

# The Westword

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

Westhill partakes in second Lip Dub

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MOLD EPIDEMIC

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EDUCATION AROUND  
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MILITARY FAMILIES



# The Westword

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## November 2018

# Note from the Editors

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the second issue of the year, we are very excited to continue serving as the student voice of the Westhill community and bring you updates about the school.

Our Editorial this month discusses the importance of student involvement in all types of elections.

News highlights the guidance department's new Instagram and the changes to connection time this school year. In Viewpoint, we debate the 14th Amendment which instates birthright citizenship.

This issue, Special Report sheds light on some of the most and least developed countries

around the world.

This Supplement insert delves into the history and evolution of transportation.

Continuando con Las Noticias, entrevistamos estudiantes que recientemente ingresaron a Westhill en el programa de ESL.

Feature contains the animals of the Agriscience building and a new column where students can learn about their teachers from a different perspective. There is also this issue's Artist of the Month, Giselle Estevez.

Limelight reviews Takeoff's new album *The Last Rocket* and the new film *Bohemian Rhapsody*. Find the Page of Fun and tips on how to sleep better in Scatterbrain.

In Sports, we provide insight

on the schedule of the ice hockey teams, and our Athlete's of the Month, Jakai Young and Betsy Sachs.

Online we continue to bring news from the community including the growing mold epidemic. Visit [thewestwordonline.com](http://thewestwordonline.com). Be sure to check out our Instagram account for updates @thewestword.

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

Sincerely,

Addison Magrath & Rachel Plotzky

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### Editorial Policy

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

The Editorial Board consists of Addison Magrath, Rachel Plotzky, Alexandra Watkinson, Bailee Esposito, Katie Gaia, Chloe Giulini, Tamar Bellele, Quinn McHale, Kate Williams, Alliyah Rivera, Camila Miranda, Jason Zarrilli, Kayla Mendiola, Mr. von Wahlde, and Mr. Wooley. The Editorial can be found on page 3.

### Announcements

*The Westword* has no announcements at this time.

### Corrections

*The Westword* incorrectly stated the front cover of the October 2018 issue was taken by Jayden Lesser. The photo was taken by Harrison Travaglino.

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

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## The importance of student involvement in government

While midterm elections generally amass a lower number of voter turnouts and participation than general elections do, that is not to say that they are less important for the future. This last midterm election had a much higher turnout, however, signalling some sort of change.

Important positions such as state governor, House of Representative, and Senate seats are voted on. These people are essential to decision making for state and federal law.

"It is important for people to recognize that those could change our policies and politics of the United States for at least two years before the next elections come around," Mr. Page, social studies teacher, said.

People often fail to realize that midterm elections have a momentous impact of the political landscape of the United States.

"Voting in midterm elections... is the opportunity for citizens to elect the members of Congress, who make the laws of our country," said Alex Printsev ('20).

Once a person is eligible to vote, it is their choice to take part in elections. It is a privilege to live in a country where the people have a say in their government representatives.

"Voting is one of our civic duties and responsibilities as citizens. It allows us to use voices to change, or impact our current government at a state, local, and national level," Mr. McFillin, social studies teacher, said.

If Americans choose not to vote, they

are not taking advantage of the very right that makes America what it is.

Before legislation such as the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 was created to enhance voting opportunities for every American, polling locations made voting more difficult for minorities.

However, now with actions like the Voting Rights Act, all voters have the same opportunity to share their voice.

"It is important to vote so that you can get someone you trust and feel safe with

they can speak freely and participate in political activism.

For example, the Feminism Club went to the Women's March the past two years and the Young Political Science Association gets together to discuss similar and opposing views on certain political subjects.

"I keep myself educated about what is going on and learn about certain issues to see where I stand," Olivia Wenke ('21) said.

A key part of keeping the political discussion going is staying educated and driven. Last school year, students organized two walkouts; one in support of the Parkland survivors and another taking a stand against Betsy DeVos and her views on the education system.

Our generation is currently at the front lines of political change, and many have stopped to admire their bravery. Student led organizations are becoming increasingly popular and their main purpose is to encourage other students to join their causes.

There are countless ways to increase involvement in school and national politics as long as the individual does not fear what others will think of them.

Canvassing, social media activism, calling representatives and attending marches are all ways that students who are not yet old enough to vote can get involved.

The chances are the audience will have tremendous respect for the bravery it took to speak out.

**Bottom Line:** Being educated in the voting process and getting involved in political activism are great ways for students to have a say in government.

as your president, as they make a lot of important decisions that can affect your future," Mixel Codova ('21) said.

Choosing to vote in any election allows one to put their trust in a candidate to make choices on their behalf. To vote is to hope for a better future and to take one real step in making that future a reality.

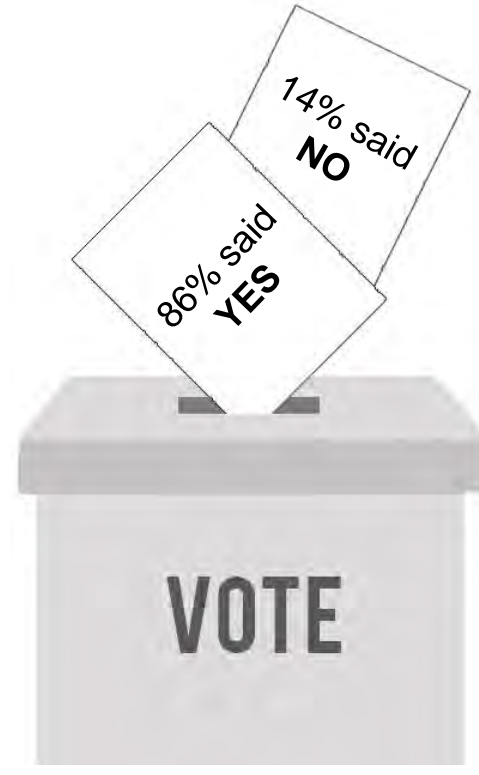
As seen in the results of this year's midterms, some races may only be won by a small quantity of votes, exemplifying the importance of each and every vote.

According to the guardian.com, in the recent midterm election, Florida Senate candidate Rick Scott won over his opponent Bill Nelson by only .1 percent of votes.

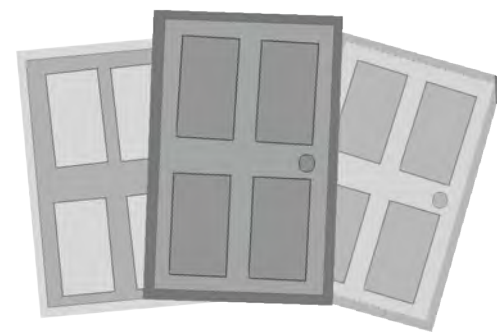
Even if it seems impossible that one vote can make a difference, it can.

Many individuals at Westhill pride themselves on their political beliefs, and some have even joined clubs in which

*The Westword* polled students to determine their likelihood of voting. These are the results.



To get involved in politics before reaching the voting age...



### CANVAS

Go door-to-door supporting what you think is right.



### USE SOCIAL MEDIA

Voice your opinion and follow your favorite political figures

## Results of the 2018 midterms

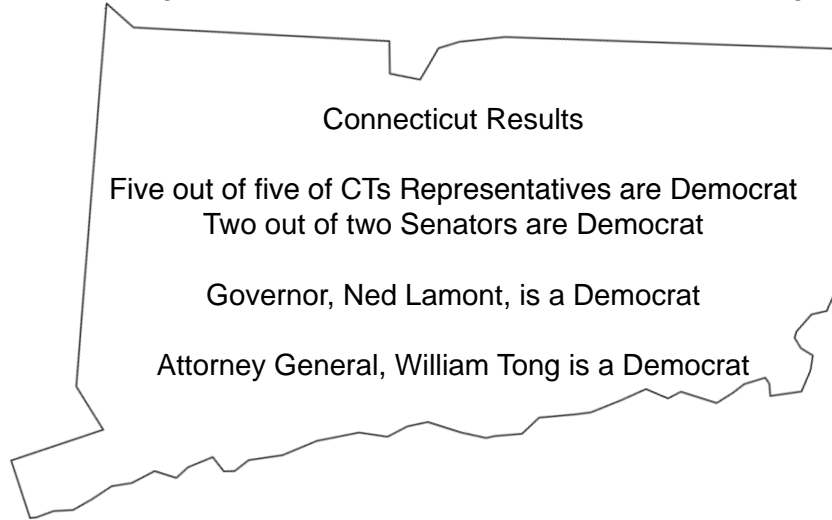


Republicans have increased their majority in the Senate while Democrats have regained control of the House of Representatives.



One of the more important elections during the midterms was for the House of Representatives and Senate making up the country's legislators.

Other positions up for grabs were Governor, Attorney General, State Legislators, School Board members, and Local Judges.





## Giving back with the annual food drive

**Lexi Boccuzzi**  
Reporter

November is generally labeled as the month of giving. Not only giving thanks for what one has, but also for truly appreciating the privileges that some indulge in throughout the year.

The simplest amenity frequently taken for granted is having food on the table. For one in six people in the U.S., food is not always guaranteed, according to Feeding America.

Many Westhill students have taken it upon themselves to do their part to solve this problem. This year, the Interact Club has continued their tradition of the annual Thanksgiving Food Drive.

This food drive allows the Westhill community to help give back to the less fortunate in the fall.

Around Thanksgiving, this type of charity can be very valuable in providing the underprivileged with food during the holiday time.

"I do not necessarily think it is more important to donate food only on Thanksgiving, however, during the holiday season it is imperative that we give people at a disadvantage the opportunity to experience a holiday and a time full of food to break from the reality of their situation," Ava Maubert ('21) said.

The Thanksgiving Food Drive began in early November and finished on Friday, November 16.

Interact distributed boxes for collecting the food and put them in many classrooms throughout the school.

All of the food collected was then sent to an organization, Inspirica, who distributes food to those in need within the community.

"[The Food Drive] directly benefits the less fortunate in our local community. We are able to feed hundreds of people who may not have anything to eat on Thanksgiving, something which can brighten our community on the holiday," Rishi Jaaswal ('19), President of Interact, said.

Overall, the student and staff participation in the Food Drive

was considerable.

Much of this was driven by individual teachers' efforts to motivate students to donate food. Many teachers did this by offering extra credit and other incentives to students who brought in a certain amount of non-perishable items.

Although this fundraising strategy is typically up for dispute, it brought in enormous amounts of donations. Throughout the school "extra-credit food drive" classrooms had boxes that were spilling over with food.

"It is a good idea to [incentivize] kids to bring in cans for extra credit because in my opinion whether or not it comes from the goodness of someone's heart, the fact of the matter is that the cause

is still being donated to. In fact, it is much more effective to raise cans by having kids bring in cans and in the meantime it is an opportunity to boost one's grade," Anissa Jahaj ('20) said.

The Thanksgiving Food Drive has been a charitable tradition at Westhill for many years. This year, Interact once again worked very hard to make it successful.

The overwhelming donations collected benefited the less fortunate and allowed them to have food on Thanksgiving.

Activities like this are meant to allow students to play a role in fixing the issues faced by our local community while also reminding students to be grateful for the privileges they have.



**MAKING A CHANGE** Students collect all of the boxes of goods and sorted the hundreds of donations to get ready to send them off to Inspirica.

Photos by **Harrison Travaglino** / Photo Manager.

## A look into Westhill's Multicultural Student Union

**Danielle Gleaton**  
Staff Writer

In 2017, a group of Westhill students decided to start a Multicultural Student Union. It is run by Mr. Celcis, English teacher, with the purpose of exposing students to cultures different than their own as well as helping African American and Latino students feel comfortable having their voices heard.

"I joined the club because I wanted to learn more about my culture and other people's culture and I

also wanted to be someone to help make a difference," Grace Etienne ('19) said.

Many students who were not born in the United States are members such as Etienne who spent the earlier part of her life living in Haiti.

Westhill is a diverse school with students from all over the world. It allows students to learn about cultures different than their own and educate the school community on their own unique backgrounds.

The Multicultural Student Union's goal is to make sure all

Westhill students feel they are in an inclusive community. The club's intention is to bring students of all backgrounds together as well as to educate them.

"Kids still stay in their own groups despite the school trying to change things," Deidre Dawkins ('19) said.

An average meeting consists of talking about topics such as race, religion, and politics. Members also brainstorm events to help students understand what is going on in the world, so they will not be unaware

of the issues facing students.

Last spring, the club hosted the Carribe-Prom to raise funds for Puerto Rico.

In early November, they collaborated with Mrs. Walden, English teacher, for a showing of the documentary *One Vote*, a documentary about voting in America for the average citizen.

The club also plans on showing *Black in Latin America*, which has been postponed until Mr. Celcis returns.

