

The Westword

Student voice of the Westhill community

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

The impact of the late bus timing on students

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WESTHILL'S
STRONG SOCIAL
MEDIA PRESENCE

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A LOOK INTO THIS
YEAR'S INFLUENZA
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INTERVIEW WITH THE
SCHOOL'S ATHLETIC
TRAINERS

The Westword

2017-2018 Staff

February 2018

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Dear Readers,

We are pleased to bring you another issue after a long break. We are very proud to bring you our February issue, and hope you enjoy everything it has to offer.

Our Editorial this month may look a little different. This month we called for a couple of changes that we feel will improve the high school experience.

In News, we cover the new Student Spirit Committee, as well as the recent development of "seniorities".

In Viewpoint, take a look at the opposing views on Valentines day and a commentary on the availability of late busses at Westhill.

Moving on to Las Noticias, hablamos sobre el influjo de los compostadores en Westhill y explicamos el sello de alfabetización bilingüe.

Special Reports dives into the recent outbreak of the flu, and how it has impacted the world.

Our Supplement this issue shares the many stories of Westhill staff and students. In Feature, we have an interview with Mrs. Corbo, as well as a look at students' involvement in the Women's March.

Limelight gives you a go to guide on upcoming music festivals. Scatterbrain covers our Slay of the Month, as well as the "page of fun".

In Express, view our interview with Ali Cogan, as well as other student work. In Sports, you will find a breakdown of the various Track and Field events as well as an interview with Westhill's Athletic Trainer,

Jenna Rousso.

Online we continue to bring current news from the community as it happens. Be sure to check out our daily Morning Briefings, as well as a student's response to President Trump's comments regarding Haiti. We also encourage our readers to listen to our new podcasts. They can be found on thewestwordonline.com.

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

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

Editorial Policy

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

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

Announcements

The Westword would like to announce that the Feminism Club will be hosting a walk-out on March 14.

Corrections

The Westword has no corrections at this time.

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The Westword
Westhill High School
125 Roxbury Road
Stamford, CT 06902
(203) 977-4894
westwordwhs@gmail.com
thewestwordonline.com
Visit ourschoolnewspaper.com/Westword
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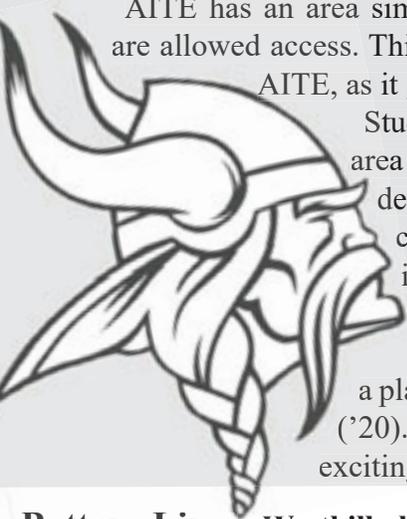
Principal Rinaldi has made efforts to improve school morale, bringing more pride and spirit into the community everyday. School culture is vital to students, teachers, and administrators' success. While The Westword believes that Viking's Culture is trending in the right direction, we came up with a few suggestions to get students more excited to come to school:

Viking Den

The creation of a "Viking Den" could be something very enjoyable for many Westhill students. This would essentially be a student lounge, where students could spend time in during lunch, study hall periods, and possibly even after school. It could be like a Purple Pack room for all students. This would be a welcome addition at Westhill, as many students want a common area to spend time other than the Media Center.

AITE has an area similar to this concept, except only seniors are allowed access. This public area is well loved by students at AITE, as it gives them a comfort to look forward to.

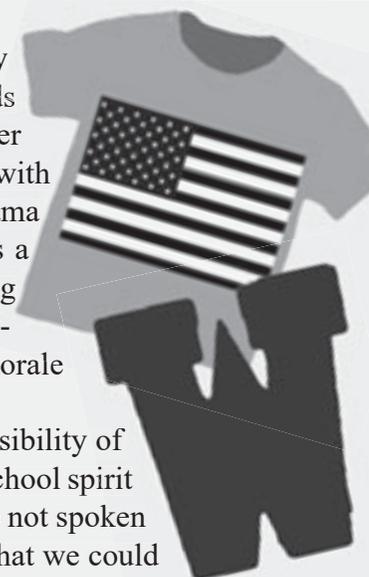
Students are open to the idea of a common area to spend time in. "I think that the school definitely needs a place where kids can just chill. There is not a place in the school that is just for fun, that is not [work] based. I think that students would benefit from something like this because it gives them a place to relax and unwind," said Divya Gada ('20). A Viking Den for students would be an exciting extension to Westhill's campus.



Theme Days

At Westhill, theme days are a good way to promote school spirit, and allow the kids to have a fun day at the same time. In October of 2017, Westhill hosted a week-long event with days such as Red, White & Blue day, Pajama Day and school spirit day. Not only was this a hit with students, but a hit with faculty. Adding theme days on a relatively consistent basis (every other Friday, for example) would boost morale among students.

Principal Rinaldi seemed to enjoy the possibility of more theme days. "Theme days are good for school spirit and getting to know new people that you have not spoken to before. I do not have a ton of ideas as to what we could do, but my support is through the roof," said Rinaldi. Students potentially could even submit their ideas for a Westhill themed day, allowing for more students to get involved in Westhill spirit. Having more theme days would only add energy, positivity, and creativity to Westhill.

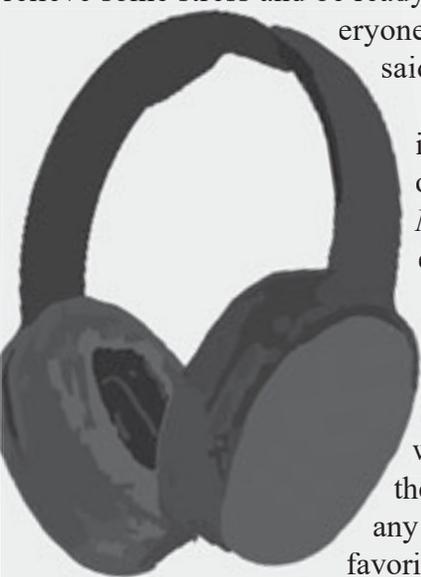


Bottom Line: Westhill should always be looking at ways to improve its culture and get more kids excited and proud to be a Viking. These suggestions could go a long way in building a strong school culture.

Music In Between Classes

Every day when students walk into Westhill, they are greeted by the welcoming and energetic Principal Rinaldi. No matter what the weather is, Rinaldi is outside playing his music and transferring some of his energy into students as they walk by. This music creates an upbeat mood that can make students excited to be at school. Continuing to play music throughout the school day would promote a more enjoyable environment. Adding music during passing time between classes would help students relieve some stress and be ready for the next period. "It would pump everyone up and make them want to go to class," said Jocelyn Aquino ('20).

Students could even request their favorite songs (school appropriate) to be played on the way to class. According to the *The New York Times*, "melodious sounds help encourage the release of dopamine in the reward area of the brain, as would eating a delicacy, looking at something appealing or smelling a pleasant aroma, said Dr. Amit Sood, a physician of integrative medicine with the Mayo Clinic." By playing music in the halls, students could take their mind off of any stress and enjoy some of Westhill students' favorite songs over the loudspeaker.

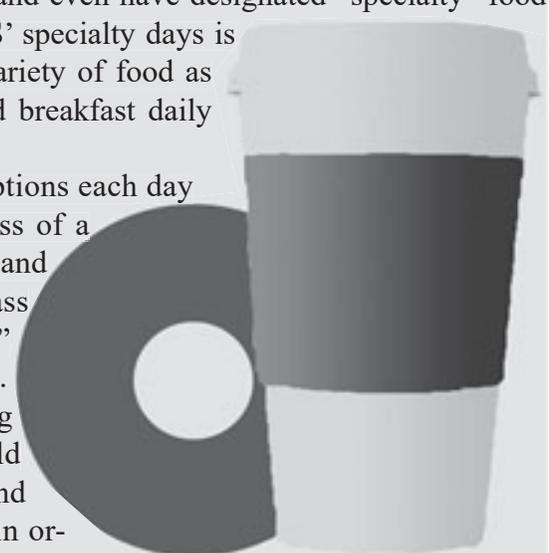


Expanding Cafeteria Options

Westhill would benefit highly from expanding food options in the cafeteria. More options to choose from may keep hungry Vikings in school rather than in their cars.

Although some teachers sell foods such as bagels or empanadas to fundraise, sometimes these items may run out or are not sold everyday. These options also cannot be sold during lunch period. The junior class helps to broaden options with ramen noodles and granola bars, but they are only sold after school. Easily made sandwiches such as a bacon/sausage, egg, and cheese could be served as a breakfast option, while a simple chicken cutlet or chicken parmesan sandwich could make for a better lunch option. Other neighboring schools, such as Greenwich High School, have plenty of food options for their students and even have designated "specialty" food days. For example, one of GHS' specialty days is dedicated to crepes. A larger variety of food as opposed to the same lunch and breakfast daily can improve Westhill culture.

"If there were more food options each day then I would probably have less of a reason to leave during lunch and more of a reason to focus in class as I would not be starving," said Brittny Adebawale ('18). Students like Adebawale, along with plenty of others, would agree to bringing a more fun and interesting cuisine to Westhill in order to boost morale.



Graphics by Emma Cali / Creative Director.

Please submit op-eds and letters to
Noah Klein's mailbox in Room 224 or
email them to westwordwhs@gmail.com.

Social media's impact on the school environment

Nicole Vantman
Staff Writer

Social media has become a part of everyone's daily lives. Even our own president takes time out of his day to send out two hundred eighty character updates about whatever is on his mind. Westhill is no different. Ever since the arrival of our new principal, Mr. Rinaldi, social media has had an increased presence in our community. Students follow Mr. Rinaldi's various social media accounts for updates on what is going on around the school and to connect with our principal. "I was never an avid social media user, but it is nice to feel so involved in school on the occasion that I am scrolling through my feed," said Sam Essensfeld ('19).

Along with the constant posts from Mr. Rinaldi, Westhill

students are also getting to experience the monthly videos created by Ms. Cohen and her team called "Viking Videos." Social media is not limited to an Instagram post or tweet; it can also be used with platforms such as YouTube and Vimeo.

Starting with the school's Lip Dub in November, the Viking Videos of the month exhibit the creativity of both the students and the teachers in school. "Connection Time gets a lot more exciting when we can watch something comical about our everyday life here at school," said Marc Migden ('18).

Viking Voyage is the newest addition to Westhill's social media presence. Students find clues provided through Twitter and have to follow them to the next clue hidden in some part of the school. The first student



to finish, and find all clues will receive a prize. Various teachers post these clues on their Twitter accounts making it a great opportunity for students to better know their teachers outside of the class.

There are so many students and teachers in our school that it is difficult to meet every single one in just four years. The Viking Voyage is yet another creative experience that enhances the student-to-teacher relationship and school spirit.

Westhill has many different clubs and teams so it can sometimes be challenging to keep up. However, Principal Rinaldi began his trend of posting sports and club updates on Instagram, making it much easier for students to stay informed. Now, students that do not belong to specific clubs get to

hear details about all the events that take place both in and out of school. From the Feminism Club to the Stocks and Finance Club, students are able to get insight to the various student groups over the course of the school year.

"I feel that social media is such a great way to broaden the communication between both students-to-students and faculty-to-students. I am very proud when I look through my Instagram and see all the great work that the students are putting forward at school," said Principal Rinaldi.

It is important for students to stay involved in events that are taking place. Before the rise of social media at Westhill, a large portion of information went unheard. Now, all students have to do is scroll, and they can easily keep in touch with the constant buzz of Westhill.

Graphic by **Nicholas Zarrilli** / Managing Editor.

Westhill's new student spirit committee

Nathan Isenstein
Staff Writer

The staff spirit committee is soon going to be accompanied by a student spirit committee. This will be a group of students working with the staff to achieve creating fun community events for Westhill. These events will hopefully help boost the overall spirit at the school.

Ms. Cohen, a member of the existing staff spirit committee, will be the faculty advisor of the student committee. She thinks that through working with the staff, students will be able to partake in more events and activities to improve school spirit.

"Right now, the staff is looking to boost the spirit of the students. We want the students to help with raising the spirit of the staff," said Cohen.

Cohen's goal is to run at least one event per month. The Twitter scavenger hunt was in January, the Student vs. Staff Day in December, and the Lip Dub in November. It will be easier to plan events the entire school will enjoy with the two committees

working together.

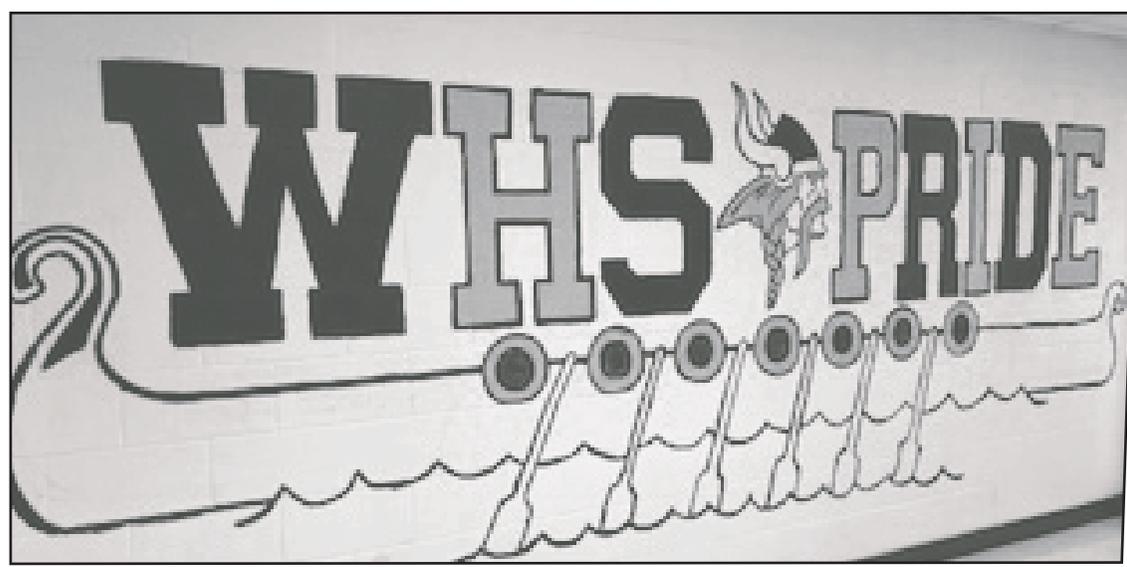
By adding a student aspect to the spirit committee, Cohen is hopeful that there will be more ideas that will greatly benefit the school.

They want all types of students, from freshman to seniors, to participate if possible. By having a variety of students at Westhill participating, the students will have a say in what events occur every month.

"Every month we are going to try to do something large that is a community building exercise," said Cohen.

There will be no limits as to how many people will be able to join and participate in helping the school become the best that it can be.

"The staff spirit committee started with ten members, and every meeting, there is a new staff member who gets involved. It is great, because we have everyone who wants to help make the school the most awesome place it can be, so we do not want to cap it. Whoever wants to help can help," said Cohen.



Cohen is looking for a few students to take with her to the next staff spirit committee meeting to see how it works and to understand what the committee can do all together. The student spirit committee is planning to meet once a month along with the staff spirit committee.

If anyone is interested in joining this committee, feel free to contact Principal Rinaldi or Ms. Cohen. Cohen is often in room 609 or you can e-mail her at dcohen@stamfordct.gov.



LEAVING A MARK Students dipped their fingers in paint, and left their imprint on the mural for years to come.

Photos by **Chloe Giulini & Addison Magrath** / News Editor & Print Executive Editor.

Cloonan accepted prestigious award for the ninth year

CFES honors Cloonan for their constant dedication to student excellence

Maria Mirafuentes

Staff Writer

Cloonan Middle School took home the prestigious School of Distinction award given by CFES Brilliant Pathways. This year marked the ninth year in a row where Cloonan was recognized by the organization.

College For Every Student (CFES) is an organization that helps students from kindergarten to high school who live in low-income and urban communities prepare for the real world. Cloonan has been working with CFES for many years, and has been recognized multiple times by the organization. According to their website, CFES currently supports and works with over 25,000 students through partnerships with 200 rural and urban schools in 30 states and Ireland. CFES works with students through three mentoring pathways: Essential Skills, Mentoring and Pathways to College and Career.

The official CFES website states that, “CFES Brilliant Pathways program directors and other professional staff members work with multiple schools to meet the needs of Scholars, using available school and community resources, “Volunteers and educators participating in the CFES Brilliant Pathways Program receives ongoing professional development in all three core practices.”

The School of Distinction award is given to middle schools as a way to recognize all of their hard work and dedication to student excellence as well as carry out CFES’ three core practices. The award also means that the school creates a culture that promotes college and career-readiness. Schools are proud to attain the award, due to its limited availability.

“Attaining School of Distinction status recognizes a successful year-long journey to raise student aspirations and build a college-going culture school wide,” said Steve

Boyce, leader of the School of Distinction program.

The award is given through an application process that includes a school profile containing the work that the school does with CFES as well as within the community.

