

The Westword

Student voice of the Westhill community

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

Northstar Playmakers dazzle the stage in *Footloose*

Page 29



6

PRINCIPAL RINALDI
LAUNCHES NEW
STRATEGIC PLAN

11

OP-ED LOOKING INTO
THE IMPACT OF
SEATING IN CLASS

30

WESTHILL WINTER
PERCUSSION BRINGS
THE NOISE

The Westword

2017-2018 Staff

Editor-in-Chief

Noah Klein

Print Executive Editor

Addison Magrath

Online Executive Editor

Josh Eimbinder

Managing Editors

Daniel Greco,
Rachel Plotzky,
Nicholas Zarrilli

Ombudsman

Max Zussman

Media Manager

Meghan Prabhu

Business Manager

Paola Soccia

Social Media Managers

Christina Burgess, Valerie Neyra

Distribution Managers

Hudson Price, Daniel Brennan

Head Illustrator

Alexis Marchetti

Creative Director

Emma Cali

News Editors

Chloe Giulini, Lexi Bocuzzi

Viewpoint Editors

Jude Ponthieu,

Alexandra Watkinson

Las Noticias Editor

Guilmar Valle

Special Editor

Katherine Williams

Feature Editors

Molly Cannon, Marta Zach

Supplement Editors

Bailee Esposito, Katie Gaia,
Micayla Roth

Scatterbrain Editors

Veda Bhalla,
Jason Zarrilli

Limelight Editors

Lucca Metzger,
Joaquin Monteclaro

Express Editors

Sophia Colfer,
Michael Dubon

Sports Editors

Tamar Bellete, Joseph DiSalvo

Copy Manager

Sahithi Kollipara

Copy Editors

Brooke Glatzhofer,
Ryan Hart, Kaela Shaulson,
Sheetal Sudhir,

Graphic Designers

Ryka ChandraRaj, Zachary Kitay

Pollsters

Zainab Jafri, Alexandra Lazo,

David Mezias, Bella Vaccaro

Reporters

Ries Allyn, Audrey Molina,

Hannah Nekritz, Ashley Shapiro,

Shaira Sunbeam

Illustrators

Neeka Baclayon,

Zachary Kitay,

Kathryn Kopec,

Tamar Frydman,

Paulina Seremetis

Videographers

Skylar Rubin,

Stephaine Tancs

Photographers

Alexa Smeriglio,

Nikhil Tungaturthy,

Nicole Vantman, Gabe Schmidt

Co-Advisers

Mr. von Wahlde,

Mr. Wooley

Las Noticias Advisors

Mr. Sandoval

Ms. Mendez

Columnists

Jennifer Carias,

Kevin Costello,

Jackie Fahey,

Matthew Greenbaum,

Jude Ponthieu,

Valerie Neyra,

Jack Williamson,

Max Zussman,

Kelly Fox

April/May 2018

Note from the Editors

Dear Readers,

As the weather heats up, our staff continues to push to provide the best product possible to our readers. We hope you enjoy our April/May Issue and look forward to producing our Senior Issue.

Our Editorial this month looks at downward trend of teen social skills, read more to find out how and why these problems will create issues.

In News, read about Haitian Flag Day, as well as Principal Rinaldi's new strategic plan.

Viewpoint gives insight to students' conflicting opinions on the U.S.' decision to bomb Syria.

Moving on to Las Noticias, hablamos sobre la catástrofe natural que ocurrió en Puerto

Rico y cómo los ciudadanos se reaccionaron. Special Report sheds light on the recent testimony by Mark Zuckerberg, and the issue of privacy online.

Our Supplement provides a "blast from the past" looking back at trends from the early 2000s on. In Feature, take a look at which teachers are hanging out outside of their classrooms.

Limelight contains a movie review of the recent box office boomer, *A Quiet Place*. Scatterbrain covers our Slay of the Month: Jonathan Joseph, as well as the "page of fun."

In Express, view our interview with Tia Blumenau, as well as other student work. In Sports, find out what it feels like to be

cut from a sports team.

We would also like to congratulate all of our staff as *The Westword* has been named "Most Outstanding Newspaper" by the American Scholastic Press Association. *The Westword* is one of two schools to receive this honor out of the 205 that applied. The award is a testament to the work and dedication our staff provides day in and day out.

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 westword-whs@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

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 Bocuzzi, Bailee Esposito, Alexandra Watkinson, Molly Cannon, Jude Ponthieu, Tamar Bellete, Katherine Williams, Guilmar Valle, Mr. von Wahlde, and Mr. Wooley. The Editorial can be found on page 3.

Announcements

Senior wills are due May 15 and can be found in your school e-mail.

Corrections

The Westword incorrectly phrased the poll displayed with the Editorial as "have April break extended or school extended," while the question posed was "April break shortened," in the March issue.

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

What's inside

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 3 | Editorial Examining the problems with current teens and how to fix them. |
| 5 | News Detailing the recent fundraising carried out by the AgriScience program. |
| 11 | Viewpoint Debating the requirement of Google Classroom. |
| 12 | Las Noticias Una ventana al caos económica en Venezuela. |
| 15 | Special Report The Zuckerberg Trial and the idea of privacy. |
| 17 | Supplement Reminiscing on past trends from the 2000s. |
| 28 | Feature A look at Allergy Season at The Hill |
| 29 | Limelight This Month in Hip-Hop |
| 31 | Scatterbrain De-bunking myths in the classroom |
| 34 | Express Artist of the month: Tia Blumenau |
| 37 | Sports What it takes to host a varsity athletic event. |

The Westword
Westhill High School
125 Roxbury Road
Stamford, CT 06902
(203) 977-4894
westwordwhs@gmail.com
thewestwordonline.com
Visit ourschoolnewspaper.com/Westword
to view our print archives.

EDITORIAL

More followers create less friends

When it comes to issues with the late Millennial to Generation Z demographic, few are more concerning than the heavy reliance on technology and social media, which can seriously hurt human interaction.

How many Friends? How many followers? How many likes? How many tweets, posts, hashtags, and pictures are we creating our second selves with on a day to day basis? Critics have long said that we are developing second lives, but have we reached the tipping point where the pseudo-self is taking over the real one?

Today, “talking” and interacting with others can be done all online. Message boards, blogs and other internet communities have connected millions of people without ever meeting one another. Problems are solved. Jobs won and lost. Papers researched, typed, and handed in, never to actually be on actual paper.

However, as more and more people continue to connect to the world via the internet, they can start to struggle with real life interactions.

“With the advancement of technology, more and more students are becoming somewhat resistant to face to face interaction and feel most comfortable behind a screen. I feel this definitely has an impact on the way we all communicate and how we exist,” Mrs. Mitchell, Guidance Counselor said.

If real-life social skills are not used of-

Having strong interviews, being able to work with others, and understanding different personalities of people is a major key towards success. This is harder, though not impossible, online.

Nevertheless, Generation Z may struggle more and more with those aforementioned skills.

Similarly, social anxiety has also be-

Bottom Line: While technology and social media have made Generation Z more connected, serious social issues such as anxiety, awkwardness, and isolation have suffered.

ten enough, a person becomes socially awkward and incapable of handling themselves in confrontations. This isolation and awkwardness can become a serious problem for of this generation.

For example, intellects that struggle with face to face interaction can be outshone by others who have better “people” skills.

come a serious problem for this generation. According to socialphobia.org, Social anxiety is defined as “the fear of social situations that involve interaction with other people, more specifically situations where people feel they may be judged in a harsh or unfair way.”

If we take that anxiety and mix it with social media, we are left open to feelings of

vulnerability or unfair judgement and set up in a manner that is anxiety-ripe.

“Social media definitely encourages a place of judgement. I feel like sometimes we don’t even mean to but we do,” Ava Mastrone ('20) said.

Judging people and making assumptions about them based off a social media persona, whether consciously or subconsciously, makes for a unique source of anxiety that all other generations have not grappled with.

We, as Generation Z, are unique in this manner, and can not always find adults with similar experiences.

From a very young age, we have been constantly bombarded with information, and we have grown up in an age where we have access to an immense amount of information at the touch of a fingertip, and yet - we often lack our own personal experience and the knowledge to sift through and prioritize and socialize in such an environment.

This has created issues in our generation. A lack of emotional maturity, common sense, as well as the ability to perform day to day human interactions are just some of the ways in which Generation Z is losing skills needed to thrive socially.

Everything in our lives, comes and goes so instantaneously and as a result we have challenged the ability to create emotional attachments. Our increased use of technology in relationships and our lack of exposure has inhibited our ability to understand, appreciate, and communicate with one another.

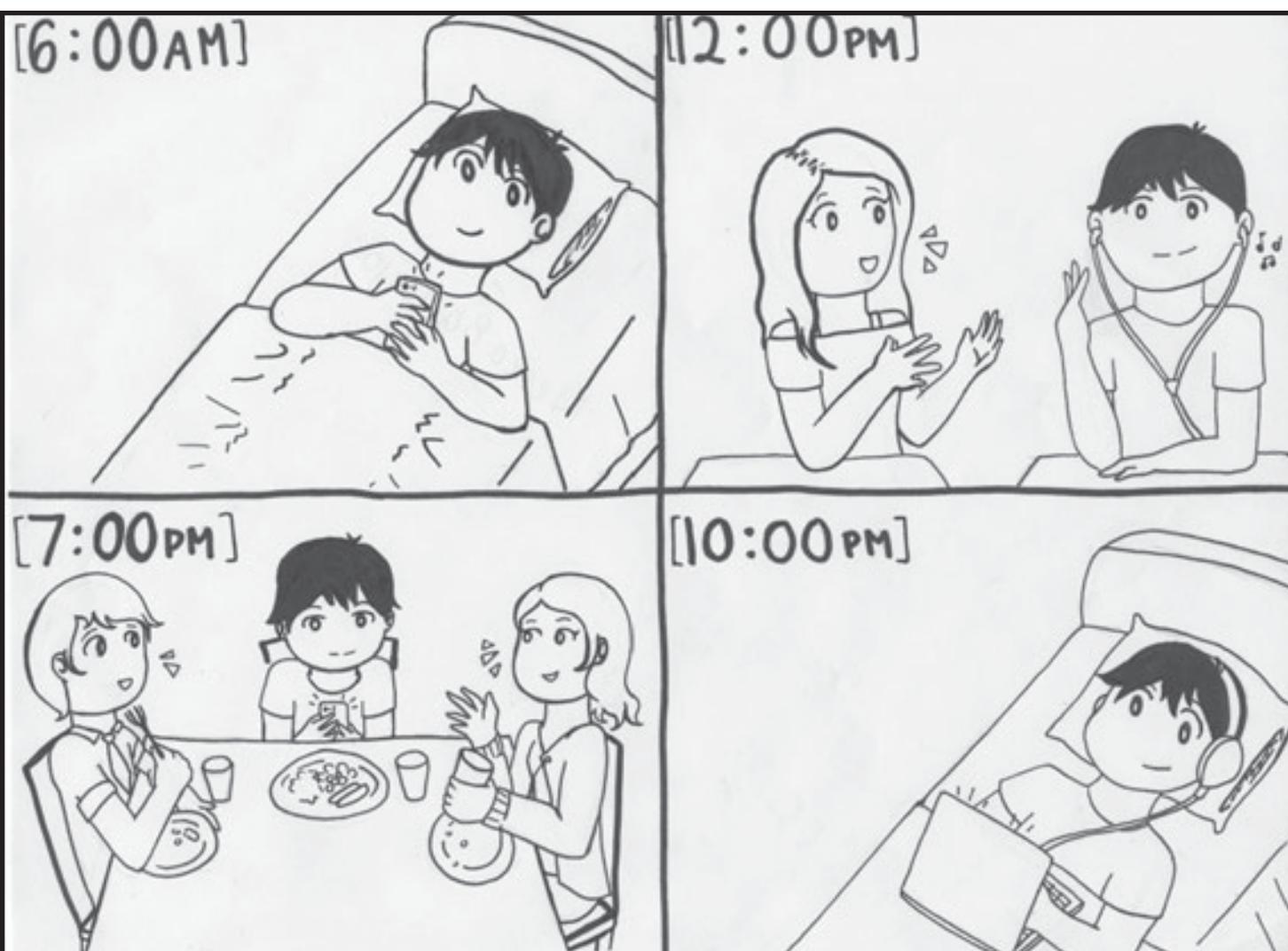
“In addition, they (Generation Z) do not have the patience to develop interpersonal listening skills since everything in their lives is so fast paced,” Ms. DeAngelis, English teacher said.

We have become a generation that is poorly equipped to navigate society and effectively communicate with other people.

“...phones have changed us in that we are at extremes in the umbrella of knowing about such experiences. We communicate so far and well with tech that people who do not know about certain issues are almost gone,” Giselle Estevez ('20) said.

We are left with some disturbing information: what we love is, in fact, destroying us; and we are left asking what is our role in making sure we do not give into the second lives, the anxiety, and the social media; forgetting the real attachments of our first, living and breathing lives.

Illustration by Neeka Baclayon / Illustrator.



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

Principal Rinaldi launches new initiative

Noah Klein
Editor-in-Chief

At a staff meeting on Wednesday, May 2, Principal Rinaldi announced Westhill's new Strategic Student Engagement Initiative (SSEI).

The SSEI plan lays out Rinaldi's beliefs and vision of student engagement, and how it will be accomplished. The plan focuses on equality amongst students, student voice, and engagement in the classroom. The SSEI will begin at the end of the 2017-2018 school year.

After his first year at Westhill, Rinaldi felt it was necessary to share his vision through the SSEI.

"I feel it is very important that I share, after this year, what I have learned about my new school, [and] what my vision is. For a new principal in a new school, a vision is not something you can articulate when you start a school year. You can have an idea, but

your vision should be informed by everything you learned in your first year," Rinaldi said.

Some teachers were appreciative of Rinaldi's openness and honesty in his vision, while others felt the plan lacked concrete instructions.

"It is very positive to have a clear understanding of your principal's vision for the school. It is really helpful and should trickle down within a team," Mrs. Sansone, Senior Class Advisor/business teacher said.

"I think there has to be a more concrete plan in place, [SSEI] has merit as an idea, but from what I could see from the presentation, it seemed like that was his [Rinaldi's] vision and plan rather than a concrete step-by-step plan to increase student engagement," Mr. Hill, history teacher, said.

The plan has not yet been released to parents and students, although select students were invited to the staff meeting. Junior

Class President, Nikki Newcomer ('19), was in attendance.

"It was amazing to see how passionate Rinaldi is about his work," Newcomer said.

The SSEI focuses on getting students on track for the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Scale. The DOK refers to the level of knowledge or understanding to answer a specific question. Level One refers to basic knowledge of facts, while Level Four refers to solving real world, multi-step, complex world problems.

Rinaldi discussed the importance of all levels, but the need for teachers to be giving Level Three and Four questions. The plan takes into account the difficulty of teaching teenagers, and illustrates the need for all students to be taught, as well as treated, equally.

"We have a responsibility that goes beyond delivering curriculum to make connections with kids so that they understand, that

they are worthy, and overtime that connection may help students," Rinaldi said.

The SSEI will look to change the way students learn, and the initiative claims that teachers must change and adapt to the teens of today.

"It is harder to engage students today than it was before all social media and technology. Students want instant gratification, and because of that, we should be compelled to evolve our practice to meet the needs of the 2018 adolescent...I want activities that students take part in to be student run. I want them to have a voice. I want them to be active when getting lectured. That is antiquated. It is just not good enough," Rinaldi continued.

Engaging students through lesson plans is a very large part of the SSEI.

"I am usually most engaged with group work and activities. It is better than just sitting around

all day listening to a lecture," Goddie Royal ('18) said.

The SSEI describes Rinaldi's vision and his beliefs about teachers, and the job of an educator. As the SSEI is rolled out, he says some parts of it are "non negotiable."

"I know there are kids that can still fail, but we should never give up on a kid. If you are going to admit that you are going to give up on a kid, you are going to be uncomfortable at Westhill," Rinaldi said.

The plan pinpoints the idea that teachers are responsible for both student success and student failure.

"We should strive to ensure that our students succeed, to a point. You can lead a horse to water but you cannot make it drink," Hill said and links to teacher responsibility.

The SSEI presentation will be released soon through a video linked to the Prezi presentation, giving students and parents a chance to see Rinaldi's vision for the school in coming years.

Senior Wills CLASS OF 2018

Do you want to leave something behind?
Visit thewestwordonline.com or
check your school email for a
link to fill out your very own
Senior Will for the Senior Issue!
Act fast! Wills are due Tuesday May 22

Graduation day encroaching on the start of summer

Andrew Lappas
Staff Writer

Graduation is the end of a student's high school career. It is the day when the past four years of a student's life come to an end, and students are forced to grow up. Seniors need to wait an extra week this year before being considered a graduate because of the many snow days Westhill had this year.

Students will not be given their diplomas on the day of graduation. According to the official Stamford Public Schools website, "...students are not officially graduated until they complete the 180th day of school on Monday June 25 at which time the class will be certified and students will receive their diplomas."

The last thing seniors need to be worrying about is when graduation will take place and getting their diploma because they still have more work to do before the year is over. All

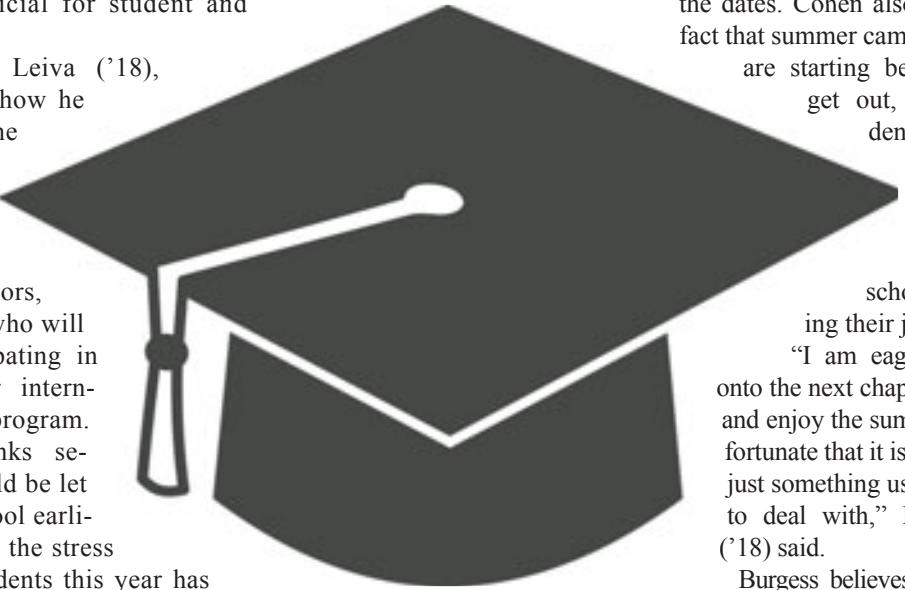
year, seniors put in effort trying to get into college, enlist in military services, or identify a trade that they are interested in pursuing. Moving the graduation date will be both hurtful and beneficial for student and staff.

Frank Leiva ('18), explained how he thinks the graduation day situation is unfair for seniors, like him, who will be participating in the senior internship program. Leiva thinks seniors should be let out of school earlier and that the stress on the students this year has been especially significant.