"I feel that we should be

ashamed of ourselves because our ancestors would be disappointed in us for neglecting their stories and not acknowledging their hard work. And this goes for every race and culture, not just people of color... About six people joined when we first started the club last year and we have about eight people this year," Etienne said.

The club is constantly open to new members. To learn more about joining the club, ask a current member or Mr. Celcis for information about the next meeting.



# Guidance reaches out through social media

**Alyssa Goldberg**  
Reporter

At the start of the school year, the school gained yet another social media presence. The Westhill Guidance Department joined Instagram as @westhillguidance.

Their account has been a resource to this year's seniors, who can use it to find information regarding college visits, deadlines, and scholarships.

"Students are on their phones constantly and use social media all the time. Instagram seemed like a good way to reach students," Mr. Marchesani, guidance counselor, said.

The account is predominantly ran by Ms. Mitchell and Ms. Midy; Mr. Marchesani has access as well.

Posts include details on college visits and fairs, schedules, scholarship information, and the occasional positive message or random school update.

Even students who are not seniors follow the page because they may see other helpful posts or just friendly reminders.

The account has already gained over 400 followers.

On October 10, World Mental Health Day, @westhillguidance posted a related image with the caption, "It's okay to ask for help. We are here for you."

Although it is a simple post, it still carries the important message that the guidance counselors at

Westhill are available when needed and it was directly sent to their student followers.

Many seniors are relying on the page to keep track of deadlines. An example includes reminders for students to fill out their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by the deadline.

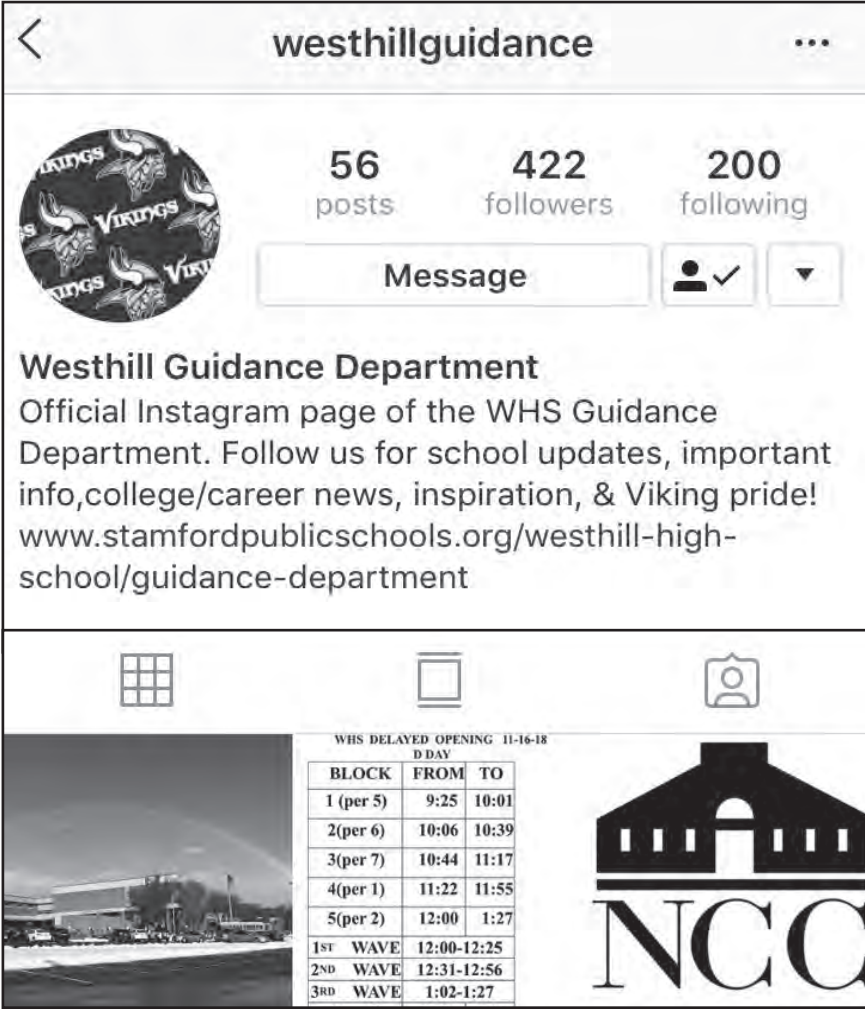
At the start of every week, the account will post a list of the college visiting the Career Center and what period a representative will be there to chat.

"As a senior, the Westhill Instagram is very helpful, as it gives a lot of useful information regarding college visits and deadlines," Maya Rai ('19) said.

With the exception of Naviance, which many students many not regularly check, the social media account is the only outlet from which the visits are announced.

"They have a lot of news on college visits that they do not announce during announcements. It is helpful because if I do not check Naviance and scroll through the super long list, I would not know about some of the colleges coming to visit Westhill without the account," Anneliese Ottinger ('19) said.

The Westhill Guidance Department has successfully followed in the footsteps of many other departments by creating this social media platform. In this modern day and age of social media, it is a perfect outlet for students to get all necessary information easily.



## Lip Dub: take two

**Sara Gatz**  
Staff Writer

Westhill's second annual Lip Dub attempted to bring even more Viking spirit than its predecessor. After the release of the first video last year, many students and faculty were excited for their chance to be a part of the Lip Dub in its second run.

"A lot of schools do not have something like [the lip dub]. I think it is really cool that we do it," Leonie Colegrave ('22) said.

In preparation for this year's Lip Dub, students were able to vote on which songs they would like to be included in the video.

The songs chosen to be featured included "High Hopes" by Panic! at The Disco, "Immigrant Song" by Led Zeppelin, "Africa" by Toto, "La Gozadera" by Gente De Zona featuring Marc Anthony, "We Will Rock You" by Queen, and "Dynamite" by Taio Cruz.

"One of the challenges for this year will be not only hitting the same high bar we hit last year, but exceeding it... What is most important is the Lip Dub is something that the students and staff can come together to enjoy and showcase our schools diversity," Principal Rinaldi said.

This year's dub showcased Westhill's diverse community of students from every race, ethnicity, and grade. The students were shown united wearing their purple

and gold Viking apparel.

"Looking at last year's dub, we had some challenges. We did not have as many dubbers as we wanted because no one wanted to do it. It was something new and different... We also have to figure out

teacher and co-director of the Lip Dub, said.

Since the popularity of last year's Lip Dub, much of the Westhill community was buzzing with anticipation to make this year's video even more spec-



**COORDINATED MADNESS** The Lip Dub was filmed in several places around Westhill, including the courtyard.

Photo by **Sydney Eben** / Photographer.

ways to top ourselves, being that we set the bar pretty high. We have a lot more dubbers representing the whole population of the school," Ms. Tobin, English

tacular. Students and faculty planned the dub since the last filming wrapped, wondering how they could make the second even better.

Ms. Tobin, Ms. Tintle, Mrs. Grant, and Mrs. Cohen were among the teachers most involved with the planning and execution of the video along with student cameraman, Harrison Travaglino ('19).

"Ms. Tintle and I [were] in charge of 'High Hopes,' and it is amazing," Mrs. Grant, science teacher, said.

Each of the teachers put in charge of the sections worked closely with the students dubbing in order to make sure it was as close to perfect as possible.

Several rehearsals and walk-throughs were done before the filming on November 21, the half day before Thanksgiving break.

The entire half-day was taken to film the Lip Dub. Students and faculty decorated the school and danced in the background in Westhill attire.

Many students were more excited than ever before for the opportunity to dub this year. Auditions were held earlier in the year in which students had to sing and dance while walking backwards.

"The Lip Dub is a great opportunity for students in every grade to get more involved in the school. Everyone is excited to see how it comes out this year," Sydney Greenberg ('21) said.

Overall, most of the Westhill community was extremely enthusiastic about participating in the 2018 Lip Dub and they waited patiently to see the final result.



## BRIEFS

### *PowderPuff Rivalry*

PowderPuff is Westhill's all female flag football game played each fall. Female students from all four grades are eligible to play and male students are welcome to coach. The teams are split by grade.

For the past four years, the senior class has dominated PowderPuff, leaving all other classes in the dust, but not this year. The games are organized with the seniors facing the freshmen, and the sophomores facing the juniors.

This year the senior class won their match against the freshmen, but the sophomores were victorious against the juniors.

"We have a great team of athletes here and I think they will lead us to victory," Zack Papademitrou ('21), sophomore team coach, said during the games.

The freshman vs. senior game was a 2-0 sweep in the senior's favor, and the sophomore vs. junior game ended 3-1. The last game was played by the sophomores and seniors, and ended in a 2-0 loss for the seniors.

For the first time in four years, the seniors did not win and the sophomores were the overall champions.



### *New truck for marching band*

At the end of October, Westhill's marching band bought a truck to carry all of the band equipment for competitions.

"Our band travels all around the country for competitions. [We go] from here to Dayton, Ohio and usually we have to rent a bus, but now that we have one, it makes a lot of things easier. It is a great thing for the kids to be able to see what they have and gives us the opportunity to deck it out as we want it on the inside," Mr. Wyatt, band director, said.

Now, with the band truck, the students can drive to their competitions while keeping their instruments with them. There will no longer be worry of having to rent a truck on time or not having enough room for all of the players and their equipment.

The truck was funded by an anonymous donation. The band program and Mr. Wyatt wish they could thank their donor in a more personal way, as they are very grateful.



# Changes to Connection Time

**Yulia Lozynska**

Staff Writer

Connection Time at Westhill is a designated 24 minute period that occurs about twice a week. During first semester, it occurs on C+ and G+ days between blocks two and three.

The period allows students to get caught up on school news and connect with students and teachers. Over the four years, students and teachers can establish bonds with each other.

Connection Time is currently a graduation requirement. Participation (PA) is the only grade, and attendance is counted as well.

The purpose of Connection Time is for students to have another teacher to connect with, and have someone to come to when they need help with anything.

"We created a class Spotify, go over current events, and spend time discussing [news] during class. I [have been] doing it for four years already... I have [had] a great relationship with all my students since freshmen year and

now they are all seniors. I help them with college, college essays, et cetera," Mr. Page, social studies teacher, said.

Students and teachers have various opinions about Connection Time. Some want to make it more meaningful while others want to replace it with something more beneficial to the students time.

"I get to bond with a lot of [friends], and seeing how everyone developed mentally and physically [has been] very riveting. I would not miss a Connection Time," Faried Uddin ('19) said.

Westhill staff is working to make the school climate more positive. Westhill is trying to improve Connection Time by providing information about activities and, introducing ways to create goals about college or the future, students can enjoy.

"Connection Time is one of the best parts of my week because it gives me a break from my academics to relax and catch up with work and friends. My Connection Time teacher engages with the students and tells us about

upcoming school news. Connection Time is a great addition to the school day," Daniella Klein ('21) said.

To make students and Connection Time teachers more engaged, each classroom had to decorate their door for a school-wide competition. At the end of the week there was a faculty meeting to vote on who won and the votes went to Ms. Ryan and Mrs. Nesbitt, art teachers.

"I allow students to be more creative during Connection Time [and] to use their time wisely. [I ask] how are your quarter grades or college process, et cetera," Ms. Cutolo, health teacher, said.

Some teachers allow their students to catch up on school work.

Other students do not participate in Connection Time because they do not find interest in it or their teacher just does not do anything with the students.

Connection Time is a teaching free period of time during school that is meant to break up the school day.



**VIKING PRIDE** Teachers and students worked with Mrs. Nesbitt and Ms. Ryan during Connection Time to decorate their doors and won first place.

Photo by **Harrison Travaglinio** / Photo Manager.

Briefs by **Timothy McKeithen** / Reporter.

Photos by **Ariana Centeno** (top) & **Cailey Koch** (bottom) / Photographers.



# Good Month Bad Month

Column by  
Sanjana Nayak  
& Jessica Matloub

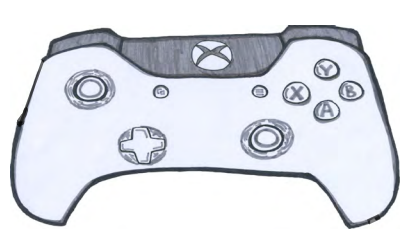


## Good Month for... Bad Month for...

**Amazon** After 14 months of silence from the company on the new location of their headquarters, Amazon decided on splitting two locations: Queens, NY and Arlington, VA. Many say Amazon's decision to split the headquarters demonstrates the blatant power of the corporation along with its market dominance and popularity amongst consumers. Amazon now has headquarters in three primary cities, allowing them to have leverage over other companies.



**Midterms** In the 2018 elections, the voting turnout reached the highest point since 1966. Upward of 47 percent of all voting-age United States citizens voted in this year's midterm elections. In 2014, the voting percentile was just 36.7 percent, so this year's voting proved substantial improvement. This surge of voting participation was shown in Texas as more people voted than they did in the 2014 election. This trend in results also occurred in 17 additional states. Analysts hope this voting turnout increase will continue in the next election.