According to CFES’ website, “a school must meet a strict set of criteria, including implementing programs for the entire school and involving Scholar families in activities. Achieving CFES School of Distinction status is a collaborative effort with the purpose of helping all students become college and career-ready.”

Being part of CFES allows for global connections, as well as helps prepare students for careers. CFES works with various colleges and businesses to give students trained mentors to help them succeed when it comes time to graduate. Once out of school, students have already gained valuable insight on the adult world. CFES recently added “Brilliant

Pathways” to their name to emphasize this.

Assistant Principal of Cloonan, Ms. Mody, was ecstatic to hear that Cloonan had been recognized for a ninth year. “It means a great deal for us. Through CFES we have

joined together as a community to bring the world closer to our students, and to access a network across the entire world.” Cloonan is hoping to keep up the amazing work, and be honored with the award for the tenth year soon.



BRIGHT MINDS Cloonan students work hard to maintain the CFES award.

Photo courtesy of @cloonanprincipal on Twitter

Senior Attendance

“Senioritis” is affecting more students this semester

Andrew Lappas

Staff Writer

Being a senior is considered to be a special achievement. Teachers and staff may tend to be more lenient, viewing seniors as older and more mature. They may also trust in them to act more responsibly with their independence. Seniors are known to be the example at which the rest of the school follows on how to work hard while still having fun.

Senior year is the year before entering the real world, whether it is college, the work force, or a trade school. Towards the spring, seniors take advantage of some of their privileges, commonly known as “senioritis”.

“‘Senioritis’ is just the culmination of an affliction that

affects many students throughout their school years: the failure to develop and nurture a love of learning for its own sake,” said Mr. Denbaum, an English teacher.

“Higher order critical thinking is the natural result of personal engagement with the acquisition of knowledge,” continued Mr. Denbaum.

“It is a process that involves imagination and the intrinsic pleasure of thinking and making meaning, not the slog of mandatory attendance and rote learning that too many students experience.”

A very common assumption about senior year is that seniors are allowed to slack off; that all of the hard work is behind them. “I want to leave high school, because I have worked hard all my academic life and

ended up getting an athletic scholarship to Dean College for lacrosse,” said Dominic Echeverria (’18). Echeverria is an example of a student who has worked hard, and now believes that ‘senioritis’ is acceptable as a senior.

Echeverria believes that the school is too strict on seniors. “Us seniors, we should be treated as responsible adults. Leaving should be a privilege just for seniors. We have a flexible schedule and that is why most of us want to leave,” said Echeverria.

Echeverria is not the only student to feel the effects of senioritis. “I do not care as much about my school work as I did the past three years,” said Hope Smith (’18). Since being accepted into college, she admits that she does not focus as much on her school work.

“I am going to miss my friends, and all the memories, but I am ready to leave this school,” said Smith.

Coach Marcuccio has a different take on students missing out on his class due to Senioritis. “The classes I teach [offer] real life [lessons] to learn. I do not have a lot of seniors that do not show up, but if they do not come, it is on them.” Senioritis is not that kids do not come to class or school, but it is about staying engaged in school,” said Marcuccio.

“You do not want to stop it, but rather just try to contain it. It is a part of life to make mistakes, but you need to control it,” said Ms. Walden, English teacher. She thinks that Senioritis does not necessarily effect only seniors, but can also spread to other students.

“All students get it, but to different degrees,” continued Ms. Walden. Ms. Walden said that she tries to be proactive to look for signs of Senioritis in her students, and bring them into her class to talk before it gets worse.

“There is a wonderful Zen phrase that epitomizes the best cure for Senioritis: Be Here Now. Be truly present every moment of your life. Do not go to class because of extrinsic pressures—because you have to or because you only want to get a good grade that will get you into a good college, so you can get a “good” job.

“Instead, enjoy school as a pathway for the moment-by-moment experience of your self-actualization...and senioritis will lose its infectious power,” said Denbaum.

Westhill making improvements

The Compost Project

Caitlin Covello
Staff Writer

Everyday, Westhill throws out trash cans full of organic waste that will inevitably end up in landfills. Composting is a quick solution that will not only reduce our quantity of waste, but also give back to the environment by producing nutrient rich soil that is ideal for plant growth.

Composting is a fairly simple process where organic waste such as fruit and vegetable scraps, wood waste, and cof-

fee grounds are separated into either a pile outdoors or into various bins. The organic matter will break down into nutrient rich soil. Composting is beneficial because the soil created is ideal for growing many types of plants, and can be produced for little to no money while also reducing waste.

Josh Appel, ('18) who is involved in the schools agricultural science program, was inspired by his brother Jacob Appel's independent study where he designed a four bin composting system. Josh decided to expand

on his brother's project by shaping his own independent study to focus on soil decomposition and sustainability. After learning about which types of soil are best for different agriculture, he brought what he learned into various AgriScience classrooms. He hoped to eventually produce enough soil so that it can be used to grow plants in the annual spring plant sale.

"My job is putting compost bins in teachers classrooms, and I am going to collect them and put [the waste] in the bins outside," said Zac Kitay ('20) who

is working closely with Josh on his project. "I am interested in horticulture and [this project] seemed fun. I am probably going to take it over for him next year."

Josh has put small bins in various classrooms that will be collected and added to the four bin system located outside of the AgriScience building. From there, the compost piles will be turned once a week, and after a couple months moved to the next bin to start the cycle over again. By separating the compost into various piles, rather than adding new material to the

original pile, it will speed up the overall process. Otherwise, it would be forced to start the decomposition process over again.

While Josh's compost project is starting off to a rough start due to the cold weather, he hopes that he will soon be able to introduce large compost bins to the cafeterias to minimize food waste. In hopes of making composting a long-term fixture, his project involves creating a manual that will make it easy for future AgriScience students to maintain the composting project for years to come.



ECO-FRIENDLY Compost is collected from classrooms in reusable bins, and then sorted outside the AgriScience building.

Photos by **Chloe Giulini** / News Editor.

School Renovations

Rayshawn Gipson & Christian Rybalko
Staff Writers

According to San Diego State University, student achievement across all categories are improved when the school environment is clean, fresh, and above all else safe. It also helps with the morale of high school students.

Recently there have been improvements to Westhill such as general maintenance, added security, and new equipment. Ever since Principal Rinaldi arrived, these adjustments have been rolling in. These changes

have the potential to benefit the school and the students. Although many students are not noticing these small improvements, it seems to be a step in the right direction.

For years, Westhill has experienced heating and cooling problems. Now many changes are being made. Mr. Plateroti, head of the custodial department, is working hard with enhancing the climate control around the school. It has been said that the heating and conditioning systems are being finalized, some already done. The Finch cafeteria has recently received a new heating unit.

Principal Rinaldi has plans for the reception area along with added improvements to security. Rinaldi wants to add a professional reception desk for the lobby and will investigate various photo scanning identification technology for the visitors in the new reception area.

The reception desk will also be equipped with a computer so all security cameras can be viewed in realtime. Buzzer or key systems for the staff and students entry are in the making. Plateroti and his team have added around 40 cameras since last year, totaling almost 180 cameras around the whole school.

Some corners of the school have "wet paint" signs with a bright yellow caution tape. For the past couple of weeks painters have been improving the school walls by giving it a fresh new white coating.

Westhill has also added a mural to the hallway in between the cafeterias.

"The mural outside the cafeteria was a good idea until they put fingerprints on it. Otherwise, everyone liked the mural and we should make more murals for westhill sports teams and clubs," said Dennis LoDole ('18).

Other little miscellaneous things have been added and are

going to be added to the school. There are new bleachers for the baseball team. In the gym department new ping-pong tables have been added, and in the cafeteria two flat screen TVs have been placed so students can catch up on what is happening in the school.

Rinaldi and Plateroti along with their team and the help of Westhill's own artists are doing a great job at improving the overall atmosphere and environment of Westhill. Hopefully, it will not stop here, but instead there will be even more renovations coming our way.

Good Month Bad Month

Column by
**Matthew Greenbaum
& Max Zussman**



Good Month for...

Bruno Mars It was a phenomenal month for one of music's top artist, Bruno Mars. The established R&B performer took home six awards at the this years Grammys. His awards included Album of the Year ("24K Magic"), Song of the Year ("That's What I Like") and Record of the Year ("24K Magic"). Mars is only the tenth artist in Grammy history to sweep those three awards.



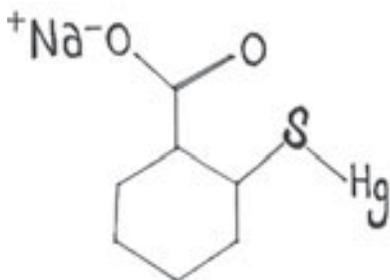
Olympics The Winter Olympics started up again on February 9. Pyeong Chang, South Korea is the host city for this year, and it is the first time that an Asian country has hosted the games since Japan back in 1998. This year, the U.S. is sending 243 athletes to represent the country. Team U.S. is hoping to be first in overall medals this year after placing second overall at the previous games. The closing ceremonies will be on February 25.



The Philadelphia Eagles won the Lombardy Trophy on Sunday, February 6, winning Super Bowl LII. They defeated the New England Patriots 41 to 33 in a very close game. Nick Foles, the quarterback for the Eagles, was named the Super Bowl's Most Valuable Player. Foles lead his team with 373 passing yards, three touchdowns, and even caught a touchdown pass. Eagles fans around the country, and fans rooting against the Patriots were thrilled by the outcome.

Bad Month for...

Influenza The start of 2018 has not taken so kindly to the health's of millions of Americans. The start of the new year has seen a very bad flu season that has swept the nation. According to *vox.com*, every state, except for Oregon and Hawaii, is currently experiencing rising flu cases. If you have not done so yet, it is important to get a flu shot, as the flu season is expected to continue until mid May.



Larry Nassar Larry Nassar, an ex-USA Gymnastics national team doctor and a Michigan State University physician, pleaded guilty to criminal sexual misconduct and federal child pornography. More than 260 female athletes have come forward to accuse Nassar of assault including both MSU athletes and USA gymnasts. After a third and final sentencing, more than 150 of the women spoke, giving harrowing testimony of his sexual abuse.



Russian Figure Skaters Many Russian figure skaters have been subject to stress and injuries. The skaters are put under a lot of pressure and sometimes practice too much for their bodies to handle. Evgenia Medvedeva is the third Russian skater to have her career disrupted due to an injury. Medvedeva fell on a double axel jump at the Moscow competition. Adelina Sotnikova, who was a 2014 Olympic gold medalist, has missed the entire Olympic season due to injury.

Registering for AP exams

Maura Johnston
Staff Writer

Students that take an Advanced Placement (AP) course have testing just around the corner. These tests scores can be sent to colleges, possibly earning the student college credit. Testing will take place in May. Students must register ahead of time, in order to take the exam in the spring.

In order for the students grade in the class to be weighted as an AP course, students must take the exam. Starting February 1 at 8:45 a.m., the registration portal opened for students and their families to register. Registration will end on February 23 at 8:45 a.m. If the student does not register before this day, they will not be able to take the exam.

In past years, those who missed the deadline were still able to take the exam, but had to pay a late fee of 15 dollars to cover the cost of the exam. This was because guidance counselors ordered extra exams under the assumption that students will forget to register. Each extra exam costs a fee of 15 dollars, so each extra-ordered exam that was not used resulted in a loss of money for Westhill.

However, this year according to Ms. De Luca, those who do not register before February 23 will not be able to take the exam. Exams will only be ordered for those who registered. This will help save money for Westhill. Although, according to College Board, the late registration date is April 20.

Not being able to register late for the exam is due to Westhill's new contract with Total Registration. The guidance department must have the exam count by an earlier date, in order to place the

exam order to the College Board. From there, they will send the tests to Total Registration where the exam's will be preregistered, in hope to shorten the amount of time exam days take up.

"This does not affect me. Being a senior, I will most likely not take the exam anyways," said Madison Cocomo ('18).

"[Not having late registration] ruins it for the kids. When February 23 comes, I cannot order any more tests. Now if a kid forgets by the 23, they are unable to take the exam," said Ms. De Luca, head of guidance.

Reminders for parents and students have been put on PowerSchool for the parents, daily bulletin boards, email blasts, and the daily announcements. The faculty is pushing for each student to reg-

ister prior to the deadline.

"I encourage the students to register for the exam as soon as they are able to. It is easy to forget to do it, especially as we get closer to the exam and are really focused on our studies and preparations. That way students can focus on earning fives," said Ms. Begetis.

There is a 98 dollar registration fee, but it comes at no cost for students who receive free or reduced lunch.

After the online registration component is complete, students must print out two PDFs of the confirmation provided at the end of the online registration. One copy is for the student to prove they are registered, and the other must be brought to Mrs. Barkan in the Attendance/Data Processing Office.



ALL THINGS AP Ms. Barkan heading the test registration season at Westhill.

Photo by **Yulia Lozynska** / Staff Writer.

LEARN, UNDERSTAND, ENJOY

Mona Mitri
Director



1051 Long Ridge Road. Stamford, CT 06903

📞 203.724.9200 📞 203.521.0692

✉️ mmitri@tutormesos.com 🌐 www.TutorMeSOS.com

Fill your heart or empty your wallet?

Leiny Otero
Staff Writer

According to *The Guardian*, Valentine's Day is one of the most celebrated holidays across the world. Valentine's Day is always filled up with bright pinks, purples, reds, and tons of flowers. This time of year is generally full of love, joy, romance, and chocolate.

As reported by *The Main Four*, "Valentine's Day remains a constant way to share and express how you feel." People use Valentine's Day to show their appreciation for their loved ones, whether it is a significant other, friend, or a family member. Buying flowers or a box of chocolates for someone can show the passion one has for another. For this holiday, it is the thought that counts.

Being in a relationship during Valentine's Day is always lovely. February 14 is the time to create more romantic sparks in the relationship. Some couples appreciate the effort and

thought that Valentine's Day sparks—whether it is to plan time together or buying a little teddy bear.

"Love is in the air, plus the candy is on sale afterwards. It is time to stock up, so why not be excited and happy like all the other couples?" said Deony Ramos ('19).

Many stores have to find a way to get rid of all the heart shaped candies and chocolates, so they all go on sale right after Valentine's Day.

Being single on Valentine's Day is not a bad thing. One just needs to have a positive attitude and perspective. Depending on one's outlook, being single and not dealing with the pressure of giving anyone something can be nice. For example, this holiday is the perfect time to spend on

self care. The holiday is about love and appreciation. Buying yourself a box of chocolates and some roses is perfectly acceptable and encouraged.

"I personally love Valentine's Day because even though I am single, it is a really good excuse to spoil yourself. Everyone is in a happy and festive mood," said Sandy McKeown ('21).

It is not all about the materialistic things, but more about the time and the quality of that time which matters.

If you are hesitant to eat chocolate and stray off of your diet, do not fret. According to *The Huffington Post*, "regular chocolate eaters welcome a host of benefits for their hearts, including lower blood pressure, lower 'bad' LDL cholesterol, and a lower risk

of heart disease. One of the reasons dark chocolate is especially heart-healthy is its inflammation-fighting properties, which reduce cardiovascular risk."

As it turns out, chocolate is actually good for your heart, so eating a little chocolate will not kill you.

On Valentine's Day there are so many different activities that people can do alone or with a significant, other such as walking on the beach, catching a movie, or watching the sunset.

"I love to go out for dinner made for me and get flowers. I am expecting to have a good Valentine's Day this year," said Ms. Cikatz, a health teacher. Overall, having a positive attitude for Valentine's Day makes the holiday enjoyable and productive.

Allie Colorado
Staff Writer

February promotes the not-so-fun holiday, Valentine's Day. This holiday celebrates the concept of love between significant others and families. Students and faculty feel the intense pressure to have the most romantic and expensive day of all. It can overshadow the true meaning of the holiday, as it becomes focused on physical possessions and not on love for one another.

Some believe the occasion should be thrown out entirely. "Valentine's Day is not necessarily a holiday we should acknowledge. People should show their love and appreciation of others everyday, not just one," said Stanley Villard ('18).

The media, through their immense amount of campaigns, has manipulated society into believing that love is dependent on money. It is a brilliant yet vicious notion that persuades us to spend more each year.

According to *USA Today*, Americans were expected to spend 18.2 billion dollars on Valentine's

Day, which is down by 7.6 percent from 2016. The decline is attributed to the drop in number of shoppers falling for the propaganda.

Although people are catching onto society's manipulation, it does not considerably affect the enormous profit that companies make from the holiday. Companies have compensated for the decline by increasing their prices.

According to National Retail Federation, "consumers as a whole spend a total of: one billion dollars on flowers, 1.7 billion dollars on candy, 4.3 billion dollars on jewelry, and one billion dollars on greeting cards." Valentine's Day is the annual commercial high point, as wholesale prices are doubled compared to sales around Christmas.

"I love the holiday, but there

is time to which I would like to purchase jewelry or a box of chocolates around that time just because, but the prices are insane," said Naomi Julca ('18).

It is no surprise that people still buy into the expensive items because of high demand. 1800Flowers.com charges customers \$34.99 for a dozen red roses throughout the year, but mysteriously the price increases to \$44.99 once February begins.