"I am worried about a lot of seniors failing because of absences and losing credits they need to graduate with the ad-

ditional days on the calendar," Leiva said.

Like many other seniors, he is looking forward to graduation, getting a job and preparing for college.



"I am fine with it moving, because it is still on a Friday, and I still get to see the students I have taught walk," Mrs. Co-

hen, Special Education teacher, said.

Cohen is also nervous for some seniors who possibly might have planned trips that students now need to cancel or move back the dates. Cohen also relayed the fact that summer camps in the area

are starting before schools get out, forcing students to have to make difficult decisions about finishing school or start-

ing their jobs.

"I am eager to move onto the next chapter of my life and enjoy the summer. It is unfortunate that it is later, but it is just something us seniors have to deal with," Pete Burgess ('18) said.

Burgess believes that graduation could have been earlier since the last three to four days of school are half days that are low on work load.

Chrystahsa McCalla ('18) expressed her opinion about

the change in the graduation date. McCalla is very upset because, she is missing her best friend's graduation at Stamford High school, since Westhill's graduation now falls on the same day.

"Moving graduation back was actually good for me because it gives me an extra week to plan and get ready," Mrs. Sansone, Senior Class Advisor, said.

Sansone is in charge of planning graduation logistics for the seniors.

"If graduation was moved up I would be in trouble because it would be less time to make it the best experience for the seniors. The overall excitement for graduation will still be there," Sansone continued.

Seniors may have to wait a little longer for their diplomas, creating a stir amongst students. The delay may create scheduling conflicts or be an annoyance. However, the day will still be a momentus event.

Haitian Flag Day is around the corner

Westhill students to celebrate Haitian Flag Day

Grace Etienna and Thierrie Maigan

Contributors

Haitian Flag day will be celebrated at Westhill on May 18. The day will be filled with facts about Haiti, dances, food, and overall culture of Haiti. The data from the most recent census show that 7.7% percent of Stamford is made up of those of Haitian descent, while in comparison the U.S. is made up of 1.1%.

Editors note: The following portion of this article was submitted by two representatives of the Haitian Culture Club in order to get the word out about Haitian Flag Day and its origins.

Haitian Flag Day has been around for centuries. This year however, the Haitian Club will celebrate the day as a sanctioned event.

The origins of Haitian

Flag Day go far back. During 1791, the early days before the revolt in Saint Domingue, many large groups raised up and became separated due to the political turmoil. Each group leader would use a small piece of cloth as a flag. During this revolt Toussaint Louverture realized it was silly to use the same flags as the French, their enemy. Due to this, Louverture invented his own flag, a white piece of cloth with a depiction of a negro head. That flag represented Haitians during the revolution for their freedom.

Years later, the first official Haitian flag was adopted on May 18, 1803. The Haitian lore holds up a newly appointed revolutionary leader Jean-Jacques Dessalines, he created the flags by taking a French tricolor and ripping out the white center.

The color Blue symbolizes the mulattoes and the blacks while the color red symbolizes their blood.

Emperor Dessalines ends up changing the flag to black and red upon crowning himself as emperor in 1805. After the murder of Dessalines in 1806, the empire was established by General Alexandre Pétion the new ruler of Haiti established returned the colors blue and red, subsequently turning them horizontal and adding the newly adopted Haitian coat of arms.

A video will be shown during Connection Time on May 25 showcasing a Haitian dance and facts about Haiti. There will also be "A Taste of Haiti" in the cafeterias during all three lunch waves. The Haitian Club will look to share the culture and taste of Haiti through both events.

ENTREES • PIZZA •
 SEAFOOD • SPECIALTIES •
 APPETIZERS • STEAKS &
 SALADS • CALZONE
 WEDGES • BURGERS
 SOUP • PANINIS
 WRAPS • CHILDREN'S
 OR
 Monday & Tuesday Only
 John The Baker 203-325-0707
 No Sides Included. Limited Menu. Expires 6/2018.
 Not to be combined with any other offer.
 Now available for take out, delivery & dine in.
DINE-IN • TAKE-OUT • DELIVERY
 Monday - Saturday 11:00 am - 10:30 pm
 Sunday 12:00 pm - 10:30 pm
 30 LONG RIDGE ROAD • STAMFORD, CT 06905
203-325-0707
 To order by fax: 203-977-8550

Cloonan hosts annual Parent University

Hannah Nekritz
Reporter

On Thursday, May 10, Cloonan Middle School hosted its spring forum of Parent University. This annual program offers an evening of educational courses and discussions designed to provide parents with the information needed to help their children succeed, inside and outside of school.

This is the fourth year of the program, which was presented in partnership with Westhill, and is open to all Stamford Public Schools (SPS) parents. Mr. Dunlap was one of the founders, and is the administrator behind the program.

This year, the program included three new courses: "The Dangers of Vaping" and "What Parents Need to Know," "The Neurological Impact on Executive Functioning Skills," and "The New SPS Curriculum, Post-Secondary Transition Services for Special Education Students."

A total of eight courses were offered this year. Each course conducted panels on the subjects, many led by experts. Overall, the evening offered a source of information and support for parents seeking to help their children navigate the complexities of high school.

"I have enjoyed attending Parent University for the past two years, it is a great way for parents to come together to learn vital information to help support their teenagers throughout high school," Mrs. Essenfeld, a Westhill parent, said.

Many students also recognize the importance of a program that helps to bridge differences in age and experience between parents and students.

"Parent University is a helpful tool for parents learning how to help their children through their teenage years, and understand the kinds of things they might be going through," Gabby Lovishuk ('19) said.

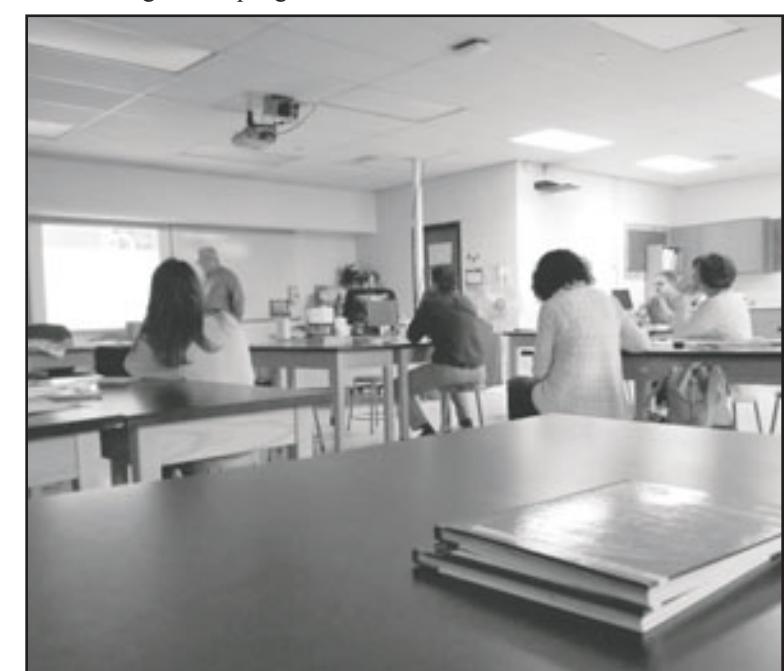
After all, many parents faced a different high school

experience than their children. Courses offered such as "Surfing Safely and Other Internet Issues," address some of the differences that come from changing technology, as well as changing culture.

Others simply address the consistent challenges of high school, such as academic pressure, relationships, stress, anger, and their impact on parents and their teens.

Although the program be-

gan as a single event offering a source of information and support for parents, it has since become an annual event that parents and students alike, find to be a positive resource for students and their families.



LEARNING ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL Parents sitting at Parent University for a lesson on their children's day-to-day lives, and how they can help support them.

Photo contributed by Hannah Nekritz / Reporter.

The Westword

Looking for the perfect club for you?
Join *The Westword!*

The Westword offers positions for all skill sets. Become an editor, reporter, illustrator, graphic designer, photographer, copy editor, or videographer.

.....

If interested please contact us at westwordwchs@gmail.com or visit 224.

Good Month

Bad Month

Column by
Matthew Greenbaum
& Max Zussman



Good Month for...

North Korea Kim Jong-un stepped foot in South Korea, making it the first time a North Korean ruler had ever done so since the division of the nation in 1945. During the Winter Olympics, Kim sent his sister, along with many others, to attend the games in South Korea. In addition, Kim has met with President Trump. Kim Jong-un has also agreed to end nuclear missile testing in efforts to promote peace.



New Orleans Pelicans The New Orleans Pelicans put on quite a performance, sweeping the number three seeded Portland Trail Blazers in the opening round of the NBA Playoffs. Considered heavy underdogs, it took an MVP performance from Anthony Davis with two often overlooked players Rajon Rondo, and Jrue Holiday to play some of the best basketball of their career. The Pelicans will face the champion-favorite Golden State Warriors in the second round.



Royal Baby Prince William and Kate Middleton had another Royal Baby on April 23. A few days after giving birth, the couple decided to name the baby boy Louis Arthur Charles. Louis came into the world at a healthy eight pounds and seven ounces. With George and Charlotte as the baby's two older siblings, Louis is now fifth in succession to the throne. The name Louis came from Prince Charles' mentor, who was a British naval officer.

Bad Month for...

Tristan Thompson NBA Center, Tristan Thompson found his name in the headlines this month, but not for the right reasons. Cheating scandals were brought to light after photos and videos of him with multiple other women appeared online. Tristan's first daughter with Khloe Kardashian, True, was born days after the scandal. The Kardashian family is looking out for Khloe, and no official statement has been made on the allegations.



Afghanistan Bombings April 30 marked the bloodiest day for journalists in a very long time, with at least nine killed and another half a dozen wounded in a double-suicide bombing in Afghanistan's capital, Kabul. At least 25 people were killed, and dozens more were injured in this tragic event. The bomber was disguised as a TV cameraman. The journalists targeted in Kabul were Afghans working for media organizations from various countries. The Islamic state took credit for the attack.



Romaine Lettuce There has been a recent outbreak of E. coli induced food poisoning. Scientists are saying it is linked to romaine lettuce. At least 121 people have been reported sick as of May 1. More than 50 patients have been hospitalized due to E. coli poisoning. There have been no fatalities, but the infections have spread to 22 states. Scientists have located a specific farm in Yuma, Arizona that has been the source of the outbreak.

AgriScience puts the "fun" in fundraising

Students sell plants, wash cars and dogs to raise money for the program

Josh Eimbinder

Online Executive Editor

On May 5, 12, and 19, the Stamford Regional AgriScience is hosting their annual plant sale. AgriScience students will be working from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. Herbs, perennials, hanging baskets, and geraniums will all be available for sale. There will be a dog wash on May 5. Prices range from five dollars for ear cleaning, to 40 dollars for a 30-pound dog or more.

"A great thing about this sale is the prices. You cannot find anywhere else with this good of quality," Vice President, Josh Appel ('18) said.

The dog wash is only one day, while the car wash is both on May 12 and 19. Donations are encouraged and accepted. dogs must have their proper paperwork to get groomed.

"We sell about 4,000 vegetables grown from seed by the AgriScience students, and we raise about 2,000 plants. We have tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, strawberries, squash and herbs. We will also be selling succulents," Etan Gabay ('18) said.

There will also be Henna from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on May 12. Dried henna is made into a paste and then used to dye hair and decorate the body. People will use it for designs on their hands. The prices will range from ten dollars to 35 dollars.

"Last year's plant sale, I loved working in the green-

houses to answer any ques-

tions customers might have had about the plants. People should definitely come out to support our program, because not only did we put so much effort into preparing for it, but all of the money raised goes towards educational scholarships and field trips," Brianna Weinreb ('19) said.

The AgriScience program helps the Fairgate Farm during their growing season, as well as participating in multiple beach clean-ups with Sound Waters.

The program is also involved with the preservation work at the Scalzi Riverwalk Nature reserve.

The AgriScience program hosts several fundraising events throughout the year, such as the haunted house in October, and their holiday

plant sale.

"Students in the AgriScience learn proper customer service skills, how to write receipts, and with this sale, they get to apply them. I am excited to see all the freshman use their newfound customer service skills. That is the thing I love about [these] plant sales," Appel said.

While this is the last plant sale for the seniors, it is just the first for many of the AgriScience underclassmen.

If you cannot make the sale on the specific dates, it will be open during most school days. Make sure to call the school to verify they will be open before coming to buy plants.

Call (203) 977-4974 for more information on the plant sale, or any upcoming AgriScience events.



PLANTS GALORE Students in AgriScience program sell a variety of plants at annual fundraiser.

Photo by Jocelyn Aquino / Contributor.

Mona Mitri

Director

TutorMeSOS
STRATEGIES OF SUCCESS

1051 Long Ridge Road, Stamford, CT 06903

203.724.9200 203.521.0692

mmitri@tutormesos.com www.TutorMeSOS.com

Highlighting the Syria bombing

Nicholas Zarrilli
Managing Editor

Whenever the U.S. gets involved with the issues of foreign nations there will no doubt be people wondering why. However, the U.S. has sworn to lend a helping hand to nations in both times of conflict and in times of peace with humanitarian efforts.

"We should have a presence in Syria because it is a humanitarian cause," Ms. Denninger, English teacher, said.

Despite the mounting evidence in the past against the Syrian government, the Obama Administration was unable to get congressional approval for military action. From that point forward the only thing the U.S. could do was carry out bombing raids on Islamic State bases within Syria and hope that Syria had forfeited all of its chemical weapons.

This position of waiting would prove to be ineffective in taking care of the problem when the Syrian government launched a gas attack in April 2017. With a new administration in place and Syria let off the hook, it was finally time for the U.S. to stand up and take action.

The attack left approximately 74 dead and over 500 injured. With the Trump Administration in place, the president got approval for a missile barrage aimed at the air base from which the gas attack was launched.

Polls conducted by *ABC News* and *The Morning Consult* showed that respectively 51 percent and 66 percent of the nation approved of the decision to take further action in Syria. These actions prevented gas attacks for another year.

"The U.S. should have minimal influence because it is a humanitarian crisis. It involves a lot of families and children, but we should take some action because the U.S. is one of the major nations and government that the world looks up to," Mr. Temilini, business teacher, said.

On April 7, Syrian government troops launched an offensive on one of the few remaining cities held by rebel forces near the Syrian capital of Damascus. In this offensive, on site doctors and witnesses reported attack helicopters dropping gas filled bombs, killing at least 70 people. Syria and its ally Russia have denied the use of chemical weapons.

The U.S., the United Kingdom and France have all begun justified bombing raids on targets suspected of housing chemical weapons.

Considering how many times Syria has been reprimanded for chemical warfare attacks in the past, it is surprising that the nation would once again use these outlawed weapons in the conflict.

"The U.S. should get involved because they are bombing religious people, so a third party needs to get involved to calm things down," Melvin Andre ('18) said.

With Syria's continued use of these weapons, comes the necessity for foreign intervention. If the U.S. can finally bring an end to this war, which continues to break international law, then intervention is not only justified, but required.



DESTRUCTION IN SYRIA After the Assad regime delivered attacks using chemical weaponry, the U.S. sent missile strikes to send a message. This resulted in the destruction of Syria's capital, Damascus.

Sabrina Boyd
Staff Writer

On April 13, the U.S., United Kingdom and France bombed Syrian research, storage, and military targets as a form of punishment for President Bashar al-Assad after a suspected chemical attack that claimed the lives of more than 70 people.

"We are prepared to sustain this response until the Syrian regime stops its use of prohibited chemical agents," President Trump said during a press conference.

Trump refuses to pull the troops out of Syria because he wants to stop any further chemical attacks the Assad regime may be planning.

The day before the reported use of chemical weapons, the Trump Administration publicly abandoned Obama's policy that rejected Assad remaining in office. Two days later, the president ordered 59 missiles into a country without any declaration of war, based on his emotional response to televised images of suffering.

Strikes on Syria's fuel pumps and structures are not likely to stop the Assad regime from furthering their attacks using chemical weapons, or even weaken the Assad regime. With the continuation of these attacks from Assad, President Trump's policy can divert taking full military action on Syria, which could prolong the war. The public is unaware of what President Trump will do next since he campaigned as a non-interventionist who vowed to withdraw U.S. troops from the Middle East entanglements.

According to *The Washington Post*, at a White House dinner, Trump said that the reason there are still problems in Syria is "because Obama did not enforce his redlines."

Trump's bombing of Syria's chemical weapon structures does not protect the U.S. Troops stationed in Syria from Assad's chemical weapons, it actually puts them at a higher risk of being attacked.

"[The U.S. is] already involved and in terms of aiding rebels who are also using chemical weapons, why are we not looking at diplomatic tactics in trying to resolve this issue? Why is our only response dropping bombs?" Mr. Kubick, history teacher, said.

"[The U.S. has] no overall strategy before, or even now, going into Syria and we do not have any exit strategy in getting out without causing more problems. This is a example of political platitudes and in my opinion this is what happened with Iraq and Afghanistan," Mr. White, history teacher, said.

It is important to note that many students felt unable to comment on the issue because they felt uneducated on the topic.

The U.S. is unclear on who was affected by the bombing. There could have been innocent civilians who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time that got caught in the crossfire. If we continue to bomb Syria, more innocent civilians are likely to get hurt.

There needs to be more thought put into our strategy in handling the problems in Syria. Instead, the U.S. government should worry about more pressing issues that are happening currently in this country.

The difficulty of setting a graduation time

Ashley Shapiro

Reporter

Graduation day is a special occasion for seniors; it is the final step as they move onto the next chapter of their lives. Unfortunately, due to the unusual amount of snow days, there was uncertainty surrounding the date and time this important event would occur.

The uncertainty caused many issues for families this year. It made it difficult to plan for family members to travel, as well as families who plan to celebrate post graduation.

This momentous event was finally set for June 22 at 4 p.m. Westhill's graduation this year is at the same time as

Stamford High School's. This makes it impossible for friends attending the other school to see each other graduate.

In past years, Westhill and Stamford High's graduations have been on the same day, but at different times making it easy to attend both.

"I think it is very inconvenient for any families that are trying to attend both graduations after all of the confusion of when the date was," Laura Carroll ('18) said.

The new date is also controversial because some students and parents had planned for an earlier graduation.

"It causes an issue because people already had things planned at that time, like college orientation or early summer plans.

It is bad that all the schools are at the same time because it is just inconvenient for parents," Sabine Sawyer ('18) said.

Some people are appreciative of the early start time because of the weekly Jewish event, Shabbat, which begins at sundown. However, others are frustrated that they will have to leave work early to attend graduation.

"I am happy the Board of Education decided to make graduation the 22nd rather than the end of the month. We do not do any work at the end of school anyway so this way people can leave earlier for vacation," Amanda Friedman ('18) said.

The time also causes issues for people who live in the neighborhood around

Westhill. The congestion in the neighborhood makes it nearly impossible for people to come or go around graduation time. The traffic at the end of graduation will also cause problems for the people coming home from work who live near the school or need to pass through.

Graduation begins at peak traffic time which will only cause more frustration. The district did their best to accommodate scheduling, traffic and religious conflicts but there is not an ideal time that would work for everyone. Whether students are in support of the date of graduation or not, June 22nd will be a memorable day.

