @westhillvball** / Photographer & Contributor.



## Max's Corner

Column By Max Savitt

As we near our way into a cold December, the sports world is starting to heat up. The National Football League (NFL) is more than half way through their season and the playoff race is getting very serious. As for the National Basketball Association (NBA), the NBA draft just occurred and the crazy off-season has begun.

In the NFL there are four teams that have emerged themselves above the rest and are proving themselves as frontrunners for the Vince Lombardi Trophy. These teams are the Pittsburgh Steelers, the Kansas City Chiefs, the Green Bay Packers, and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

The first team to look at are the Steelers who are currently undefeated and have crazy talent on both sides of the ball.

The Steelers offense is led by future hall of fame quarterback Ben Roethlisberger and his stellar receiving core of Juju Smith Schuster, Diontae Johnson, and rookie sensation Chase Claypool. These players have been putting on a show this year

emerging themselves as one of the best offenses in the league.

Along with their offense, the Steelers defense has been nothing short of excellent. They are the number two rated defense in the NFL being led by star defensive end, TJ Watt, and star safety Minkah Fitzpatrick. These two players have been leading a hungry defense to keep their team in games and show themselves as a powerhouse.

The next team to look at are the Kansas City Chiefs. The defending Super Bowl champions are trying to protect their title as they have been one of the best teams in the NFL.

Led by star quarterback Patrick Mahomes, the Chiefs have been able to cruise their way through the season as they have only lost one game. Mahomes has been on another level. He is the frontrunner for Most Valuable Player (MVP) this season with 2687 passing yards, 25 touchdowns (tds), and just one interception.

Mahomes this year is being helped out by his star tight

end Travis Kelce. Kelce is the best tight end in the league putting up huge numbers this year. Kelce has the most receiving yards for a tight end, and the most tds for a tight end. Overall, the Chiefs are a scary good football team with great odds to repeat their super bowl run of 2019.

The third team to look at are the Green Bay Packers. The Packers are a favorite to win the National Football Conference (NFC) as they are led by future hall of fame quarterback Aaron Rodgers.

Rodgers has been ballin' out this year. Rodgers is just behind Mahomes in MVP odds as he has thrown for 2578 yards, thrown 26 tds, and thrown only three interceptions. Rodgers is showing the NFL world that he can still play at 36 years old, and play at a high level.

Rodgers has had help from one of the best receivers in the league, Davantae Adams. Adams is a machine. He is racking up numbers and putting on a show every week he plays. This duo of Rodgers and Adams

is a dynamic duo that has the potential to bring home another Vince Lombardi Trophy home to Green Bay.

The final team to look at is the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. The Buccaneers have a crazy good defense with the best linebacker duo consisting of Lavonte David and Devin White.

These two guys play great alongside each other and are leading their teams defense every week.

The Buccaneers are being led by newly acquired, legendary quarterback, Tom Brady. Brady is still competing at a high level at age 43. He is leading the Buccaneers to the top of their division with a stacked roster.

They have a talented receiving core made up by Mike Evan, Chris Godwin, and Antonio Brown. These three guys are all top receivers in the game and are helping the Buccaneers compete for their 2nd Super Bowl victory.

Moving on from football, the NBA draft has just concluded. The top five picks from

the draft are Anthony Edwards, new member of the Minnesota Timberwolves, James Wiseman, new member of the Golden State Warriors, Lamelo Ball, new member of the Charlotte Hornets, Patrick Williams, new member of the Chicago Bulls, and Isaac Okoro, new member of the Cleveland Cavaliers.

The highlight player of this mix is Lamelo Ball. Ball has been in the spotlight since he was a freshman in high school. Him and his brothers have been on ESPN long before this draft as viral videos of Lamelo have been all across social media for years. He has dominated in high school since freshmen year with his superb ball handling skills. Lamelo has been in the spotlight for years, but it is interesting to see what he will do as he is finally in the NBA.

These are the top five picks of the draft and it will be exciting to see who emerges as a star, who emerges as a bust, and who just simply fits in with the rest of the NBA.

*Editor's note: At the time of this writing, the Steelers was undefeated. However, they lost to the Washington Football Team on December 7.*



# Engel shows leadership in an unexpected season

**Kelly Aguilar**  
Staff Writer

Wide receiver Jack Engel ('21) is now captain of the varsity football team here at Westhill. Engel has shown dedication, hard work, and a deep love for football. Engel, playing since 5th grade, has had to balance out multiple Advanced Placement (AP) courses, the stress of senior year, and the new responsibilities of being captain. The Westword was thrilled to sit with Engel and get to know more about him and how COVID-19 has restricted football.