**E-sports** At the Microsoft store in the Roosevelt Field Mall, ten teenage boys were seated behind computers competing in an online video game. The boys were a group of competitive video gamers on the Bay Shore High School e-sports team. E-sports are competitive multiplayer video games. They were competing in a scrimmage and playing their way toward college scholarships. Their recent popularity has given them the unique ability to take steps toward earning scholarship money for one's future.

**Marvel** The creator of many beloved Marvel characters and comics, Stan Lee, passed away on November 12 at the age of 95. The past year had been difficult for Lee after losing his wife of 70 years and battling many health issues. Throughout his career, he created and developed superheroes including Spider-Man, Iron Man and Thor. He leaves an inspirational legacy with his creation of stories that can still entertain any individual, regardless of age.



**New Delhi Airport** People traveling out of New Delhi will face difficulty this month as the airport is planning on shutting down one of its three main runways for repair. Delhi Airport is already operating at more than its capacity, and now with airlines having to cancel flights, it will leave many travelers in an unfavorable situation. The ultimate goal of this temporary closure is to surge a more efficient system and better accommodate the tremendous amount of people and flights that are based out of Delhi airport.



**California** California faced deadly fires that have already taken the lives of more than 85 individuals. Firemen worked for several weeks in an effort to contain these relentless fires. One of the three major wildfires is known as the "Camp Fire" and has left over 6,400 buildings and homes unrecognizable. Search teams for survivors were initiated, but over 600 people remain missing. People were forced to flee the area to stay safe while their homes were left to be destroyed. These flames have left California in ruins, and people praying for their lives.

# Westhill's mold epidemic to be followed up online

Addison Magrath  
Editor-in-Chief

It has been revealed earlier in this school year that the Stamford Public School buildings have had a mold issue. Some schools have it more severe than others, but there is a growing question as to how severe the issue really is.

Westover Elementary School was recently relocated to Pitney Bowes, as explained in our previously posted online article. This relocation leaves many students and teachers wondering about what will happen to Westhill.

Although mold could be harmless, long term exposure could be harmful to those who have a preexisting medical condition, develop a sensitivity, or have an allergy to it.

According to RTK Environmental Group, "when mold is growing on a surface, spores can be released into the air where they can be easily inhaled. If you are sensitive to mold and inhale a large number of spores, you could experience health problems"

Teachers have been deciding to get tested

for long term exposure as they may not know what it means for them in the future.

Other teachers have been experiencing irritation due to the mold such as elongated headaches or coughs that go away on the weekends.

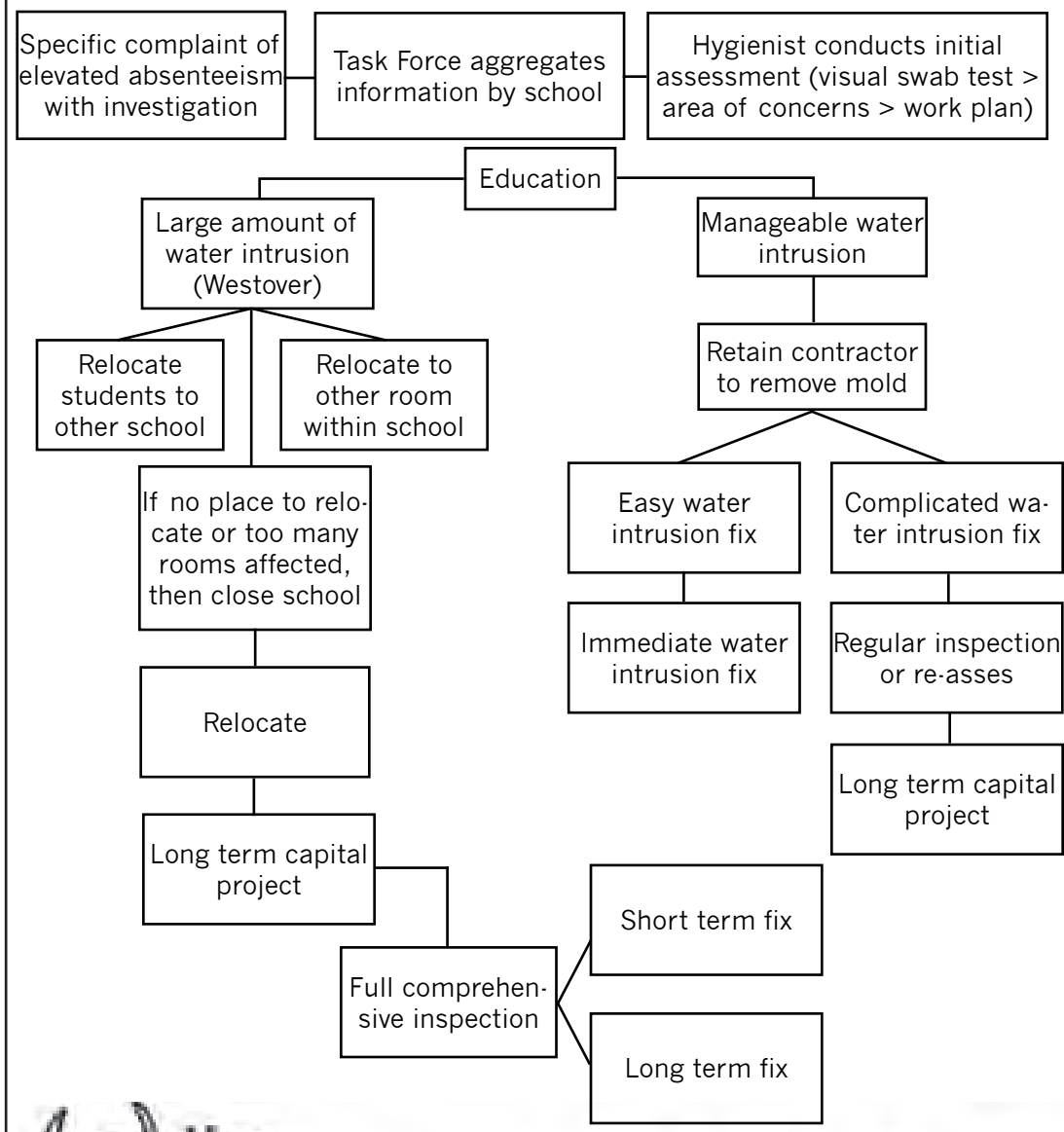
A Mold Task Force was created as of late October, but there are no definite answers as to what will happen in the event that the school needs to be shut down or there just are not enough substitutes for the classes.

The task force has begun to hold weekly meetings on Wednesday nights at the Government Center.

The Westword has been following the story in hopes to inform the students on the safety of the school and the status of mold in classrooms.

Visit thewestwordonline.com to view the chart holding the areas of concern in Westhill or throughout the school district. We are covering the mold primarily online to match the timely and developing nature of this story.

Follow us on Instagram @thewestword and turn on post notifications on for article updates.



the westword online  
student voice of the westhill community

Graphic from Stamfordct.gov



# Debating the repeal of the 14th Amendment

**Chloe Giulini**  
Managing Editor

One of the sacred aspects of our democracy is the principle that everyone born in the United States is automatically a citizen.

President Trump is now in the process of creating an executive order that will annul the current birthright citizenship protected under the 14th Amendment.

The 14th Amendment, ratified in 1868 soon after the Civil War, grants citizenship to all individuals born or naturalized in the United States. It guarantees all of these citizens “equal protection under the law.”

The simple yet powerful wording was meant to place citizenship over politics, no matter the era.

“We are the only country in the world where a person comes in and has a baby, and the baby is essentially a citizen of the United States... with all of those benefits,” Trump said when speaking to axios.com.

In an attempt to remind his original voters of his views on immigration, Trump was hoping this comment would pull the Republicans through midterm elections.

Many listeners and readers knew this claim was false considering there are at least 30 other countries granting automatic birthright citizenship.

A key part of Trump’s election was

his views on immigration, and he was determined to remind these voters he still has the same mindset.

As of right now, in other countries like Canada and Mexico, any child born on the country’s soil automatically becomes a citizen.

The United States has always prided itself on its acceptance of all races, religions, and backgrounds. However, this philosophy is now being threatened by Trump and his administration.

According to *The Washington Post*, 45 percent of Republicans favored amending the Constitution to eliminate birthright citizenship, compared to only 20 percent of Democrats.

The attacks on the amendment are nothing new. Even prior to its ratification, many objected the idea of extending citizenship to all.

Most individuals against the law then were residing in Confederate states

and feared the idea of losing their slaves. These objections were quickly rejected, and the same should reoccur today.

“I do not understand what makes Trump think he has the power to change a law like this. All babies born in the United States should be granted citizenship, no matter their parent’s status,” Stella Buckey (’20) said.

The United States is a nation full of immigrants, despite what many choose to believe. To define citizenship by bloodlines goes directly against the nation’s basic values of equality and justice.

Those who believe they are fully American would be surprised to hear their family line traces back to a place not within current U.S. borders. Every current citizen has an ancestor that migrated.

“Seeing as we are a country built on immigrants, all babies born in the [United States] deserve an equal chance at everything the country offers them,” Mrs. Manning, math teacher, said.

Those who oppose birthright citizenship firmly believe that undoc-

umented or illegal immigrants have no right to have a child with rights exceeding theirs.

“I see why many oppose this, but they just have to be reminded that the whole purpose of this country is that everyone deserves an equal chance, no matter what,” Taryn Duncan (’19) said.

However, there is a reason these families make their way to the United States. They are seeking a better life for themselves, but they clearly want their child to have the most opportunities possible.

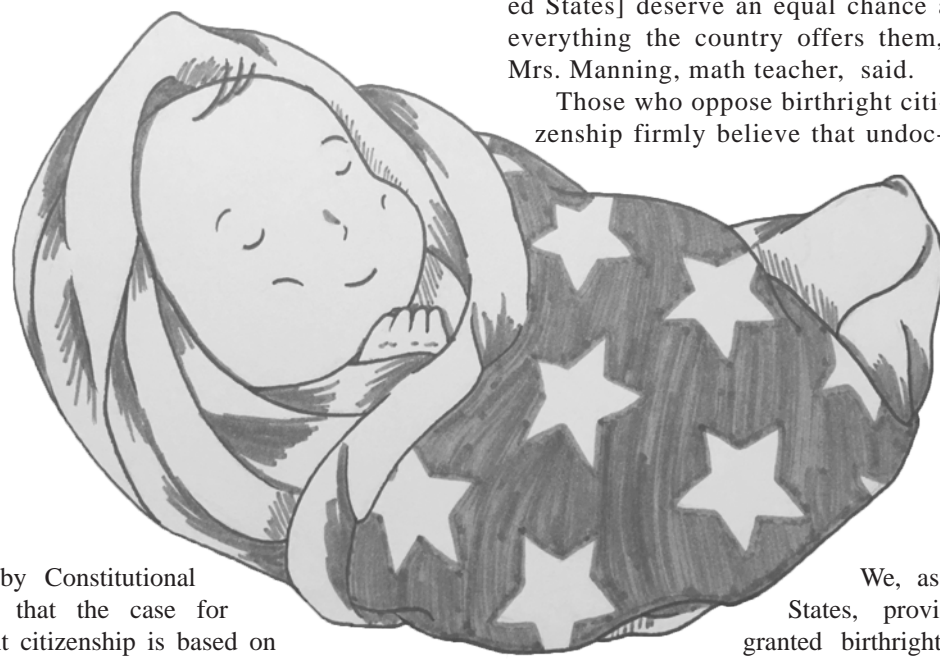
Some individuals may even be fleeing for their own safety. America should not have the right to deny someone their liberties due to the parent’s past actions. Whether or not the parent has become a legal citizen of the United States should not affect the rights offered to the child.

However, there are many that do believe the parent’s status directly affects the child’s.

“People who are born in this country deserve citizenship in this country. Just because the child’s parents may not be American citizens does not mean that they do not deserve to be a part of it,” Jove Luna (’22) said.

It seems almost unimaginable that anyone would question the 14th Amendment and its job within the United States.

This amendment is the promise that helped shape the nation and allows everyone to be considered equal in the eyes of the law.



**Daniel Brennan**  
Contributor

Every few years, our politicians reopen the discussion on birthright citizenship and attempt to prove how beneficial it is for our country.

Birthright citizenship is terrible for our country and it is an issue that needs to be quickly addressed.

“Children born in the United States from parents who chose to enter the country illegally should not be granted citizenship because they are not respecting the law of the country,” Christian Colegrave (’20) said.

The idea that being born inside the border of the United States equals qualifying for citizenship is absurd and impractical. It has been

proven by Constitutional scholars that the case for birthright citizenship is based on the misunderstanding of the 14th Amendment.