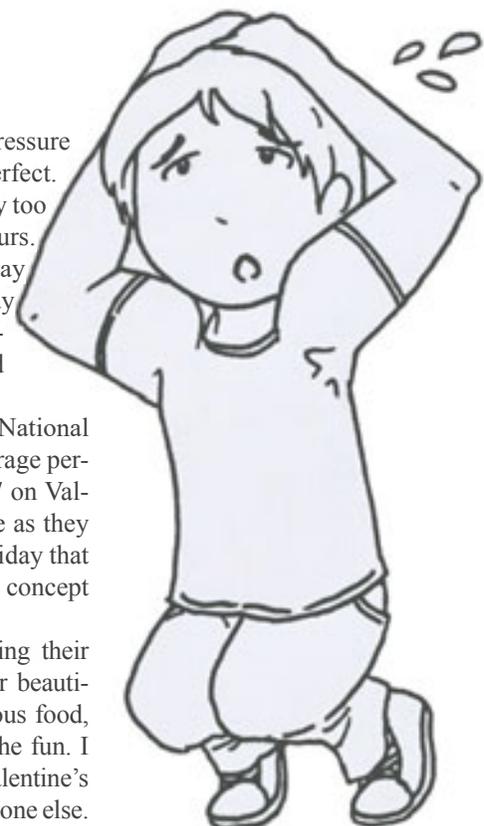
Though the origin of Valentine's Day was pure and centered around love, now it is simply a corporate-sponsored competition to see who can spend the most money, receive the best gift, and have the most romantic day.

"I think because the holiday is so glorified, especially on so-

cial media, couples feel pressure to make the holiday perfect. They end up spending way too much money for 24 hours. In reality, Valentine's Day is just like any other day where you should appreciate your loved ones," said Sydney Fisher ('18).

According to the National Retail Federation, the average person spends about \$136.57 on Valentine's Day. CEOs thrive as they rake in billions from a holiday that is genuinely meant for the concept of love, not money.

If everyone is throwing their money down the drain for beautiful accessories and delicious food, I am not missing out on the fun. I will not buy into the Valentine's Day propaganda like everyone else.



Are extracurriculars too extra?

Valerie Neyra
Staff Writer

There are a lot of extracurricular activities available to Westhill students. The reason students might want to be a part of afterschool activities is influenced by motivation for that specific activity. Clubs and sports help boost college resumes,

which encourages some students to join. Other students might just enjoy the club or sport which is why they want to join. Either way, motivation is key to committing to extracurriculars. However, recently there has been a decline in students participating in afterschool activities.

It may be the time and commitment it takes to be a part of

these activities that impacts participation. Many students have other obligations outside of school, such as jobs or taking care of their families, and cannot take on other responsibilities. It makes sense that many students do not stay in school past 2:05 p.m.

Most clubs, such as Interact and Care For Pets, end around 3:00 p.m. Yet, some clubs such as Mock Trial can end as late as 9:00 p.m.

When it comes to students who participate in musicals, there is a week known as “hell week.” This involves students having to stay at school until as late as 11:00 p.m. in order to prepare for the upcoming show. Even if students do not have to stay very late, staying afterschool can take a toll on them.

“It is challenging, especially when there is a lot of school work and things that have to

be done in the club. The worst part is when things collide. However, all I can do is take every day at a time,” said Francesca Figueroa (’18).

A lot of school work plus having to stay afterschool is never a good combination, especially if students have other commitments on top of that.

“It is hard to balance extracurriculars and school work, because most of the time students have to go home and finish a ton of homework, and do not have time to stay the hours that some clubs require you to stay,” said Nicole Leon (’19).

It is not like students do not want to be a part of these clubs, they can just be time consuming. Maintaining good grades are important when it comes to school, so it is no surprise that students would limit what they do afterschool.

“At the moment extracurriculars have not affected my grades,” said Frankie Larrosa (’21). This brings up the point that maybe it is not that people are failing their classes due to afterschool activities, but may-

be it is the fact that students are scared to fail, so they do not bother to participate at all. It can be seen here that afterschool activities are not to be blamed for poor grades. Students stress themselves out to the point where they think all of their work needs to be done and staying afterschool will only hurt them.

So the question is, is there too much to commit to when it comes to extracurricular activities? It depends on the person.

When it comes down to it, grades or responsibilities outside of school might come first to many students. If they try looking at afterschool activities as a benefit rather than a burden, then maybe students would stay afterschool. The time in which the club ends definitely comes into play, but it is also based on students passion for the activity. If students truly want to be a part of a club or a sport, then they should be willing to make time for the activity, it is as simple as that.

Illustration by Neeka Baclayon / Illustrator.



Are we reporting what we should be?

Tyler Fisher
Staff Writer

In recent years, news outlets and publications have been accused of reporting “fake news.” This has caused a rift between the news outlets and consumers of the stories that they publish.

Many people no longer trust the accuracy of what is reported. In 2017, a study conducted by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, found that 33 percent of more than 70,000 people said they can no longer rely on the news to be true. Much of the content that is available is embellished with insignificant and sometimes inaccurate details.

The result of this is the belief that news outlets are reporting stories that are not entirely true, as well as the belief that these outlets are responsible for the misinformation of thousands of people. “Do not let the fake news convince you otherwise,” said President Trump.

At the time of the 2016 Presidential Election, fake news was rampant. In fact, it was so widespread that many believe it

affected the outcome of the election. The reporting of inaccurate news caused some to raise the question: Is the media only publishing things that are meant to grab the reader’s attention? The coverage of controversial topics is not a new thing, but news publications are now flooded with these stories.

In 2017, the reporting on storms affecting thousands of people had significantly less coverage than more controversial topics. Many students in Westhill share the belief that those responsible for reporting the news are not covering the right topics.

“I think the news is only being reported to gain attention, usually it is attention grabbing and sometimes only bait where the headline is entirely unrelated to the real story,” said Luis Capella (’19).

“For the most part, the media is trying to garner views. If they reported real and boring news, then they would not be making money. There is a lot of fake news out there,” said Marco Alvarado (’18).

The problem is that many important topics are considered to be

boring and in a time where controversy fuels likes and views, it is paramount to grab the reader’s attention as fast as possible. I believe that it is important to maintain a balance between entertaining and informing the consumer.

During Hurricane Maria, coverage of the event was overshadowed by President Trump’s tweets about the national anthem. This is a prime example of how the media sweeps major topics under the rug, to cover more polarizing topics.

“It seems like [news outlets] bring up topics solely for the purpose of entertaining those watching the news shows, most of the time it is not relevant,” said Nick Bellantoni (’18).

News publications should continue to report important stories, especially those that affect our society. The #MeToo movement is a perfect example, but they should also give attention to topics that are seemingly less interesting. It is the responsibility of news publications to not only entertain people, but to inform them.

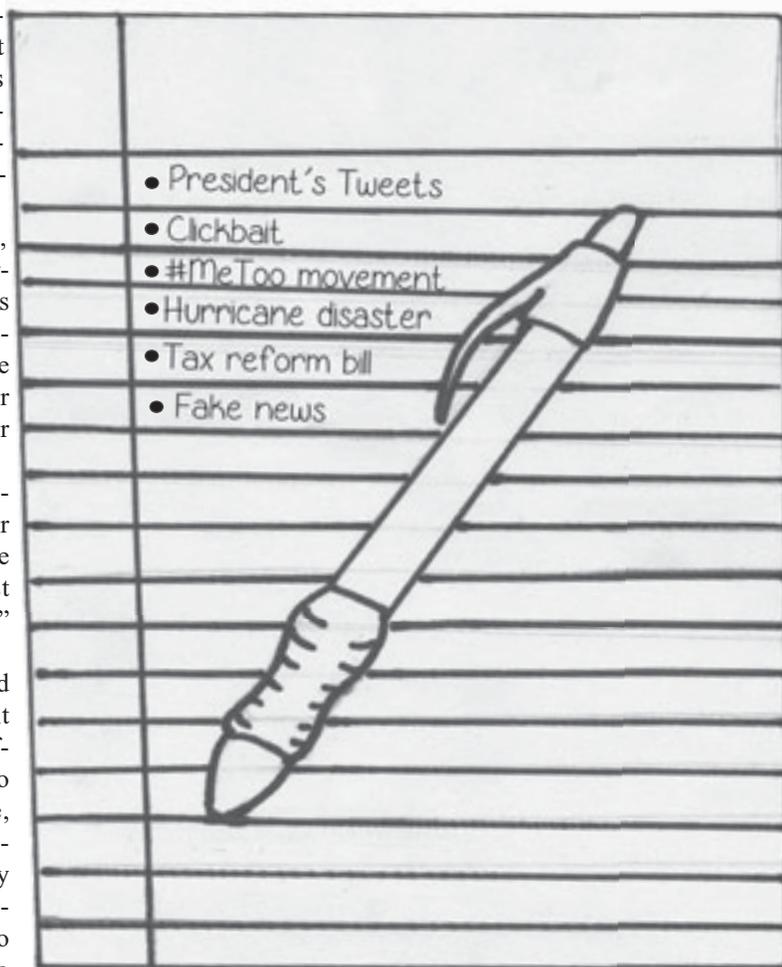


Illustration by Addison Magrath / Print Executive Editor.

Students at a disadvantage need accommodations

Rachel Deutsch
Staff Writer

It is no secret that there is a wide distribution of wealth among Westhill students. Students have diverse upbringings as the school district has students that come from the suburban North Stamford area as well as the urban downtown area. Westhill students share the same classrooms, yet lead drastically different lives. Students also carry a wide array of different responsibilities. Some students are even tasked within their own families to work several jobs or to be the caretaker of siblings.

“At home I help out my parents by paying the rent and utility bills. I cook and clean my house. Take care of my younger twin brothers; help them with work, sports, projects, play with them, and tutor them. Aside from that I work two jobs. So I have to manage working over 30 hours a week and keeping up with my

classes,” said an anonymous Westhill student who will be referred to as Kevin.

These students are hard workers and know the value of their education because of the multiple responsibilities they must maintain. Juggling school, work and family in an effort to keep a roof over their head.

“I come to school to do my work; I take AP Psychology and English, Honors Physics, Human Physiology, CP Pre-calculus, and study hall,” said Kevin. Taking such a schedule while maintaining a dream for the future sits on the surface of every student’s brain.

“I take the time to study for Human Physiology and AP Psychology because I want to be a science major, in Chemistry. I want to understand the relations between people. I learned from

personal experience you cannot just jump the gun in perceptions of others,” continued Kevin.

Our school is not accommodating enough of these students, who need to not only maintain their academic and financial responsibilities, but have to sleep and take care of their bodies.

“[During] second quarter, towards December, I was working retail at the time, and loads of people were coming in for Christmas shopping. I was coming home at one or two in the

morning and had to do homework and schoolwork in two to three hours. It was tough, I did not have enough time to sleep.”

Having an open campus gives students an additional chance to sleep, but this extra 50 minutes every few days is rarely enough. “[Because of a] lack of sleep I actually got into a car accident,” said Kevin.

“I do not like relying on people,” said Kevin. Once this student was able to talk to his teachers, they were very understanding and gave him extensions for his work. This is not an easy subject to bring up and gain the courage to ask for help.

“If [students] are all set with credits, [schedules] should be flexible. They could come in late or leave early or get credit for work-

ing,” said Ms. Ochoa, resident bilingual guidance counselor.

It is important for every tired and seemingly overworked student to put themselves in the shoes of their peers, especially the people who work around the clock to remain on the same academic level as them.

“You think you are working hard, but someone else is working twice as hard to get where you are. You can look next to you and think someone’s life is all buttercups and rainbows but you do not know what they are going through. You think they have it easy, but you do not know what they are going through,” said Kevin.

As much as one’s privilege can help them, spirit and work ethic are what makes a person a true success. “It is like the turtle and the [hare]; you think you are ahead but watch out because somebody else is going to put in twice as much work and win the race.”



Illustration by Paulina Seremetis / Illustrator.

Jack Williamson
Staff Writer

Westhill offers students a form of transportation to and from school, the school bus. There is a set time in the morning when a student’s bus will arrive and if a student misses it, they must find another way to get to school. However, going home from school, students are offered more options. The majority of students choose to leave at 2:05 p.m., If they do not, students can take one of the late busses home. These late buses leave at 3:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

The late busses are there to accommodate students who need a ride home after staying past 2:05 p.m. Many people taking the late bus are staying late with a teacher to get a jump on their work or are athletes coming in from a hard practice or workout. These busses give students the opportunity to do so.

“I feel they should add a 4:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. late

bus,” said Peter Leandre (’18).

Students do not want to stay upwards of two hours if they are late to the 3:30 p.m. late bus. A student losing track of time while studying for a test or a student practicing with their team should not be penalized by being forced to wait for hours.

Westhill late busses are limited in where they will drop off people, instead of giving a neighborhood or a small area they are broken down into north, east, west, and downtown. For one bus to cover an entire area, they have to limit stops

and where they drop off people.

“The bus drops us off way farther [from home] than the regular busses,” said Jeremy Romero (’18).

Students like Romero that have to walk farther to get home from the bus stop are getting home later and are given limited time to finish any school work they need and time to see their family.

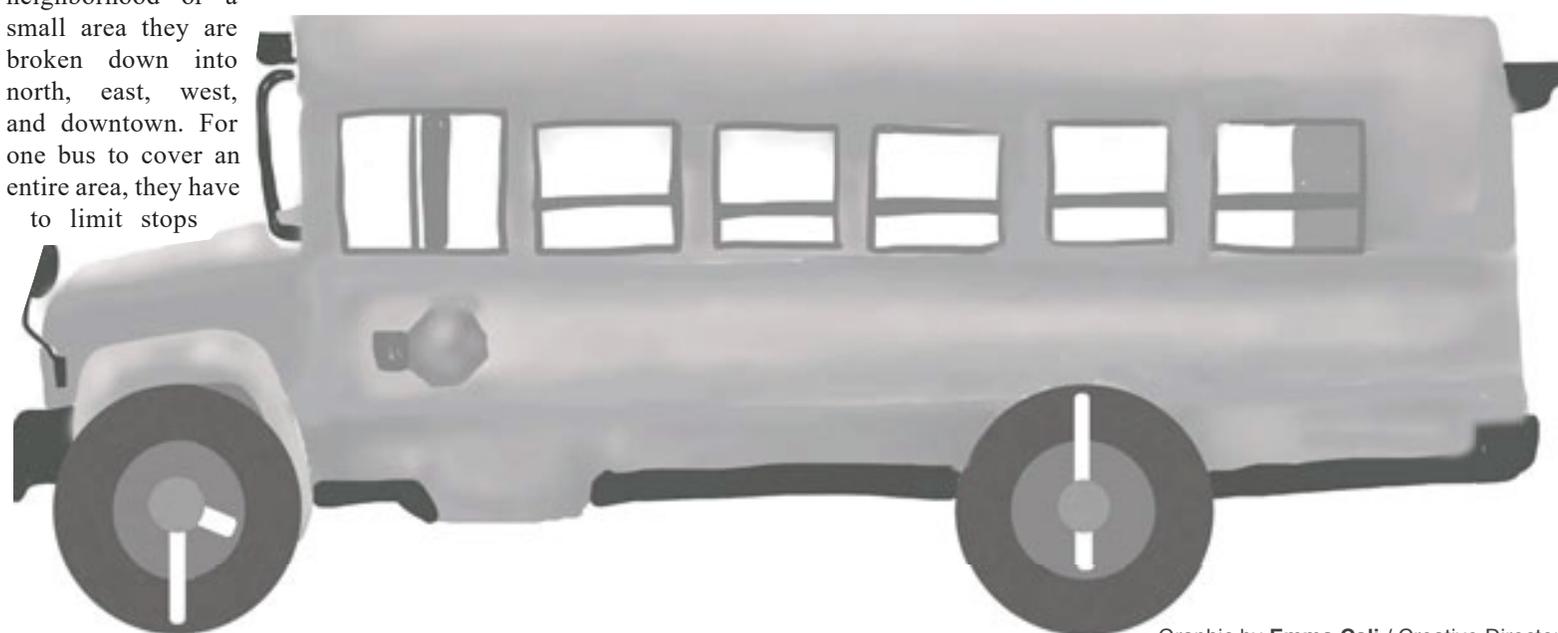
Being late because of walk-

ing distance is not the only reason students can be late for dinner, it is also that the late busses tend to be late. “The 6:00 p.m. late [bus] is always late,” said Marcellous Bell (’19).

With so many people to drop off, there is an expected delay one will face going home. If the school were to offer more busses the students could disperse between the times, or at least plan on that delay.

The fact that the school is not offering more times for students and making them stay until ridiculous times is unfair for the students. They should at least offer a time in between time or include extra busses to lighten the load. Westhill encourages students to strive for more in education and athletics, but with these bus times students are not feeling encouraged.

Not-so-magic school bus



Graphic by Emma Cali / Creative Director.

School lunches fall flat

Personally, I am a huge food person, and have been from as far back as I can remember. Usually I do not critique every little thing, and I try not to be picky with whatever is being served. However, I must admit, Westhill's lunches are pretty upsetting. This was no surprise to me when I first arrived at Westhill over three years ago. I was not expecting a five star gourmet

meal at a public high school; nevertheless, I hoped there would be better options.