Photo courtesy of commons.wikimedia.com.

How educated should substitutes be?

Jack Williamson

Staff Writer

Every student has had at least one experience in common, arriving to class and being met by a substitute teacher. Every student reacts differently, some see the substitute and head right out of class, while other students begin to treat the class as a study hall. Students may use the time to talk to their friends or go on their phones.

Stamford Public School's current policy is that substitute teachers must have a bachelors degree from an accredited school.

Requiring substitutes to have a bachelors degree is a great first step, but it can still be improved. Having someone with a bachelors degree means they are highly educated, but requiring substitutes to have a specialized degree would keep a substitute that majored in accounting from teaching a Spanish class.

"Making all of these substitutes specialized would make them more expensive and definitely fewer in numbers," Kelly Bernatchez ('18) said.

However, having less quantity of substitutes would not mean lower quality.

Substitutes, just like teachers, should be resources for students. They

tute can be teaching it. However if it is an art class, the students most of the time are doing a continuous assignment that does not require much over-

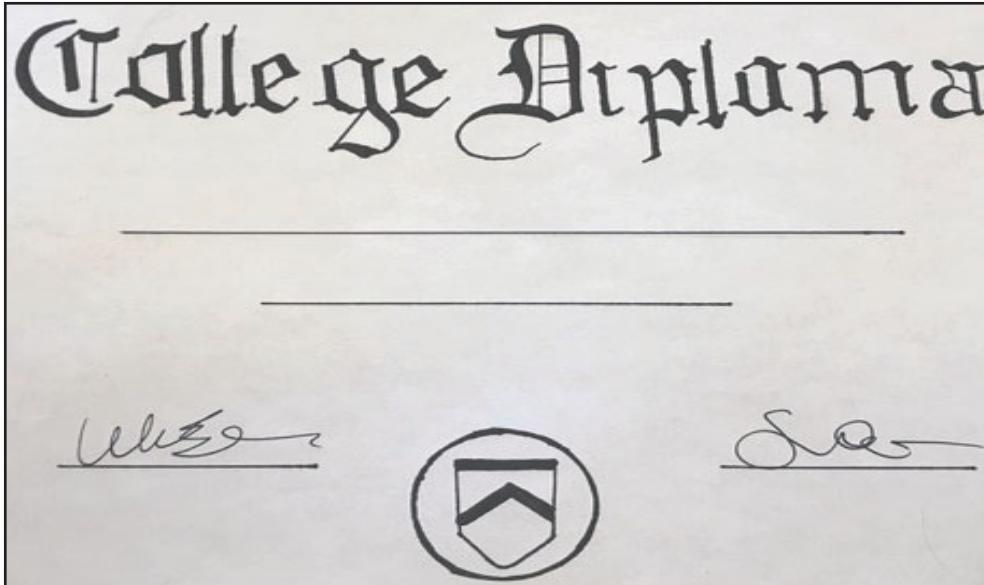
adjust to losing a day. Teachers are absent at times, but their short term replacements can change from being in charge of a free period to an instructional one.

A substitute teacher should need to have a degree in the area they are substituting for to be able to help students. If students have a math test the next day and their substitute has an English degree, in any class this could negatively affect the students.

Following a lesson plan left behind by a teacher can be done by a substitute with any degree, but students need more.

"If a substitute is [covering] for a math class, they should have a degree in math because the teacher can be out for [an unknown amount of time]," Jemeson Charlestain ('18) said.

Substitute teachers should have degrees in the field they are substituting for. Even though days off may seem like fun, the truth is students are wasting time they could be using to continue to better themselves as students.



would need a degree in the class they are teaching to be useful for the class.

"It depends on the class because for a math class there is a lot that can be missed in one class when the substi-

seeing," Allison Wilson ('18) said.

Even though having a period to decompress sounds nice, it interrupts the class curriculum. Students fall behind and the teacher has to



The need for Google Classroom

Nathan Isenstein

Staff Writer

Google Classroom, a virtual classroom platform, has risen through the ranks since 2014 as a tool for teachers to better communicate with students. Google Classroom comes with many advantages, the main one being the increase in accessibility to assignments.

With Google Classroom, assignments are never lost and can easily be completed outside of the classroom. Students that miss a day's work can easily retrieve assignments and make them up online as opposed to waiting the next day, dealing with the stress of making up a lot of work in one day.

"It is easier to keep track of assignments and get your work

if you miss a day of school [with Google Classroom]," Mason Perkins ('19) said.

Another advantage is that feedback is instant on Google Classroom. For instance, teachers can have students take a quiz on the classroom's stream and get quick results from their students.

Google Classroom is also a way to integrate today's internet-reliant society with a classroom environment without losing any information. Anything can be readily posted on a class' feed.

Google Classroom can also be helpful in preparing students for the future by creating the opportunity to experience an online classroom dynamic.

Google Classroom is environmentally friendly. Since Google Classroom is entirely

online, there is no need for paper, which saves trees and lightens students' backpacks.

There are also disadvantages that come with using Google Classroom. One of them is that it has to be managed properly in order to be effective.

Students must learn to be able to use Google Classroom without getting distracted.

"It is hard to access with your phones, and not everyone has access to a computer all of the time," Shane Hackett ('19) said.

Google Classroom would be hard to use for math or science classes, where a lot of the work students get is textbook based.

Teachers also may not have the time to be able to learn Google Classroom well enough to make it a viable tool for students.

"If teachers had more time

to learn the technology, more of them would be able to use it more effectively in the classroom," Mr. Capriotti, Math Department Head, said.

Google Classroom is overall an optimal tool for teachers. Even though it is hard for teachers to be required to use an online program, it should be used by every teacher who does not have a curriculum based on a textbook.

The benefits that come with Google Classroom are very hard to ignore. With the right exposure, Google Classroom may become a staple in an everyday classroom.

UPCOMING

Senior Issue

TOPICS

Senior Wills

WestAwards

Editor-in-Chief reflection

Should junior prom become a formal?

Lexi Bocuzzi

News Editor

Prom is the pinnacle of many students' high school experience, and a true representation of American culture.

Most schools throughout the country only have a Senior Prom. On the contrary, Westhill hosts a prom for the Junior and Senior class'.

In recent years Junior Prom has caused a lot of discourse, specifically over whether or not it should still exist.

Parents and staff have been concerned about the significant financial burden that having two proms places on Westhill students, and as a result have proposed changing the prom to a formal. The hope is that this would decrease the cost students feel obligated to pay associated with the event.

"Junior Prom is so extravagant that most girls buy expensive, long dresses and spend a lot of money getting hair and makeup done. This makes it unaffordable to many and makes Senior Prom nothing major to look forward to," Betsy Sachs ('20) said.

Nevertheless, the Junior Prom should continue with the precedent set by Westhill tradition. The event should remain a prom in an effort to retain the respect for the event.

It is rare for students in high

school to have the opportunity to attend an event where they can dress up and enjoy a fun, special night.

"Junior Prom should continue to be a prom, because for most of the students there are very few opportunities where we can dress up and go to a dance together and just have fun," Divya Gada ('20) said.

In changing the event from a prom to a formal, the Junior Prom would lose its noteworthy status and thus people would not have the same high regard for the event, making it less enjoyable.

Additionally, part of the appeal associated with prom is the other details that go along with prom night, such as "promosing" and pre-prom. In changing the event to a formal, many of these unique experiences could be taken away.

"Just like Senior Prom, Junior Prom should be a prom as well. That is how it has always been and that is how most Juniors like it," Elsa Amiti ('19) said.

Junior Prom does have its issues. In many cases, it does present an unnecessary financial burden on both students and their families who have to pay for the costs of an outfit, shoes, and jewelry on top of the ticket price.

A poll conducted by *Seventeen Magazine* found that girls spend an average of \$231 dollars on prom

dresses. Research by [klegacypress.com](#) came to the conclusion that boys spend approximately \$184 dollars for their tuxedos.

As a result, modifications could be made to Junior Prom in order to decrease the cost of attendance. One of which could be modifying the dress code associated with prom and urging girls to wear short or less extravagant dresses and boys to wear suits or slacks rather than tuxedos.

"I think keeping the name prom but encouraging girls to wear short dresses would keep the formality of it so that it is not like homecoming and would also solve the cost issue," Sachs said.

Not only would these modifications to Junior Prom aid in making the event more affordable for all students, but it would also differentiate it from Senior Prom. It would additionally give students something to look forward to for Senior Prom, with an event that is more formal.

Despite the proposed changes that could be made to the event, Junior Prom should continue to be a prom in order to keep with tradition and retain the esteem for the event.

Editors Note: After this article was written, the sophomore class began deliberations of whether or not to have junior prom or a formal next year.



How seating impacts education

Maura Johnston
Staff Writer

Classroom desks or chairs are organized in different ways depending on a teacher's style of teaching. The desks may be organized in rows, a large circle, semi-circle, tables, or other layouts. The teacher may also have assigned or free seating.

The reason a teacher decides to organize their classroom could be for a variety of reasons. For example, if the class is group task oriented, the teacher may have their students in assigned clusters, based on who works best together. Similar situations may happen for ability level and behavior management.

A teachermagazine.com study in 1999 tested whether different seating arrangements led to students asking more questions. They tested traditional rows and a semicircle.

According to the researchers, "the results showed that question-asking was more frequent when the children were seated in the semi-circular arrangement than in the row-and-column arrangement."

Researchers learned that those sitting in a more central seat asked more questions per lesson displaying how seating can seriously impact the classroom setting.

In certain types of classes, some seating arrangements are more preferred than others. This

could depend on the material being taught in each class, along with the teacher's individual preference.

"In the beginning of the year, I always try to sit in the front row if possible. I have Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) so it helps me focus a lot better. For discussion classes like history and English I prefer to sit in a large circle," Danielle Gleaton ('19) said.

Although having the desks in rows may work best for some students in certain classes, it is not always the best layout in others.

"In art classes, it is definitely best to have large tables to spread materials apart and around. I cannot imagine an art class with desks instead of tables," Ramie Hale ('19) said.

Mrs. Gallo, an English teacher decided to put a unique twist to her seating arrangements. In her classroom there are bean bags, couches and other non-traditional seating available for her students.

"I like Mrs. Gallo's classroom seating a lot because for this class specifically, the style of learning is more group work and talking with each other. It is not as effective to be in desks and rows. I look forward to this class because of the seating," Tejas Vermani ('21) said.

Students that do not have this type of seating available to them may feel like they are missing out. Many excel in this type of unconventional learning environment

but unfortunately it may not be available to them in school.

"I work best on a couch and a laptop. If we had laptops and iPads [in the classroom] it would be more of a 'homey' environment. I do not like sitting in a desk all day, I work best when I am comfortable," Mikela Pirri ('21) said.

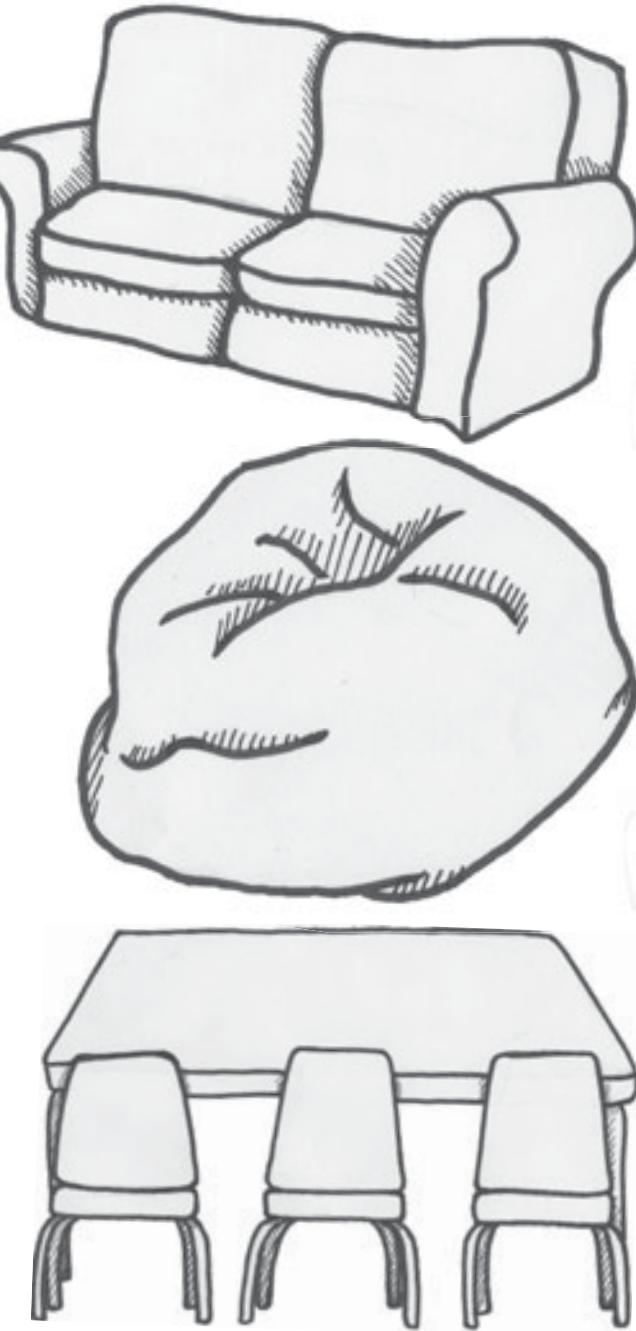
Students thrive in different atmospheres, whether they are more of a home-like environment or the traditional classroom setting.

"If I am going to do work in school, it needs to be in a school like environment. I could get very distracted with couches and other things that are not usually in a classroom around me," Hannah Scherrer ('21) said.

With each seating arrangement comes issues, such as students with their backs to the board or a taller student blocking the view of the board.

More specifically, according to teachermagazine.com, "the lighting may be much better in one part of the room than elsewhere, it may be cold over by the windows, and perhaps too warm by the heating vent. The view of the blackboard differs dramatically from one part of the room to another, often because of a glare from the ceiling lights."

Overall, the utilisation of more creative seating arrangements has the potential to truly benefit the students at Westhill.



Illustrations by Neeka Baclayon / Illustrator.

The disadvantages of morning practices

Yulia Lozynska
Staff Writer

Sports can take up a large amount of time in a teenager's life. Many have debated that having early morning practices will provide student athletes with more time than afternoon practices would. This creates the discussion for schools and students to try both.

Even though morning practices can give students an easier opportunity to participate in other school activities or clubs, some student athletes have said that having morning practice can affect students' performance in school as well as students' tend to lack in school work due to fatigue.

"Moving practice to before school will make students pay less attention



during the school day. They will be drained from waking up so early, they will want to sleep during school," Leo Succi ('19) said.

If students had morning workouts, they could get tired during the school day because of lack of sleep. With afternoon practices, students are more alert during the day and have more energy to focus on their school work.

"I definitely prefer the afternoon considering I am not a morning person and have no energy to play my hardest in the morning," Margot

Buckey ('19) said.

"We should not have morning practices because students are tired in the morning from waking up early. Practice in the afternoon is perfect because we are then awake, alert and ready to play," Bella Vaccaro ('19) said.

Some believe that playing a sport takes time away from studying and being able to focus on their academics. However, changing practice times will not effect this.

"Student athletes should have practice in the morning because it al-

lows the student to have more time to do homework and study. Also, it would allow student athletes to spend more time with family during their on-season," Jakai Young ('19) said.

According to palyvoice.com, "getting as little as five hours of sleep a night is detrimental to the performance of a student-athlete. Morning practices or conditionings can start as early as 5:45 a.m., which means in order to make it to school in time the student must wake up at approximately 5 a.m. the sleep requirements for a teenager are around nine hours."

Student athletes starting their day before the sun has risen, can lead to exhaustion. Being part of a team is particularly difficult for many students, but students try their best to balance sports and their education.

La crisis de los refugiados venezolanos

Kevin Alvarado

Colaborador

Con el transcurso de los años se pensaría que hemos aprendido del pasado y que los problemas en nuestras naciones serían mínimos. Sin embargo, es lo contrario. Cada vez, los problemas empeoran y ahora es nuestro país hermano, Venezuela el sufre y derrama sangre. Su crisis comenzó en octubre del 2016 a causa del caos político y económico del país, administrado por el régimen de Nicolás Maduro desde 2013, el cual ha llevado una larga dictadura devastadora que ha causado un desastre nacional.

Pese a la situación económica, social y política del país, muchos venezolanos han sido obligados a tomar la drástica y dura decisión de emigrar a su país vecino, Colombia. Estos emprenden su destino por medio de la frontera en Cúcuta. La razón, esperar conseguir un futuro mejor ya que el país se encuentra con pocos recursos alimenticios, higiénicos y médicos. Las autoridades de migración en Colombia indicaron que debido a la crisis en Venezuela, han llegado aproximadamente entre 600.000 a 800.000 venezolanos a este país. "Diariamente entran y salen 40.000 venezolanos," dice Felipe Muñoz ('20), quien supervisa en censo del país. Es claro, que el flujo de venezolanos en Colombia ha

incrementado a niveles mayores.

Joel Marroquin ('19), un estudiante venezola no, opina sobre la

Colombianos se ven conmovidos con este problema y ayudan con suplementos médicos y comida. Sin embargo, los Colombianos que en la actualidad carecen de trabajo debido a que el país no brinda oportunidades a su propia gente

un sueldo mínimo. Sin lugar a duda, este acto toma lugar exclusivamente por el hecho de que la necesidad ha alcanzado una crisis existencial para nuestros hermanos venezolanos. Como resultado, los colombianos sufren también

porque es sólo obvio

que e m -

extranjeros con sueldos mínimos y sin experiencia. Esa es nuestra Colombia." Como ella, muchos más ciudadanos colombianos se quejan por la contratación de venezolanos en el país. De igual manera, la dura situación es para todos dice la venezolana María Mercedes Montiel Yáñez, "No he logrado trabajar en mi área. No es por problemas de documentación porque están al día. Se hace difícil a la hora de conseguir empleo porque los empleadores continúan viendo como ventaja pagar menos."

Por otra parte, Domenica

Cruz Torres ('19), estudiante en el grado onceavo se commueve con el problema, "Los venezolanos son personas que necesitan ayuda y merecen ser tratados con respeto y bondad, hay que abrirlnos el corazón y ayudar a estas personas que están pasando una situación inexplicable, brindándoles comida, y trabajo para que salgan adelante."

Es claro que para los colombianos la llegada de venezolanos se convierte en un problema crucial ya que están causando un desequilibrio económico y social. Mientras muchos colombianos sienten compasión y continúan demostrando su generosidad ayudando a sus hermanos venezolanos, a la misma vez, otros no evitan sentir que los venezolanos han generando más desempleo en la economía colombiana y han causando que muchos sientan recelo contra ellos.



pleadores
contraten mano
de obra barata y dejen
a su propia gente des-
empleada. Sandra Lon-
doño, una contadora
colombiana especialista
en finanzas y administración
pública se ve gravemente afecta-
da y respalda el problema diciendo,
"Yo llevo más de un año buscando
trabajo y, aun siendo profesional y
especializada, prefieren contratar



MADURO NO MÁS Los venezolanos están protestando el régimen de Nicolás Maduro a favor de una democracia.



UNA LLAMADA PARA ACCIÓN La gente de Venezuela quiere mejorar la economía venezolana.