The amendment was written to give freed slaves the same constitutional rights as any other citizen in the country. The amendment nullified the *Dred Scott* vs. *Sandford* decision that ruled no black male could be a legal citizen in the United States.

“Birthright citizenship should be abolished, because it is used by illegal aliens as an excuse for chain migration and keeping the parents in the country even though they are not legal citizens,” Alex Printsev (’20) said.

Birthright citizenship is nothing more than a magnet attracting immigrants to the United States.

“We are the only country in the world where a person comes in and has a baby, and the baby is essentially a citizen of the United States... with all of those benefits,” Trump said to axios.com.

South Carolina Senator Graham seconded President Trump’s calls for the end of birthright citizenship, along with many other senators.

“The United States is one of two developed countries in the world who grant citizenship based on location of birth... This policy is a magnet for illegal immigration, out of the mainstream of the developed world, and needs to come to an end,” Senator Graham said to axios.com.

We, as the United States, provide families granted birthright citizenship with all the social, economic, and legal benefits of being a United States citizen. This includes programs such as food stamp distribution and Medicare. They are treated equal to any other United States citizen.

Some individuals still strongly believe that citizens born in the United States to undocumented parents should still be granted citizenship.

However, if we want to better our immigration system, we need to stop offering incentives to the illegal immigrants.

Once the country stops spending three billion dollars a year on illegal immigration, we can spend it on making the legal process more

efficient and a better choice for all individuals who want to come to this great country.

“I oppose birthright citizenship only under the current wording of the 14th Amendment guarantees citizenship through the territorial clause and the jurisdiction clause... until reform happens, I will oppose birthright citizenship within the legal dominion,” Paolo Mazzara (’19) said.

After the immigration process is sorted out, it is about time politicians in Washington D.C. reexamine the way the 14th Amendment was written so there are no more loopholes in our Constitution.

This entire debate is based upon the misinterpretation of this amendment, so we have to make sure there is no further confusion.



# Technology is making it too easy for students

**Husayn Biggs**  
Staff Writer

As technology becomes a larger part of life, schools now rely on it more. This has created the ongoing debate of which method is more beneficial to a student's education, computers or paper.

As technology advances, there are more ways for students to complete their school work without having to pick up a pencil. However, is having more technology helping or is it detrimental to a students learning environment?

According to procon.org, "technology based instruction can reduce the time students take to reach a learning objective by 30 to 80 percent."

Tablets eliminate the physical storage of books and class-

room materials. Not much space is needed for the material as, "1,000 books take up one gigabyte of space."

Additionally, procon.org states that tablets help improve students achievement on standardized tests.

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, an educational company, tested an interactive digital version of an Algebra I textbook and students who used the iPad version scored higher on standardized tests versus students with traditional textbooks by 20 percent.

The benefits of using technology to study is that students learn more material faster, they eliminate physical storage, and students score higher on standardized tests.

The downfalls of using tablets for learning material is that handheld technological devices are

associated with a range of health problems, such as computer vision syndrome. This has been linked to eye strain, headaches, blurred vision, and dry eyes.

Another issue with tablets is they can have too many distractions for classroom use. Students become more focused on their internet dependence than their studies.

According to the study, 87 percent of K-12 teachers believe that "today's digital technologies are creating an easily distracted generation with short attention spans."

According to nbcnews.com, people who read printed text comprehend more, remember more, and learn more than those who read digital text. The brain interprets printed and digital text in different ways, and people generally

read digital text 20 to 30 percent slower than print.

According to the Pulitzer Prize Foundation, reading hyper-linked text may increase the brain's "cognitive load," lowering the ability to process, store, and retain information. It can also seriously affect the ability to translate the "new material into conceptual knowledge."

In addition, students who type their lecture notes instead of write them by hand tend to write more, process less, and perform worse on recall tests.

"Nowadays, we find books boring and technology has more sources than a book," Oskar Barrera ('20) said.

Many feel that books are repetitive and technology gives us more resources that are even more

beneficial.

"Books are better because you get enough technology at home. Technology is abused in today's education because you do not need to explore anymore." Mr. NG, substitute teacher, said.

Individuals also believe that technology can be and they are not actually learning what is in front of them.

"You are not absorbing the information [with technology]," Gabriela Cherres ('20) said.

Students and teachers are split on whether or not technology is being abused. It might be making it too easy for students to learn material since all they have to do is look it information up online instead of going through books and studying the material themselves.



Photos by **Anika Tandon** / Photographer.

## Companies fear holiday marketing backlash

**Molly Cannon**  
Reporter

When Starbucks revealed their new holiday cup in 2015, the company faced enormous backlash. In an attempt to appear more inclusive, Starbucks replaced their usual exuberant festive cups with simple bold red ones, absent of any designs other than their own traditional logo.

The company released a statement with the launch of the new cup saying that consumers should use their own imagination rather than the factory printing any design. However, shortly after its release, the new holiday cup was received with harsh criticism and accusations.

For some Americans, the idea of Starbucks not selling Christmas-themed cups was a front to a much larger issue. They expressed

their concerns about how they felt Christianity was being attacked and accused Starbucks of being overly politically correct.

It appears that the issue of the red cup was not with the cup at all, but rather what Starbucks said it was supposed to represent. If the statement was not issued, the change on the holiday cup would have most likely gone unnoticed.

For large companies such as Starbucks, changing their logos, packaging, and advertising during the holiday season is incredibly common.

Many other corporations such as Target, Google, and YouTube alter their logos for the holiday season. With many logos donning Santa hats, Christmas tree ornaments, and green and red lettering, it may be harder to focus on a single design.

"They are not forcing people

to buy it and enjoy it, it is just there for the holiday season which many people do appreciate," Brandon Diaz ('20) said.

However, now any company's decision to incorporate holiday-themed aspects, and how they market their products can be perceived as insensitive. With this fear of backlash, companies should reconsider changing their designs all together.

"It is not culturally insensitive because the company can do what they want because it is their company. They should have the right to make their merchandise holiday themed and if people are offended they do not have to buy and support the company's products," Holly Furrer ('20) said.

Changing the design of their logos and packaging may increase the spirit of consumers to begin preparing for the holidays. In fact,

it may contribute to an overwhelming sense of urgency and pressure to ensure everything is done in time.

The National Retail Federation conducted a survey that showed the average American spends about 700 dollars on holidays gifts each year which is about 465 billion dollars nationally.

"People enjoy the connotations surrounding the holiday season even if they do not celebrate the specific holiday. If you take Starbucks as an example, they have been decorating their holiday cups with winter scenes rather than actual religious images, and it encourages their customers to enjoy this time of year rather than religiously celebrate," Bintou Bane ('20) said.

During the holiday season, companies are especially aware of the potential to make an enormous

profit. This, no doubt, is a reason why many companies chose to alter their logos to appeal to customers preparing to spend serious money.

Companies should quickly become more aware of the diversity that exists throughout the holiday season and incorporate more neutral holiday-themes into their marketing.

These companies, especially Starbucks, fear having any bad press regarding their marketing strategies. This main event happened in 2015, but it is still remembered by many, and it will be awhile before all customers forgive the decisions the company made.

However, in this bustling holiday season, large corporations will not be looking to compromise their profit margins to ensure a greater sense of inclusivity for its customers.



# The ethics behind altering embryos

**Sam Harris &  
Chloe Giulini**  
Reporter &  
Managing Editor

Scientists have begun to test different methods of altering the genetic makeup of embryos. These adjustments can quickly

lead to doctors saving baby's from life threatening diseases or conditions before they are born.

However, many argue that the rights doctors and parents have to interfere with unborn fetuses should be limited.

These scientific advancements open the door to infinite possibilities. There is a

difference between fixing a fatal heart condition and wanting the child to have bright blue eyes.

Some individuals are excited to see how far this technology can advance, while others are terrified of the potential consequences it can have on the population.

With scientific advancement intensifying as time goes on, this research and its implications only grow more relevant to both citizens and the government.

"The major problem, being ethics, could, in theory, be bypassed if you take in the time to make sure the formal consent is received from both parties and the research is being done only for the sake of benefitting the medical field," Amir Benson ('21) said.

The most controversial point is long term effects. Supporters of modification argue that it does not matter what the parents decide for the fetus as long as it benefits their family and future medical advancements.

Opponents are concerned with how genetic modification will affect the population years from now.

When every embryo is edited to be "perfect," we can assume most diseases would be eradicated, but it would also lead to there being little to no diversity.

The ability to purposefully place unnatural traits in fetuses is often seen

as unethical, and in some religions, as blasphemous.

Issues regarding religious beliefs directly interferes with many of the factors. Some religions strongly oppose against birth control, nevermind altering a fetus' genetic makeup. This makes many individuals reluctant to have an opinion on the topic.

"Honestly, I do not know how I feel about it. It is highly controversial and I do not want to pick a side without all the information," Josie Trebing ('20) said.

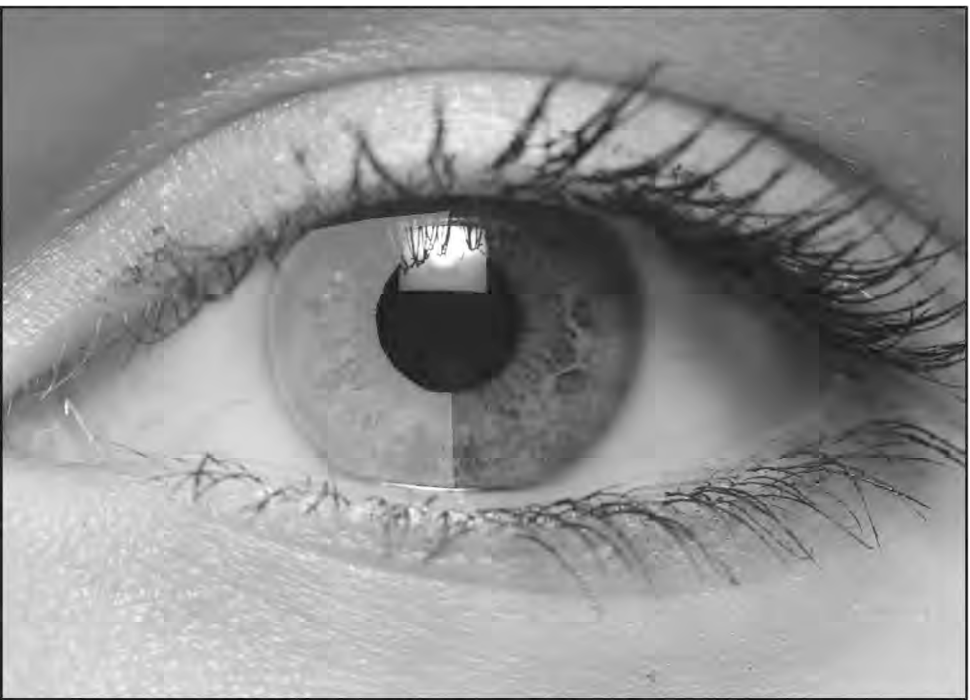
If doctor's responsibly use this method to help save lives, it will be hard for opposers to say it is not benefitting all of us.

"It is a safe way to test [the] development of diseases without harming a living human," Nate Cooper ('21) said.

It would be unethical to let this opportunity for immense improvement to the quality of life just pass by. It should not matter if "designer babies" occur in the meantime.

Parents will no longer have to worry about their children being born with harmful life-altering conditions. Mothers will also be able to have children later in their lives without fear of risking their baby's health.

In the end, the entire population will benefit from advanced medical treatments that can save lives before the condition even comes into play.



**FUTURE MODIFICATION** The advancement of genetic editing may allow parents to choose ideal traits for their children, such as eye color.  
Graphic by **Addison Magrath** / Editor-in-Chief.

# Evaluating the necessity of gym

**Glorimar Chiruzzo**  
Staff Writer

Many students question if gym should be a required course to graduate Westhill or any high school.

"Gym or sports [should not be] mandatory, because not everyone is physically active and some people have medical conditions as to why they play gym or participate in a sport. When gym or a sport is mandatory, it causes conflict," Davina Brown ('20) said.

Gym is an issue for students who do not enjoy physical activity. This causes students to dread having to go to class. This does not mean they are unathletic, but they just do not enjoy the activities offered.

Also, changing clothes before and after every class is tedious. Students have to remember to bring an extra set of clothes everyday.

This proves to be very stressful for some students, because

they fear their teacher's reactions if they forget or their grade being impacted.

"Instead of gym we should have more study time or a free period like study hall to catch up on missed work...it would also be a great time to catch up on stuff we are having trouble learning," Jose Carcamo ('19) said.

On the other hand, many students believe physical activity should be mandatory since students need something to get their mind off academics and release built up energy.

Being in a classroom for six periods is mentally draining, and physical activity can be beneficial and split up the day.