Some students could not care less about what is being served at school if they bring their own lunch. However, other students do get anxious about how the food will taste because at the end of the day, this food is going through students' systems.

School lunches can be mis-

erable even if students coat them in condiments. It does not matter what it is; pizza, tacos, burgers and fries, breakfast for lunch, chicken patties or even a simple salad. It is all disappointing. The options of what students can get are limited as well. At the sandwich stations, it can be difficult for students to get something they want, such as extra sauce or even extra lettuce.

"[The food] is not seasoned, sometimes it is burnt, sometimes it is undercooked. [There is] no flavor. It is just sad," said Kerns Louis ('18).

As the day progresses on, students get hungry, especially during long period. The first thing that automatically comes to a productive student's mind is food, and when students walk into that lunch room to smell something that somewhat smells appealing, they get excited. However, that excitement ends with a bite.

The alternatives such as

the side stations or the vending machines might be a better option, but the prices for some people do not make it any better. A small can of Snapple is about 1.5 dollars, and a bag of chips is about two dollars. The yogurt in the vending machines is not appealing to many and the cost might make a student automatically turn their head in the other direction.

"The hot lunches are not good, neither are the vending machines," said Louis. People do not want to eat school lunch food at high prices.

However, there were some positive reviews about the school lunch. "Some of the food is okay, it all depends on what it is," said Derrick Story ('18).

Most people do not care about what is being served because they already know what to expect. Many upperclassman have gotten tired of the food options and even skip lunch to get food somewhere else.

"The school lunch is not good. On a scale of one to ten, I give it a three, one being the worst. The taste is pretty bad, there is no flavor put into the food," said Goddieu Royal ('18).

Of course there are reasons why the food tastes the way it does. It all started with the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act which started in 2010. Restrictions such as no greasy pizzas, no salt on french fries, no sauced up wings were put in place.

According to *The New York Times*, "meals must now be lower in fat, calories and sodium and contain lean proteins, more fruits and vegetables and whole grains. And kids from coast to coast are wrinkling their noses."

Maybe this is why many students not just at Westhill, but across the United States do not enjoy eating school lunches as much as it seemed they had before.

—Rayshawn Gipson ('18)

Graphic by Ryka ChandraRaj / Graphic Designer.



Preferred changes to the attendance policy

In 2016, Westhill implemented a new attendance policy that allows for fewer absences than it previously had. However, it only threatens loss of credit for a course in the event of violation, rather than a failing grade. Students possess mixed opinions on the policy and its effects on the school population.

While the previous attendance policy threatened a failing grade in the event that a student exceeded seven absences in one quarter, the new policy revokes course credit to a student who obtains ten absences in one semester. Therefore, while the number of acceptable absences has been reduced, the consequences for policy violation are arguably less severe, as loss of credit is not detrimental to a student's grade point average (GPA), nor will it force them to repeat a course.

"I think that losing credit is a better alternative to failing, but it is still a harsh punishment, especially if the student had a passing grade in the class," said Ryan Kipp ('19).

While students do seem to prefer the new policy, they still express some concerns. The new policy is "more fair," but the al-

lotted ten absences per semester is "kind of low. It is hard not to go over the limit," said Audrey Molina ('19) citing students who have very good grades, but struggle to keep up with the policy due to outside circumstances.

Ten absences per semester (approximately five per quarter) is difficult not to surpass. Indeed, absences resulting from circumstances such as short-term illness, college visits, and doctor's appointments are considered "appealable," but are unable to be exempt.

Some students also take issue with the loss of credit associated with violation of the policy. Although the grade the student received in the course still stands, loss of credit on their transcript may prove threatening to the impression they make on colleges.

Students are allowed to appeal absences by means of a note signed by a parent within ten days of returning to school. However, an absence that has been excused is not "exempt" and therefore still counts toward loss of credit. If credit is lost, the student may then undergo a separate appeals process in order to regain credit.

"There should be an easier

process to get absences appealed," said Molina, especially considering the reduced number of absences that students are allowed.

If students are forced to complete a tedious appeals process in order to regain credit, they are far more likely to simply accept the loss of credit, even if the circumstances that caused it were beyond their control. Therefore, loss of credit should be a consequence that students obtain through an offense somewhat more severe than obtaining ten absences in a semester.

As Molina stated, ten is a relatively low number considering all of the circumstances that may keep students from school. It is very possible to achieve an adequate understanding of the curriculum in the event it is surpassed, given that the student works to catch up.

After all, the true consequence of being absent is missing assignments and instruction. Subsequently, if a student neglects



EMPTY SEATS Students absent from class being given more opportunities to do well in class.

to make up said work, their grade will suffer as a result. These repercussions are enough to discourage excessive absences for most students and cause them to miss school only when it is necessary. Consequently, if a student does receive excessive absences, this is likely a result of some outside circumstance. This should be cause for administrators, guidance counselors, or school social workers to

step in and investigate conditions that may be potentially detrimental to student success and well-being.

All things considered, Westhill's new attendance policy is far more considerate of student needs than it had previously been. However, action could be taken to optimize its potential for securing student success.

—Lucy Hart ('18)

Compostadores en todo de Westhill

Caitlin Covello
Escritora Personal

Todo el día en la escuela, tiramos basureros llenos de basura orgánica que últimamente va a terminar en un vertedero. El compostaje es una manera muy rápida y eficiente para no solo reducir la cantidad de desperdicio, y también dar algo al entorno, por manera de dándole material que puede usar para el crecimiento de plantas.

El compostaje es una manera muy simple en la cual frutas, veg-

etales, café, y otra basura orgánica puede ser separada entre diferentes basureros. En una atronó controlado, la basura orgánica se puede descompostura en poco tiempo, comparado al tiempo que tomaría en la naturaleza. El compostaje es muy beneficioso porque la tierra que produce es muy buena para poder crecer varios tipos de plantas, y se puede producir gratis, mientras también reduciendo el desperdicio.

Josh Appel, del grado 12 está involucrado en el programa de ciencia agrícola. El centro de

la inspiración para este proyecto fue cuando vio el estudio independiente de su hermano, en cual él construyó un sistema de compostaje de 4 cantinas. John decidió a continuar el proyecto de su hermano cuando él quiso estudiar la descomposición de la tierra y cómo sostenerla. Después de que él aprendió cuál tierra es la más beneficiosa para la agricultura, él aplico lo que ha aprendido en sus clases de ciencia, con la esperanza de produciendo plantas para vender en la venta de la primavera.

Zac Kitay ('20) digo "Mi tra-

bajo es poniendo el basurero de compostaje afuera de las clases de las maestras, y las pongo con el resto del sistema de compostaje afuera." Ella está trabajando muy cerca con John en su proyecto. Ella también dijo "Yo estoy muy interesada en la horticultura, y este proyecto tenía un sentido muy divertido. Creo que voy hacer el proyecto por yo mismo el próximo año."

Josh a puesto muchos compartimientos afuera de varias clases para recolectar y poner con el resto de su sistema fuera del

edificio de ciencia agrícola. Después de ahí, van a mover el compostaje una vez a la semana, y después se pone en un nuevo compartimiento para empezar el ciclo de nuevo. Se tiene que hacer esto para apurar el proceso.

Ahorita el proyecto no está muy exitoso por la clima muy fría, pero espera que va a poder ser más exitoso en la primavera. Espera que este proyecto va a subir la conciencia sobre el ambiente. Josh planea hacer unas instrucciones para que estudiantes en el futuro puedan recrear el proyecto.

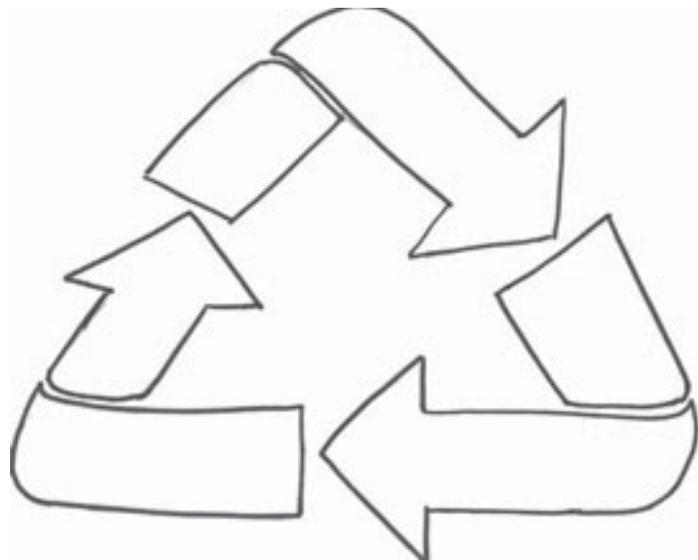


Gráfico cortesía de pixabay.com.
Dibujo de Addison Magrath / Editora Ejecutiva del Periódico.

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¿Qué es El Sello De Bi-Alfabetización?

Josh Eimbinder
Editor Ejecutivo en Línea

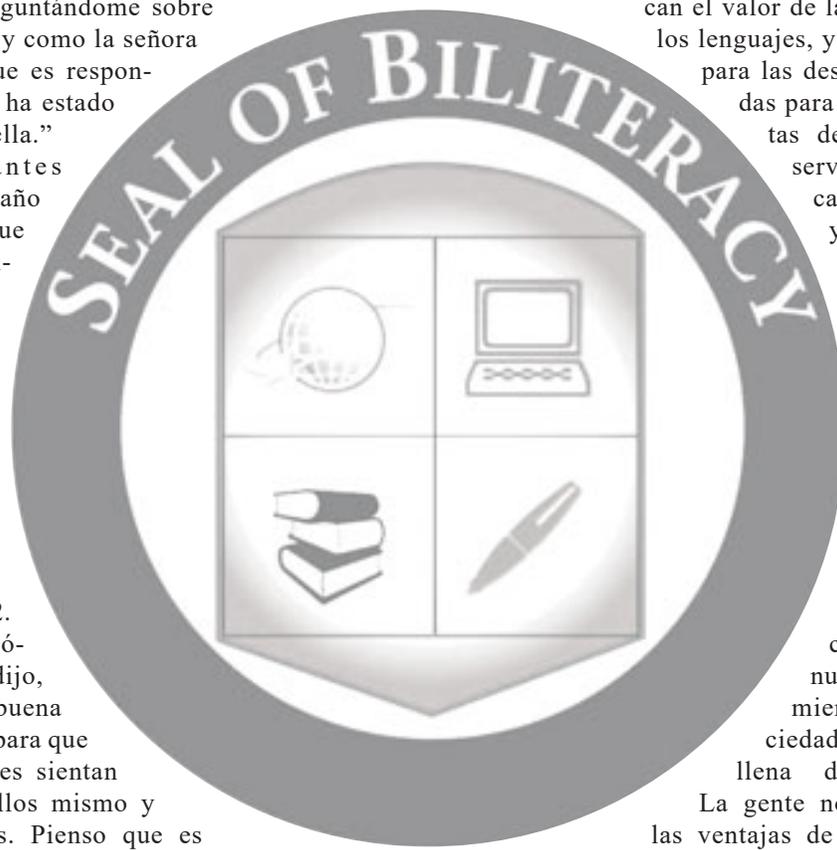
Nuevo para el estado de Connecticut y el sistema escolar de Stamford es El Sello De Bi-Alfabetización. Es un honor dado a los estudiantes los cuales “han estudiado y es competente en dos o más idiomas antes de terminar la secundaria”. Según la página de web de la organización responsable por el sello, solo hay 7 estados que no tienen este sello, y 9 más los cuales están empezando a introducir este sello de honor. En total, hay 27 estados que dan la oportunidad para recibir El Sello De Bi-Alfabetización. Su consejero tiene que tener su application antes del 9 de Marzo, 2018. El camino para recibir el sello es muy largo, y incluye un examen del lenguaje, varias reuniones, y llenando una aplicación.

Paola Ochoa, una consejera en Westhill dijo, “Como una persona bilingüe, creo que es una buena idea para enseñar a las universidades y empleadores que uno puede hablar y

manejar una idioma con competencia. Ya e tenido varios estudiantes preguntándome sobre el programa, y como la señora Herz es la que es responsable, yo los ha estado refiriendo a ella.”

Estudiantes del onceavo año van a tener que dar su aplicación antes del 9 de Marzo si quieren el sello en su diploma. Los pasos son el mismo para estudiantes del año 11 y 12. Stephania Gómez ('18) dijo, “Es una buena oportunidad para que los estudiantes sientan orgullo de ellos mismo y sus creencias. Pienso que es una buena cosa para los estudiantes que quieran aprender una nueva idioma. Ella también dijo que “Estoy muy contenta para

tomar el examen, y recibiendo el sello para tener en mi



diploma.”

Segun la página de web del Sello De

Bi-Alfabetización, ellos quieren que los estudiantes reconozcan el valor de la diversidad de los lenguajes, y que estén listo para las destrezas requeridas para el siglo 21. Estas destrezas van a servir en el mercado de trabajo, y va a enfocar las relaciones y dar honor a las varias culturas en una comunidad.

La señora Herz dijo que “Es una distinción muy buena y una celebración de nuestro agradecimiento de la sociedad que tenemos, llena de diversidad. La gente no ha realizado las ventajas de ser bilingüe”.

También dijo, “No se que era la espera para Connecticut. La área privada ha realizado la importancia de ser bilingüe hace

mucho tiempo. Es mi espero que esto se va a manifestar en varios otros lugares, y que Connecticut implemente un requisito de lenguaje para graduarse. Espero que nuestro país y los ciudadanos realicen el impacto de poder hablar varias lenguas”.

Estudiantes pueden aprender más sobre esto visitando la página de web de la organización, sealofbiliteracy.org, la página de web de Westhill o visitando a su consejero. La página de web tiene mucha información sobre como poder aplicar y las ventajas de poder hablar varios lenguajes.

La señora Herz digo “Esta semana pasada empezamos a anunciar el programa. Espero que haya un poco de interés en el programa.”

Según El Atlantic, sólo 7% de estudiantes universitarios en los Estados Unidos están tomando un curso de lenguaje. En Europa, ese porcentaje es mucho más alto. El espero es que el sello de Bi-Alfabetización será lo que haga los estudiantes que tomen un curso de lenguaje y que lo disfrutan.

Gráfico cortesía de sealofbiliteracy.org.

Opinión: ¿como es el almuerzo de Westhill?

Rayshawn Gipson
Escritor Personal

Este artículo es tendencioso. Todos los puntos de vistas expresados son del escritor. Parapreguntas o observaciones sobre este artículo, por favor, envíe un correo electrónico a noticiaswhs@gmail.com.

Personalmente, amo a la comida, y lo ha amado desde que yo puedo recordar. Normalmente no critico cada cosa, e intento de no ser muy difícil con que como. Pero, debo de admitir, el almuerzo de Westhill es muy triste. Esto no era ninguna sorpresa cuando primero llegué a westhill hace 3 años. NO estaba esperando comida mundial, pero esperaba que hubiera mejores opciones.

Otros estudiantes no les importa lo que hay de comer en la escuela, porque traen su propio almuerzo. Pero otros estudiantes si les importa cómo sabe la comida de la escuela, porque en el final del día, esta

comida todavía está procesado por el cuerpo.

El almuerzo de Westhill es horrible, aunque uno lo metan en ketchup. No importa lo que dan de almuerzo ese día, ensalada, tacos, hamburguesas, todo es muy feo. Las opciones que uno puede obtener también están muy limitadas. En las estaciones de sandwich, es imposible pagar lo que uno quiere por las reglas que tienen.

Kerns Louis ('18) dijo “La comida no tiene sabor, a veces está quemada, y otras veces esta cruda, no hay gracia, es muy triste.”

Después de los primeros dos periodos, los estudiantes tienen mucha hambre, especialmente durante el quinto periodo. La primera cosa en que un niño con hambre piense, es la comida. Cuando tal estudiante entra a la cafetería, se pone contento a ver la comida, pero esa emoción termina con la primer mordida.

Louis dijo “El lunch no es bueno, las maquinas no tienen

mejor almuerzo, la gente no quiere comer el almuerzo de la escuela.”

Derrick Story ('18) dijo “Alguna de la comida es más o menos.”

Goddieu Royal ('18) dijo “la comida escolar no es buena, de 1-10, con 1 siendo lo peor, yo le doy la comida un 3. El sabor es muy malo, no tiene gracia.”

También hay razones por la cual sabe tan mal. Empezó con el programa de Healthy-Hunger-Free kids, que empezó en el 2010. Este programa prohibió pizza, sal en las papitas, y nada de alitas con salsa.

Según el New York Times, “la comida ahora tiene que tener menos grasa, calorías, y sal. Ahora tiene que tener más proteína, frutas, y vegetales. Los niños de costa a costa no les gusta esto.”

Talves es por esto por la cual los estudiantes de no solo Westhill, pero del país no les gustan el nuevo almuerzo.



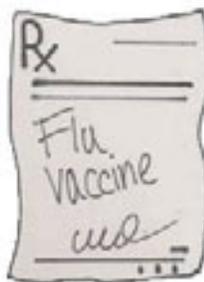
¿COMIDA O NO? Estudiantes son preocupados con la comida de Westhill. Foto cortesía de **Daniel Greco** / Editor Directivo.