HUYENDO DEL CAOS Muchos de los venezolanos están viajando a Colombia para refugiarse.

CAUSA

EFFECTO

Sin luz por horas

Cómo los ciudadanos de Puerto Rico se reaccionaron al apagón

Domenica Cruz Torres

Colaboradora

La catástrofe natural que ocurrió en Puerto Rico los meses pasados, ha dejado consecuencias que por supuesto han afectado a la mayoría de su población. Desde casas totalmente destruidas, calles irreconocibles, y pérdidas de materiales además recursos necesarios para la vida cotidiana uno de ellos, lo más importante la electricidad. Las quejas en los pobladores son justificables puesto a que, sin electricidad se privan de acceder a la red más necesaria en la actualidad, el famoso internet. Daniela Hernández ('20), una estudiante opina sobre esta problemática “Los deja sin acceso a la comunicación y pueden recuperar exigiendo al gobierno que haga algo.”

El tema de la comunicación, en todos los sentidos electrónicos se ha vuelto un problema la falta de electricidad, no está demás indicar que de esta manera también muchos sectores empresariales están perdiendo dinero debido a que por obvias razones no pueden utilizar sus artefactos y va de la mano con tener cerrado los locales. Este suceso se ve reflejado en la opinión de la estudiante, Jhoselyn Bazan ('19), que comentó: “Afecta a muchas áreas de trabajo, la actividad económica para las empresas pequeñas”. Pero cuando los problemas llegan a un país no sólo afecta el sector económico también el bienestar de la población. La Autoridad de Energía Eléctrica (AEE) de Puerto Rico anunció que comenzará a disminuir la generación en cier-

tas unidades de la red tras el impacto “negativo” que genera para la isla la decisión de una jueza de conceder un préstamo.

La jueza Laura Taylor de Nueva York negó este viernes una petición de la AEE para obtener un préstamo de mil millones de dólares solicitado por el Gobierno de Puerto Rico con la finalidad mantener las operaciones de la corporación pública, mientras continúa con el restablecimiento del servicio de electricidad en la isla. El gobierno afirmó que la decisión tiene un impacto negativo en los trabajos de recuperación tras el huracán María, que destruyó una buena parte de la red, y la operación de la AEE.

En un comunicado la AEE expresa su preocupación por los

efectos que tenga en la población este retraso y que procederán a conservar sus reservas. También mencionan que esta situación podría acelerar la emigración de los residentes. “Muchas personas se sienten en abandono debido a que las autoridades no hacen nada para recuperar las pérdidas en la isla,” dice Bridgette Calderon ('18). Así mismo se afirma, los daños recibidos por el pueblo de Puerto Rico se han intensificado debido a la lenta respuesta ofrecida por el Departamento del Tesoro de Estados Unidos y el Agencia Federal de Manejo de Emergencias (FEMA, en inglés) para viabilizar el acceso a los 4,900 millones de dólares aprobados por el Congreso por concepto de préstamos para desastres. El gobernador de Puerto

Rico, Ricardo Rosselló, prometió que para el 15 de diciembre del 2017 quedaría restablecido el 95 por ciento del servicio, mientras el Cuerpo de Ingenieros del Ejército de Estados Unidos ha dicho que el trabajo se completará en mayo de 2018. “Confiamos que con la llegada de más trabajadores de las compañías eléctricas de Estados Unidos y con un plan actualizado de restauración, veremos un progreso para reconnectar el servicio de energía a todos.” dijo como para aplacar la molestia de las comunidades, que ya han comenzado a manifestarse en las calles. Esta vez se espera que el gobierno cumpla su palabra y que no sea la misma historia de siempre, ignorar las necesidades y el sufrimiento de su pueblo.



Dibujo de Daniel Greco / Editor Directivo.

“Senior Wills!”

Clase de 2018:

Vas a thewestwordonline.com para un enlace para completar tu propio “Senior Will” para el edición final del año.

SPECIAL REPORT:

Zuckerberg faces trial for Facebook scandal

Rachel Deutsch
Staff Writer

Since its conception, Facebook has pulled private lives into the public sector. This leaves access to individual's private information just a few clicks away from any interested parties.

There is power in understanding the population in such an invasive manner, which can be abused by users and advertisers alike. The investigation of Mark Zuckerberg, Chief Executive Officer (C.E.O) and founder of Facebook, surrounds Facebook's protection of user privacy in wake of the Cambridge Analytica scandal.

Cambridge Analytica is a private firm of political consultants that has ties to Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign. Aleksandr Kogan, a social psychologist and professor at the University of Cambridge, conducted a self-described survey on happiness and kindness. Participants would take the survey using their Facebook login information, effectively linking it to their Facebook account.

Kogan failed to disclose that he was conducting this survey for Cambridge Analytica, and with Cambridge Analytica's monetary backing, Kogan gained access to users' private information. This information was used to predict or sway these votes through direct advertisements. Kogan ascertained not only users who participated in his survey, but friends of participants.

According to the acceptance of terms for survey participants, an individual would grant the survey access to their own account and to associated friends accounts (neglecting to ask the friend's permission).

According to CBS News, within this network of people, Kogan admittedly gained access to data including, "their location, their gender, their birthday, and their page 'likes.'"

"I would not feel comfortable with [my privacy being violated]. Having someone else have my information and being able to find where I am makes me uncomfortable," Eva Laforte ('21) said.

Cambridge Analytica mined the data of what Facebook believes to be 87 million unknowing users. The use of Facebook breached willing participants. The issue also raises questions as to who else the data Kogan acquired may have been sold to.

Facebook began to notify users whose information was leaked in early April despite knowing about the breach since 2015.

On Tuesday April 10, Zuckerberg appeared at a joint hearing conducted by the Senate Judiciary and Commerce committees to discuss the possible breach of Facebook users' security. In his deposition, Zuckerberg was asked questions on ownership of users digital data; and if Facebook has sufficiently protected that information.

The next day, Zuckerberg was ques-

tioned by a series of state representatives including Connecticut's senator, Richard Blumenthal.

Blumenthal pointed out that Facebook had violated a Fair Trade Commission (FTC) agreement in the protection of user information in their allowance of Kogan's terms for his app.

Blumenthal called out the social media platform's negligence as, "heedless and reckless," pointing blame at

Zuckerberg who either turned a blind eye to malicious behavior on his platform or was unaware of terms tied to the company's name.

The questioning brings to light the free reign the company has over public information.

"I would feel violated and I would definitely want my personal information protected by whatever means possible," James Macintosh ('18) said.

Not only did students display discomfort with the distribution of information, but also the idea that only large corporations benefit from the distribution of their information.

"Well it is being sold by Facebook and not by me, so not only is my information being violated but someone else is getting profit from it," Nick Robles ('18) said.

"People put their information on there willingly, and go on there willingly, but that does not give Facebook the right to distribute their information," Fahmida Ahmed ('18) said.

Although Zuckerberg was heavily coached and provided a bounty of vague answers, his action creates a dialogue and is moving towards the direction of protection of the public's data.

If this incident can provoke change, rather than being one in a string of many past apologies, then user privacy may prevail after all.



**CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA
ACCESSED OVER
87 MILLION
UNKNOWNING USERS.**

-CNBC NEWS

Changing the idea of user privacy

Tyler Fisher
Staff Writer

In the last few months, social media juggernaut Facebook has been under fire from its users, the media, and government officials due to its revealed invasion of privacy towards its users.

The data collected by Facebook can show the location of a user during their last login, in addition to people's contacts, emails, the apps people use and when they use them, the music people listen to, and the videos people watch.

"I feel uncomfortable because I have a right to privacy, but I do not think the collection of our data is malicious," Kevin Morales ('18) said.

Facebook is not the only site guilty of invading the privacy of its users. *The Guardian* revealed that Google also collects data from millions of users. The data Google collects allows the company to log every event users have ever been to, every photo they have ever searched for, and every email they have sent. Though mainly used to feed for user personalization through machine learning applications, the data has the possibility of being accessed by

third party apps using Google's Application Programming Interfaces (API).

"It is not safe [online] anymore anything can happen with that kind of data, people should go out and protest to insure their privacy," Franko Nunez ('18) said.

People's data is not only being collected, but it is being sold for profit. At the end of the 2017 fiscal year it was reported that AxiCom, a data brokering company, made 402.56 million dollars in gross income. AxiCom's data collection is also used to make 12 percent of the nation's marketing sales.

In an issue of *Forbes Magazine*, Bernard Marr said that the company claimed to have data on, "all but a small percentage of U.S. households."

According to an article in *The New York Times* by Natasha Singer, AxiCom, "peers deeper into American life than the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Internal Revenue Service (IRS). [If you are an American adult it is likely] that AxiCom knows things like your age, race, sex, weight, height, marital status, education level, politics, buying habits, household health worries, vacation dreams—and on and on."

Until it was revealed that Facebook had ties to AxiCom, few people knew of their existence. This made it easy for not only AxiCom, but other similar companies collect and sell consumer data.

One of the ethical issues that arose with the sale of data is the lack of knowledge of what the data is actually being used for.

According to AxiCom's website, "the data [they] collect helps companies market more effectively and reduces fraud and identity theft. [Their] data also helps people find businesses or other people through our directory services."

Although many companies abstain from selling the data of their users, some still grant third-party apps access to this data. Often times, the data is used to personalize advertisements that a user may see or improve the app's end-user functionality. While this may seem harmless, this still leaves users' personal data at risk of being seen without their knowledge.

The social media app Snapchat is reportedly working on a new feature that would allow this kind of data sharing to occur.

Data brokers, retailers, and analytic firms that process data have created multiple consumer scores that rank people

on a variety of things, such as their ability to keep a job or how likely they are to be a "profitable consumer."

In a report released by the nonprofit World Privacy Forum (WPF), it was found that, "consumers have little to no ability to learn when their lives are affected in a major or minor way, by a consumer score that they never heard about."

In the report written by Pam Dixon, Executive Director of WPF, and Bob Gellman, Privacy and Information Policy Consultant, multiple types of consumer scores were shown.

These include a Job Security Score that uses employment data and economic trends to predict if people will lose their jobs, and the person's ability to pay bills. The Churn Score, or the number of people leaving a service, is used by wireless and cable companies to determine if people are likely to switch to their competitors. Consumers may be unknowingly charged a higher price for the same service as a result of this score.

The collection and sale of data affects people more than one may think it does. It can put privacy at risk and even prevent people from receiving fair and equal treatment from certain companies.

DO YOU THINK PRIVACY IS

INVADED ON THE INTERNET?

YES
62%



NO
38%



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

Illustration by **Alexis Marchetti** / Head Illustrator.

Poll conducted by **Bella Vaccaro** / Pollster.

*Poll conducted out of 250 people.

Do you want **more** of The Westword?
Are you unable to **wait** for a new issue each month?
We have a website!
Simply go to:

THEWESTWORDONLINE.COM

...to read articles about the Westhill and Stamford Community.



¿Quieres **más** de *El Westword*?
¿No puedes **esperar** un mes más para un edición nuevo?
¡Tenemos un sitio web!
Simplemente va a:

THEWESTWORDONLINE.COM

...para leer artículos sobre la comunidad de Westhill y Stamford.

The Westword Supplement



A BLAST FROM
THE PAST:
TRENDS FROM THE 2000s

SHOWS THAT SHAPED THE 2000s



Allie Colorado
Staff Writer

As children, the teenagers of today experienced carefree and joyous times, where they could sit down in the living room, eat a bowl of cereal, and watch any show that came on Disney Channel, Nickelodeon, or Cartoon Network for hours.

Any student who grew up in the early 2000s may remember the times where the biggest stressor he or she would experience came from wondering what show would air next on their selected channel.

There was a large number of shows, ranging from *Drake & Josh* to *Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends*, that shaped who children of the 2000s were.

and what they did as kids. Kids from the 2000s have even started to force their favorite childhood TV shows upon the younger generation to encourage them to enjoy it as much as they did.

"I, for one, loved *Dexter's Laboratory*. I have taken important values from watching him come up with new, innovative ideas, not giving up on his creations, and always learning from his mistakes," Vanessa Heredia ('18) said.

Some shows that were popular in the early 2000s are still relevant in students' lives today.

"I loved watching *SpongeBob*. My dad and I still reference *SpongeBob* to this day," Simone Kenny ('18) said.

According to variety.com, views on Disney and Nickelodeon have gone down over the past decade since *Suite Life of Zack and Cody* and *Hannah Montana Forever* ended. In attempts to get the early 2000s babies back to watching their network, Disney Channel released a continuation series of *That's So Raven* in July of 2017 called *Raven's Home*.

Raven's Home is set several years after the original

show ended, with Raven Baxter having her own two young children, one of who has the same psychic abilities as she does. Within the show, the writers were sure to incorporate references from the original Disney show.

"It is an impressive idea for networks to bring back some of our generation's favorite shows. It definitely pulls back a large audience for these producers," Marco Alvarado ('18) said.

It can be nice to be hit with a blast from the past, it reminds teenagers of better times and allows them to reminisce about their childhood memories.

These iconic shows will stay in the memory of many teenagers forever. The teens of tomorrow will soon be shaped by the shows of their childhood.

NOSTALGIC KIDDIE FOOD



DINOSAUR CHICKEN NUGGETS

ANIMAL CRACKERS

CRACKERS 'N CHEESE DIP

mies and the lunchables frozen meals," Leslie Caltenco ('19) said.

The decade can also be recognized by popular sugary drinks including Capri Sun, Kool Aid Bursts and Yoohoo chocolate milk.

Today, many of these foods have been discontinued due to decreases in demand for products such as Gripz, fruit-shaped Trix, and Planters Cheez Balls.

With all of these snacks changing and being discontinued, many students are nostalgic and wish to have them once again. Luckily, some 2000s snacks that are still available today are Ritz crackers 'n' cheese dip, Corn Pops cereal, Fruit Roll Ups, and even frozen dinners from Kid Cuisine.

"I remember eating...dinosaur chicken nuggets on a ZooPal animal plate and the Annie's peace sign Mac 'n' Cheese. I also remember Easy-Bake Ovens and [that] all their food

products were really trendy at this time... The Keebler Scooby Doo graham cracker sticks were my favorite," Katie Hollenberg ('18) said.

The 2000s also consisted of food trends that are still eaten today, such as bacon flavored foods, crazy cupcakes, fun-size meals, and cake pops.

Bacon is still a popular food today. However, the 2000s was when everything included bacon, from breakfast to dessert.

Another trend during the 2000s was food documentaries. *Super Size Me* was a documentary about experiments with fast food and showing the effects on the body from eating only McDonalds for a whole month.

Food blogs and shows were popular as well. Channels like the Food Network were responsible for popularizing careers of stars, such as Rachael Ray.

These foods were popular among

Westhill students growing up.

"I remember eating Yogos Bits in second grade and Gushers at school. These make me feel a little [old now]. My mom used to give me them before going to school and I always used to feel happy because of that," Myra Perez ('19) said.

The food trends from the 2000s bring back memories and a feeling of nostalgia for students. It is always fun to look back on the trends from the past and see what has changed, or in some cases, what has stayed the same.

Phoebe Lukaswitz
Staff Writer

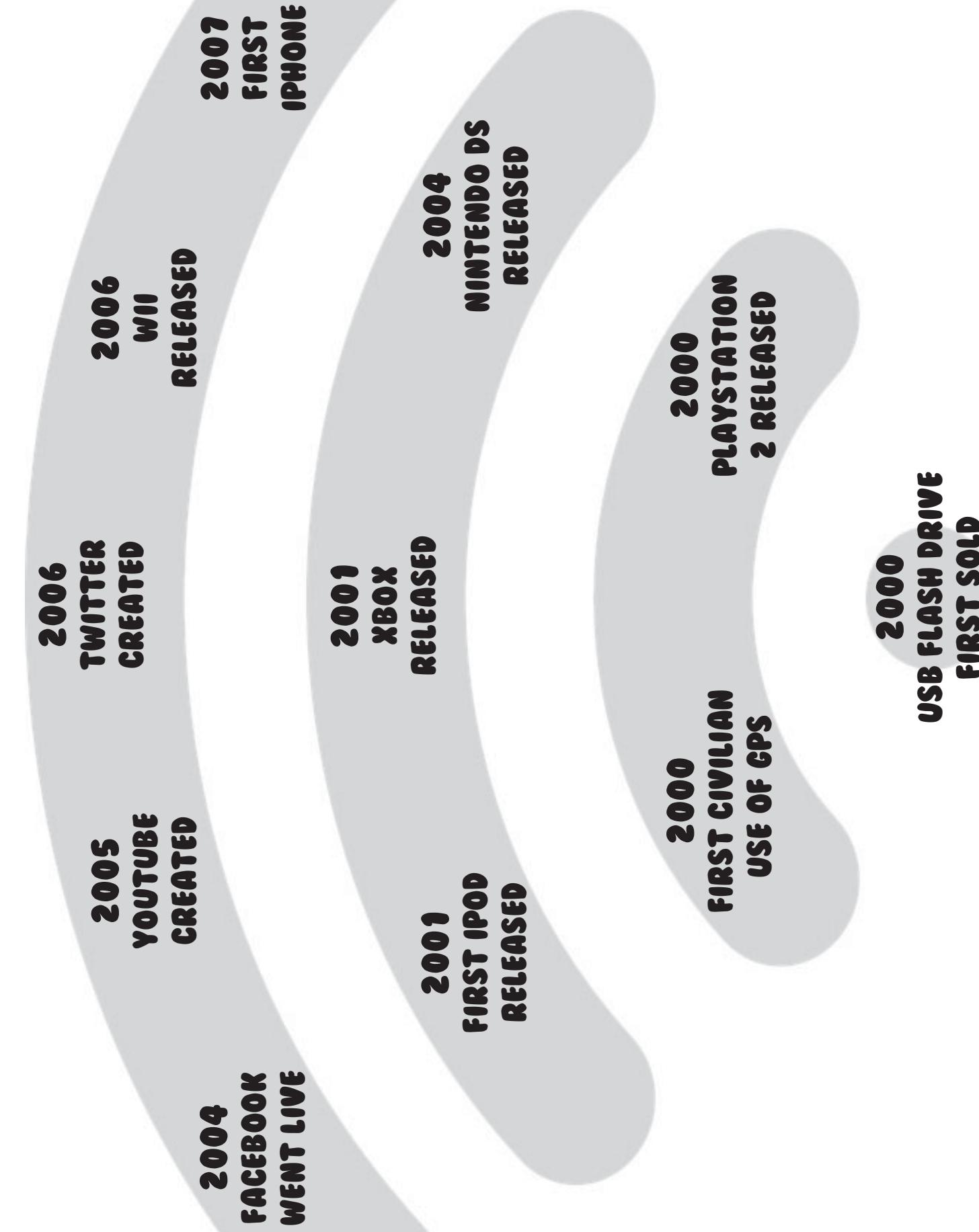
The 2000s can bring back many childhood memories from all aspects, such as clothing, music, toys, and even food.

There were many trademark foods that characterized the 2000s. Dinosaur shaped chicken nuggets, character-shaped Mac 'n' Cheese, Dunkaroos, Yoplait Trix Yogurt, and Altoids Sours are some that dominated the industry.