According to a study conducted by the University of British Columbia, "regular aerobic exercise, the kind that gets the heart and sweat glands pumping, appears to boost the size of the hippocampus, the brain area involved in verbal memory and learning."

"Gym can be useful during

school time because it is the only free time kids get to exercise. Since we are in the generation of obese children it is important for kids to know that running around can make a huge impact to their physical appearance," Ms. Ochoa, guidance counselor, said.

As of now, physical education is only a one year course. It is split between freshman and sophomore year into semester classes.

Although some students are opposed to gym class, health class will still be very beneficial to a student's overall knowledge.

"After school, kids go home and relax or play video games and get no exercise throughout the whole day," Corina Luckie ('19) said.

By not engaging in physical activity, the metabolism can slow down and the heart rate is not as elevated as it should be during any activity.

King High School, a Stamford private school, has the requirement that all high school

students must play at least one sport each year.

It should be the student's choice if they want to take a class focused on physical activity. Although the physical activity may

benefit the individual, it will not necessarily help their academic studies. When students are making their class schedule, taking a gym class should be an option rather than a requirement.



**MAKING A PASS** Students play a game of soccer during gym class.



# Going behind the screens of advertisements

**Marta Zach**  
Staff Writer

It is virtually impossible to maintain any privacy or anonymity on the Internet. When searching for something online, one might see something similar appear on their social media, or on pages and websites they visit. Every link clicked on or searched is constantly being monitored.

“When using the internet or your phone, privacy is never a thing,” Lily Carroll ('20) said.

Cell phone users are not always aware of what information is being collected or what it is used for, but it is no coincidence that specific product advertisements appear on one's Instagram a day after they were looked up on a web browser.

“People have access to track every place you go. There is nothing you do on the internet where you should expect privacy. They will sell advertisements to different companies based off what you are saying,” Mrs. Benedict, Media Center Specialist, said.

According to digitaltrends.com, the information collected about an individual is stored and used for various different purposes.

Companies often use the data collected from cell phone users in order to generate advertisements and applications use it to improve their app experience. Virtually every website one visits does this as well.

The Federal Trade Commission provides a surplus of information regarding the subject. The sites one visits, contains “first party cookies,” which are put there by these sites.

Cookies are small text files created by websites to be stored on the user's computer temporarily for that session. These cookies are used to make the experience smoother and more pleasant, as well as to deliver advertisements that will appeal to the specific customer.

Individuals can both enable and delete cookies, but websites use them in order to tailor your advertisement experience and make the site usage more efficient. They allow for

data storage to be simple and convenient.

If cookies did not exist, there is a good chance that users would have to log onto every website to retrieve their information.

Once a user makes an account on a certain website, every-

thing they do is utilized for target advertising.

There was an instance where a travel website, Orbitz, displayed higher rates for Mac users. Mac users spend approximately 30 percent more on hotel rooms than people who use other computers.

Orbitz took advantage of this

to the data collected, and to collect data from these phones.

For example, Instagram has access to locations in order to show relevant pages to follow, or microphone access so users can film stories or posts. To view what applications are able to access your location and microphone, go on Settings and click on the specific app you wish to evaluate.

Despite the alarming reality of being tracked, the data usually is not attributed to users by name. Digitaltrends.com states that the data obtained from users is not saved by name, but under a “pseudonymous numerical identifier.”

Even though the data collected is usually used for harmless purposes, most commonly advertising—some people take certain precautions to maintain privacy as best as they can.

“On Instagram, for example, I am able to be connected to other creatives, businesses outside of the ones I am already aware of. This makes me feel like my input as a consumer is being valued by those trying to gain my business, but I do feel like not all my information and interests need to be exploited for financial gain. I want to know that I do have some sort of privacy,” Lia Aleman ('20) said.

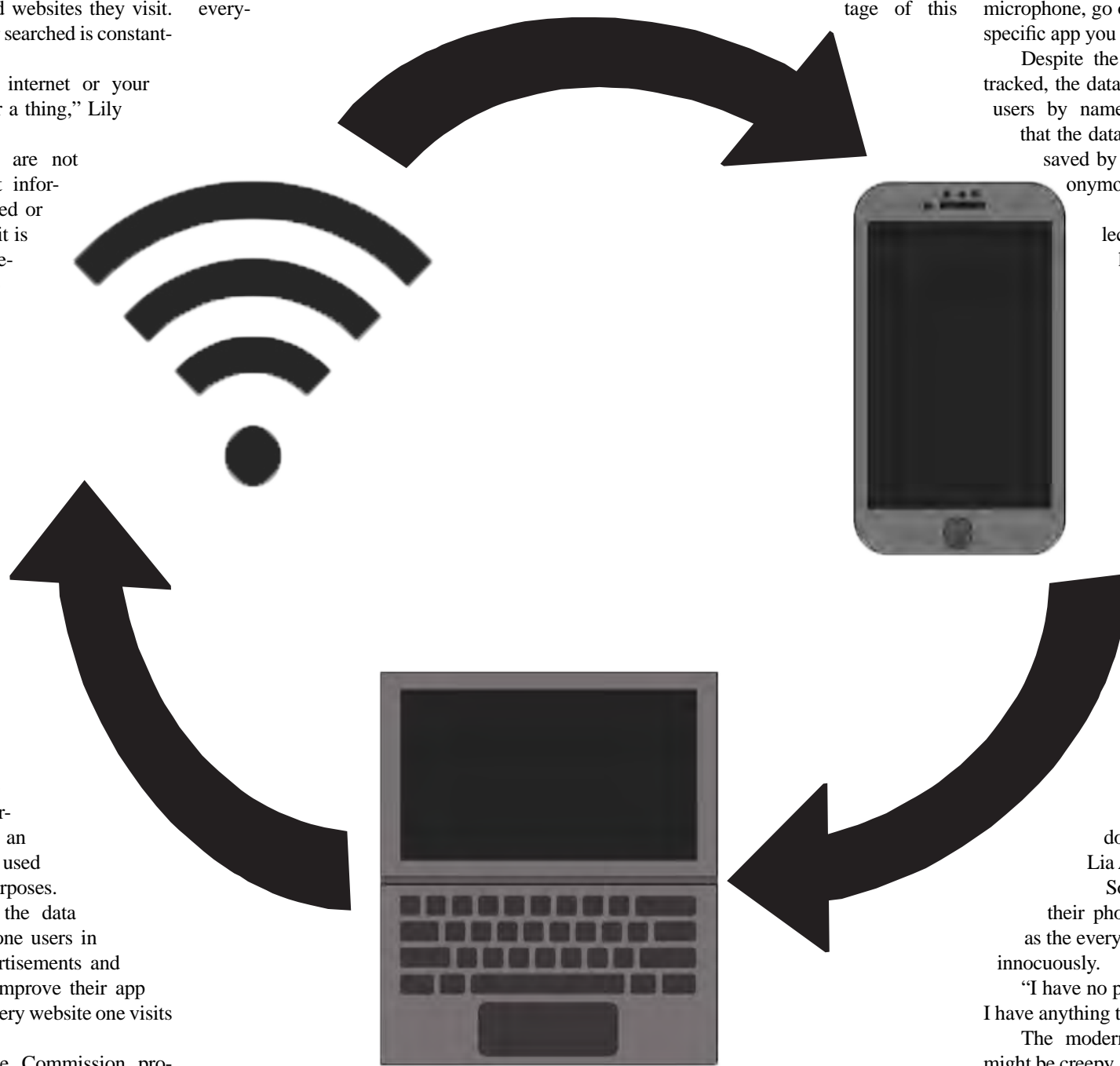
Some do not mind having their phone activity tracked, seeing as the everyday person uses the internet innocuously.

“I have no problem with it. It is not like I have anything to hide,” Eli Roth ('21) said.

The modern-day invasion of privacy might be creepy, but it is otherwise harmless, considering the fact that there are over four billion other people with mobile devices all having all of their data compiled as well.

These past few years, individuals have become more curious as to what goes on behind their screens. Some users had brushed aside the alarming consequences, and chose to ignore the truth. Research has been done on the topic, but many are uninterested to find out what goes on behind their screens.

Today, instead of questioning what is really going on and doing research, users have just accepted that this is the way it is for everyone.



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# SPECIAL REPORT

## More-developed vs.

**Francesca Rubino-Chuckas**

Staff Writer

Highly developed countries have several aspects of their economy and society that aid in their progression, including resources, laws, and prevention of poverty.

“[People in] countries that are poor do not have the same opportunities that people do in richer countries, so those people are more likely to succeed, which makes their country succeed even more,” Ruthie Price (’22) said.

According to [dailymail.co.uk](http://dailymail.co.uk), three of the wealthiest and fastest growing countries in the world based on gross domestic product (GDP) are Qatar, Luxembourg, and the autonomous territory of Macau.

Qatar is located on the eastern border of Saudi Arabia, surrounded by the Persian Gulf.

With only 2.7 million people populating an area of 7456.45 square miles, Qatar has the highest GDP in the world at 152 billion dollars, according to [worldbank.org](http://worldbank.org).

According to [heritage.org](http://heritage.org), as of 2017, Qatar’s unemployment rate is only 0.2 percent, the lowest in the world.

As stated in [worldbank.org](http://worldbank.org), “absolute poverty is not an issue for citizens. In the context of the National Development Strategy 2011-16, the authorities have adopted a national relative poverty line and a welfare measurement methodology to track living standards of the population and identify vulnerable households.”

These are the government’s efforts to help protect its citizens from total financial downfall.

According to [worldatlas.com](http://worldatlas.com), Qatar lacks many rights that other countries have. They still practice torture methods, such as flogging and stoning, due to allowance by the Sharia law, a religious legal system ruling members of the Islamic faith that is practiced in most Middle Eastern countries.

This law has strict regulations on alcohol consumption, sexual relations, and dress code. Foreigners are also susceptible to such punishments. Muslims living in the country have separate rules, they are forbidden from consuming alcohol or pork, while Muslims outside of the country may consume such with a license.

Many of the punishments of Sharia law are also extremely strict towards females.

However, in other wealthy countries, such as Luxembourg, women are highly respected. Luxembourg is a small European country bordering Belgium, France, and Germany.

According to [luxembourg.public.lu](http://luxembourg.public.lu), “the index praises the country’s uprightness: only two percent of men think women should not have the right to work,”

which is an extremely low rate, especially considering that the worldwide average stands at a staggering 19 percent.

Additionally, 71 percent of women feel safe in the country and 22 percent claim to have been sexually assaulted. Though this may seem high, it beats the worldwide averages of 60.5 percent and 30 percent, respectively.

“The status of a country as developed or not does not determine the quality of life, I think that relates more to technology, as well as economics,” Julia Brown (’19) said.

Luxembourg has many amenities that replicate those of the United States, but their crime rate is much lower. Although still present in society, crime is kept to a minimum.

According to [osac.org](http://osac.org), “the general crime rate in Luxembourg is below the U.S. national average. Most crimes against U.S. citizens are considered petty street crimes and crimes of opportunity. Pickpocketing occurs with some regularity, often at popular tourist sites.”

Protests are rare in Luxembourg, and when they are present, they are small, well-organized, and non-violent.

The need for protests is extremely low. Most of the population is comfortable with the country and do not feel the need to change it.

According to [worldbank.org](http://worldbank.org), the GDP of Luxembourg is 58 billion dollars. This makes Luxembourg the seventh wealthiest country in the world.

Macau Special Administrative Region (SAR), a region located on the southern coast of China, has the third highest GDP in the world, at 44 billion dollars.

Although in a communist country, being an SAR allows Macau to govern itself.

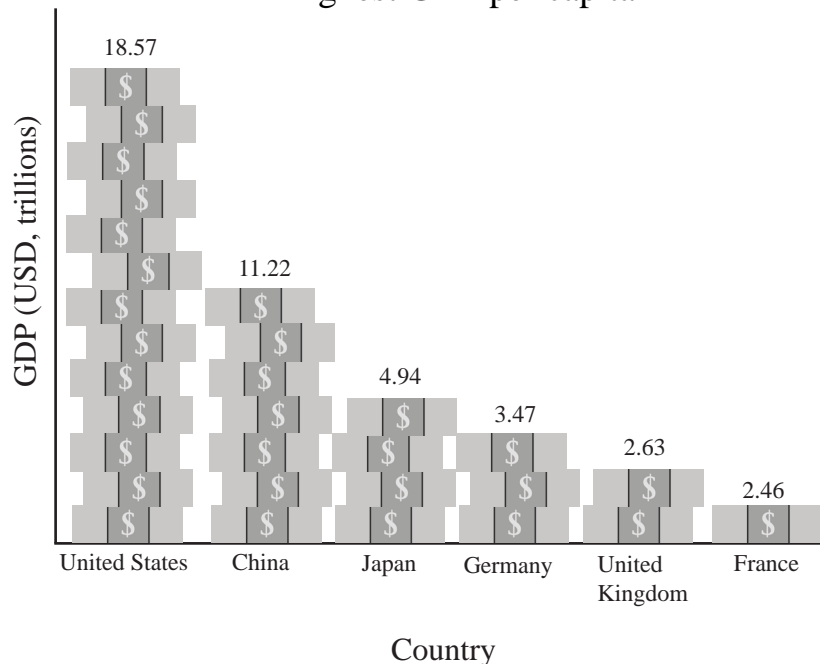
Macau’s exports consist of textiles, garments, toys, electronics, and footwear. Some of their trading partners are Mainland China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and the United States.