SPECIAL REPORT: Keeping an eye

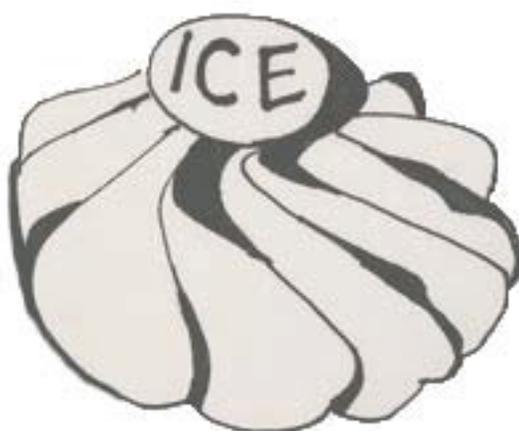
Steps to preventing the flu

1. Avoid close contact
2. Cover your mouth and nose
3. Wash your hands
4. Stay home when you are sick
5. Practice good health habits

- GlobalSecurity.org reports the first flu-like disease was reported by Hippocrates in the year 412 B.C., which many people believe led to the demise of Athens.



- According to Health Direct, Influenza B is a solely human virus while Influenza A is widespread among many different species.



The CDC states, 49.9 percent of children aged six months to 17 years have received the flu vaccination in the past year.



Studies conducted by the University of Arizona suggest that birth year can predict a patient's chances of surviving the flu.

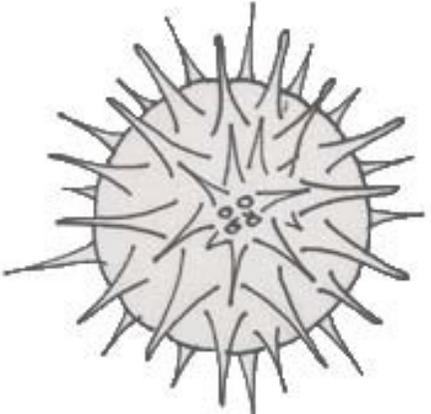


PetAirapy.com states that dogs can also get the flu, but if contracted there are no antibiotics that can treat it. The dog must recover from it on their own.

According to the CDC Foundation, the flu costs approximately 10.4 billion dollars in medical expenses and 16.3 billion dollars in lost earning every year.



According to Health Direct, three influenza pandemics occurred during the 20th century: the 1918 Spanish flu, the 1957-58 Asian flu and the 1968-70 Hong Kong flu.



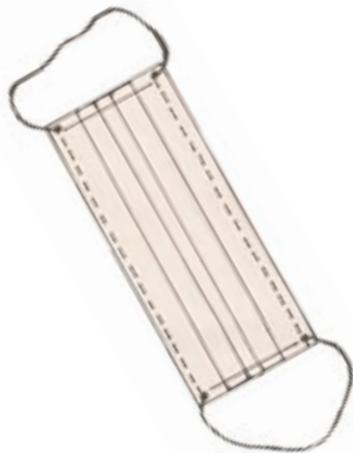
on influenza

The war on influenza

According to stanford.edu, there were more American casualties during the 1918 Influenza Pandemic than during WWI.



The CDC recommends that everyone six months of age and older should be vaccinated annually.



The CDC states that it takes two weeks after getting the vaccination for the antibodies to develop and protect the body.

Phoebe Lukaswitz
 Staff Writer

Influenza, commonly known as the flu, is a highly contagious viral infection of the respiratory passages causing fever, severe aching, and excessive build up of mucus in the nose or throat. Each year, the flu season peaks from fall to winter. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), of all the types of flu spreading each year, influenza A, specifically H3N2, is most common.

The CDC stated, “the most frequently identified influenza virus subtype reported by public health laboratories during week three was influenza A(H3).” The flu this year has been very different from prior years.

According to Dan Jernigan, Director of the influenza division in CDC’s National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, “this is the highest level of activity recorded since the 2009 H1N1 [swine flu] pandemic, which peaked at 7.7 percent.”

This flu season, there are new recommendations for prevention, including avoiding

the nasal spray vaccine; instead, people should stick to the shot.

According to the CDC, “influenza-associated deaths in the United States ranged from a low of 12,000 (during 2011-2012) to a high of 56,000 (during 2012-2013).” As of February 17, the flu has been the cause of death of 97 individuals. The CDC also stated, “Complications of flu can include bacterial pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, and worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes.”

In New Canaan, Nico Mallozzi, a ten year old boy, passed away from the flu this January. As stated by the CDC, “Anyone can get the flu (even healthy people), and serious problems related to the flu can happen at any age.”

According to the CTPost, “The New York medical examiner’s office determined that Mallozzi’s flu, complicated by pneumonia, led to sepsis, which was the cause of death.”

Many think that the flu season is approaching an end seeing as winter is almost over, but this is a

common misconception. Flu season is not restricted to the duration of winter.

“Flu activity has been elevated for nine consecutive weeks so far this season. To put that into perspective, the average duration of a flu season in the past five seasons has been around 16 weeks, with the longest being 20 weeks. So, by this measure, we are about halfway there this season. That means we have several more weeks of flu to go,” said Jernigan.

Although anyone can get the flu, there are specific groups that possess a higher risk. “Those who are at high risk that we recommend to get treated if they get sick with the flu are the very young, very old, pregnant women and those with underlying illnesses like heart conditions and lung problems,” said Jernigan.

The flu this season has been considered widespread in almost all of the United States. The CDC reported “The geographic spread of influenza in Puerto Rico and 49 states was reported as widespread; Guam reported regional activity, the District of Columbia and one state reported local activity; and the

U.S. Virgin Islands reported sporadic activity.”

The flu is not only causing deaths, but hospitalizations as well. “A cumulative rate of 41.9 laboratory-confirmed influenza-associated hospitalizations per 100,000 population was reported,” declared the CDC. Seeing as the flu is so widespread, it poses a real threat to the Westhill community. Some students are concerned about catching the flu due to its unprecedented severity.

“It has not impacted me personally, but yes, I am worried about getting it, I had it last year, it was horrible. If I got it I would not be happy, also, I do not want to lose 15 pounds,” said Raleigh Singer (’18).

“I am worried, but during these times just take care of your health and you should be fine, wash your hands,” said Paola Gonzalez (’19).

“People should stay home to avoid getting others sick. Also, getting over the flu is a long process and I would prefer not to miss school so I do not fall behind,” said Amanda Veseli (’19).



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Supplement



THE TIMES AND TALES OF WESTHILL

Ms. DeAngelis



Ms. DeAngelis was born and raised in Westport, CT with her parents and two brothers. Both of her parents were born in Italy, and she is the second of the siblings to be born in the United States. Although her students may know Ms. DeAngelis as their typical teacher, she was kind enough to share a story from her childhood that may not be so well known. Before starting this story, DeAngelis made it very clear that this is the only bad thing she ever did as a teenager. Supposedly, she had excellent judgement. Still, she could not resist taking her uncle's car out for a spin the weekend all the boys in her family went out on a camping trip. She was home alone with her youngest brother and mother for the entire weekend. On Saturday night, she noticed that her uncle had left his car keys out on the table. At the age of 15 she had already gotten her permit, but a learner's permit only requires a written test. She had not exactly mastered the art of driving yet. Her plan was not to go to some party or meet up with her friends, but to instead just drive around. For the first time in her life, Ms. DeAngelis snuck out of the house. She waited for both her mom and brother to be asleep, before slipping out the back door just before midnight.

She said that her father had taken her driving before, but her uncle's car was nothing like what she had driven. She had no clue where most of the controls were and which ones did what. She could not find the switch that would turn the headlights on, so instead she turned on the interior car lights (the one thing you are not supposed to do when it is dark). In less than a minute, she hit the gas in reverse and rammed into the tree in her neighbor's front lawn. Ms. DeAngelis turned around to see the entire back windshield was shattered. She had no clue what to do, but calling her friend sounded like a great idea. She asked her friend who lived a few houses down to walk over and help her with this entire mess, but her friend did not come.

"I decided I was going to put the car back right where it was, and just pretend I had nothing to do with it," said DeAngelis. Her genius plan was to tell her mom that a drunk driver must have hit the car and just drove away. She came up with this story knowing very well that the skid marks on the ground pointed directly to her uncle's car, but she continued. While pulling the car forward into the same spot, she managed to hit her mom's car twice. By the second time, Ms. DeAngelis gave up. She accepted the fact that her mission failed and was ready to tell her mom everything that happened. She stepped out of the car and walked in the same way she came out only minutes ago. Her mother did not yell at her, but instead, in her thick Italian accent, said, "Oh, just wait till your father gets home."

Needless to say she was grounded. She was shocked because she was expecting more consequences than just getting a talk. Ms. DeAngelis said that she learned her lesson. She never stole a car again and she made sure to stick to her better judgement. That year, much to her surprise, she ended up getting her very own car. DeAngelis ended her story saying, "I ended up failing my first driving test."



Ms. McKenzie



As Ms. McKenzie starts to tell her story, she stops to remember the person that changed her life forever. His name was Oneil S. Medley. He was tall, kind, and had a great sense of humor. In addition, he was always well-groomed; he took the time to ensure that his nails were manicured, he was clean-shaven, and that his clothes were always neat. Medley loved sports. He coached volleyball, basketball, and softball at Greenwich Academy. Medley also had a need for speed, so much so that when he would pick McKenzie up in his truck, she would hold on for dear life. McKenzie repeatedly told him that it would be the death of him; however, she did not know that these words were going to be true someday.

The two met during their sophomore year at Westhill. McKenzie had transferred from Stamford Catholic High School (now known as Trinity Catholic) and Medley had just moved here from Jamaica. Their friendship and bond was instant, mainly because they did not try to impress nor judge each other for anything. Their connection was so strong, they each knew how the other was feeling before they told one another. He was one of the only people that McKenzie could confide in. After high school and college, they were still best friends and because they were both educators, they looked forward to end of marking periods and school-related breaks so they could spend time together.

In April 2010, another graduate of Westhill died and the pair did not know whether to go to the funeral, but they decided to make the decision together. In the end, they did not go. However, it segued into the topic of funerals and death. Medley concluded that he only wanted close family and friends with a closed casket. Between then and July, McKenzie and Medley talked on occasion. Their last meal together was at a sushi restaurant in Norwalk, which was one of Medley's favorites. There was a peace that night like no other, maybe because it was their last meal together.

On July 4, when he moved into his new home, somebody gave Medley a model dog as a gift. When McKenzie found out about it, she sent him a message, and got no response. This seemed off to McKenzie because he always responded to her texts. Immediately, she realized something was wrong. The next day, McKenzie still had not heard from him. Worried, she reluctantly searched online for *The Stamford Advocate*. There was an article with a headline about a Stamford man dying in a car crash in Kent, CT. McKenzie refused to believe the loss and was in denial. In order to get clarity, McKenzie called Medley's mother while driving to his mother's house. When she was only a couple minutes away, his mother answered and confirmed to McKenzie that Medley was gone.

McKenzie became nauseous, confused and panicked. It was difficult for McKenzie to keep going on, especially because she considered him a constant in her life. She also had two kids, making it hard for her to mourn. Every time McKenzie saw Medley's mother, she saw his face, which did not make it easy for McKenzie to support her. McKenzie continued to mourn, for weeks and months. It took four years for her to talk about him without crying and there has not been a day that has gone by without her thinking about him. Medley was McKenzie's best friend and nobody could ever replace him in her life.

Inside the minds of Westhill

What is your favorite place and why?



"Where I grew up, Mexico. Well, most of my family is there. It is my getaway from everything."
—Irvin Munoz ('20)



"The AgriScience Office. I am more comfortable there than I am at home. It is always warm in there in the winter, there is plenty of charging cords, and that is where all the seniors gather. And there is a table there for students to do work."
—Ella Byrne ('18)



"My favorite place is Ireland because my family lives there."
—Laura Carroll ('18)



"My favorite place is my grandma's house because without doubt she is one of my favorite family members and always seems to cheer me up."
—Divya Gada ('20)



"Spending time with people and enjoying the moment as it is rather than taking your phone out. I love spending time with my friends, and my family. Giving them your energy and having them reciprocate, that makes me happy."
—Hoshahnia Kumaran ('19)



"Helping others, I used to volunteer at Brighton Gardens and a retirement home in Greenwich."
—Melvin Andre ('18)



"Making other people happy makes me happy. I know if I make other people laugh in their day than I have done my job."
—Danielle Gleaton ('19)



"I have two baby sisters. Being with them makes me happy, they are very smiley and it brightens my day."
—Nevaeh Mills ('19)

What scares you the most?



"Being in a falling elevator. Imagine you are in a circumstance where a rat chews the cable and you just fall."
—Kim Roig ('18)



"I am scared of dolphins because they can kill sharks and sharks can kill us. So, anything that can kill a shark is pretty scary to me."
—Brandon Viera ('18)



"My biggest fear would probably be not having anyone there when you need them most. So, I guess, being alone."
—Emily Digiacomo ('19)



"I am scared of the dark because I cannot see anything. I am scared of the monsters. Actually, I am not scared of anything."
—Bryson Dean ('18)

Where do you see yourself in ten years?



"I see myself having a successful job as a cosmetic dentist. I would also like to see myself in the career of international businesses."
—Emanuel OtaIvaro ('19)



"Probably in a decent apartment with a good job as a chef."
—Za'Nubeya Rivers ('18)



"I plan to be an ultrasound technician or a wedding planner. Living in New York would be nice."
—Laurie Labady ('20)



"In Los Angeles, designing clothes."
—Fredd'herek Leny ('18)

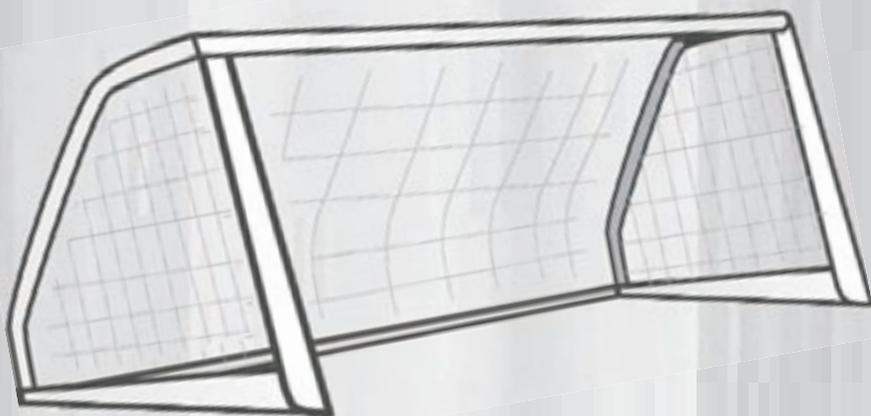
Claudia Benz

Claudia Benz ('19) has left her mark not only on the soccer fields of Connecticut, but all over the nation. Benz has a fair number of tales which contributed to her success and being recruited by and committing to the division one women's soccer team at University of Delaware before her senior year. The forward had dominated in regional teams in Florida, national teams in Costa Rica, and had the honor of being a part of the prestigious group of players named first team all Fairfield County Interscholastic Athletic Conference (FCIAC). Benz has already accomplished all of this and still has a lot more soccer left in high school to play. Her glories do not only lie on the field as she also runs track and does gymnastics.

Out of many shining moments in Benz's life so far, one seemed to have stuck out. Going through her list of accomplishments, Benz seemed to light up once she remembered one game. Just last year before our Vikings went to the playoffs, the team was down four nothing at the half against Staples High School, "the Wreckers." When some players sweltered up with frustration and gave up, Benz instead rose to the occasion starting off a monster second half with a goal to bring the Vikings back into the fight. "We needed to either win or tie to get into FCIACs," said Benz.

Next to score was Benz's fellow teammate, Corinne Dente making the hopes of a major comeback stronger. The clock was ticking quickly and the Vikings still needed two more goals in order for their playoff hopes to survive. With the clock beginning to wind down and seven minutes left in regulation, Benz skillfully nailed her second goal to bring the game to a three to four score.

Suddenly the impossible became possible; Staples's defense was not prepared for the beast that was unleashed by Benz. Staples's dominance from the first half quickly beginning to falter under the vicious Vikings attack. Although a tie was closer, Benz and the Vikings still needed one more goal to tie the game and qualify for FCIACs. However, the Wreckers would not go down without a fight. Five minutes passed as the two teams battled on to score a goal. The final goal needed to tie was becoming increasingly difficult as the girls began to run out of gas. Yet Benz stepped up once more. With three nail biting minutes left on the clock, Benz blasted a final goal past the keeper, finally tying the game. Benz's hat trick secured the Vikings their position in FCIACs with a four to four tie against the Wreckers. Game-changing moments such as that are some of the reasons why Benz's name is amongst the few named first team all FCIAC, and there is still a long road left in her career.



Paolo Mazzara



Paolo Mazzara ('19) was born in Milan, Italy and lived there his whole life until about eight months ago when he moved to Stamford. Although his move to a new country was a life changing experience, Mazzara affectionately remembered the last day he spent in Italy as one of his best.