"I remember [eating] animal crackers all throughout elementary school which I loved, Scooby gum-

TELEPHONE THEN AND NOW

THE BEGINNINGS OF TECHNOLOGY STILL USED TODAY

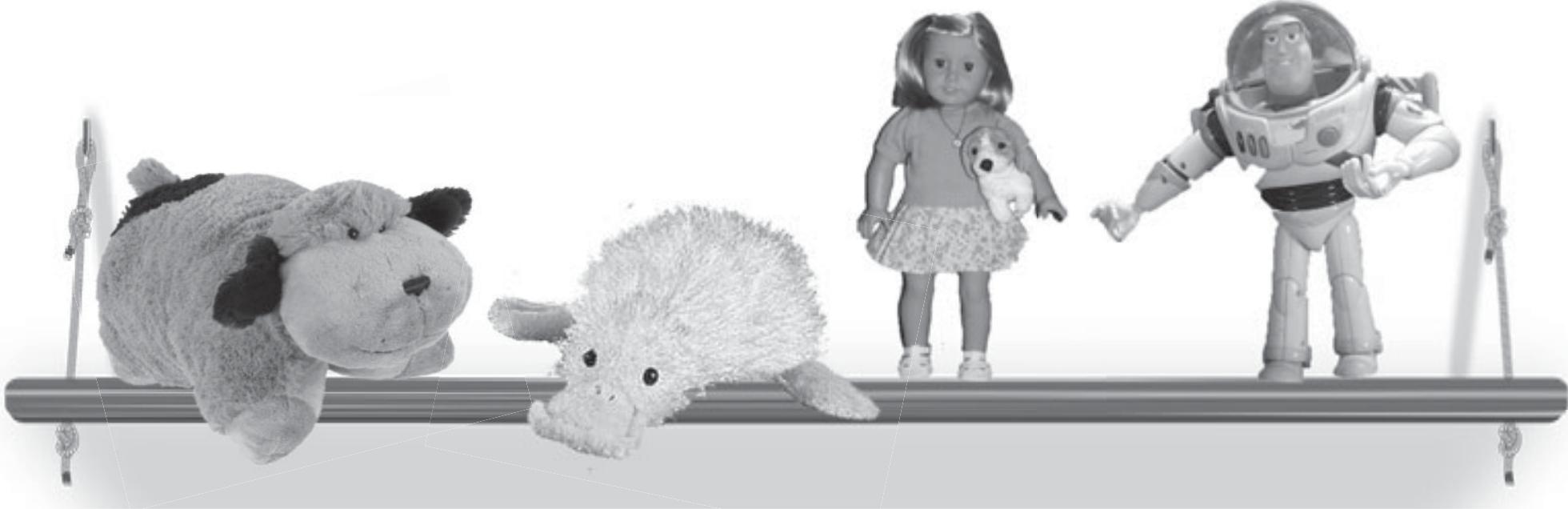


Mobile phones of the early 2000s entailed plastic exteriors and small screens that flipped or slid open to reveal keypads. These phones could do little more than call and text. They rarely had a full keyboard; one would most likely use the number keys to type text messages. Some flip phones had cameras as well and could be purchased in various colors and styles.

The first generation iPhone was released in 2007. It boasted a touch screen and access to internet connection, as well as countless downloadable applications. This “smartphone” was unlike any flip phone, as it was somewhat of a mobile computer, in addition to its basic calling and texting features. The iPhone was also equipped with a camera.

The iPhone X was released in 2017. It features new screen technology, wireless charging, face identification, and a very advanced camera. It also has plentiful storage for applications, music, and text messages. This is by far the most advanced mobile Apple device, the company itself aims to represent technology of the future.

TOYS THAT TOOK THE DECADE BY STORM



Jennifer Carias

Staff Writer

In September of 2017, Toys 'R' Us declared bankruptcy as an attempt to keep the business going. However, in the past month the company announced a liquidation of their assets and that they are shutting down stores all around America. Toys 'R' Us was struggling with making a profit for a while, due to toys being sold at discount stores like Target, Walmart and Amazon.

"I feel old knowing Toys 'R' Us is shutting down, but I am not surprised. It is not shocking because kids are not interested with toys anymore. Instead they like tablets and more interactive things rather than dolls, toy trucks or LEGO sets," Stanley

Villard ('18) said.

Children today are gaining more access to the internet than any generation before them, and are spending more of their time using technology rather than playing with actual toys. As the years have gone on, the internet gradually started taking up more and more of children's time.

Playing with toys such as Polly Pockets, Hot Wheels, and LEGOs turned into playing on Club Penguin and Webkinz. According to adweek.com, this has ultimately led to the use of social media.

Online gaming has changed the industry as well. As more games get developed and enhanced, more parents find their kids playing them. Games like Minecraft and Fortnite have tak-

en the world by storm.

"I do not think it is really that surprising. Nowadays you see a lot more kids around with new iPhones or tablets instead of toys, so I feel like [Toys 'R' Us] shut down has been coming for a long time now," Nicole Leon ('19) said.

These days it seems as if children would rather spend hours playing online, than being outside with their imaginations or friends to entertain them. These games keep kids occupied and it is hard to stop this trend from continuing. Parents can continue to tell their kids to go outside and play, but there is always a new game or console coming out that children believe they just have to have.

In addition to all of the online gaming, online shopping also

has a hand in toys not being used as frequently. Students know it is easy to find a good deal online and parents have noticed too.

With kids getting on the internet at young ages, the desire for toys has decreased. As reported by *The Guardian* in 2016, "smart toys," technologically advanced toys with internet access geared toward kids, have made a large impact in the market, with sales escalating from \$2.8bn in 2015 to \$11.3bn projected by 2020. Parents may wonder why they would spend money on a toy at stores like Toys 'R' Us, when they could easily get the same toy for less online.

Now, instead of going through the hassle of traveling to a store, customers have the resources to have an item delivered directly to

their home. All customers have to do is pay a shipping and handling fee. With all of these new developments online, it is inevitable that stores such as Toys 'R' Us will shut down.

"I am bothered by the turn that society has taken with its children... It is honestly sad because it just comes to show how technology is taking over the youth whereas ten years ago, kids would play with actual toys," Francesca Figueroa ('18) said.

The exact date Toys 'R' Us will be closing their doors is unclear, but it seems there is not much students can do about it now. With the internet growing and developing each day, it is getting harder to find a kid who awaits trips to Toys 'R' Us for their next gadget.



FASHION FLASHBACK AND FLASH FORWARD

Alyssa Goldberg

Staff Writer

Low rise jeans, Abercrombie & Fitch, and Juicy track-suits are all trademarks of 2000s fashion. Though we have left these exact styles behind, today's society still mirrors parts of the iconic fashion of the 2000s.

Britney Spears started the unforgettable terry cloth track-suit trend, in which women wore full Juicy Couture track-suits. This style plagued the 2000s, and is remembered through pictures of sky blue and hot pink sweatpants with "JUICY" printed on the back.

Though this particular style is typically laughed at nowadays, tracksuits are still making their mark on fashion. Beginning in the late 2010s, Adidas tracksuits have rapidly increased in popularity and are now classified as a going out outfit, rather than workout apparel.

Child stars often set the trends—Hilary Duff and Lindsay Lohan were continuously at the fashion forefront. Both stars rocked chokers and cut up sport shirts. Chokers are often tied to the 90s, but with the new decade, they have progressed from the typical "tattoo chokers" to studed and decorative chokers.

These styles are reflected in today's fashions, as chokers

FASHION TRENDS OF THE 2000s



CROCS



ABERCROMBIE SHIRTS



FLARED STRIPED PANTS

have risen in popularity, and resemble the design of the chokers of the 2000s.

Cut up jerseys, number tops with rhinestones, eyelet holes, or decorative cuts are now seen in the designing of tailgate college t-shirts. Though the designs today might be updated, they are not far off from old styles.

Ashley Tisdale was another child star known for setting tween trends. Tisdale was one of the many celebrities photographed wearing fishnets at Hollywood events in the 2000s. The former Disney star styled them under shorts, just

as the fishnets are still utilized in the same fashion today.

A style once unique to the 2000s was vertical-striped flare pants. However, according to thefashionspot.com, this look has made a massive comeback in 2018. Big brands, including Urban Outfitters, are getting massive business from their large selection of pants. Models and social influencers have been seen styling these distinctive pants in recent fashion.

Even eyewear made a mark on 2000s fashion highlights. Dated photos of Beyoncé show her flaunting pink tinted aviator glasses, paired with pigtails

and a baby pink top typical for 2000s style. Today, tinted glasses have made a comeback; the main character in a *Black Mirror* episode "Shut Up and Dance" ironically wears yellow aviators. Music festival goers always keep a pair of the retro shades to wear to their next event.

"I remember the velvet Juicy sweatshirts, chokers, and crocs. Everyone wore crocs because 'that was cool,' [and] the jibbitz were big," Jessica Ostroff ('18) said.

Crocs, the all-too familiar foam clogs that almost everyone regrettably wore in the

2000s, is seen as yet another fashion trademark of the decade. Ten years ago, crocs were actually worn as part of stylish outfits, though more so by kids than adults. Now, crocs are recognized as merely a shoe.

"I see people still wearing crocs to school. I would never wear those," Kimberly Hernandez ('19) said.

Men's fashion also has trends that stand out: spiky hair, layered polos with popped collars, bootcut jeans, and Abercrombie athletic club t-shirts. It seemed like every guy was on an athletic team, as they all had it printed on their Abercrombie t-shirts.

Without debate, it is clear that low rise jeans are the style most symbolic of the 2000s. Jeans were being made to fall as low as possible while still being counted as pants, and everyone was wearing them. With the high rise jean craze in today's fashion, low rise jeans are completely outdated.

"I would never wear low rise jeans again," Alyssa Gualiano ('19) said.

People are still just as brand obsessed as they were in the 2000s, plastering "Supreme" and "Nike" logos all over our wardrobe. We just consider these trends to be "stylish" now, unlike the outfits we cringe at from less than twenty years ago.

FASHION ICONS OF THE 2000s



HILARY DUFF



BEYONCÉ



JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE



Front cover photo illustration by **Sydney Lesser** / Contributor.
Back cover photo illustration by **Addison Magrath & Nicole Vantman** / Print Executive Editor & Photographer.

Colleagues by day, friends by night

Taking a look at some of the most well-known Westhill staff friend groups



@triviasquad The Westhill staff “supergroup” managed to escape one of the most challenging escape rooms for Mr. Pereira’s birthday.

Photo contributed by **Ms.Tobin**



@mathandmartinis The “Math Squad” poses for a picture during an outing.

Photo contributed by **Mrs. Khetan**



@whsteacherband The English department friend group poses for last year's Purple and Gold day.

Photo contributed by *The Westword*



@adminavengers Sean and Mr. Bertone pose for a picture together in the hallways of Westhill.

Photo by **Addison Magrath** / Print Executive Editor

The Trivia-ers

One of the most recognizable core teacher friendships at Westhill is between Mrs. Grant, Ms. Tobin and Ms. Tintle. Though they have their main group, it offshoots to a larger group consisting of Mr. Pereira, Mrs. Brunner, Ms. Cahill, Ms. Begetis, Mr. Stone, Mr. Marchesani, Ms. Ochoa, Ms. Bunn, and many more.

They generally spend their time together by going to dinner and brunch, as well as having barbecues. They also like to do fun activities like trivia night.

"We do pretty well given we have a whole team of people who dedicated their lives to varied fields of education," Tobin said.

They also celebrate birthdays together. "For Mr. Pereira's birthday, ten of us did an escape room. We won the timed one which is the hardest. It was time-travel-themed and we had to cure the president. Only 20 percent of people solve it and we completed it with just six clues. Our teamwork was great," Grant said.

The Math Squad

Our next group of teachers is made up entirely of math teachers and is commonly referred to as the “math squad” by their students. Mrs. Ashkin, Mrs. Manning, Mrs. Khetan, Dr. O’Brien and Mrs. Manzino are a group who enjoy each other’s presence in and outside of school.

"One of our best outings was a trip to New York City where we went out to lunch and saw a matinee show. Afterwards we went to Sephora to buy makeup, went to the top of the Marriott to drink martinis, and then went to Carmines for dinner," Ashkin said.

On less extravagant occasions The Math Squad likes to go out to dinner and see a movie.

Jam Session

Our next group is composed of Mr. Pinsence, Mr. Wooley, Mr. Celsus and Mr. von Wahlde. The four teachers are all in the English department. Mr. Wooley, Mr. Pinsince and Mr. Celsus all work on music together as well.

"With Mr. Pinsince it is more of a jam situation; Mr. Celsus and I record rap music together at least once a week during the summer," Wooley said.

Mr. von Wahlde says he is not very involved with the music production, but on occasion has assisted with lyricism. The group gets lunch at least three times a month, and over the summer get together for a barbecue and jam session.

The Superhero Duo

Our last pair is a fan favorite among underclassmen. Security guard Sean Segovia and health teacher Mr. Bertone are well-renowned for being best friends. In previous years, they could be found having lunch together in the courtyard on a nice day. Bertone says he appreciates Sean's sense of humor, and is glad to have somebody to talk about superheroes with.

"We see movies together sometimes. We saw *Batman vs. Superman* together. Then we talk about more movies in school," Bertone said.

Spring allergy season at Westhill

As allergy season comes into full swing, many students suffer with seasonal symptoms

Devonte Atwell
Staff Writer

Like the general population, Westhill students are also prone to allergies. Allergies are sensitive responses from the immune system to outside substances that come into contact with your body.

Pet dander, pollen, and bee venom are some of the most common allergens today.

As students come into Westhill, they have a chance of bringing pollen and other allergens with them that can affect other people around them and can cause allergic reactions.

Allergies are the sixth leading cause of illness in the United States, and affect more than fifty million Americans each year.

Allergies are mainly caused by the release of pollen and other allergens in trees, plants, and grass. When a person is allergic to something, the body treats the substance as harmful and attempts to destroy it. The

immune system tries to get rid of these substances by releasing histamine. This is when symptoms begin to take effect. Symptoms from allergies often occur around the nose, ears, eyes, and in the respiratory system.

Symptoms can cause pain in the ears, runny and stuffy noses, sneezing, loss of smell, red, itchy, or watery eyes, wheezing, fatigue, coughing, and headaches.

"Allergies will sometimes distract me from my work. When my eyes get very watery, or my throat gets itchy, I start to worry about that instead of school," Divya Gada ('20) said.

Seasonal allergies are less common during the winter. Trees are the primary culprit for allergies in the spring. Nearly fifty percent of Westhill students suffer from seasonal allergies. These students rely on medication to get them through the school day.

The pollen count is highest in between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. It is best to stay inside on a windy day so that pollen has a smaller chance

of coming into contact with your body, and to go outside after a rainy day when most of the pollen has washed up.

Westhill students are dealing with their allergies throughout the school day, when pollen is at its highest. Students rely on the nurse's office for relief, or they can try heading to the health center at Westhill.

"We have around 25 kids come in everyday because of their allergies. There is not much we can do besides give them ice," Ms. Ferrero, school nurse, said.

"During school, my allergies tend to bother me in a few ways: itchy eyes, runny nose, and a headache. It makes it hard for me to concentrate, but I feel comfortable going to the nurse's office," Olivia Berni ('19) said.

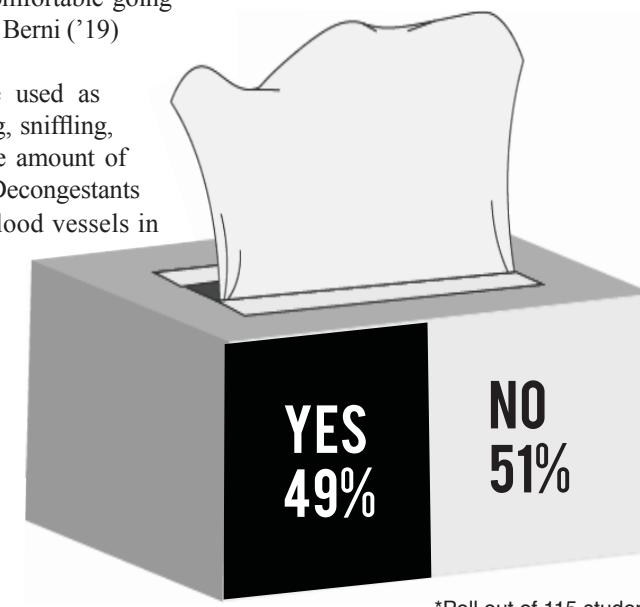
Antihistamines can be used as medicine to reduce sneezing, sniffing, and itching by lowering the amount of histamine in your body. Decongestants are used for shrinking the blood vessels in

the nasal passageway in order to relieve congestion and swelling.

Common allergy medications are Zyrtek, Allegra, and others. Most allergy medications can be given over the counter.

"For severe allergy sufferers like myself, having to medicate for my symptoms as well as going to school is difficult because my concentration is heavily impaired." Anissa Jahaj ('20), said.

All information for this article was provided by hopkinsmedicine.org.



*Poll out of 115 students.

Poll conducted by Zainab Jafri / Pollster.
Graphic by Zac Kitay / Graphic Designer.

DO YOU SUFFER FROM SEASONAL ALLERGIES?

Don't Bully the Breed: Animal Testing

Column by Kelly Fox

Imagine millions of innocent animals getting chemicals constantly flung at them while being trapped in a cage. They may be trembling in fear or pulling at their fur, waiting to be experimented on.

Animal testing is a controversial subject that has spread infuriation amongst many people. Different parts of the world have diverse stances on this issue. Europe has completely banned products made as a result of cruelty, while China requires animal testing for products.

Every year roughly 100 million animals die from this cruel treatment according to People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). The chemicals that they are given have the potential to poison, blind, or even kill

them. Also, the majority of the animals end up being euthanized if they survive the test according to aboutanimaltesting.co.uk.

This testing is done to virtually any type of animal, including bunnies, monkeys, mice, dogs and cats. Cosmetic testing usually places chemicals on the skin and eyes of the animal, where they could have all sorts of reactions, causing them severe harm.

The majority of creatures used for research are not protected by the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). The AWA puts up regulations to help improve the way that animals are treated. This act can prevent abuse and has aided a tremendous amount of animals involved in various industries, such as breeding.

Unfortunately, this act does not cover a great deal of the animals used for testing including fish, birds, mice, and rats. This means that the people conducting research can essentially do whatever they want to these poor creatures. These animals could easily become subject to starvation, dehydration, pain, and countless other types of abuse.

Animal testing can also be ineffective, because animals do not have the exact same reaction as people do. There are copious amounts of cellular, anatomical, and metabolic differences, which could make products that were deemed safe for animals ineffective on people.

In fact, 92 percent of experimental drugs that work for animals fail in human trials because

they are dangerous or ineffective according to PETA. In addition to that, some things that harm animals do not harm people. For example, when aspirin is used on animals it has a negative effect. However, aspirin aids in relieving pain for many people.

Alternative testing methods now exist that can be used instead of harming animals. An example of this is cell cultures in a petri dish. This can predict results more effectively because it is tested on human cells.

Artificial human skin can display more accurate results. These are made from people's skin cells and are typically grown in test tubes.

An additional non-cruelty alternative is micro fluidic chips, which contains human cells and

can recreate organ functions.