According to [export.gov](http://export.gov), “Macau enjoys a Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) with mainland China: Macau’s 2003 agreement with mainland China—largely parallel to the arrangement Hong Kong enjoys with the mainland—has enhanced its economic integration with the PRC.”

Another important aspect of its culture is the prominence of casinos in the region, which contributes to the crimes in the country. Violent crime is rare, but does occur. According to *CNN*, 20 percent of locals work in a casino.

Taking into account the faults of some of the wealthiest nations, it can be concluded that GDP cannot reveal the quality of life in a country.

Highest GDP per capita





# less-developed nations

**Micayla Roth**  
News Editor

The world today consists of nearly 200 countries, each unique in their own way. Countries are often economically divided into two categories: “less-developed” and “more-developed,” the distinction being dependent on its history, government, resources, population, and environment.

The United Nations (UN) defines the less-developed countries as, “low-income countries confronting severe structural impediments to sustainable development.”

Every three years, the UN re-evaluates the developmental state of these countries based on income, human assets, and economic vulnerability.

Most less-developed countries have not always been underdeveloped, and a variety of causes have led to their position such as European and American imperialism, particularly in Africa and Southeast Asia, which were exploited for the economic gain of the mother country.

The Berlin Conference in 1884 was one of the many instances of Western Exploitation where several European countries convened in order to divide portions of Africa amongst themselves.

“A lot of African countries were used for mercantile and capitalist goals...The European countries in the Scramble of Africa took portions of Africa to suit their needs to facilitate for their industrial growth. While they were developing during that time, the African nations were suffering, and they are less-developed [now] because of that,” Joshua Charleston (’20) said.

Historically, many less-developed countries were marked by, “dictatorships, one-party rule, military regimes, or—at best—democracies marred by high levels of social conflict and political violence,” according to academics.wellesley.edu.

Recently, however, democracy has grown in popularity. Despite this, tension still exists in some countries, as it is hard for the democracies to reach more remote areas. Economics play an important role in a country’s development. According to economicsdiscussion.net, the economies of many more-developed countries, such as the United States, depend largely on services, which generates a large gross domestic product (GDP).

Conversely, many less-developed countries have a higher dependency on industry and agriculture.

The appeal of higher paying jobs in industrial factories has drawn many people to urban areas, resulting in overcrowding and scarcity of industrial jobs.

Additionally, less-developed countries are absorbed in a nearly inescapable cycle: a low per capita income has led to low money saving, which inhibits economic growth and contributes to a low per capita income.

The economies in today’s rapidly developing world also requires an abundant amount of resources to fuel technological growth.

“There is an evolution path to the development of a country. Even if it means the use of non-renewable resources, it is crucial to the development

of these states to have cheap sources of energy,” Tomas Mazur (’20) said.

According to worldbank.org, most less-developed countries, especially those in sub-Saharan Africa, obtain most of their energy from renewable resources. However, this often consists of burning biomass, contributing to air pollution.

Paraguay, on the other hand, produces a large portion of their energy from hydroelectricity, leading the way for a less harmful source of renewable energy.

Climate change and global warming continue to add challenges to less-developed countries. As well as environmental disasters, such as earthquakes or tsunamis, that can leave people homeless and deplete resources.

“Both economics and geographical placement play a large role in why countries are less-developed than others. Countries with drastic climates often do not have the proper finances to keep on rebuilding their infrastructure and agricultural systems during these dangerous weather periods,” Shira Cohen (’20) said.

According to worldbank.org, Southwest Asia, North Africa, South Asia, East Asia, and the Pacific have fewer women holding parliamentary positions compared to North America.

On the other hand, sub-Saharan Africa has a larger portion of women in parliament. As stated in worldbank.org, while women make up about 25 percent of most parliamentary systems across the globe, Rwanda is a unique exception, in which women actually hold about 60 percent of seats.

Culture drastically differs from less to more-developed countries. While popular culture dominates in more-developed countries, unique “folk” cultures have a stronger presence in less developed countries, according to tclf.org.

Folk cultures are different in each region and have roots that trace far back in history. However, as the world is advancing, more people are gaining access to the popular music and food chains like McDonalds, depleting more unique traditions and cultures.

Lastly, population patterns of less-developed countries differ from those of more-developed countries. Wider access to medicine in less-developed countries has led to a drastic drop in death rates.

According to economics-discussion.net, there has not been a drop in birth rates, leading to large population growth. It is difficult to provide food for so many people, and many cities are overcrowded.

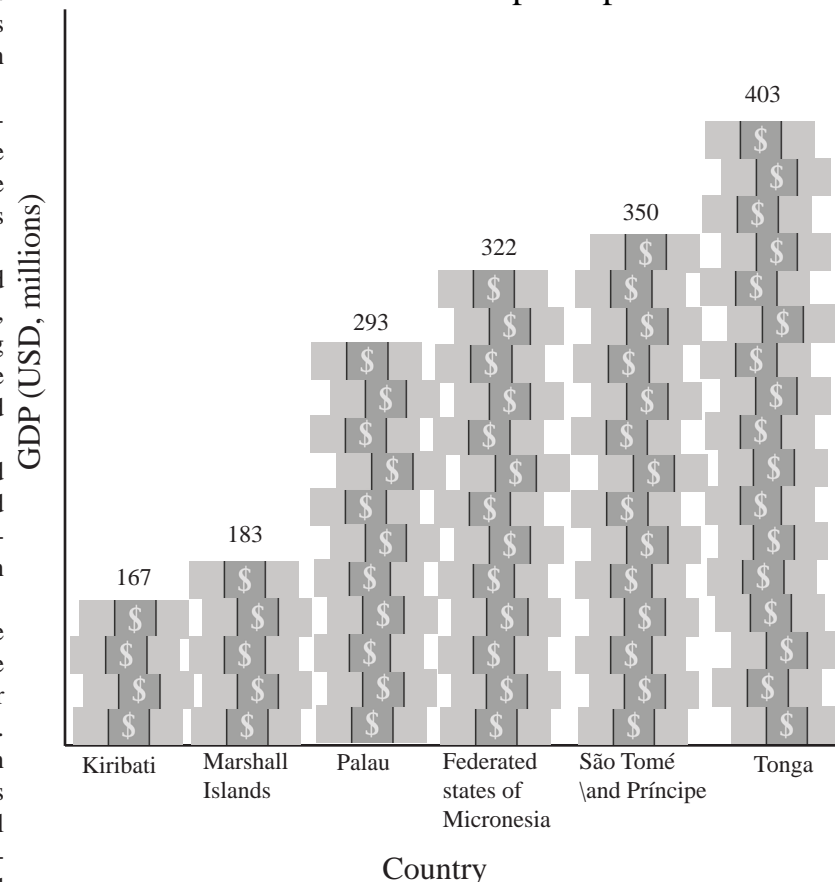
While less-developed countries are often grouped together as “poor,” no two countries are alike. Socioeconomic diversity exists in all countries, developed countries included. A “less-developed” status has not completely inhibited them from innovating.

Additionally, organizations such as the World Bank are working hard to close the gap between less-developed and more-developed countries, with Sustainable Development Goals such as, “no poverty,” set to be achieved by 2020.

It is important to be aware of the diverse array of countries in the world so that everyone can help improve these conditions.



Lowest GDP per capita





# A minute away from extinction

**Katie Gaia**  
Managing Editor

Throughout history, numerous cycles of mass extinctions have occurred on Earth, in which the vast majority of species became extinct in a short period of time.

The earliest mass extinction discovered, known as the Ordovician–Silurian Extinction, dated back to over 400 million years ago.

According to worldatlas.com, 86 percent of all life on Earth was “wiped out” in this extinction due to falling sea levels and glaciation.

The worst mass extinction in history, the Permian–Triassic Extinction, occurred 251 million years ago, in which 96 percent of all species were lost.

Since then, Earth has undergone four more mass extinctions, and scientists theorize that we are the midst of another.

A study by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) found that the amount of wild animals on Earth is half of what it was 40 years ago.

A common causality for all mass extinctions has been climate change. Rising and lowering sea levels, volcanic eruptions, and asteroid impact are just some of the environmental changes that contributed to mass extinctions.

When the climate of Earth changes significantly, many species cannot acclimate to the new conditions, and thus go extinct.

In the Permian–Triassic extinction, for instance, volcanic eruptions that emitted vast quantities of carbon dioxide caused the planet to warm and acidified the ocean.

However, the causes for this currently theorized mass extinction differ in a major way from its preceding five. Humans, specifically, are a new factor whose exploitation and consumption of resources are, “increasing species extinction between 10 and 100 times faster than the norm,” as

stated by worldatlas.com.

Humans continue to destroy habitats and prompt climate change through pollution, deforestation, carbon dioxide emission, exploitation of resources, and overhunting.

According to theguardian.com, Professor Paul Ehrlich at Stanford University said, “the ultimate cause of all of these factors [that are causing extinction] is human overpopulation and continued population growth, and overconsumption, especially by the rich.”

“It is important to put efforts toward saving endangered animals because I am an animal lover myself, and think that we should be more in tune with the world around us,” Shira Cohen (’20) said.

According to TIME, the concept of endangered species originated in the mid-1960s and popularized in laws, such as the 1972 United States Endangered Species Act that set rules to protect endangered species.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) created one of the most comprehensive and frequently used spectrum for endangered species. Vulnerable species on this spectrum range from “near threatened” to “extinct,” with the classification of “endangered” being in the middle.

To qualify a species as endangered, IUCN assesses various aspects, such as a shrinking population, vulnerability of the species’ habitat, and reproduction issues.

“The rate of extinction is devastating and only getting worse. This is definitely an issue because a loss or endangerment of a species shows that their ecosystem is falling apart, which impacts our health,” Shayla Siljkovic (’19) said.

Efforts have been made in recent years to help endangered species, some of which were successful. WWF is one of the leading non-governmental

organizations in wildlife conservation.

According to the WWF, the Asian elephant is classified as endangered, as less than 50,000 of them remain. This is due to poaching, or illegal hunting, and capturing of wild elephants for domestic use.

To prevent complete extinction and monitor the population that remains, 30 percent of the remaining Asian elephants are in captivity.

Eastern lowland gorillas are critically endangered, the last stage before extinction in the wild, with more than half of the population dying since the 1990s and less than 5,000 remaining.

This drastic decrease is due to major habitat loss and the growing illegal mining industry in Africa, which has attracted foreigners to come to the species’ habitat and hunt the animals. The WWF has attempted to combat this by expanding protected areas, but park rangers have found it difficult to patrol the large borders.

Hawksbill sea turtles are also considered critically endangered. Though pollution and habitat loss are factors for this endangerment, the largest factor is the illegal wildlife trade industry that captures and kills the turtles for their shells.

“We need to protect endangered species. Every time a species dies off, it affects our ecosystem, which is why it is so vital to protect these animals,” Ries Allyn (’19) said.

Some species, such as the Western black rhino and the Pyrenean Ibex, have become extinct due to human interactions and poaching.

Though not all species can be saved at this point, it is important to address the major cause of extinction: humans. If vast efforts are made to minimize the effects humans have on the environment, such as reducing carbon dioxide emissions, this trend towards mass extinction may be stopped.





# Education across the globe

**Ashley Shapiro**  
Staff Writer

In many countries, wealthier areas often can afford to have better quality school systems and teachers. Parents have the ability to move to specific school districts in order to ensure their child's acceptance into a "better" school.

Although Westhill is very different than schools around the world, it can draw inspiration from elements of school systems in other countries to improve its own school environment, such as improving language studies and career readiness.

In the United States school system, public school students attend primary and secondary school for twelve years. At age six, children begin attending elementary school (primary school), which they attend for five or six years until they go to middle and high school (secondary school).

After graduating high school, students may go on to college or another form of higher education. The school year usually begins in August or September and continues through

May or June.

According to The National Center for Education Statistics, the country's average class size is 22 students for elementary school and 25 students for middle and high schools.

Canada also has public schools that are governed by a superintendents and locally-elected school boards.

According to the Just Landed Canadian Public School Guide, this board controls the school's policies, such as hiring teachers, purchasing equipment and overseeing the school overall.

Similar to the United States, children start school in the Canadian school system before turning six in kindergarten. Students attend school until reaching age 18.