It was a special day in Milan, June 16, which is similar to the Fourth of July in the United States. Mazzara was upset at the prospect of having to say goodbye to the friends he grew up with, but rather than wallow, Mazzara and his friends decided to spend the day together and have fun. They planned to meet up at Monza Park, a huge park where they held car races, and spend the day there. Mazzara and his friends would frequently meet up there on the weekends to eat outside, play or just hangout, so this was not anything out of the ordinary.

Mazzara and his friends spent all day at the park reminiscing about their past and looking forward to the future. Mazzara explained that it was nice to find comfort in his old memories and past experiences with the people he cared about before starting his journey to move to the United States. The friends promised each other that they would see each other again and that they would not let their distance keep them apart for very long.

The group got into mischief and shenanigans throughout the day, like any teenagers would, Mazzara and his friend even lost their phones. However, they were really looking forward to the main event of the day; the fireworks. The group had to corral themselves into one area of the park to watch the show. Horrible, loud music was blasting; but no one cared, they were just happy to be together. Then the fireworks began. Although Mazzara had grown up watching these fireworks his whole life, he said these were by far the most magnificent he had ever seen.

When the firework display was over, the friends walked out of the event still laughing and talking. However, it was too crowded and they eventually had to break apart and go their separate ways. All of them were so upset at the idea of leaving one another but Mazzara convinced them that it would be okay. Mazzara told them to take care of one another, and remain close friends despite having to go into their new high schools that year. The group agreed that no matter what, they would not let anything break them apart and that they would always stay friends.

As he walked away from his friends, and in the months since then, Mazzara has thought about all of things he could have said to them in that moment that he forgot, and everything that could have been better than what he actually said. However, he realized that the day was perfect as it was, and everything that was said was meant to be said. Mazzara also felt grateful that he was able to spend his last day in Italy with his friends, laughing and reminiscing under the fireworks.

In the end, Mazzara is glad that he moved to the United States and started at Westhill. Mazzara feels lucky that he had the opportunity to move to a new country and get the chance at a better life. Mazzara said that this day "was not a so long farewell, it was just a short goodbye." True to their word, Mazzara's friends are going to come visit him in America this summer.



Front cover photos by Rachel Deustch, Samantha Hamilton, Lucy Hart, Phoebe Lukaswitz, Caitlin Cavello, Rachel Plotzky & Addison Magrath / Staff Writers, Managing Editor & Print Executive Editor.
Backcover by Sydnie Lesser / Photo Manager.

Looking into the daily life of a school secretary

Petra Ramirez
Staff Writer

Alison Corbo is one of our school's secretaries. In order to learn about the role of a secretary in our school and get to know her better, The Westword sat down and interviewed Mrs. Corbo.

The Westword (TW): What is it like working as a secretary?

Alison Corbo (AC): It is a very rewarding job when you get to help many people. There are many parents that come in, as well as students and staff members. When you are able to help people, it is rewarding.

TW: What do you like most about your job?

AC: I like helping people. It is why I have this job. I like the variety; everyday is a different day. Every year you have orientation and graduation, but in-between it is different everyday.

TW: What is the hardest part about your job?

AC: I would have to say juggling my schedule.

TW: What have you learned over

the years?

AC: Listen the best you can before speaking. Listen to what somebody is telling you or asking you. Process it for a few minutes, and then give them a response.

TW: Do you have any role models or people you looked up to?

AC: One of my role models, Kathy Bennett, has now become my best friend. She is the secretary at Rip-powam Middle School. She was instrumental in helping me when I started at Cloonan Middle School, which was my very first time working for the Board of Education in 1997. If she did not teach or help me I would not know what I was doing, and for that, I am very thankful. We have been friends for over 20 years because of it.

TW: What has it been like working with Mr. Rinaldi as opposed to Ms. Figluzzi?

AC: They are very different. Mr. Rinaldi likes to have you work on your own and work on the project from the beginning. Ms. Figluzzi worked with you on the project and then she would review it again later on. The previous work ethic is a little more freestyle, while the other

one is more structured. Not that the freestyle was not structured—but he lets you put your own thought into it, and then if a process has to be changed then he will say: "Maybe we should do that instead." Instead of demanding what should be done, Mr. Rinaldi provides suggestions and helps out.

TW: What is something that no one knows about your job?

AC: They think that I know all of the answers.

TW: What do you wish people understood about your job?

AC: How difficult it is to juggle things at times. You know, a parent comes in and you get interrupted. You have to drop something very important that you are working on because you have to help the parent, or an emergency comes up. That is probably the most difficult thing that people do not understand. People sometimes want their particular situations handled right away. I do understand that many teachers only have certain amounts of free time. They only have a free period or their lunch, so when they come down they need help right away but it can often be difficult.



HARD AT WORK Mrs. Corbo at her desk in the front office. Photo by **Sabrina Boyd** / Staff Writer.

TW: What motivates you to do what you do everyday?

AC: The students. I love the students. I have students every year that I get attached to. It is interesting just to watch them grow and mature. I have

been a secretary in all three levels of schools. It is just a beautiful thing to see the students mature and go off to college. Many of them still visit from college. So that is my number one motivational factor.

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Women's march in New York City

Samantha Hamilton
Staff Writer

A year after the inauguration of President Trump and a day after the government shutdown, women took to the streets to express their grievances at the second Women's March.

This year there were seven major marches in cities across the globe. From New York to Rome, one thing remains consistent; women who participate are angry at the

state of their government. The Westhill Feminist Club had 15 members attend the New York branch of the march. They were joined by 200,000 other women and allies.

Members noticed a clear shift in attitude from the first ever march to its predecessor. The first march had an angry yet hopeful feeling because it was the first time women came together to express their anger. It resulted in the largest single-day protest in American history. The second march was full of

anger and expressed a serious call to action.

"The posters were one of my favorite parts of the march," said Sophie Ciokajlo (18). "They were all so creative and were a perfect outlet for expressing why each woman attended." Posters, as well as chants such as, "racist, sexist, anti-gay, Donald Trump, go away," gave participants a way to use their power to cause change.

With a primarily political focus, the seriousness of our situation began to sink in. The past year had been filled with resentment and a constant need for protest. People were openly tired of having to fight for basic rights, which made for a solemn environment. The participants came to be heard, and they came to validate their personal grievances by meeting others who felt the same way.

Women and allies were encouraged to be as inclusive as possible so that men and different minorities felt comfortable participating. "I attended the first women's march in D.C. with the feminist club and it was a very powerful experience," said Grace Savage ('18). "So many people came together and it ended up being a huge success." Men have become a very important piece of the feminist movement. The inclusion of all genders is necessary in order to accomplish what feminism really stands for.



DEMANDING ACTION Marchers continue to fight for their rights.



SEEING CHANGE Another influential march takes place in New York.

Symbolism of women's genitalia, which dominated the first march, was advised against to make the trans community feel included. The push for intersectional feminism is very exciting because it shows how far the movement has grown within itself. A common criticism of feminism is that it caters to white women alone, and has no regards for the rights of people of color or members of the LGBTQ+ community. By creating

an intersectional environment, the movement has not only grown in numbers, but it has expanded its reach on topics they lobby for.

The feminist movement shows no signs of slowing down. We will be able to see the effects of this march and others as midterm elections approach. People will take their grievances to the polls in hopes of electing legislators who have beliefs reflecting those of the movement.

Photos by **Emma Cali** / Creative Director.

Don't Bully the Breed: Puppy Mills

Column by Kelly Fox

When people venture into pet stores, it can be immensely difficult to resist bringing an adorable puppy home for a shockingly low price. However, it is crucial that members of society resist doing so. The majority of the time, these dogs come from horrific puppy mills. In these vicious places, an enormous amount of innocent dogs of all shapes and sizes are engulfed in disease and malnourishment.

These poor animals ache to see the light of day and are kept in ghastly conditions where they cannot even move in order to exercise. Older dogs are forced to constantly breed, and when they physically cannot do that anymore they are usually killed by malicious owners. The dogs' food

and water are typically contaminated and spread deadly illnesses. They are deprived of basic veterinary care, protection from weather, and sanitary living conditions. Greedy owners could not care less about the welfare of the animals. They merely care about the profit they gain from overbreeding.

When animals are purchased from places like this, all it does is give the puppy mill a greater demand, and melancholy dogs will be forced to breed more. On top of that, an animal from a backyard breeder is more likely to be ill and suffer from behavioral problems from being neglected for so long. Most puppy mills take the young away from their mothers too early, forming these behavioral issues.

In addition to pet stores, many

puppies from backyard breeders are sold online. If someone plans on getting a dog from a breeder, it is essential that you see the animal's parents, and that there is only one breed being sold. Puppy mills will carelessly sell as many breeds as they can, while regular breeders will only sell one. If possible, try to visit the location of the breeder, to make sure the dogs are being raised in a safe environment. A moral breeder will provide a customer with paperwork, and make sure that the dogs are going into a quality home.

In many states and countries, puppy mills are legal. States such as Minnesota, Kentucky, Idaho, and many more have no laws regarding harmful breeding at all. It is estimated by the Hu-

mane Society that there are over 10,000 puppy mills in the United States alone.

Although puppy mills are more common, there are also records of kitten mills. A way to avoid getting a kitten from one of these cruel places is by visiting the cats and checking for red flags. Some red flags that are specifically for kittens include overgrown nails and piles of cat hair. The safest way to make sure an individual is not supporting these backyard breeders is by going to an animal shelter. There are millions of caring pets that need to find their forever home.

According to The Puppy Mill Project, every year in the United States, roughly two million dogs are sold from puppy mills, while

around three million dogs are euthanized because there is not enough room in shelters. If more people got pets from shelters instead of pet stores or online, it would save millions of lives. Also, rescue animals are more likely to be trained and be in great health.

The majority of pets that end up in shelters are already house-trained and they are there because their owner could not take care of them. Common examples of this is with financial crises, divorces, and deaths. Shelter animals undergo physicals and get treatment for any medical issues and that usually does not happen at pet stores. It is clear that people need to be more informed about this issue in order to put it to a stop.





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Upcoming music festivals

Festival season is less than five months away, but for avid festival goers, the countdown began months ago with impatient waiting for each big festival to drop their lineup. Living so close to the city, as well as in reach of festivals slightly north of Connecticut, there are plenty of festivals to choose from.

Governors Ball, which is held on Randall's Island, NYC, is from June 1 to 3. Governors Ball is a contemporary music festival that started out eight years ago with the headliners being: Girl Talk, Pretty Lights, and Empire of the Sun. Now, having gained immense popularity, Governors Ball hosts 60 plus artists including big names such as Halsey, Eminem, Travis Scott, Lil Uzi Vert, and Khalid. Over the years, Governors Ball has deterred from a more alternative overarching genre to head in a rap and pop direction. "I do not like the Friday lineup, but the Saturday and Sunday lineups are good. Saturday has Travis Scott, and Sunday is better than Friday, so I am going Saturday and Sunday," said Ashley Salatino ('19). The audience has altered slightly, but most regulars have continued to attend. A General Admission (GA) one-day ticket is priced at 115 dollars plus extra fees, and a full three-day pass comes to 305 dollars plus extra fees. Both exclude the cost of travel, food, and merchandise that can be purchased at the festival. "This is my first year going to Governors Ball. I am going Friday and Saturday, I am most excited to see Travis Scott," said Jonathan Joseph ('18).

GOVERNORS BALL

Randall's Island is also home to Panorama NYC Music Festival, but the vibe, artists, and the whole setup in general of Governors Ball and Panorama most definitely differ. Panorama gained popularity after their favored lineup last year, which included Frank Ocean, Tame Impala, Tyler, The Creator, and Vance Joy. "Panorama was really fun. It had an amazing lineup I was able to see Frank Ocean, MGMT, Vance Joy & Tyler the Creator perform all in one day! Not only were the performances really good, but there was a variety of food stands and cool events going on, making everything picture worthy," said Yaneira Torres ('18) This year they are presenting The Weeknd, Janet Jackson, The Killers, Odesza, SZA, Cardi B, and The XX. What attracts many festival goers to this event is "The Lab," an interactive experience that combines technology, artistry, and design of New York City artists through six different installations and a 360-degree virtual-reality theater. Though many festivals trademark art as one of their attractions, Panorama is one of the few that truly hits the mark. One-day passes are 99 dollars plus fees, two-day passes are 185 dollars plus fees, and a three day pass is 250 dollars plus fees.

PANORAMA

Firefly stands out from all other festivals for its unique atmosphere and camping experience. The four-day festival, taking place from June 14 to 17 in Dover, Delaware, offers on-site campgrounds. Festival goers can also choose to commute or rent houses nearby. The one downside is that you must attend all four days, as they do not offer single day passes, only weekend passes, which cost 299 dollars plus fees, and with the potential of these dates overlapping with our finals, this could prevent students from attending. Arctic Monkeys is returning from a five year hiatus to headline Firefly, and as of now, this is the only announced show they all be playing in America this year. Along with Arctic Monkeys are headliners Kendrick Lamar, Eminem, and The Killers.

FIREFLY

BOSTON CALLING

Boston Calling, a three day festival in Allston, MA draws people from CT because of the convenience of it taking place over Memorial Day weekend, May 25 to 27. Performers include The Killers, Paramore, Portugal the Man, Jack White, Tyler, The Creator, Brockhampton, Eminem, Khalid, and Bryson Tiller. Three-day GA tickets are 289 dollars plus fees, and single days are 105 dollars plus fees. Boston Calling is a festival that repeats twice a year. So, if you miss their lineup this spring, you can catch them again in the fall over Labor Day weekend.

Afropunk Fest has yet to release their lineup, but is a notable festival, as it highlights multicultural artists, and travels to Brooklyn, Paris, London, Atlanta and Joburg. Afropunk will be in Brooklyn August 25 and 26 at Commodore Barry Park. Weekend passes are only 85 dollars, and single day tickets are only 50 dollars. Each festival is unique, so no matter what music style interests you, there is a festival for everyone.

AFROPUNK

Audrey Molina wins school poetry competition

Jennifer Carias

Staff Writer

Recently, the school held a competition in which students perform their interpretation of a poem. There were seven finalists, but in the end Audrey Molina ('19) ended up winning first place. Audrey will soon be heading off to Hartford University where she will be attending poetry workshops. She will then be competing in the state competition where she will hopefully once again take home the crown. She was able to sit down for an interview for us to hear what she had to say.

The Westword (TW): In your own words can you explain Poetry Out Loud and what it is about?

Audrey Molina (AM): Basically it is a poetry recitation competition. You have to memorize a poem and perform it in front of a group of people. The whole point is that you are supposed to sort of bring more meaning to the poems

with your performance; you are supposed to bring your interpretation which should really bring the poem to life. So it is all about expression and picking a poem that resonates with you so that when you recite it, you mean what you are saying.

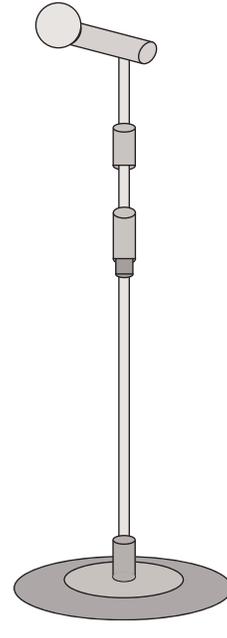
TW: Who inspires you and does performing make you want to write your own poetry?

AM: I really like this poet named Jacqueline Woodson because she writes about really topical things. I also like this original spoken word poet named Sarah Kay. I think she is really amazing and she is definitely my inspiration for writing poetry. Performing original poetry is even more terrifying than performing something somebody else wrote because it is so intimate and personal. I do not know if I would really do that, but I think it could be really interesting.

TW: When did you first realize that you had talent in performing poetry?

AM: Well the first time I tried

it was in eighth grade. I had no idea that Poetry Out Loud existed until this year. I actually was not planning on participating, but my English teacher Mr. Wooley had me recite a poem in class. After I did, he said, "I think that performance would be competitive at the state level," so that was the first time that somebody



praised me for performing poetry. I [thought]: "maybe I should do this."

TW: Do you ever get nervous when reading out loud and how do you get through it?

AM: I do get very nervous, but I do theatre so I feel like that has helped prepare me for performing in front of people. Poetry has always felt different though because, you know, high school can be brutal. You are always scared of judgement and people thinking; what is she doing here and why is she taking this so seriously, but I think it helps if you care about the poem you are reading because then you are expressing to people something that you believe in and that you care about. I feel like that makes me less nervous.

TW: Can you give a little insight on the poetry workshop you will be attending at Hartford University?

AM: It is run by one of the guys that started Poetry Out Loud. You basically go and they talk to you about how to give the best per-

formance possible and how to evaluate it. It is really for any of the kids who won the school competition and it basically prepare you for the state competition.

TW: Explain what the process is like for reciting poetry.

AM: You have to pick a poem from the website—that is always the hardest part for me—but once I choose one, I generally go to my basement to say it out loud a few times to see how it feels. Sometimes there would be a poem that I love, but I just do not perform it very well. If I like the poem and I perform it well, that is when I start to work on it and how each line will be delivered.