Furthermore, advanced computer programs can predict information regarding products such as the toxicity of substances.

Research through animals is complicated. It can take months to plan the experiments and analyze the results. Additionally, it consumes an extensive amount of money, and can cost anywhere from thousands to millions of dollars. In a study conducted by PETA, it was discovered that a total of 56.4 million dollars of government funds were spent on ineffective animal testing.

People can help this cause by purchasing cruelty-free cosmetic brands such as Becca, Anastasia Beverly Hills, Hourglass.





Don't Enroll In The Wrong Driving School

Don't Be Fooled by PART-TIME SCHOOLS Operating in Stamford.

Since 2005, the High Ridge Driving School has been the driving school of choice for Stamford-area teens and their parents because of our commitment to **always put the student FIRST!** In fact, as a result of our student-centric philosophy, we have taught more Stamford teens to drive than all of the other driving schools... **combined.**

The fact is, **we are not a driver education factory.** From day one, we have strived to offer the best possible driver education experience for each student. When it comes to driver education, just like shoes, one size does not fit all. And there is only one way we can offer this level of

attention – by being local business-people who are actively engaged with our instructors, students, parents and the community. We don't own numerous driving schools around the state or operate part-time, **our focus is here on the driving students of Stamford and the surrounding communities, all day – every day.**

The purpose of this ad is to provide you with a fair and accurate comparison of your driving school options in Stamford, so you can make an educated decision. In the end, you will have to decide which driving school option is best for you and your family.

THE HIGH RIDGE DRIVING SCHOOL ADVANTAGE

	Other Driving School Options	High Ridge Driving School	FREE TEST DRIVE!
Flexible Schedule	No, they schedule sessions that begin and end. So, if you miss a class, you might need to go to another town, or wait quite awhile to finish your training.	Our classes NEVER end. We teach in the classroom 52-weeks a year. In the summer we offer up to 3 classes a day!	Any student accompanied by a parent can sit in on one of our weekday classes absolutely FREE so you can get a feel for our school, our curriculum, and our teaching methods.
Driving Hours	We know of students from other driving schools that have needed to go to other towns to finish their driving hours. Some schools do not even offer in-car sessions on a regular basis!	We drive 7-days a week, all year long. You're assigned an instructor who's dedicated to providing you with the best driver education experience possible. Plus, we pick-up and drop off ANYWHERE locally.	
Off-site Testing at the School	Possibly.	Always available in Stamford multiple times a month since 2005 - And always will be!	
Customer Service	Questions, phone calls, and DMV paperwork usually handled by a corporate office or a branch office in another town, generally only by phone. Some schools do not generate DMV CS-1 certificates in Stamford.	We're almost ALWAYS open – in person or by phone. All phone calls, certificates, and paperwork handled in Stamford. No phone queues or customer service reps, we deliver REAL customer care with our dedicated Stamford staff. We invite parents into our facility, and offer training and support to ensure the time spent driving with your teen is productive.	
The Oldest Driving School in Stamford	VERY limited office hours in Stamford, if at all.	Yes , High Ridge Driving School has been locally owned and operated since 2005!	INTERESTED IN ONLY THE 8-HOUR DRUG & ALCOHOL CLASS? We offer 16 & 17 year old students the chance to take just this class every weekend. (EXCEPT MAJOR HOLIDAYS)
	No.		Always separate classes for teens and adults.

We think you'll agree that the advantage of

- A Flexible Classroom Schedule • An Expanded and Flexible Driving Schedule
- Taking the Driving Test Here in Stamford • Having Ownership Local and Involved...

Makes **High Ridge Driving School** The Logical & Best Value!

High Ridge
Driving School

992 High Ridge Road, Stamford
(203) 329-3030
HighRidgeDrivingSchool.com

Just south of the Merritt Parkway, Exit 35 – High Ridge Road, next to Town Fair Tire.

Azure Time Converter: A student built app

Daniel Greco
Managing Editor

Publishing an application to the Apple App Store is a rigorous, multi-step process. After the content developer has written all of the application's code, which may take months of dedicated work, he or she must submit it to the Apple Application Review system. This ensures that the application is not malicious in nature and passes all of Apple's application standards. If the application makes it through this step, the developer is able to publish it after agreeing to pay an annual 99 dollar fee to Apple.

Throughout Westhill's history, no individual student developer has published an application to the App Store—that is, until Kevin Zyskowski ('19) published his first application *Azure Time Converter*.

"The app is really just about converting times between different pool lengths," Zyskowski said.

The idea is simple at its roots: enter your time, choose the units to convert to, and press "Enter." Though, writing this ap-

plication was no easy task.

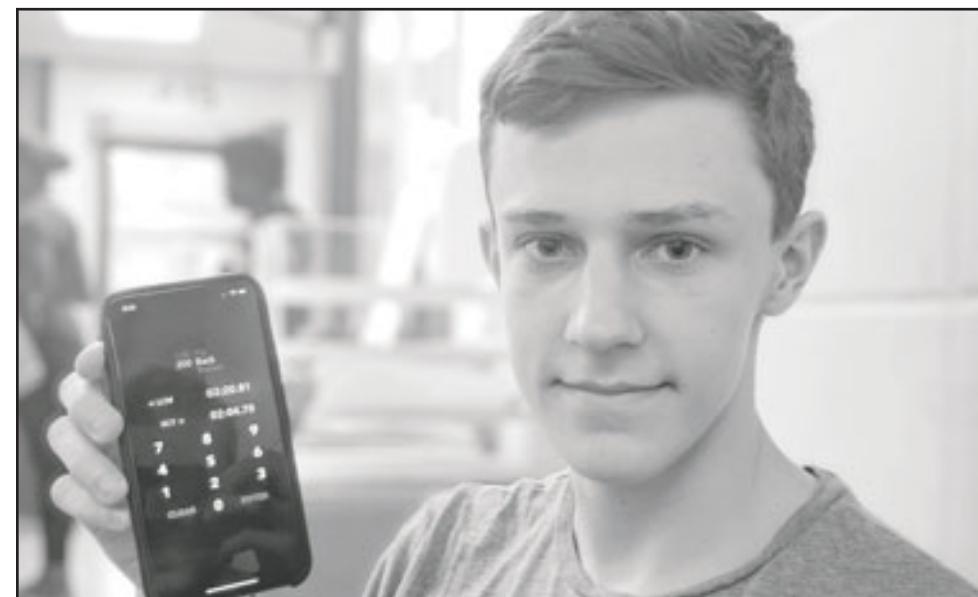
"It was hard to find time to dedicate to making the app," Zyskowski said.

The app took roughly three weeks of work. By committing as much time as possible in-between schools and extracurriculars to the development, the app was created in a timely manner.

The basis for creating this application was Zyskowski's own need to convert his swim times, as he competes on the Chelsea Piers Aquatic Club swim team. He felt that the current implementations of this tool were too "clunky" and not very user-friendly. He then chose to create an application that was simple and practical.

Zyskowski acquired his skills in computer science through taking the AP Computer Science course offered at Westhill.

"AP Computer Science taught me the core principles of programming used everyday by programmers, and really facilitated the development process," Zyskowski said. After learning fundamentals with the programming language Java, the young coder began several small side projects. These



READY, SET, CONVERT Kevin Zyskowski demonstrates the use of *Azure Time Converter*.

Photo by Daniel Greco / Managing Editor.

projects were made in another language called "Swift" through the development platform Xcode—both of which were created by Apple for the purpose of application development. Apple offers beginner guides

to both the Xcode development environment as well as the Swift language for free on their website.

Azure Time Converter is available on the App Store for free today.

72 Hours: The Magic 8 Ball

Column by Valerie Neyra & Jennifer Carias

For three days each month Jen and Val will be challenging themselves to try something new and possibly fun. These challenges will consist of things they have never tried doing before and they will be documenting the outcome. This month's challenge: the Magic 8 Ball makes all of our decisions for 72 hours.

Day 1:

Val: For the first day, I wanted to buy a Magic 8 Ball, but sadly I did not have time to get one. I decided to just download a Mag-

ic 8 Ball App which had a three star rating, so I did not know if I could truly trust it. I started my day by asking the Magic 8 Ball if I should make myself breakfast. It replied saying "without a doubt." I decided to make myself a bowl of cereal with milk, as I am not a great cook. I headed off to school where I asked the Magic 8 Ball App if I should finish my study guide for my test on Friday. The ball replied "outlook not so good." I followed orders and waited until the last minute to do my study guide.

Jen: Unfortunately, I was also unable to go buy a Magic 8 Ball that day, so I ended up downloading an app. I forgot to use it throughout the school day, it was not until after school when I remembered that I should start asking it questions. I asked it if I should get food before going to work to which it replied "No!", but it

was not the answer I was hoping for. I was hungry and had plenty of time before I had to be at work at 3:00, but I still followed the rules. After work, I asked it if I should get food on the way home. The ball said, "count on it!" I gladly complied and got myself a nice meal. By the time I got home, it was already late. I ended up taking a quick shower and was off to bed.

Day 2:

Val: I was more on track on day two and started the day off by asking the Magic 8 Ball if I should have breakfast, to which the app replied "very doubtful." I went to school hungry. I did not really ask questions during school hours. The only other question that I asked was if I should go to the media center for study hall. The ball replied saying, "it is certain." The Magic 8 Ball motivated me to do all the things that I did not want to do; studying for my test, eating healthy, and cleaning my room. I did not expect the Magic 8 Ball to affect my life positively. I expected it to throw me off. Day two gave me more positive re-

sults than negative.

Jen: On the second day I was not feeling too well. I had gotten hurt in the morning while trying to help a friend of mine in spoons and was in no mood to continue asking the ball questions. It was not until later in the day when I started using it again. I had study hall last period and asked the ball if I should go home. It said "ask again later." When I asked again a couple of minutes later, it said "signs point to yes," which is what I was hoping it would say. When I got home, I asked if I should make something to eat; and the ball said, "No!" I then asked if I should take a quick nap, and it once again said "No!" I then asked it one last question—if I should go do my homework. The ball said "No!" once again. After the third "no", I gave up and did all three things anyways.

Day 3:

Val: For the final day I asked the same questions. This time I got more negative than positive responses. Day three happened to be Friday, so I wanted to go out with friends. I asked my Magic 8

Ball App and it said "very doubtful." I ignored it and ended up going out with my friend. I did not regret it. I would like to point out that there was a negative review on this Magic 8 Ball App. I wish it could have been more reliable.

Jen: On the last day I was considering going to the Color Run. I had not paid for my ticket yet and really wanted to go, but there was also a college accepted students day I needed to attend. When I asked if I should buy my ticket, the ball said "I doubt it." I took that as a no and ended up not buying my ticket. I realized that the Magic 8 Ball App was not really giving me much of a variety in its answers. I kept getting no over and over again, just like the day before. I did not really follow its directions for most of the day.

In conclusion, a Magic 8 Ball may not be the best way to make decisions. It does, however, help guide one in finding out what they truly hoped an outcome would be. So the next time you have a decision to make, perhaps try a Magic 8 Ball.



Northstar's *Footloose* adaptation

Addison Magrath &

Rachel Plotzky

Print Executive Editor &

Managing Editor

Northstar Playmaker's *Footloose* hit the stage on Saturday April 28 and went on to play five shows until the last performance on May 5. The musical was in the works for almost four months with rehearsals almost every day.

Marcos Pinto-Leite ('18) and Skye Gillespie ('18/AITE) played the lead roles of Ren McCormack and Ariel Moore.

For those who are not familiar with *Footloose*, the story takes place in the small Midwestern town of Bomont. The main character, Ren, moves to Bomont from Chicago and soon learns that dancing has been outlawed. Ren believes this is outrageous. This ban sparks a fire in Ren to bring students and families together to revolt against the church to bring dancing back to Bomont.

With this revolt comes many dance numbers and solos throughout the musical. The musical spotlights more than just the

leading roles and allows for other students to get the opportunity to sing and dance, front and center.

For example, Audrey Molina ('19) and Alexandra Watkinson ('19), playing Ariel's mom and Ren's mom, are featured together in a duet during the show.

Auditions for the musical took place after winter break in January and the cast has been practicing since then.

"Being in *Footloose* was great. It was a once in a lifetime high school experience," Kaden Roome ('19) said.

Northstar hit a bump in the road early on in the production because there were not enough boys to fill the cast. This obstacle had Northstar letting in late starters such as Roome, and even giving male parts to members of the tech crew.

Kevin Harrington ('19), Assistant Stage Manager, was drafted into the musical as a police officer because of the need for more male actors.

"I was unprepared [to act], but I rose up to the challenge," Harrington said.

Throughout the musical, there were several different sets built by tech. These in-

cluded a scenic train platform, houses, and a church.

"I like looking at the props. It makes me wonder how long it takes to put in the effort to assemble and paint them," Evelyn Vasquez ('19) said after she saw the production.

A lot of shows that Northstar has done have been set in older eras like the 1920s, unlike *Footloose* which takes place in the 1980s.

"The time period was interesting because in the past we have done older shows; this one was more contemporary," Ries Allyn ('19), member of the Northstar board, said.

Allyn played the roles of Eleanor, a church counselor, and Irene, a club singer.

Although the Spring Musical has concluded, Northstar is not finished for the year.

"[Northstar is] working on a showcase and our improv troupe is going to be doing a show," Allyn said.

Northstar Playmakers will soon begin elections for new board members and looks to improve for next year.



DIVINE ACTING The cast of *Footloose* dances their hearts out in the final scene of the musical on its final night.

Photo by Noah Klein / Editor-in-Chief.

Movie Review: A Quiet Place

Valerie Neyra

Staff Writer

John Krasinski's *A Quiet Place* is a 2018 American horror film about a family trying to stay alive while avoiding deadly creatures. The family must remain quiet and communicate with one another via sign language.

The movie begins with the Abbott family searching and collecting what seems to be medicine and other valuables in an abandoned supermarket. The audience is then shown a title card announcing "Day

89," but it is unclear what has happened. This makes the viewer an active participant in the movie, having to figure out the story for themselves.

The family, which consists of Lee and Evelyn (John Krasinski and his real-life partner, Emily Blunt) and their three children (played by Noah Jupe, Millicent Simmonds, and Cade Woodward), are walking on a bridge when a battery-operated toy triggers a loud alarm. View-

ers watch in horror as the family runs into imminent danger.

Skipping forward one year into the future, the audience sees the family and a now very pregnant Evelyn. Lee teaches his son how to hunt, and the daughter fumes over the protectiveness of her parents. What happens next is a series of obstacles that the family must go through in order to survive.

It is revealed that the crea-

tures terrorizing the family have no sight and only attack sounds. There is not much told of the family's past or where these creatures came from, as that is irrelevant to the focus of the story.

There is no end resolution other horror movies might have, but this uncertainty does not make the film any less frightening.

Every noise that one does think would not matter, matters, even the little sounds that we would not think about in our

everyday lives could jeopardize theirs. The family has made sure to soundproof everything, from the creaking of the floorboards to the basement.

It is a movie parents will relate to, because it shows the extremes that parents will go to in order to protect their kids. It is entertaining because it surrounds the idea of silence being a necessity, maybe even above food and water in this case. It is a movie worth watching as you have to wait until the end to comprehend everything.



The ABBOT FAMILY (Left to Right): Millicent Simmonds, Emily Blunt, John Krasinski, Noah Jupe, & Cade Woodward
Photos courtesy of Gettyburg Images North America, Wikimedia Commons & Danny Acres Photography.

Westhill Winter Percussion takes center stage

Audrey Molina

Reporter

For members of the Westhill Winter Percussion Ensemble, hearing a booming voice announce teams over a microphone to a crowd of expectant listeners is nothing new. In fact, it is an average Saturday night for this group of dedicated musicians and performers. They work long hours on their show to bring their best to each weekly competition.

Winter Percussion, in short, is a version of marching band in which percussion instruments such as snares, bass drums, cymbals, marimbas, drum kit, and many more play an extended show in front of judges and audiences. The mobile instruments march on a themed mat and often portray a story through their performance.

This year, Westhill's show was entitled *The Monsters Under My Bed*. It told the eerily delightful story of a little girl who

is befriended by three monsters. Musical selections included "Enter Sandman" by Metallica and "The Monster" by Eminem featuring Rihanna.

The Westhill team was awarded first and second place at nearly every event they competed at this year.

Last month, they travelled to Dayton, Ohio to compete in the Winter Guard International (WGI) World Championships for the 11th consecutive year. To this incredible group, the grueling 11-hour bus ride to Ohio was a small price to pay for the opportunity to perform on an international stage. They made it to the semi-final round and nearly clinched a ticket to finals, but just missed the finals cutoff.

Band director Mr. Wyatt cares less about the group's placement and more about what his students get out of their time in Winter Percussion.

"I want the students to gain valuable life skills, musical

skills, and a family. I would like to think we were successful on all three fronts." Mr. Wyatt said.

For snare player Noah Schaffer ('18) this year's trip to Dayton was bittersweet. He knows he will never perform with this group of people again.

"Between the staff and my peers, I have developed a community I will be able to hold onto for my entire life," Schaffer said.

The best part, for him, was watching his peers develop into truly amazing performers and people throughout the course of the season. Because of these experiences, Schaffer intends to continue with music into college.

Schaffer is not the only one who feels this way. Helena Dougherty ('21), who portrayed one of the monsters, says that the relationships she made through the band program allowed her to be herself.

"I think the biggest thing I gained from Winter Percus-



CHAMPIONS Westhill's percussion team after winning the MAC championship.

Photo by @westhillpercussion / Instagram.

her sister Julia Brown ('19), a cymbal player said.

Elizabeth played the little girl who discovers monsters living under her bed. She formed a close bond with Helena and the other two monsters, Ashley Cherres ('19) and Brianna Gibson ('19).

As this year comes to an end, these performers look to the future. They barely have any time to mourn one season before a new season begins and they must pick up their instruments anew.

This month in hip-hop

Column by Jude Ponthieu

It has been a hot spring with many big name artists coming out of the blue with new releases and long awaited projects finally making their way out into the market.

April kicked off with Famous Dex's debut trap rap album, *Dex Meets Dexter*, which dropped on April 6. The album, despite being trap oriented differs from Rich the Kid's hard-hitting album with more melodic hooks and beats. Dexter did not have many features on the album besides Wiz Khalifa and Diplo, as well as A\$AP Rocky who was featured on the previously released track "Pick it Up." The lesser known group named Drax Project was also featured on the track "Light," where Dex's vocals shine. Big tracks off the album include "Japan," "Pick it Up," and "DMD."

The same day as Famous Dex's release, the Brooklyn group Flatbush Zombies released their second studio album, *Vacation in Hell*. The album is packed with witty lyrics and hooks, fresh concepts, hard hitting drums, and gritty vocals. The trio does not hold back on

keeping it New York with half of the features on the album being New York natives. Artists such as Joey Bada\$\$, A\$AP Twelvyy, Jadakiss, and Nyck Caution continue to make the empire state shine in the album. Other features include Bun B, Dia, Dave B, Portugal. The Man, and Denzel Curry. "YouAreMySunshine" mourns the death of rapper A\$AP Yams and the track "Facts" comes at the rap game. Big tracks off of the album include "Vacation," "Headstone," and "HELL-O".