In elementary schools, students learn the fundamental skills, such as writing, math, history, crafts, science, and music. French used to be taught strictly to older students. However, recently, they have been offering French for older elementary students in some areas. They also offer French immersion programs in some areas of Canada.

In Canada, there is a high

emphasis on career planning and learning. Around ninth grade, students begin career counseling, which continues through college. Some schools offer vocational programs, which provide training in fields such as agriculture, business, commercial, trade, and industrial.

"I have always believed that language and career readiness is lacking in American schools. In reality, there are a lot of kids who come out of school not speaking proper English even though English is their first language. By giving us more exposure to that second language, not only do you have the ability to be bilingual, but you are also giving the ability to speak better English," Tori Morgan ('20) said.

Public schools in China are similar to American schools in that it consists of a five day week, with Saturday and Sunday off.

However, according to [internations.org](http://internations.org), the average public primary school class size in China is 40 to 60 students, while in secondary school, the class size is 60 to 80 students.

As with other countries, some regions have better school systems than others. The quality

of teachers and environment vary depending on the area.

Contrary to Western learning curriculums, Chinese education focuses on memorization. In the Western hemisphere, teachers stress the importance of understanding the fundamentals. Teachers want to ensure that students comprehend the material they are teaching. Math, science, and Chinese studies receive a higher emphasis as well.

Due to the stronger emphasis on exams in the Chinese school system, it can create a classroom of students who can recite information but cannot fully understand it.

"The Chinese learning style should not be based on memorizing. Most likely, not all students are understanding what they are being told to memorize. This causes students to not [fully] learn the lesson," Charlie Schwartz ('22) said.

This system also dismisses physical education and the arts, which Western education supporters argue provide necessary skills to produce well-rounded students. Finland's education system is very different compared to that of the United

States, specifically in its attitude towards teaching styles.

The Finnish National Agency for Education explains Finland's unique education style, stating, "there are no private schools in Finland, and all schools are funded by public dollars."

This money allows teachers to test many styles and do what is most effective for their students.

Contrary to the school system in the United States, Finland's kindergarteners enjoy 15 minutes of free time for every 45 minutes of instructional time. In primary school, students in Finland receive 75 minutes of recess during the day versus the average 27 minutes allotted for students in the United States.

"We should have more recess. Elementary students would benefit incredibly from extended recess. It is important for them to learn social skills," Caroline Boyd ('20) said.

In Finland, the focus is on learning, rather than testing, and there are no national tests for students during the basic education. In secondary school, the matriculation examination is given to determine acceptance into higher education.

## Average Class Sizes

**UNITED STATES: 25**

**CANADA: 25**

**CHINA: 60**

**FINLAND: 21**





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Off-site Testing at the School	Possibly.	Always available in Stamford multiple times a month since 2005 - <b>And always will be!</b>	
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. VERY limited office hours in Stamford, if at all.	We're almost <b>ALWAYS</b> open – in person or by phone. All phone calls, certificates, and paperwork handled in Stamford. No phone queues or customer service reps, we deliver <b>REAL</b> 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	No.	Yes, High Ridge Driving School has been locally owned and operated since 2005!	

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The Westword

# Supplement

Traveling across history





# Transportation of the future

**Evelyn Vasquez**  
Staff Writer

Many people say that searching for a new car can be like searching for a new home. The smallest details matter when investing in something that impacts their everyday lives.

Nowadays, cars vary in shape, color, size, and energy source. In 2018, people can choose to have a fuel, hybrid, or electric car.

Historically, gasoline-fueled cars have been the most commonly bought type of car, as they were the original type available to the public.

According to smartycents.com, these gasoline-fueled cars are a lot cheaper when paying upfront at a dealership or elsewhere. Hybrid electric cars can cost over 13,000 dollars more than gas cars.

"I found my first car for a very reasonable price," Elfido Alvarez ('19), who drives a gas fueled car, said.

Gas stations can be found almost anywhere, sometimes on every corner.

"I love that I can refuel almost anywhere without a problem," Mr. Otterspoor, science teacher, said.

Not only are gas stations in convenient locations for most people,

gas tanks of cars can be filled up within minutes.

Although they provide the most convenience for the general consumer, gasoline-fueled cars negatively impact both the planet and human health.

As stated by the United States Energy Information Administration, "the fuel released from the cars contribute[s] to air pollution and is highly toxic and flammable."

In addition, according to *The Huffington Post*, gas ends up costing the average American 2,000 dollars a year.

After the public was introduced to hybrid cars in the 1990s, people began to transition into a more eco-friendly form of transportation.

According to nationwide.com, people spend less money on gas in the long-run by using hybrids, even if they are more expensive, because of the fuel efficiency.

Hybrids also have a high resale value, putting money back into customers' pockets.

One of the downsides of hybrids is the initial cost and maintenance. These cars require a close eye because there is less support of the suspension and body.

"After going to multiple mechanics, not one of them had the proper equipment to help fix my 2014 Ford Fusion. It was a nightmare," Nicolas Perez-Sosa ('19) said.

Looking at the more futuristic side of the nation, electric cars have been widely broadcasted, which has helped increase sales.

According to smartycents.com, these cars require a lot less maintenance and are a lot cheaper than gasoline-fueled cars in the long run.

Compared to gasoline-fueled cars, electric cars get more than 100 miles per gallon because electricity is cheaper and more efficient by-the-unit than gas.

Although the electric cars can be cheaper in the long run, these cars are not built for people who have long commutes.

Traveling long distances can be a problem because of the short miles they can travel (ranging from 100 to 200 miles per charge).

According to the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, electric cars take multiple hours to charge.

Similarly, charging stations are not as easy to find as normal gas stations.

According to statista.com, there

were nearly 125,000 gas stations in the United States in 2017, but only 16,541 electric charging stations.

"My dad loves his electric car, but he is scared to take it to the city because of the lack of charging stations," Tais Alicea ('19) said.

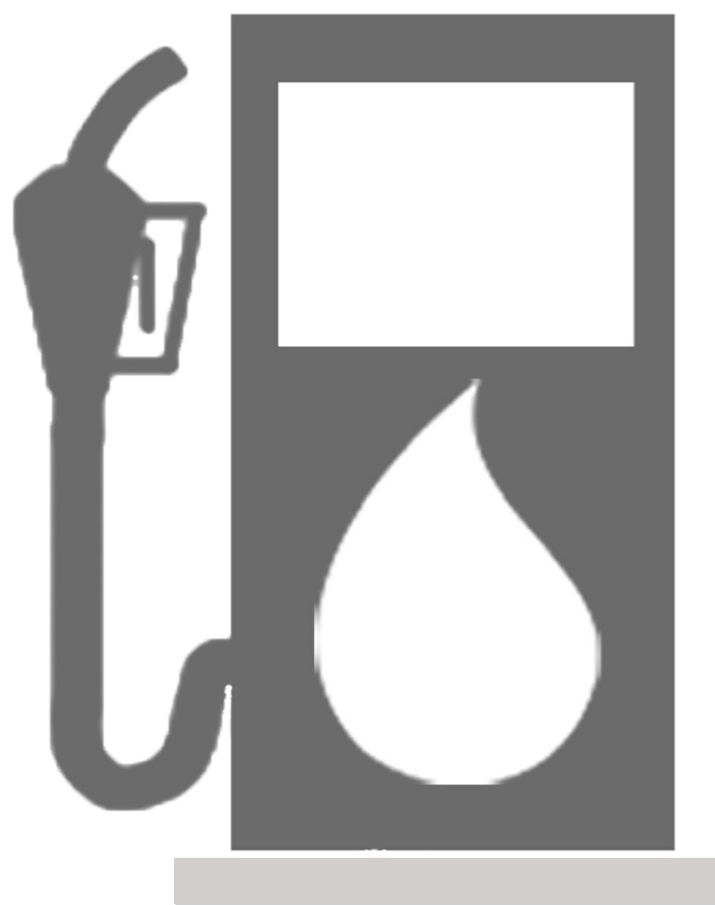
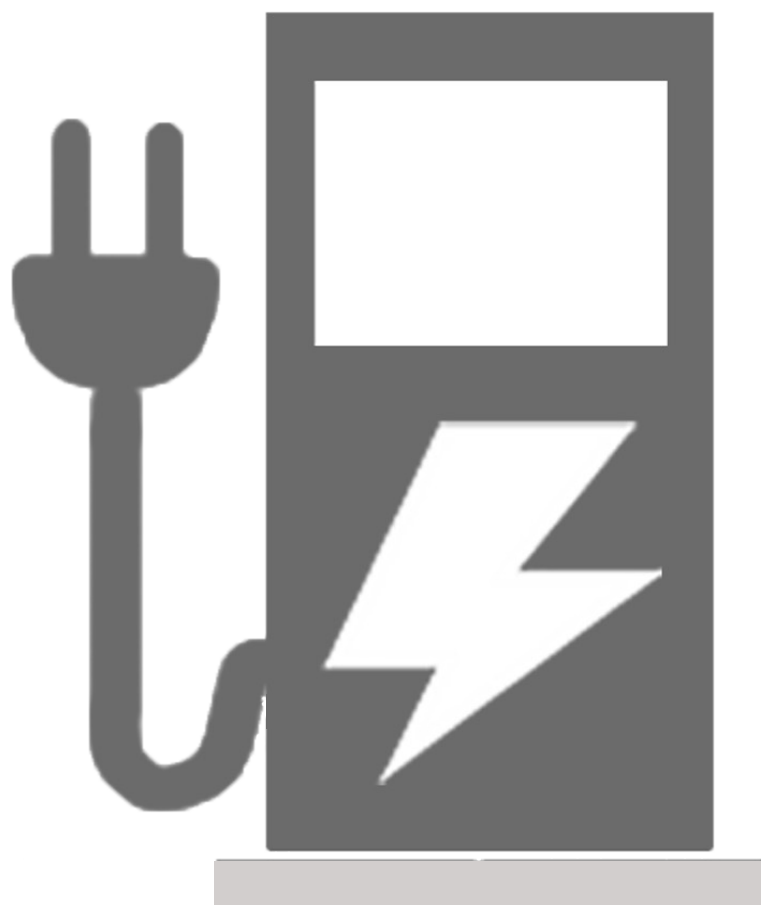
Electric cars can also pose a safety hazard because of how quiet they are compared to a regular gasoline-fueled cars. Pedestrians may not be paying attention when crossing roads and may not hear the vehicle coming.

According to *The New York Times*, the school district for White Plains, New York, has invested in electric school buses. However, because they do not make noise, a four-tone melody was added for the safety of pedestrians and students.

White Plains has invested almost 365,000 dollars a piece on these buses.

Cities in California and Massachusetts have also started investing in similar and smaller projects, such as issuing rebates to electric vehicle drivers.

Though all of the various types of cars offer different trade-offs, the success of hybrids and electric cars indicate that the country will likely move towards more environmentally friendly and fuel efficient



# Highways: the risks and rewards

**Leiny Otero**  
Staff Writer

Highway systems play a major role in everyone's lives, as they determine the timeliness of getting places and, at times, how busy local roads are and how most of their goods arrive at retailers.

Highways are a crucial part of making the economy prosper and grow. They make transporting goods across the country faster and easier.

"I use the highway every day to drive to work after school. It helps me get places faster if I leave with spare time," Denise Polonia ('19) said.

The Federal-Aid Highway Act, signed by former President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956, allowed the construction of a 41,000-mile network of interstate highways that would span the nation. It was a 26 billion dollar project

The project was introduced to help alleviate transportation-related issues in people's daily lives and to get rid of the unsafe roads that were causing crashes and traffic jams.

Highways advocate for a safer emergency route in case of an atomic attack in any of our key cities, as the roads would not permit quick evacuation.

In 1956, it was "essential to the national interest" to protect all citizens and provide a safer route for emergency evacuations, according to history.com.

Unfortunately, transportation-related issues are still prominent in society today. According to the World Health Organization, road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death among people between 15 and 29 years old.

Additionally, more than 1.25 million people die every year as a result of road traffic crashes. Some of the risk factors are: speeding, driving under the influence, nonuse of helmets, distracted driving, and unsafe road infrastructures.

"I prefer to drive on the highway because it is easier to get places without getting stuck in traffic on the smaller roads, even though sometimes I get stuck in more traffic on the highway," Tyler O'Banner ('19) said.

The United States has four different highway systems: Interstate, United States, State, and County.

Officials of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation are in charge of the route numbers and the locations.

The north-to-south highways are odd numbered, the lowest number starting in the east and ending with the highest number in the west.

The east-to-west highways are even numbered, with the lowest number in the north and the highest number in the south.

For main highways, also known as parent highways, north-to-south routes usually end with "1" and east-to-west routes end with "0."

The other highways that are connected are called routes with three-numbers following. The signs on the side of interstate highways are used to make sense of these numbers on the roads.