**The Westword (TW): What makes you love football?**

**Jack Engel (JE):** The intensity of the game, the brotherhood that is involved with football. It is a fun atmosphere to be around everyday.

**TW: How would you feel if football suddenly got cancelled this year with other schools in the Fairfield County Interscholastic Athletic Conference (FCIAC) getting closed due to COVID-19?**

**JE:** I would honestly feel pretty sad. All these years and memories I have made and the fact that this is my last year would be devastating if football suddenly got cancelled.

**TW: With all of the new regulations and rules installed, is it harder to play now?**

**JE:** I got a couple penalties for blocking when I am not supposed to. It is not the same as regular football so it is a bit hard to get used to all of the new rules.

**TW: What keeps you motivated throughout the season?**

**JE:** Improving everyday. We have games every week so we want to win. Just being with my teammates and trying to improve with them keeps me motivated.

**TW: What made you get into football?**

**JE:** Both of my brothers got me into playing football.



**CLEANING UP** In his free time, Jack advocates for a green environment. Photo courtesy of **Kateryna Pekar** / Contributor.

My older brother played in High School and My younger brother Sam Engel ('22) really liked football and had fun so I decided to come to practice.

**TW: What made you try out for the Westhill team? Was it intimidating?**

**JE:** I loved the game. I did not want to stop there. It was kind of intimidating with new players and coaches. I was so used to my middle school team. The intensity sped up a bit but you get use to it.

**TW: How does it feel being captain now? Is there anything different about it?**

**JE:** I have to be more vocal, step up more as a leader too. I have more responsibilities and it has changed roles for me. An example is I have to hold players accountable for their actions and make sure everything is in check.

**TW: What feeling do you get when you are on the field?**

**JE:** Before a game I feel nervous, I get butterflies in my stomach but once the game starts, adrenaline washed over me and I am ready.

**TW: What is your least favorite thing about playing football this year?**

**JE:** Just how we cannot play real tackle football. After this point, I will not ever play football so it is quite sad that my football career had to end on this note.

**TW: Is there any specific player you look up to, if so why?**

**JE:** As a kid I always went to my brother's football games at Westhill. He was a captain for the team at that time. I looked up to him. I wanted to be like him.

I remember my freshmen year when I first got a Vikings helmet, I was ecstatic. My coaches now, who have coached my brother in the past, have reminded me of how good he was, how hard he worked, and his amazing leadership skills. In my everyday life I strive to be like him whether on the field or not.

**TW: How do you get through a tough point in the season?**

**JE:** In my four years of playing here we have had lots of tough points in the season. What keeps us going is a strive to be better. We have to go in every week wanting to win and working for it. Along with that having some fun and competitiveness amongst the team keeps us going.

**TW: When did you start playing football?**

**JE:** I started playing football in 5th grade, although when first going into the season I did not think I wanted to play. My younger brother changed my mind. My younger brother who is a year younger than me went to practice for the team and I did not. After his first day of practice, I asked him what he did. He replied "We ran." I do not know what changed my mind especially after that response, but I decided to join the team. I showed



**SEND OFF** Jack Engel sprinting for the touchdown. Photo courtesy of **Sandy Ellis** / Contributor.

up for the next practice and loved it.

**TW: Were there any injuries or complications and how did you get through them?**

**JE:** Yes. My sophomore year I sprained my medial collateral ligament (MCL) with a couple games left in the season. I sadly missed the Stamford High game, but I still went to games and practices to support my teammates. A few weeks after the season was over I healed up fully and I was ready to get to work for next season.

**TW: Were there any times you felt like quitting if so how did you get through it?**

**JE:** There were definitely times where quitting or taking a break seemed nice, but I know that I could never do it. I love the game and I love my team. With the amount of joy the game brings me, I would never quit. Also, football is a team sport and I not only play for myself, but for my team. Quitting the team would be a let down to myself, my coaches, and my teammates.

**TW: How have you been managing being captain along with senior year?**

**JE:** Senior year has been a little tough with getting my school work done, my college applications, and then the football season with the new responsibilities of being a captain. I just have to manage my time more efficiently. It is a lot of work, but it is worth it.

**TW: Do you have co-captains. If so, how well do you work together?**

**JE:** We have 3 other captains: Kobe Givens ('21), DJ Friedman ('21), and Ben Hochadel ('22). I think we work together very well. Kobe is the most vocal captain, and DJ, Ben and I lead more by example. We all work well with the team.

**TW: Do you intend to continue football after your leave high school?**

**JE:** I have decided not to play organized football after high school but I definitely plan to keep watching it!. Go Giants!



# Westhill Vikings

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**Should high school sports continue during COVID-19? p. 19**

**Interview with new Dean of Students, Mr. Pazmino *p. 6* / Remembering Mr. Stabile *p. 4***