Continuing through April, the chart-topping female rapper Cardi B also dropped her long awaited debut album *Invasion of Privacy*. Cardi B did not hold back on her artistry on this album, refusing to stick to her common trap genre and branching out to Spanish trap on "I Like It" with features from Bad Bunny, J Balvin, and Kehlani. Prior to dropping the album, Cardi released the track "Be Careful." This track took a different approach from her usual hard trap rap style and took shots at her fiance, Offset, who had cheated on her previously. We get to hear

Cardi's simple yet beautiful vocals on this heartfelt track. SZA is featured on the final track "I Do" as they go off for the boss women out there. Other features include Chance the Rapper and his smooth, lyric packed flow as well as incomparable vocals on "Best Life." Migos also makes an appearance on "Drip," as well as 21 Savage on previously released track "Bartier Cardi," and YG on "She Bad." A lot of big tracks came out of this album but some tracks to highlight are "I Like It," "I Do," "Drip," and "Best Life."

Aside from all of the album releases, a lot of artists are making returns with some singles. Nicki Minaj has broke her silence dropping two new tracks "Chun-Li" and "Barbie Tingz" with two exciting videos in an attempt to maintain her throne as queen of the rap game.

Childish Gambino's "This is America" is also racking up major views as the video and its messages are being discussed all over. Drake's "Nice for what" last month was also breaking records, the video featuring a lot of female superstars and em-



HARD HITTING Childish Gambino's and J Cole's new releases have been lyrically groundbreaking and culturally influential.

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

powering women throughout it. We can look forward to Drake's "Scorpion" in the month of June along with Kanye West and Kid Cudi collab "Kids See Ghost."

The hip hop world was buzzing even before Kanye West announced his list of upcoming projects. West is back in full force with a lot of controversy and a lot of new music to come.

We wrap this up with our throwback song of the month, "N.Y. State of Mind" by Nas. This track is one of the many legendary songs off of the classic album



SCATTERBRAIN

De-Bunking common classroom myths

If a teacher does not come to class within 15 minutes you may leave without repercussions.

One of the most popular myths at Westhill is that students are free to leave a class if a teacher is at least 15 minutes late. The myth most likely originates from college level education, where classes are less monitored and students are given more freedom. Despite widespread belief around school, this myth is undeniably false. There is nothing in Westhill policy that allows students to leave a class prior to its dismissal time. If the aforementioned situation were to happen, the most logical solution is to call over a security guard and they will contact the office requesting a substitute to watch over the class for the rest of the period. This way attendance will be taken and anyone who stayed will get credit and those who left will be marked absent.

Cafeterias were once officially segregated as "Black and White."

Some students say the cafeterias were originally segregated, and the nicknames "Black" and "White" originate from that. This myth was started long ago. A former student of Westhill, James E. Tompkins Sr. says that students have been calling the cafeterias those names before he started at Westhill in 1992. Westhill opened in 1972, almost two decades after segregation was ended in schools by Brown vs. Board of Education in 1954. The nicknames most likely originated from the students and have persisted out of habit, as they are no longer even relevant to the current demographics of the cafeterias.

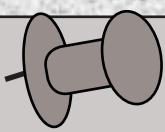
If a teacher or student dies during an exam, the class automatically gets a passing grade.

A death in the classroom is a very unlikely event to happen, but students like to theorize and speculate the "what ifs" when it comes to testing. While it may be reassuring (in a way) to know what the school's policies on death are, in truth, staff and student deaths are handled on a case by case basis by the school both in and outside of the classroom. There is no end-all be-all policy on what happens to students if someone inside the classroom falls ill or dies during an exam. If this does happen the best course of action would be to call for help from another teacher, the nurse, or an ambulance if things are really bad.

Are school and prison food practically the same thing?

Students are always quick to complain about the quality of food that the cafeteria serves up for lunch; some go as far as to say it is worse than what is served to inmates. While there is no way to directly compare the two, we can look at the objectives. According to the LA weekly, it costs 1.10 dollars per meal of prison food while according to the New York Times, it costs about 2.72 dollars per meal of school food. School food is also closely monitored by the government to make sure it complies with USDA health standards whereas prison food is regulated by the institutions themselves, not the government. Taking this information into account its safe to say that Westhill food is better than most prison food across the country.

Briefs by Christian Rybalko / Staff Writer
Photo courtesy of pixabay.com



**A special thank you
to the Westhill High
School Custodial and
Security staff. The
work you do does not
go unnoticed.**



Luigi's
RESTAURANT & PIZZERIA
HOMESTYLE ITALIAN COOKING

Open 7 Days for Lunch and Dinner
Serving Fairfield County
Over 50 Years
Est. 1960

203-329-8848
Fax: 203-461-9473
968 High Ridge Road
Stamford, CT 06905
We Accept All Major Credit Cards

Online Ordering
www.MyLuigisRestaurant.com
MyLuigisRestaurant@gmail.com
Catering Available,
View Our Menu Online

\$15 minimum delivery order. \$1.50 delivery charge.
Personal checks not accepted. Please let us know in advance
if paying by credit card.
Prices are subject to change without notice.

FAST DELIVERY!

\$4.99
FAMILY FEAST
All items included for person eating.
All items include 1/2 chicken, pasta
or 1/2 pizza
drinking wine bottle included only

50% OFF
lunch or dinner entree
Buy 2 entrees & receive the
second entree at 50% off
dine in only

20% OFF
lunch order
dine in only

\$5 OFF
delivery order
of \$50 or more

\$10 OFF
dine in order
of \$50 or more - dine in only

\$27.99
SUPER DEAL
Large 3-course meal
Includes 2 entrees & 2 sides
over \$100 entree - dine in or delivery only

SLAY OF THE MONTH: JONATHAN JOSEPH



"My name is Jonathan Joseph and I am the Slay of the Month. Many things inspire my style. I love to take inspiration from everyone around me and from everything I see, then form it into my own style. I like to take parts of outfits I see on Instagram, mix them with my own ideas and make a whole new style."

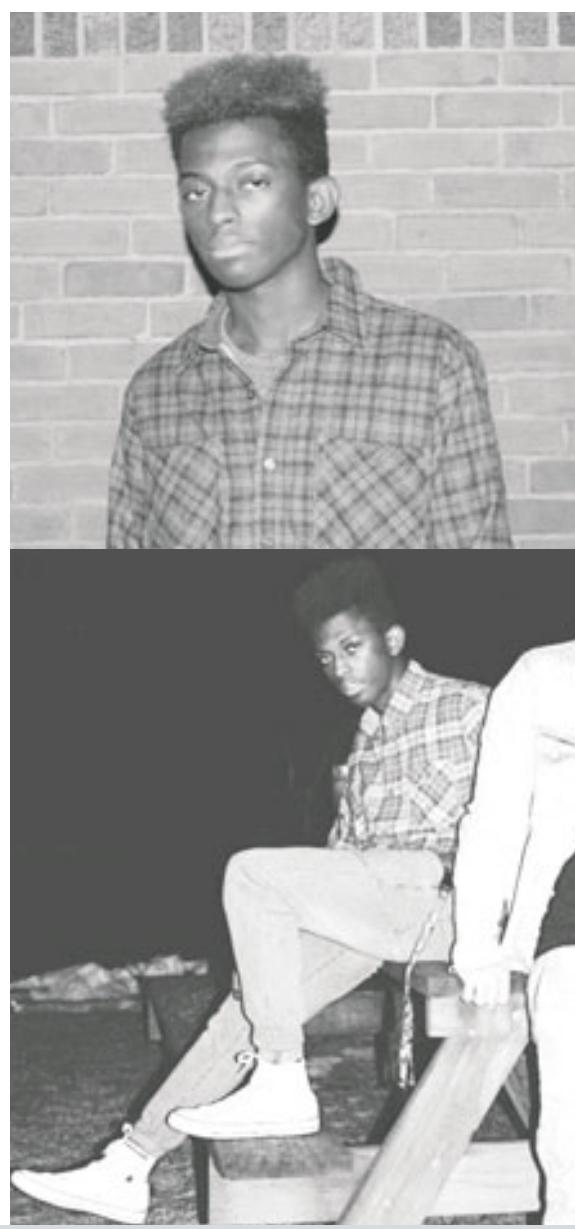
"I think that the way you dress really expresses the type of person you are. The way I dress is how I express myself and show a part of me that I cannot really show any other way. My favorite pieces are flannels, vintage jackets and distressed jeans. The fall is when I usually wear the most flannels because they are usually colorful, and that is just the perfect weather to get really dressed up in."

"Some of the stores that have good pieces of clothing are American Eagle, Zara, and H&M. These stores are on the affordable side and provide pieces that can go with almost anything. There are some pretty dope pieces that can also be thrifted, but it is very rare that you would find a really good piece at a thrift store."

"Most of the celebrities that I look up to fashion-wise are involved in music: A\$ap Rocky, Travis Scott, and Khalid. I also follow a bunch of fashion pages on Instagram that inspire me and help make my ideas flow. Some people on Instagram that have a very good sense of style are Luka Sabbat and Markel Williams."

"My advice concerning fashion for guys is do not be afraid to try new styles and go for more creative colors because they are what makes your outfits pop and look different. The way you dress is an extension of yourself. When you first meet someone the first thing one looks at is the way you dress. Your manner of dress tells them if you care about how you look, and if you are taking care of yourself."

"My style has changed over the years because of the people around me who give me tips and ideas of what I am doing wrong or what I am doing right. I am always open to suggestions to my style, that is why it has improved and why it will keep improving."



To Do This Month: May



*Photo courtesy of pixels.com.

Spring Word Search

W	O	B	N	I	A	R	I	O	R
B	S	I	G	N	I	P	M	A	C
E	P	V	S	N	B	I	R	D	S
S	R	A	M	L	E	N	S	T	S
R	I	C	O	R	A	D	I	U	E
E	N	A	S	A	T	M	R	A	N
W	G	T	S	A	R	R	I	A	R
O	F	I	O	M	I	B	E	N	G
L	E	O	L	W	A	R	M	E	A
F	I	N	B	L	O	O	M	N	S

Word List

ANIMALS
BLOOM
BLOSSOM
CAMPING
FLOWERS
GARDEN
RAIN
RAINBOW
SPRING
SUN
VACATION
WARM
TREES
BIRDS

SUDOKU

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

HOW TO PLAY:
FILL THE BOARD SO THAT
EACH COLUMN, ROW AND
3X3 BOX HAS DIGITS 1
THROUGH 9 WITHOUT ANY
REPEATS. GOOD LUCK!



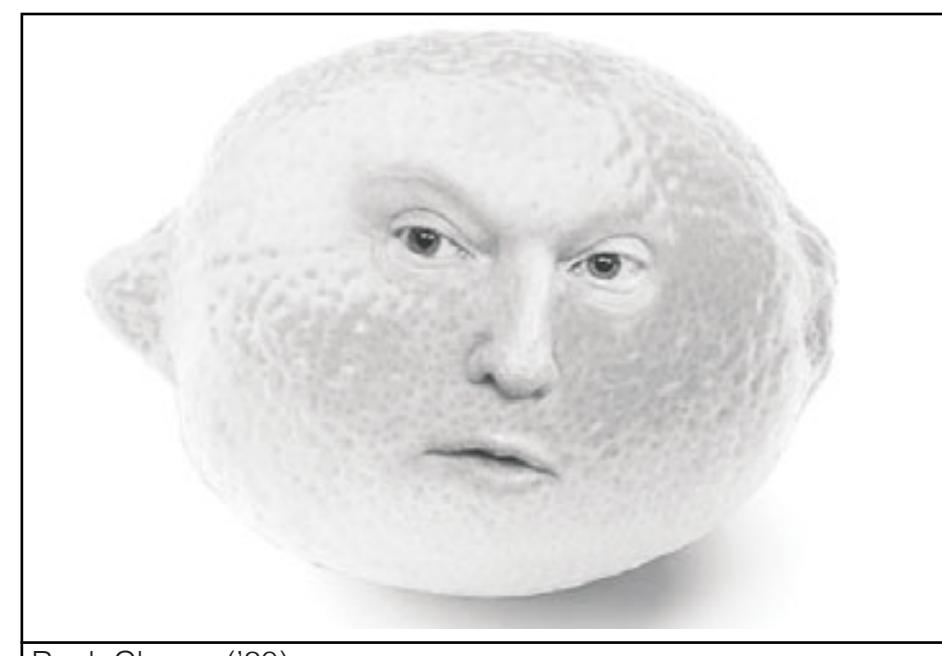
www.Express.com/ArtBlog

EXPRESS: ART BLOG

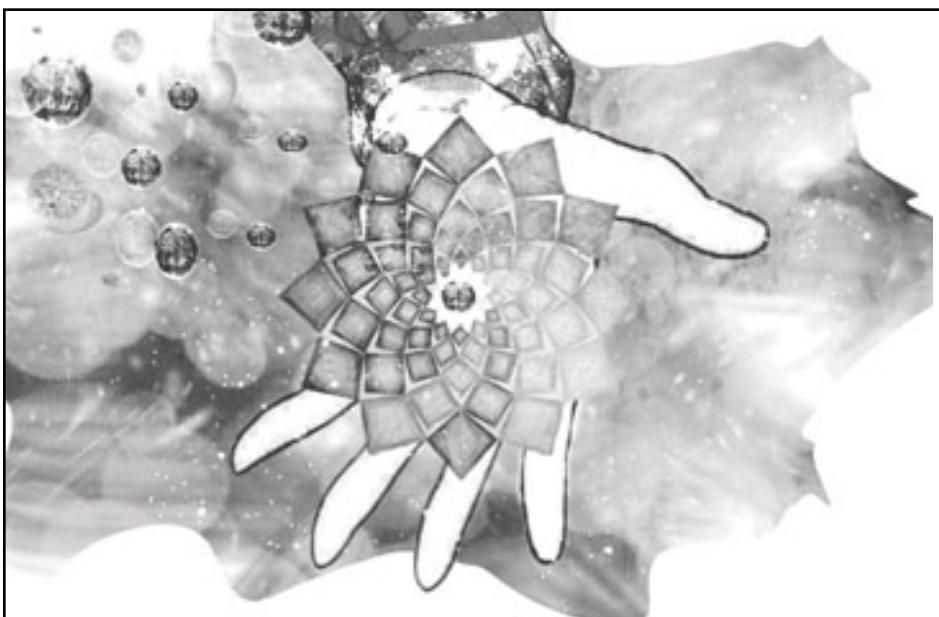
OCTOBER NOVEMBER DECEMBER JANUARY FEBRUARY MARCH **APRIL**



Victor Carias ('19)
#Tesla, #Face, #Scientist...



Rock Clapp ('20)
#Trump, #Lemon, #Photoshop...



Samantha Lucas ('19)
#Shapes, #Hand...



Noah Cheruk ('18)
#Album Art, #Headphones...



ARTIST OF THE MONTH: TIA BLUMENAU

OCTOBER NOVEMBER DECEMBER JANUARY FEBRUARY MARCH

APRIL



The Westword (TW): How would you describe your artistic style to others?

Tia Blumenau (TB): My art is usually in cartoon form.

TW: What is your favorite medium to work with? What would you like to work with in the future?

TB: My favorite medium is markers. I would like to work more with paint and watercolors in the future.

TW: What do you like to portray through your art?

TB: I like to portray fantasy and wonder through my drawings and stories that I make.

TW: How has art influenced your life?

TB: It has influenced me a lot because the decisions I make for the future are portrayed through [my] art and it helps me express my emotions.

TW: Who or what has inspired you to create art? How did you find this inspiration?

TB: A lot of cartoons on TV like Steven Universe inspired my art, and different anime.

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

TB: A message I would like to convey is to not take things for granted and to live life in the moment.

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

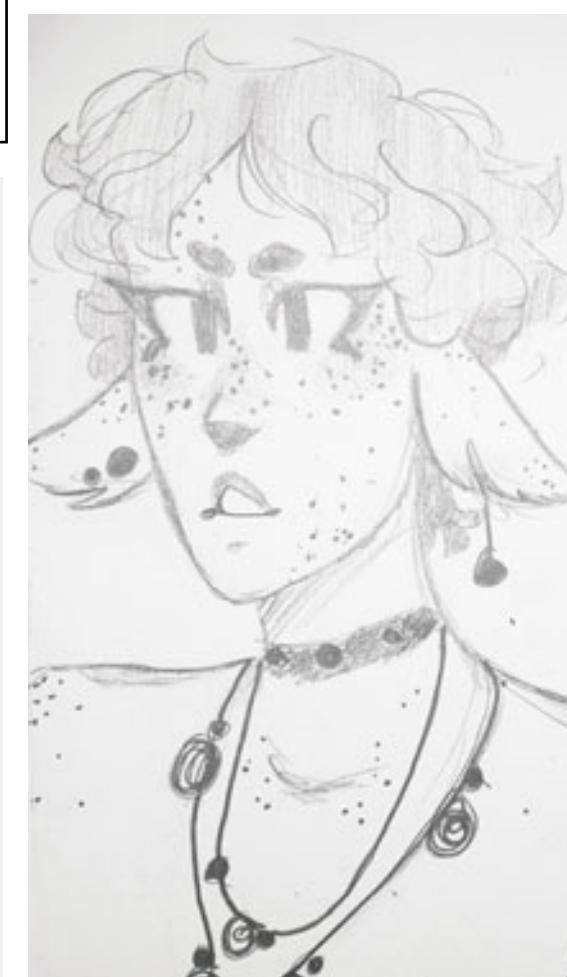
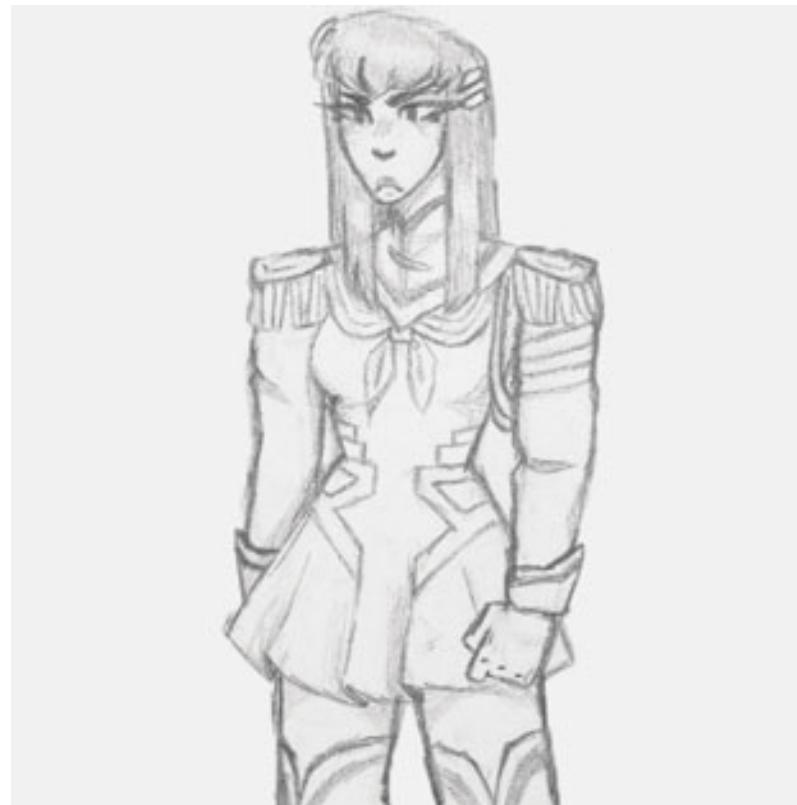
TB: Yeah, I hope so.