TW: Is there anything else you would like to say about poetry and what it means to you?

AM: Yes I think a lot of times poetry can say things that just normal writing cannot. I think that performing it can sometimes say even more than that; there are so many little nuances and it is such an emotional activity. I think that is what draws me to it the most.

Graphic by Joaquin Montecarlo / Limelight Editor.

This month in hip-hop

Column by Jude Ponthieu

The hip-hop world has been buzzing for these past two months. Many big name artists have been dropping singles and releasing albums that keep our speakers blasting and heads rocking. There is a lot of content to dig into from January and a lot of content to look forward to for this month.

Award winning artist Drake released a two-track EP called *Scary Hours*. This small EP includes bragadocious tracks. First off is "Diplomatic Immunity," which Drake speaks on his return from his small hiatus and why he will always be immortal and untouchable in the rap game. This chill yet hard hitting beat samples Wu-Tang's song "Triumph" and was produced by Boi-1da. The next track, "God's Plan," which has debuted at number one on the Hot 100's Billboard has been receiving a ton of plays. Drake again speaks on his destiny to always run the rap game as people want him to fail but it is "God's plan" for him to succeed. This track has been all over social media as big name athletes such as Odell Beckham Junior have been using it to make videos with the famous line, "she said do you love me I told her only partly, I only love my bed and my mamma I'm sorry."

Next in January was rap group Migos' release of *Culture II*. The third studio album the group released coupled with big anticipation as *Culture* had went platinum with a couple of top 100 tracks. The trap-themed album comes with a lot of big-named features from 21 Savage, Drake, Gucci Mane, Big Sean, Travis Scott, Ty



GOD'S PLAN Drake's track reaches number one on Hot 100's Billboard.

Dolla \$ign, Nicki Minaj, Cardi B, Post Malone, and 2 Chainz. Needless to say, this album is packing a ton of star power with hard hitting production from Kanye West, Metro Boomin, Murda Beatz and 21 other talented producers. Although the 24 track album has not been receiving the best

ratings, fans are excited to listen to tracks like "Motor Sport," "Stir fry," "Walk it Like I Talk It," "BBO," and "Gang Gang."

Artist Kendrick Lamar has also been buzzing as he has taken the responsibility of putting together the soundtrack for highly anticipated Marvel movie *Black Panther*. Lamar has already released three tracks off the album, "All the Stars" featuring SZA, "King's Dead" featuring Future, James Blake, and Jay Rock and finally his most recent release "Pray for Me" featuring The Weeknd. All three of these tracks have been on constant repeat for me. SZA's vocals on "All the Stars" match perfectly with the hard hitting drums of the beat and Lamar's inspiring verse. "King's Dead" Keeps your speakers blasting with a more trap like sound to it, heavy drums and even heavier bass coupled with the catchy verses from Jay Rock, Future and Lamar and finishing the song with a heavy bass filled beat change and a vicious final verse from Lamar similar to the final verse of "DNA."

It was great to hear The Weeknd's voice again on "Pray for Me" coming with a techno-like vibe similar to the beats heard on his *Starboy* album and another hard verse

from Lamar. The hip-hop themed soundtrack is only bringing more anticipation to the release of *Black Panther* and fans of Lamar can look at this soundtrack as a sort of album release. The soundtrack is coming with features from big names such as School Boy Q, Swae Lee, Vince Staples, Khalid, Jorja Smith, SOB



HYPE Hip-hop fans were excited to hear about Lamar's new Marvel tracks.

X RBE, AB-Soul, Anderson, Paak, Mozzy and Travis Scott as well as the other artists aforementioned and more.

There have been numerous singles that have been released from January and February such as "Keke" by New York rapper 6ix9ine

featuring Fetty Wap and A Boogie, as well as a new Rae Sremmurd release "T'd Up."

Finally our throwback song of the month is Kanye West's "Gold Digger." Released in the early 2000's, the song speaks about just as it is titled, the so called "gold diggers" which are women who only involve themselves with men with money solely for the purpose of their money and fame. "Gold Digger" is one of Kanye West's biggest hits, winning Grammy and BET awards for best rap solo performance and video of the year as well as other awards. It has been nearly three years since we have heard any new music aside from production from West, though a photo of him at a table with Dave Chappelle and Yasiin Bey has been surging through social media and has people wondering what could be cooking. West is rumored to be working with artist Kid Kudi; could we be seeing a Yeezy and Kudi collab soon?

All in all, February was packed with hip-hop and we can anticipate a lot more during the month of March. It is going to be a good month for music.

Photos courtesy of commons.wikimedia.com

RUN DOWN OF OSCAR NOMINEES FOR BEST PICTURE

Rachel Deutsch
Staff Writer

The Academy Awards, better known as The Oscars, will premiere Sunday March fourth. Best Picture is often the most anticipated award, with each year bringing acclaim to the astounding nominees. Contenders for Best Picture include *Call Me By Your Name*, *Darkest Hour*, *Dunkirk*, *Get Out*, *Ladybird*, *Phan-*

tom Thread, *The Post*, *The Shape of Water*, and *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*. Topics of these films range from the first great war of nations to a relationship between mother and daughter. These movies showcase their stories using groundbreaking direction, writing, and acting worth raving about.

Call Me By Your Name received a Certified Fresh score of 96 percent on Rotten Tomatoes. The film is renowned among viewers for its touching depiction of budding first love and homosexuality. Its beautiful cinematography over an Italian/Tuscan scenery can really help pull the viewer into the world of the story. Making a name for actors Timothée Chalamet and Armie Hammer, *Call Me By Your Name* is a film not to be missed.

Gary Oldman's remarkable performance as Winston Churchill in *Darkest Hour* brought this film to life. Portraying the importance of leadership amid despair, the film clearly captures a moment in time when Churchill faced the world's darkest hour, the start of WWII.

From one WWII movie to another, *Dunkirk* captures the real-life story of allied soldiers stranded on the beaches of

France and surrounded by German troops. Known for its emotional performances delivered by a talented cast, the film received 93 percent certified fresh review on rotten tomatoes. The film follows the different lives of the island's stranded inhabitants, and the small civilian ships that are called in to come to their rescue. The film was also nominated for seven more Academy Awards.

Using the absurdities of science-fiction and comedy; Jordan Peele's *Get Out* communicates our society's level of interracial relations in way that is anything but absurd. *Get Out's* overall composition was not acclaimed alone, as it also received nominations for Best Actor, Director, and Original Screenplay.

Lady Bird is relatable, funny and enigmatic. Self-named *Lady Bird*, or Christine, is attempting to run away from her small minded Sacramento town, her family, and herself, to a college on the East Coast. The movie follows the struggle between her mother's strong will, as well as herself. With a Rotten Tomatoes score of 99 percent, the movie touched not only adolescents but found value in the eye of critics. The film was nominated for Best Picture, Ac-

triss, Supporting Actress, Director and Original Screenplay.

Phantom Thread transports its viewers into the high-fashion world of London in the 1950's. Among its six Oscar nominations is best actor for leading-man Daniel Day Lewis's final role. The movie has attracted great critical attention. With a 91 percent score on Rotten Tomatoes, direction and screenplay by Paul Thomas Anderson and a performance by actress Vicky Krieps, the film enchanted viewers and critics alike.

The Post, the newest movie directed by Steven Spielberg, surrounds the controversial and difficult publication of the Pentagon Papers. The cast is led by Meryl Streep, who received an Academy Award nomination for Best Actress, alongside Tom Hanks. This movie, based on a true-story, serves as a thrilling drama, reminding audiences of the media's purpose to publish the truth.

The *Shape of Water* is up for an astounding 13 Academy Award nominations. It is a fantasy amid Cold War era America, commonly compared to *Beauty and the Beast*. Guillermo del Toro's the *Shape of Water* received a 92 percent on Rotten Tomatoes.

Last but not least *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri* follows the story of a passionate mother who takes the injustice against her murdered daughter into her own hands. Using just three billboards, she shines a light on the criminal acts of her daughter's aggressor and the ignorant cops on the case. It was nominated for seven Oscars and features a small but star-studded cast.



The Hungry Vikings

Column by Jackie Fahey, Jack Williamson & Kevin Costello

Tony's Deli

Service: ★★★★★

Taste: ★★★★★

Ambiance: ★★★★★

Recently, The Hungry Vikings have resumed searching through Stamford to find the best food the world has to offer. Alas, they only came upon places they had already conquered. With the Vikings on the verge of starvation, they packed their travel chests with axes, maces, and napkins and departed to foreign lands to search for nutrition. The Vikings agreed to set sail for a neighboring settlement known as Greenwich, where they came across an eatery known as Tony's. Once inside Tony's, the Hungry Vikings immediately fought their way to the front of the line and demanded nourishment immediately of any kind.

Viking number one was amazed by the swiftness of the staff behind the counter yelling.

They must have known the Vikings were coming for the food to be finished so quick! Viking number one took his meal, planted himself at a table and opened up his bag to be surprised with a "Bulldog." This was no actual dog, it was a sandwich consisting of chicken, steak, french fries, mozzarella sticks, and hot sauce on a wedge. A tear ran down the Viking's face after seeing such a beautiful creation.

Viking number one loved the mixture of steak and fries. It was a whole meal in between two pieces of bread. The food that stood out the most in the sandwich was the steak, perfectly cooked to the point where it was cooked enough to be in a sandwich but juicy enough to be enjoyed. After he had finished

on this sandwich, Viking number one proclaimed that no sandwich could beat his "Bulldog," but little did he know the Bearded Viking had ordered the "Gator."

The Bearded Viking after hearing the "Bulldog" was ordered demanded another animal, and he was served the "Gator". Before the Bearded Viking could eat his sandwich he ingested a chocolate chip muffin while he waited. The muffin was good but it only made him more hungry. The Bearded Viking ran to his table and dropped his sandwich down to find that he was in for a glorious meal.

His taste buds watered at the sight of a bacon egg and cheese with hot sauce cascading down the sides on the wrapper. With no time to spare he devoured his

food and immediately loved the taste of hot sauce. The mixture of bacon and steak was the highlight of his meal; the two meats combined did not rival each others flavor but strengthen the overall taste. The sandwich was no match for the hunger of the Bearded Viking because he started to smell the sandwich that the Female Viking had chosen.

The Female Viking did not want a barbaric animal-named meal, so she decided to get the chicken cutlet. The smell of fresh bread enticed her to take a bite, and as she bit into the sandwich, the taste of the chicken cutlet overcame everything else. The Female Viking took out her axe to defend her food from the other Vikings, because she knew once they

smelled it they would fight for it. American cheese had been placed on the Female Viking's meal and she could not have been more happy, her sandwich was decimated quickly and was highly rated by the Female Viking.

The Hungry Vikings were full and satisfied by the small Tony's Deli. The Hungry Vikings felt welcome in this foreign land and declared in that moment that Tony's was officially in Viking territory. The Hungry Vikings vowed to return when hunger comes over them while they are in Greenwich. Even though the Vikings were happy with their meals, they set off with an unfulfilled feeling in their guts looking for bigger and better things, The Hungry Vikings journey still continues.

SLAY OF THE MONTH: JAHDAVID JAMES

“Hi, my name is Jahdavid James and I have been addicted to dressing myself for about seven years now. As a kid who grew up continuously romping around between every sport that could make my shins bleed, I picked up skateboarding. Skateboarding culture is the root influence on most of my fashion choices. Groups such as Odd Future and The Strokes developed my addiction of cuffed jeans and Chuck Taylors. Comfort and anti conformity drives my style. My perpetual laziness led to a personal saying of mine: “Never wear anything you could not sleep in during class.” Thrifted finds, flannels and painted shoes came along down the road when I just could not be bothered to be part of the organized brainwashing of picking out clothes every night. I pride myself in my taste of socks. I personally believe that however dull or dreary the outfit, a bright, printed sock goes a long way.

“As far as favorite brands, my list holds popular features such as Vans, Dickies, Pre “Coolest Monkey In The Jungle” H&M, and Nike SB. I am also a large supporter of skate brands both big and small. My personal favorites are RIPNDIP and DGK, have been draped on my body since I was six. Vintage or novelty shirts never seem to go out of style, and a band tee from a concert, or simply a bracelet from that venue makes my outfit feel solid and equipped with the main essentials. Nowadays, I seem to wear anything that truly represents the increasing level of teenage angst that boils underneath my bomber jackets and conven-



tional windbreaker. Sweatpants, dark-toned joggers and oversized sweaters are a true blessing during this unforgiving Northeastern season.

“The few times I might be caught out of a casual setting, I become completely infatuated with button down shirts. Bright floral decorated button downs paired with a dark pullover gives me goosebumps. However, business casual is the farthest I will go because the very thought of a monkey suit makes my blood boil. Ties, bow ties, clip ons, and full three piece suits provoke an allergic reaction like no other. My head becomes filled with nightmares of settings of stale, stagnant offices and pocket protectors. However, a great blazer with a white t-shirt is admittedly my first love. It is a perfect mixture of business and casual, sophistication and simplicity.

“Once in a while I walk past my local Starbucks and stare through the glass at some stranger. Recently I have noticed my sense of fashion has polarized towards something similar to the modern hipster. Surprisingly, I am completely okay with that. I take my muses as they come, but I am a firm believer of taking the norm and making it yours. Even though I conformed to one of the many subclasses of fashion, I still try to infuse a hint of Rastafarian boutique and skateboarding culture. I encourage whomever lays eyes on this article to truly embrace your influences, because creativity stems from someone else’s originality. In a world plagued with constant reprimanding of the copycats and “hypebeasts,” and the thought of who wore it first or better vibrates the inside of our skulls, I raise a toast to the people who don’t give a —.”

To Do Next Month: MARCH

March 3: World Wildlife Day
Celebrate the earth’s plants, animals and the environment, while raising awareness about things that harm the ecosystem.

March 11: Day Light Savings Time Begins
prepare to lose that precious extra hour of sleep and spring ahead.

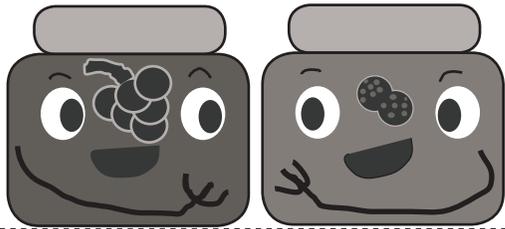
March 14: π Day
A day dedicated to the mathematical constant pi, commonly abbreviated as 3.14. Pi is special because it is infinite and patternless.

March 20: International Day Of Happiness
A nonprofit organization called Action For Happiness, established this day to focus on increasing human happiness.

March 23: Puppy Day
This day is all about the fur balls that we love so much and their unconditional love for us. This day is also to help orphaned puppies find homes.

Belated Valentine's Day cut-out cards

WILL YOU BE THE PEANUT BUTTER IN MY JELLY SANDWICH?



I'm sorry I didn't get you chocolate for Valentine's Day, but if you want something sweet I'm right here.



Do you like cats?
 Because I would like you to take me out for a belated Valentine's Day.



Valentine's Day is everyday when I'm with you.

		7				8		
6			4			3	7	9
				9	8	2	6	
	4	6					8	
1		9	6	3	5	4		
	3					5	9	
	9	1	3	2				
8	7	5			4			
		3				9		

SUDOKU

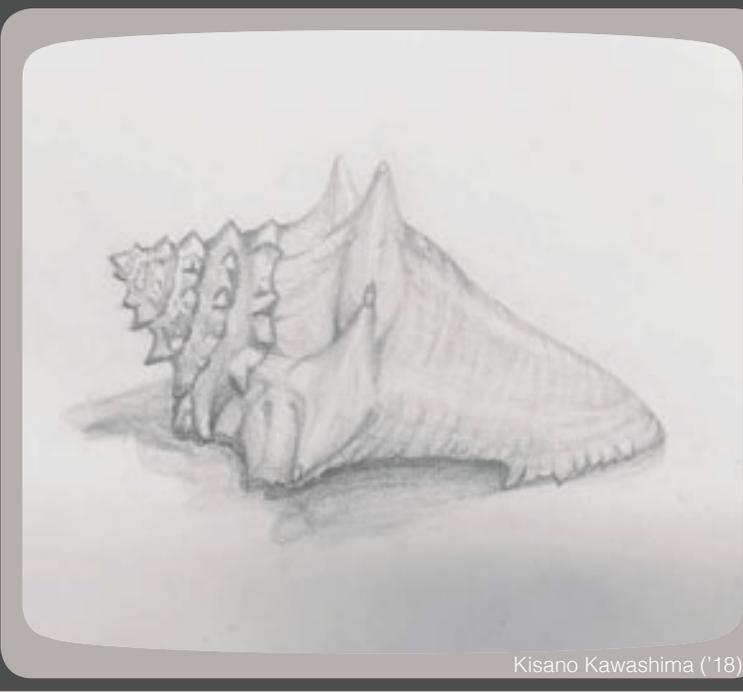
How to play:

The objective of the game is to fill the 9x9 board so that each column, row and 3x3 box contains every digit from one to nine.