TW: How do other people typically describe your art?

TB: People describe it as very fun and bright.

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

TB: Do not give up. Get through the art blocks because you are always improving, even if it does not seem like it.



Hosting at home

Looking at what it takes to host a varsity sports game

Chloe Giulini

News Editor

When it comes to hosting a varsity sports game, a lot goes on behind the scenes to make sure everything runs smoothly and successfully. One of the biggest undertakings in the process is scheduling and setting up games. Everything from security to spreading the word must be handled in advance of the big day.

Every morning, students are jolted awake in their first period classes by the morning announcements. The announcements are a helpful way of releasing all sorts of information, including the upcoming game schedule.

The morning announcements are a way to spread the word about the games, and get students excited for the team playing. If more people know about a game, there will likely be more purple and gold in the stands.

The school also has opened several social media accounts that spread the word about sports games on top of the regular announcements.

Student athletes spread the word about upcoming games, making sure they can get as many of their friends to join them at sporting events. Thanks to the school's social media, it is easier than ever to spread the word.

Westhill has multiple sports that attract a large crowd. On Thanksgiving, the bleachers were packed with a large portion of the school there to support Westhill's Football team when they played against Stamford High School in football.

Students from both the competing schools and Westhill show up to watch a game, but they may not realize all the preparation it takes to host one. At each event, there is a routine followed to prevent or intercept conflict and issues that can arise. Westhill security guards, teachers, and Stamford police officers all work together to keep the situation in the stands under control.

"At a game or event, there will be security at each door. There are usually two to three security guards at games, along with four Stamford Police officers," Nick Wright, head of security, said. Two

of those four officers include Westhill's own SROs.

It is critical that both the players and students remain safe, and the event does not get out of hand.

"We are there to make sure that a fight does not break out, and that everything remains under control," Wright continued.

Some of the most dedicated people who make pre game preparations are, of course, the students.

"Our team is very upbeat and positive. We are all so close. Before a game, we love to listen to loud music on the bus or at home matches" tennis player Sanjana Nayak ('20) said.

"...we are trying to stay calm and relaxed before the game. We get there early, shoot around and try to keep our nerves down if it is a big game..." basketball player Jack Schlachtenhaufen ('20) said.

In each sport, about half of the games will be away. For the away games, transportation has to be arranged there and back for all of the players. All of this travel and organization falls into the hands of Mr. Cerone, the Westhill Athletic Director.

"Most games will be scheduled by the FCIAC league. They determine the teams playing and the location. From there, it is a matter of communicating with custodians and officials for home games, and the bus company for away games," Cerone said.

Another factor that goes into the spectacle of a Westhill game is the Purple Pack. The Purple Pack is a group of students who attend games to show support. The pack cheers on the players from the stands, and they are willing to travel to away games to show their excitement. The players can benefit from their schoolmates' enthusiasm.

"Any game consists of a bunch of people doing a lot of little things contributing to the whole team," Mr. DeVellis, girls basketball and lacrosse coach, said.

At the end of the game, players will board the bus and make their way back to Westhill. The next morning, Mr. Pereira will get back on the speaker and announce the wins or losses of the Westhill teams. Pereira mentions the upcoming games, and the cycle starts all over again.

Graphic by Ryka ChandraRaj / Graphic Designer



6th Peter Cernansky Memorial Golf Tournament, Dinner & Auction

Monday ... June 18, 2018

Rockrimmon Country Club

2949 Long Ridge Road, Stamford, CT 06903

Golf Tournament

- Play your own ball; shotgun start [Noon Sharp]
- Pistol Pete Trophies for men & women low gross
- Brunch/warm-up 10:30am to 11:55am; dinner follows

Dinner & Auction

- All invited
- Dinner & silent auction 5:15pm; open bar ends 8:00pm
- See www.pcmgolf.org for ticketing/details/updates

Proceeds support:

- Westhill HS "Purple PACT" & Stamford HS "Knight Life"
- Stamford Public Education Foundation (SPEP) & Stamford Youth Foundation (SYF)
- AthLife Foundation & Stamford Middle School Mentoring Initiative



Callari Auto Group:

Hole-In -One CaryPrizes

Sponsor for the 6th year



Effect of rejection on athletes

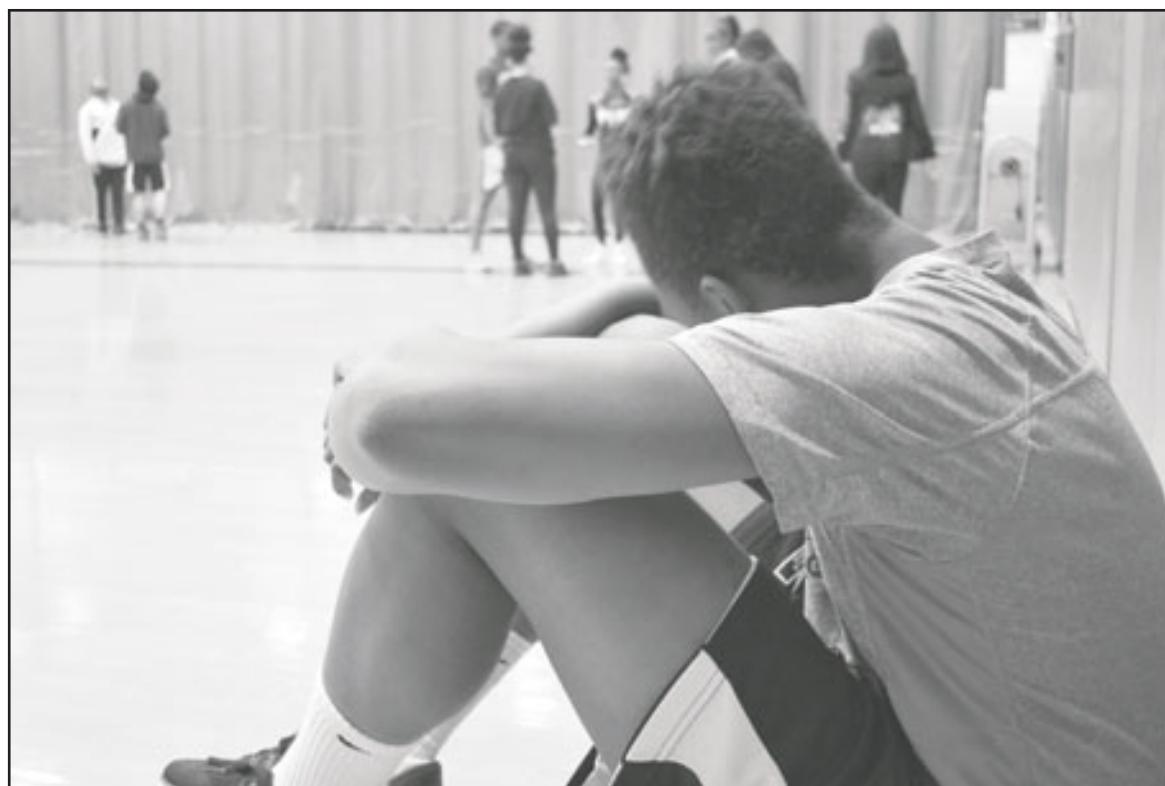
Maria Mirafuentes

Staff Writer

At the turn of each season when sports tryouts come around, many people put out their best in hopes of making a team. However, no matter what level of experience one has, making a team is not always guaranteed. Whether it is poor grades not allowing for qualification or the coaches believe that one is not ready or skilled enough, rejection is something that some athletes must deal with.

Not making the team because the coaches decide an athlete is unprepared can cause one to think that they will never be good enough and can sometimes make them feel like they should not tryout the upcoming year.

This negative outlook will not bring anyone success. Even though rejection stings, the effects all depends on one's outlook. Rejection can be taken as motivation to practice everyday and improve. Rejection taken the



wrong way can make one feel ashamed about not being good enough and just not want to try anymore.

Noel Martinez ('18) did not

make the baseball team this past year and took it as inspiration.

"It gives you a certain inspiration, to work harder and puts a lot of things in perspective for

you," Martinez said.

Another positive way of looking at rejection is as an opportunity to try something new.

"When I did not make it into

cheer, I decided to not improve and try something else out. As a result of that, I found out that I had a desire to play field hockey. I made the team. Even though I failed at cheer, I found something that I love," Karla Servin ('19) said.

Being inexperienced at a sport is not the only reason someone might not be able to play. If a student's GPA is 2.0 or lower, they will be kept from the team or put on academic probation. Some students regret their actions and wish they could have done more to fulfill their goals.

"I would try out again and work on my grades because basketball is my passion" Brian Martin ('19) said when asked what he would do if he failed off a team.

Overall, rejection is a painful, yet also important, step to becoming good at anything. Of course it stings, but that pain can help tell the recipient a change is needed. A chance after rejection could mean trying harder in the same field or trying something new.

Photo illustration by Gabe Schmidt / Photographer.

Dance team debuts at Westhill

Shaira Sunbeam

Reporter

Westhill provides many opportunities to students in order to feed their interests and discover new hobbies through after school programs.

Westhill is now offering a new addition to its long list of clubs as a dance team has been formed. Although Westhill already offers a dance class, this club is great for those who cannot fit a class into their school schedule, or just want to dance for fun with a passionate group of students. The team will look to draw in both students who already take part in dance, like those who perform in the musicals or dance outside of school, and students who are new to the scene.

The club was initially started when Shauna Alexander ('19), Jessye Ortega ('19), and Janet Xy ('19) performed at the talent show. The juniors enjoyed performing so much that they decided to form the new club. All three captains have

been dancing since they were kids, and have a passion for dance.

"They were amazing," said Mrs. Sher-Kalter, the advisor to the Dance Club, and dance class teacher said.

Sher-Kalter elaborated on how great Alexander, Ortega, and Xy were at the talent show and even promoted the video of them dancing. As an advisor to the club, Sher-Kalter's enthusiasm drives the Dance Team to be the best they can be.

By talking with Principle Rinaldi and Mrs. Sher-Kalter, the trio was able to establish the club officially. Club meetings take place in the dance room after school.

Now that the club is established and has made itself known through the posters hung up around the school, students have been expressing interest.

"I honestly believe that [the dance team] is a great addition to our school, it is a way for students to express their talents, and is a great way for them to stay active"

prospective member Naomi Julca ('18) said.

The captains are looking for dancers who want to have fun and can follow along with the choreography provided. The captains are open to perform several varieties of dance styles.

One of these styles is hip-hop, which is a type of dance that involves quick, full-body, movements separated by brief pauses.

The next style is Spanish, which is recognizable by its bold and expressive movements.

The team's third area of interest is contemporary dance, which combines the range of classic ballroom dancing with the speed and full body movement of more modern styles.

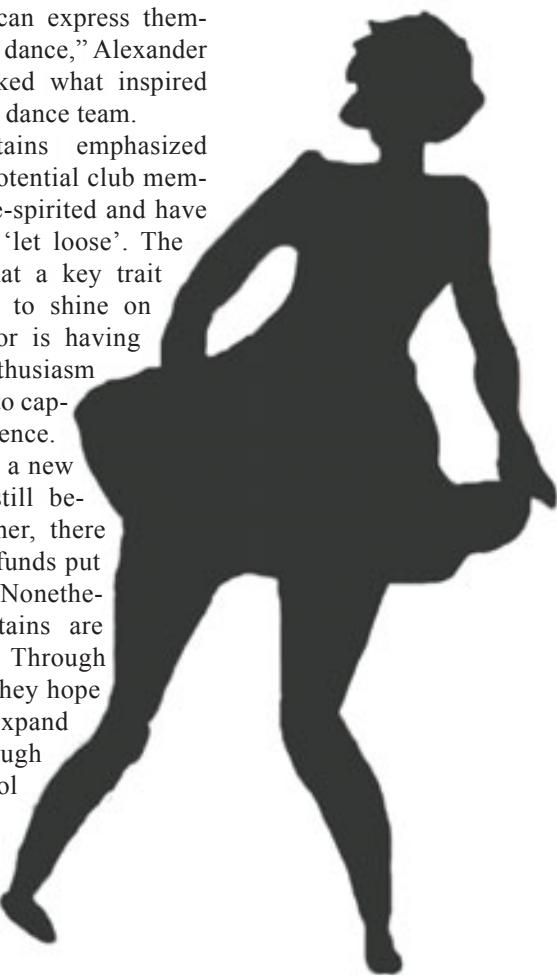
The team, however is wary of lyrical dancing, a type of choreography where dancers sync their movements to the rhythm of the lyrics of a song instead of the background music.

"My passion for dance made me want to teach other talented

kids so they can express themselves through dance," Alexander said when asked what inspired her to start the dance team.

The captains emphasized the need for potential club members to be free-spirited and have the ability to 'let loose'. The trio claims that a key trait in being able to shine on the dance floor is having enough enthusiasm and character to captivate the audience.

Since it is a new club and is still being put together, there are not many funds put into it yet. Nonetheless, the captains are determined. Through fund-raising, they hope to be able to expand and grow enough to enter school competitions as well as dance shows.



Graphic by Nicholas Zarrilli / Managing Editor

Butler up to bat



FOCUS Butler steps up to bat, one of her strong suits when it comes to playing softball.

Photo contributed by **Olivia Butler** / Contributor.

Leiny Otero

Staff Writer

Commitment is one quality that every athlete should have. Olivia Butler has this quality in spades. Butler has been playing on the Westhill softball team since she was a freshman, and is now one of the captains for the team. Her hard work and commitment has landed her the female athlete of the month spot for this issue. The Westword sat down with her to talk about her history with the sport and favorite softball experiences.

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

Olivia Butler (OB): I have been playing softball since I was seven. I played baseball originally in a boys league, but I wanted to gain more of a bond with my teammates so I switched to softball. Plus, it is more fast paced than baseball.

TW: Outside of school, do you play on any other softball teams?

OB: I did play on the Westhill coaches travel team during the

summer and I have been playing on travel teams since I started softball, but this year I decided to take a break and have a free summer. One of my travel teams made it to the World Series in Florida.

TW: Do you have any routines or pre-game rituals?

OB: My dad and I have had a handshake since I was younger so I always do our handshake before I go out on the field. We also have a tribal dance that we do before every game where we make a beat and dance.

TW: What is your proudest athletic achievement?

OB: Placing Second Team All FCIAC for second base.

TW: What is your favorite thing about playing softball?

OB: I get to spend time with my favorite girls on and off the field and softball just brings everyone closer.

TW: What has softball taught you in life?

OB: How to communicate with others and be a leader.

TW: What motivates you to con-

tinue playing softball?

OB: The feeling of winning and enjoying it with others, also learning how to put in effort and gain success full results.

TW: What do you like and dislike about playing softball?

OB: My favorite thing is getting into shape and working on the mechanics so you know what you are doing on the field. My least favorite thing is probably running.

TW: Do you play or take interest in any other sport?

OB: I do like playing volleyball but I wanted to focus more on one sport this season.

TW: What do you think are your strengths in softball?

OB: I would say being able to play a lot of positions and being versatile. I am also good with hitting and not getting stressed in the box.

TW: What do you think you need to improve on?

OB: Adjusting to shortstop since I have been playing second for two years. I also want to work on my mental game.

Brendan brings it on the field



PROFICIENCY Pierre playing as Defensive Midfielder, a highly targeted spot by opposing teams.

Photo contributed by **Brendan Pierre** / Contributor.

Petra Ramirez

Staff Writer

Though this season is Brendan Pierre's first time playing lacrosse, he has learned a lot thus far. To get a better look into how the Westhill senior has gotten such a strong start, The Westword sat down with him and asked about his personal highlights playing this year.

The Westword (TW): What position do you play?

Brendan Pierre (BP): I play Defensive Midfielder. It is a multi-faceted position, but our main job is to prevent any offensive midfielders from scoring and bring the ball up the field for the offence.

TW: What is the team's record for the season?

BP: The team is currently one and eight.

TW: When did you begin playing Lacrosse?

BP: This is my first year playing la-

crosse, but I started to take an interest in the sport near the end of my junior year.

TW: What or who inspired you to start playing?

BP: No one really inspired me. I mostly did it for the comradery. I wanted to be a part of something special, to go out there with my teammates and give it all we have together even if our record does not really reflect our effort.

TW: In what other capacities do you train or play lacrosse in places other than at Westhill?

BP: I keep in shape by going to the gym during the season and getting involved in other sports. I do a lot of cardio in order to keep my stamina up and a bunch of calisthenics to prevent any injuries during the season.

TW: What other sports do you play in your free time?

BP: I also enjoy playing football and basketball in my free time, they are another way for me to stay in shape.

TW: What do you think is the

most fun part of playing lacrosse?

BP: The most fun part of lacrosse would be my teammates, we get along pretty well. Mechanics wise, the most fun part of the game is playing with a stick, it separates it from any other sport I have played. Players use the head of the lacrosse stick to carry, pass, catch, and shoot.

TW: Do you plan on continuing lacrosse in college?

BP: I will mostly like not continue my lacrosse career in college.

TW: What do you do to prepare yourself before your games?

BP: To prepare for a game we usually shut off all the outside distractions and start to focus in on our game, and of course we blast some music.

TW: Describe a favorite game or series of plays from this year.

BP: The Trinity High School game because beating a city rival always feels good, but I am looking forward to the Stamford High School game coming up.



THE FINE & DANDY SHOW WITH JOSH & ANDY

Find it on thewestwordonline.com or look us up on [AudioBoom.com](https://audioBoom.com)

MAY SPORTS CALENDAR

Week 1: 7-12

DATE: 11
EVENT: JV Softball
OPPONENT: Darien
LOCATION: Away
TIME: 4:00 P.M.

DATE: 11
EVENT: Varsity Boys Volleyball
OPPONENT: Staples
LOCATION: Away
TIME: 4:00 P.M.

DATE: 12
EVENT: Varsity Girls Lacrosse
OPPONENT: Fairfield Ludlowe
LOCATION: Home
TIME: 11:00 A.M.

Week 2: 13-17

DATE: 14
EVENT: Varsity Girls Tennis
OPPONENT: New Canaan
LOCATION: Home
TIME: 4:00 P.M.

DATE: 15
EVENT: Varsity Boys Lacrosse
OPPONENT: Brian McMahon
LOCATION: Home
TIME: 5:30 P.M.

DATE: 16
EVENT: Varsity Baseball
OPPONENT: New Canaan
LOCATION: Away
TIME: 4:00 P.M.

Week 3: 18-26

DATE: 18
EVENT: Freshman Boys Lacrosse
OPPONENT: Stamford
LOCATION: Home
TIME: 5:00 P.M.

DATE: 22
EVENT: Varsity Boys Volleyball
OPPONENT: Kolbe Cathedral
LOCATION: Home
TIME: 5:30 P.M.

Good luck to all of the
Westhill Sports teams
in FCIACS and States!

Viking Sports

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



Spotlighting the new Westhill dance team p. 37

Athletes of the Month p. 38 / Evaluating what it takes to host a varsity sports game p. 37



Brendan Pierre



Olivia Butler