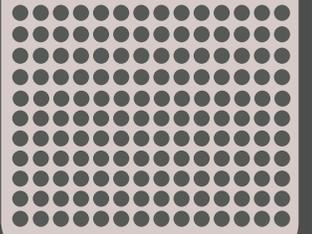
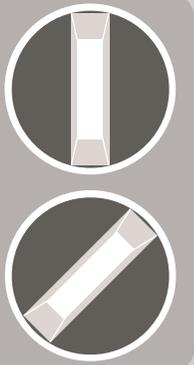
The Westword Presents: EXPRESS



Joshua Greenburg ('18)



Kisano Kawashima ('18)



Nickailla Mclean ('18)



Cimir Carter ('18)

Artist of the Month

Ali Cogan

The Westword: When did you first start becoming interested in art?

Ali Cogan: Ever since I can remember.

TW: How would you describe your artistic style?

AC: I like portraying strange things. I could do something strange or something whimsical.

TW: What is your favorite medium?

AC: I really like digital art. I also enjoy using oil paint even though I have not used it that much lately.

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

AC: My concentration last year on studio art was a kind of mix of haunted places and themes from horror movies.

TW: How has art influenced your life?

AC: Art has kind of shaped who I am and my career path since I was very young. It is always something I have been interested in, so its been the driving factor for my future.

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

AC: Things I see online or in advertisements every day have inspired me to start doing art. I was interested in the way the art can portray so many different things, and I am also interested in seeing what other artists can do.

TW: Is there a message you want to convey?

AC: I do not really have a theme yet. Right now, I kind of just do art through my classes.

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

AC: Yes I do. I am going to major in illustration.

TW: How do people typically describe your art?

AC: Ms. Moncure says it is strange. I think she has said the word "alarming" before, and also "interesting". I have a variety.

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

AC: If you are interested but think you are not talented enough to do it. I always say you are not born with talent, you are born with affinity. It just takes practice, so just keep going. I picked up a pencil when I was young and never put it down.



Baseball field gets a new addition

Maria Mirafuentes

Staff Writer

Watching baseball is widely known as one of America's favorite pastimes, and the community at Westhill thinks no different. At Westhill, there is a Freshman, Junior Varsity, and Varsity baseball team. All three baseball teams host a full roster every year and are competitive to get onto. The team has also produced several college bound athletes.

Recently, the seating at the baseball field has become an issue to many because the old bleachers are warped and hard to sit on.

"Parents were complaining about [the seating] for years. Three years of trying to get someone to do it and we finally have one," said Mr. Savo, former athletic director.

According to Savo, the new bleachers were paid for through

the budget with money delegated for new equipment for the team. It is probable that the lack of attendance at the games is due to the poor quality of the seating. Savo discussed that many parents also complained about the obstructed view in certain seats. Although the amount of people that the bleachers can hold is not yet known, baseball players have said that they will be a great addition. Having the new seating can expand not only how many people show up to support the team, but also the players performance with more people watching.

"New bleachers would attract more fans and a better seating area for many people that support the Westhill baseball team. We would love having bleachers to get more people to cheer us on and boost our confidence," said Timothy Wainwright ('19).

A place for fans to sit was a big concern. "The current stands

are a tough place for fans to sit and watch, hopefully the added seating helps generate or increase attendance" said Mr. Mulvany, Head Baseball Coach.

Many members of the team were excited to hear about the added seating. "I think it is a great addition to the Westhill baseball field, now the fans can watch the games and have a good view," said Leo Socci ('19).

The idea that fans can now truly view the team without any obstacles to look over or issues with seating is a relief to players and can possibly lead to a larger attendance this season.

"Now more people can come see our games, hopefully it will bring more hype," said Bobby Zmarzlak ('19).

Mr. Plateroti, Head Custodian, confirmed that the bleachers should be going up by March or early April, before baseball season begins.



IMPROVEMENT Pictured are the foundations for the new bleachers Westhill will soon be receiving for their fans to sit on.

Photo by Nicholas Zarrilli / Managing Editor.

Boys games vs Girls games

Analyzing the cause and effect of smaller turnouts at girls sporting events



Yulia Lozynska

Staff Writer

Throughout the years at Westhill, there has regularly been more fan support at boy's games than at girl's games. This divide occurs not only in school, but also in the world of professional sports. A common misconception is that males are typically more competitive and aggressive than their female counterparts, and thus people usually want to watch the boy's games more.

The Purple Pack fan section avidly supports most boy's teams, but their turnout has been lackluster at girls' games. As an example, a large energetic crowd can be seen at any football or boy's basketball game while only parents and very few friends of players will watch a girls basketball game. At the boys game, the Westhill side of the bleachers is almost full. On the other hand, the girls' game consists of parents and maybe

five or six students, with the Purple Pack seldomly attending once or twice per season.

"Boys [get more of a crowd] most of the time if it is basketball, hockey, or football, because they are contact sports which makes it more interesting. [Attendance] has nothing to do with the players, it is that the rules of girls sports vs boys sports are sexist" said Nikki Newcomer ('19) who plays on the girls volleyball team.

The more support the school has when it comes to sports, the better. "It definitely is more energetic and exciting and I feel like it strongly impacts the team by bringing everyone's support onto the court," said Nina Bakuradze ('19).

Athletes will likely play better, or at least want to play better, if they have something to play for. If there is no fan section the energy will not be the same. A large crowd encourages players to work and play harder. During the girls games it is just the par-

ents supporting their kid. Turnout can have an overall effect on the score of the game.

Even though people know about the difference fan support can make, some think there will always be a difference in the value of male and female sports. "I think that if there is a big fan section at a game it will help the players performance improve because the fans will get the players hype and get their adrenaline going," said Anthony Laccona ('19).

Equal support is something to strive for, after all, a sport is a sport. "I feel like the boys' games get more of a crowd because more happens, it is just more of a game. Even though I also do not go to any of the girls games, I think the girls should get the same support as the boys do," said Alexis Vanderpoel ('19).

In order for the girl's teams to perform at their best, it would be a good idea for Westhill to support them just as much as the boys, even if there is less contact.

SUPPORTIVE The Westhill Purple Pack supports the sports teams of Westhill by cheering them on at their games.

Photo by Principal Rinaldi / Contributor.

Getting to know the school trainers

Jack Williamson

Staff Writer

Jenna Rousso is Westhill's athletic trainer. It is her job to make sure that athletes are doing everything they can to play safely. In addition, when athletes do get hurt, she makes sure that they are staying safe and recovering normally. The Westword sat down with Rousso to get to know her discuss in more depth what her job is all about.

The Westword (TW): Where are you from?

Jenna Rousso (JR): Trumbull, Connecticut.

TW: Did you play any sports at Trumbull?

JR: I was a soccer player.

TW: Did soccer lead you to pursue a job in the athletic field?

JR: Yes.

TW: How long have you been an athletic trainer?

JR: Two years.

TW: What college did you go to?

JR: Merrimack College.

TW: Do you only work at West-

hill, or do you work somewhere else as well?

JR: I work for Innovative Health and Rehabilitation. We are based out of Norwalk and have a clinic in Stamford. Many schools have contracts with physical therapy clinics, and the physical therapy clinics are responsible for supplying athletic trainers, so I am employed through the physical therapy clinic and they placed me here. I do two mornings a week at the clinic and then I am here everyday after school for practices and games and I am here on Saturdays for games.

TW: What would you say is the best part about your job?

JR: Probably the people I work with. There are a lot of different personalities and many different and great people that I have met. The kids are great, it is a good group, big mix, and I like having a good mix of kids.

TW: Would you say there is a certain team that gets hurt more than the others?

JR: I would say the busiest sport is



STRENGTH Athletic Trainer Jenna Rousso sits in her office where athletes can seek her out for help with any sports related issues they may have.

Photo by Jack Williamson/ Staff Writer.

Ali Knott is Westhill's Strength and Conditioning coach. He works with all of the sports teams to improve their physical shape and maintain a healthy lifestyle through exercise. The Westword sat down with Knott to talk about his work.

The Westword (TW): How many years have you been at Westhill?

Ali Knott (AK): I have been affiliated with Westhill for six years and I have held the title of strength and conditioning [Coach] for the past three years.

TW: Were you an athlete in the past?

AK: Yes. Growing up, I played football, I ran track, played baseball and played basketball recreationally.

TW: Where are you from?

AK: I was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. I came out to Connecticut in 2005 when I went to Central Connecticut University.

TW: Did having a background in athletics lead you to become a trainer?

AK: Absolutely. Once I made the conscious decision that I did not want to pursue it [athletics] professionally, I kind of sat back and I said "how else can I give back to the athletic community, and how can I help people in general?" That is kind of where my interests grew for exercise science. One thing lead

to the next and I got to CCSU, and that is where I really fell in love with just helping mold the athletic body and human body in general.

It is just amazing what you can do, and I have come across so many different shades of athletes and seen them go through so much. My



HEALTH Strength and Conditioning Coach Ali Knott sits inside the Westhill weight room, where he can often be found helping students with their workout routines.

Photo by Jack Williamson / Staff Writer.

love came from being an ex-athlete myself and it also helps me relate to you guys.

TW: Do you enjoy hanging out with athletes in high school?

AK: Absolutely, because it does not feel like a job, it is the best thing in the world. It is "going to work and not feeling like work," and at the end of the day I always say I am a kid trapped in a man's body. I love being an athlete and interacting with athletes. It is something I look forward to doing everyday, and I enjoy coming here and helping/watching them grow. I am fortunate to have been here three years and see some of you guys start as sophomores and make it out to your college life. It is just a beautiful thing to watch.

TW: Have you made a strong connection with a specific team?

AK: I love every single team equally. Certain teams have made more success than others, because their consistency or their dedication and just their work ethic, but I do love working with each and every team. I mean this year I have even had the opportunity to work with a couple of tennis kids. It is nice that diversity that comes through those doors.

TW: Since bringing in your weight program into Westhill, are you starting to see changes in athletes?

probably football. There is something always going on with football.

TW: Coming into your second year have you become almost a second coach?

JR: Not necessarily. I try and help out every sport as much as I can. Being a soccer player growing up, my expertise is soccer. There have been a couple of times where I will point out something to one of the coaches, but I am mostly just bouncing around to every sport.

TW: What one thing you want every Westhill athlete to know?

JR: Probably that athletic trainers are there to help you. Many people are afraid of health care professionals in general, and some athletes are afraid to talk to athletic trainers because they are afraid they are going to keep them out the game, but the goal of an Athletic Trainer is to keep you playing safely, as long as they can.

TW: Last question, what is your favorite sports team?

JR: Probably the Yankees.

AK: Absolutely. I see it, they come back to me after they have gone off to college, they come back and say [something like], "all the torture and blood, sweat, and tears you put me through has made it easier from a college standpoint." Then you get others that just develop a healthier life style, even if you are not going on and high school is that last time you put on pads or lace up. It is still a healthy life style change I am trying to bring and I try and give you guys as much knowledge, so if you want to leave here and pick up a weight at least you know how to pick up that weight.

TW: Is there anything you want the Westhill community to know?

AK: You would be amazed, if you put your mind to it, what the body does. You are talking to a person who has had asthma their entire life, specifically exercise induced asthma and I have really learned how to overcome that. There have been times where it has put me down to a knee, but I have learned to always get back up. Just being in the weight room, it teaches you a lot more than just picking up a weight and putting it back down. You come in here and there are so many life lessons you can learn and there is so much change you can bring to yourself. Never settle for less, like I say, whatever the mind wants the body will achieve.

Stan the man

Josh Eimbinder

Online Executive Editor

It is not hard to find the 6'4" Stanley Villard in the hallways. It is also not hard to find him grinding on the basketball court, working to be the best he can be. Villard is currently a senior, and plays center for the boys basketball team. He is this edition's male athlete of the month.

The Westword (TW): When did you start playing basketball? What league were you in as a kid?

Stanley Villard (SV): I started playing basketball when I was in fourth grade and I never played in a league. I would play with older people to make me better.

TW: Is there a certain age where you realized you were pretty talented?

SV: People said I had potential when I was growing up because of my height. I started to realize in seventh grade that I can be pretty good and play with people and not be intimidated by them.

TW: Do you have a specific routine you follow before games?

SV: Before games I would usually stay to myself and listen to music so I can lock into the game.

TW: What is the best moment you

have had playing basketball?

SV: The best moment of my basketball career was winning an FCIAC in 2016. It meant a lot because Coach White went down at Central the game before FCIACs started and we decided to do it for him the rest of the season. We lost to prep that year but I have learned that you can not take a day for granted. Another one was when I dunked my first game back of my injury. The crowd was excited to see me back on the court so I used their energy to carry me [during] that game.

TW: Do you have a favorite NBA team or player? Who and why?

SV: I do not have a favorite team but a player I have looked up to is Tim Duncan. He was not the flashiest player but he did what he had to do to be successful and is a quiet leader.

TW: What is your offseason routine like?

SV: My offseason routine is to go to the gym everyday and work on my inside and outside game. Some days I will get runs in with the past Westhill kids and get better off of them.

TW: Talk about this years Westhill basketball team compared to years past.

SV: Obviously we did not expect the record we have this year. Coming

in we were inexperienced on a variety level which showed this year. Past years they had guys with experience and the two FCIAC championships helped with their confidence. This year we showed the effort but our inexperience showed at the end on games and usually second half.

TW: What do you think is your best skill on the court and why?

SV: My best skill on the court is going to the rack. Every time I go to the rack hard I would either get fouled or get a layup.

TW: Where is an area you can improve on the court?

SV: I always want to improve on defense. It is fun to make your opponents frustrated and knowing you had a part to do with it.

TW: What is your go to shoe brand and why?

SV: I wear KD's so Nike. Plus, our school is Nike dominant anyway.

TW: What does the future for the Westhill team look like?

SV: I expect good things next year for the guys. They got to work hard in the summer and learn from this year, there is no reason why I cannot see them winning a championship in the next two to three years.



COMMITMENT Villard started playing basketball at an early age. Ever since then, he has does everything he can to improve and play a great game.

Photo contributed by **Stanley Villard** / Contributor.

Leydon looks to cover

Maura Johnston

Staff Writer

Sometimes, it is not about how long you have played, but how much effort and hard work is put in. Junior Mary Leydon has been playing hockey since age ten, but this is only her second year playing goalie. In her sophomore year, she volunteered to play goalie for her team. Although this was only her first year being goalie, she was awarded FCIAC female athlete of the week, a Mickey Lione Jr. fund award, and named all FCIAC. As a junior, she was named captain for her Co-op team. The Westword sat down with Leydon to discuss her success and dedication to hockey.

The Westword (TW): How long have you been playing hockey? Why did you start playing?

Mary Leydon (ML): I have been playing hockey for six years. I started playing because my brother played and I was always at the rink, so I wanted to try playing hockey too.

TW: Do you play outside of

school as well?

ML: I do play outside of school. I used to play for Stamford Sharks and now I play for Darien Ice Cats.

TW: What positions have you played over time?

ML: I did not start playing goalie until last year. Before that I played defense.

TW: Do you have any pregame routines?

ML: My pregame routine is eating a panini with chicken cutlet, mozzarella, roasted red pepper and prosciutto.

TW: What individual goals do you have for hockey?

ML: My individual goal for hockey is to get a shutout.

TW: What are your proudest athletic achievements?

ML: My proudest athletic achievement is winning the Mickey Lione Jr. Fund award last year and making all FCIAC last year.

TW: As captain, what do you do to help your team?

ML: As a captain I plan pasta parties and do a lot of organization

like what warm up we are doing, what our team talk is about, and what freshman has the water and med kit for the week.

TW: What are your favorite parts about this sport?

ML: My favorite part about hockey is the team chemistry. We have a great group of girls and amazing coaches.

TW: What is your favorite team memory?

ML: My favorite team memory, would be covering our coach's car in sticky notes. His car broke and had to stay at the rink all night, so at midnight we went back and covered it in sticky notes.

TW: Will you continue to play hockey outside of high school?

ML: I love hockey so if it continues after high school that would be great, but if it does not I am fine with that.

TW: What life lessons has this sport taught you?

ML: Life is not about winning. As long as you put in 100 percent effort, it feels just as good as winning does.



INFLUENCE Mary Leydon over the years has played on skilled teams such as the Stamford Sharks and the Darien Ice Cats.

Photo contributed by **Mary Leydon** / Staff Writer.



THE FINE & DANDY SHOW WITH JOSH & ANDY

Find it on thewestwordonline.com or look us up on AudioBoom.com

MARCH SPORTS CALENDAR

Week of March 22-31

**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL
THE WINTER SPORTS TEAMS
FOR THEIR SUCCESS THIS
PAST SEASON!**

DATE: 29
EVENT: Varsity Baseball
OPPONENT: Fordham Prep
LOCATION: Away
TIME: 5:00 PM.

DATE: 30
EVENT: Varsity Baseball
OPPONENT: Amity
LOCATION: Away
TIME: 4:00 PM

DATE: 30
EVENT: Varsity Boys Tennis
OPPONENT: Fairfield Prep
LOCATION: Home
TIME: 4:00 PM.

Viking Sports

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Permit Number 57
Stamford, Connecticut



Junior class hosts dodgeball tournament: See thewestwordonline.com for more

Athletes of the Month *p. 38* / New baseball stands *p. 36*



Stanley Villard



Mary Leydon