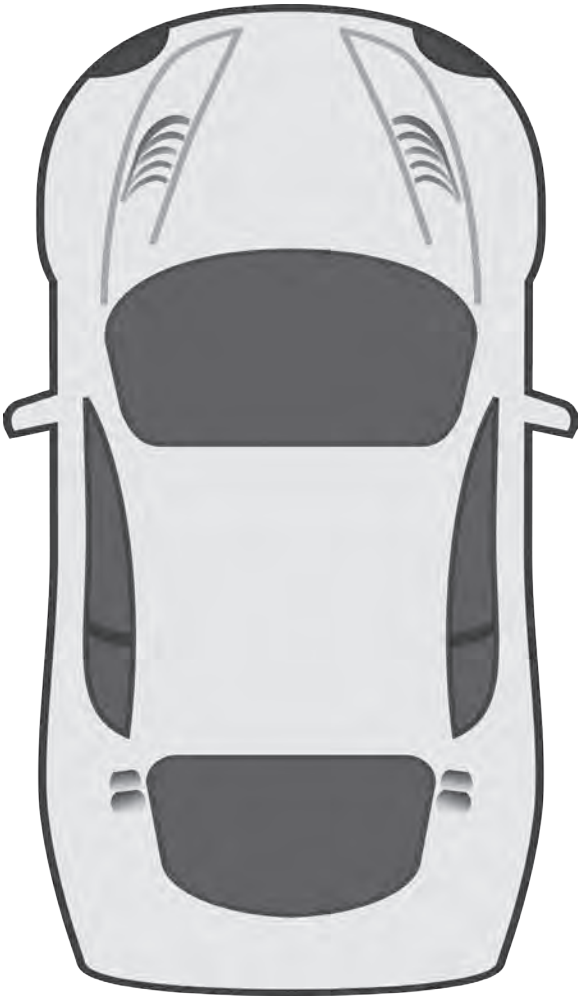
The United States Highway System is mostly made up of connected roads. The difference is

that the Interstate Highway System is made up of freeways and is labeled by a red and blue shield with white letters.

The numbering system is different for every state because each state decides how to number their routes. For example, Connecticut numbers their highways from 1 through 202.

Highways are a major helping hand to those who drive and even those who take public transportation, such as city buses, as it eases congestion in back roads and allows the public transport vehicles to travel faster.

Though the development of highways has not been an easy or cheap process, it has had a positive impact on the country and has proven its value over time.





# The evolution of transportation

The first major form of transportation invented was the canoe sometime between 8200 and 7600 BC.

According to canoe.ca, “canoes were developed over the course of thousands of years by the native peoples of North America.”

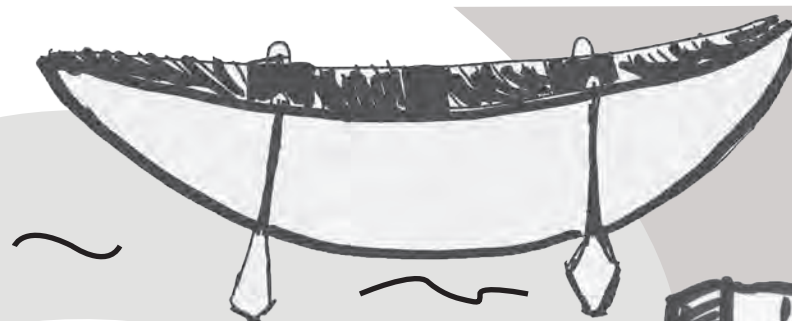
Large tree trunks were shaped and hollowed out and used to travel between areas of land. Since then, the design of the canoe has barely changed.

The canoe was the ideal mode of transportation for traveling through bodies of water in North America at the time. Their sizes ranged from lengths of three to 17 feet, depending on their purpose, according to iro.umontreal.ca.

“The first mode of transportation was a canoe and now, if you have a lot of money, you can go on a cruise. It is cool how it has evolved into something much larger than what it started but from the same origin,” Ruthie Price (’22) said.

Iro.umontreal.ca also states that, “dugout canoes required more advanced tools, like axes, adzes and chisels, initially made from flint, then metal.”

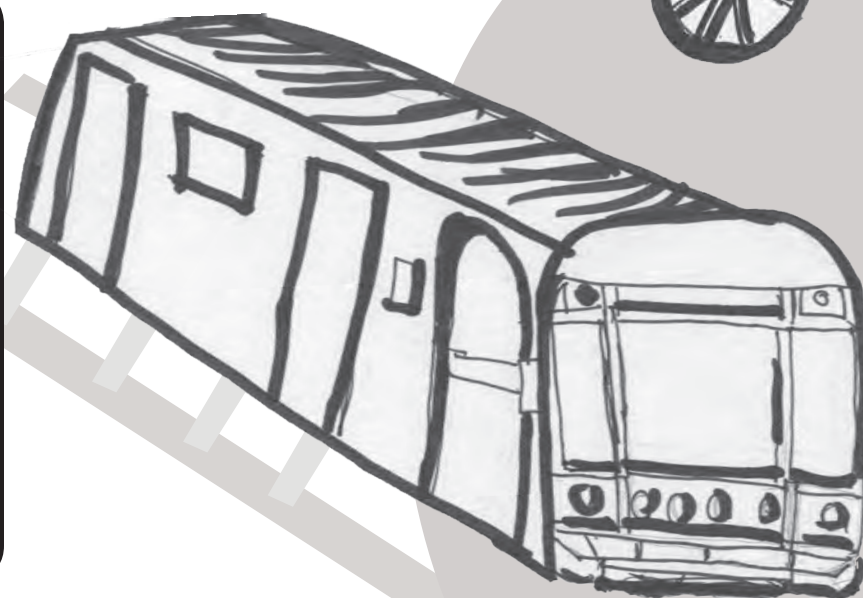
At the time, canoes were a new and highly advanced mode of transportation.



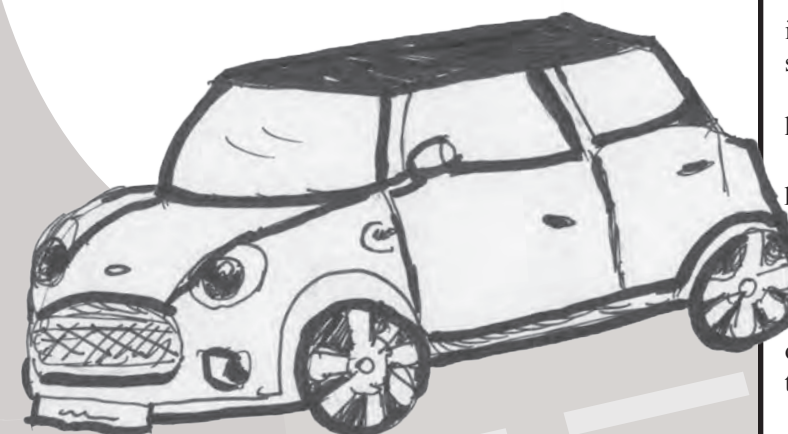
CANOE: 8200 - 7600 BC



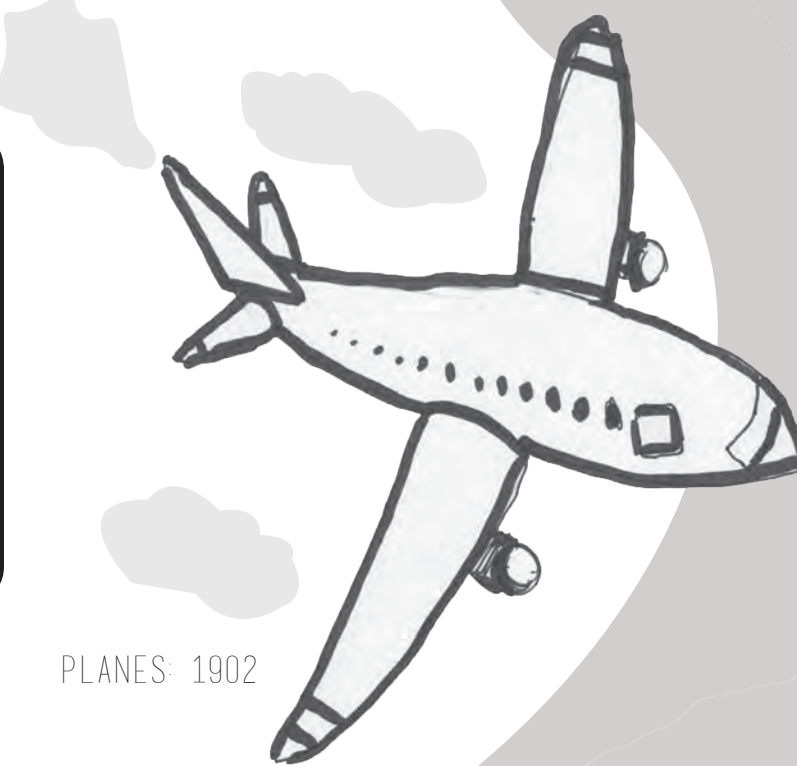
HORSE AND CARRIAGE: 16TH CENTURY



TRAINS: 1763



CARS: 1885



PLANES: 1902

The train was officially developed in 1763 when James Watt took the stationary steam engine design and transformed that steam power into a circular motion, as stated in trainhistory.net.

According to lelandwest.com, these locomotives were powered by steam, which was fueled by coal, wood, or oil. Other methods of powering trains were electricity and diesel.

After Watt’s innovation, early train inventors Matthew Murray, Richard Trevithick, George Stephenson, and Oliver Evans separately invented more revolutionizing ideas that progressed the development of the railway.

For instance, Murray developed the first commercially viable steam engine, which gave the steam engine even widespread use. Most of their contributions are integral parts of how trains operate today.

Workers began using trains to easily move coal from mines to rivers. This increased the efficiency of their work and sped up the transportation of products.

Today, “the fastest commercial high speed rail trains, which use magnetic levitation technology, can go up to 431 kilometers per hours,” according to lelandwest.com.

Locomotives have had a slow and steady progression, and display the increase in industry throughout the world, including the United States.

Airplanes were first developed by the Wright brothers in 1902.

As more improvements of the airplane were made, the first commercial jet airline was created and flown by British pilot De Havilland Comet, according to lelandwest.com. This allowed for the transfer of goods and people faster than ever before, and at a lower cost.

Now, according to alum.mit.edu, aircrafts can fly up to about 510 knots or 587 miles per hour, which is similar to how it was in the 1960s.

According to spikeaerospace.com, “By the 1960s, aviation was the preferred way of getting across the US and abroad to Europe. Faster and faster planes carrying more and more people—for reasonable airfares—helped us to travel, explore and invest around the globe.”

Flight has progressed from two brothers discovering how to get a steam engine off the ground to transporting hundreds of people at once across the globe.

The domestication of horses and donkeys was around 4000 to 3000 BC, while camels were sometime in 3000 to 2000 BC, according to localhistories.org.

In the 16th century, the use of animals progressed to traveling on a box between two poles (one horse in front, the other in the back). The Romans developed this method, and had to train their horses to walk at the same pace.

With the introduction of this system, someone could travel 50 to 60 kilometers a day while easily carrying goods.

Additionally, according to smithsonianmag.com, the wheel was created around 3500 BC in Mesopotamia. This allowed for the further advancement of animal transport and for transportation to become more efficient.

Goods were then able to be transported by packhorse and covered wagons were used to carry goods or people.

The inventor of the first true automobile has been a topic of controversy for years, but it is believed by most to be Karl Friedrich Benz who created it in Germany in 1885.

Loc.gov states, “[Benz developed] the gasoline automobile powered by an internal combustion engine: three wheeled, four cycle, engine and chassis form a single unit.”

In 1893, brothers Charles Edgar and Frank Duryea built on the idea of the car by creating the “first successful gas powered car... and set up [the] first American car manufacturing company.”

Over time, the style of cars has changed and become more advanced, but the basic types of cars included: two doors, small, sports cars, and luxury cars. The latest car models have computer-aided systems, improved gas mileage, and platform sharing.

“It is interesting how wealthy people back then owned cars and wealthy people now own horses in addition [to their multiple high end cars],” Carly Fein (’21) said.

According to lelandwest.com, during Alfred Sloan’s presidency of General Motors, the company launched numerous cars of improved efficiency and affordability.

Automobiles are constantly being revamped to make the consumers’ lives easier due to the competition between the vast amount of car companies.

According to localhistories.org, “although the first cars appeared at the end of the 19th century, after the first World War, they became cheaper and more common. However, in 1940, only about one in ten families in Britain owned a car... Yet, cars only became really common in the 1960s. By the 1970s the, majority of families owned one.”

The number of automobiles differ in popularity based on the area and the current economic climate.

According to leland.com, “today, the automobile industry produces more than 70 million vehicles across the world and a rapid rise in price of oil and gasoline has led to the development of various green cars.”

# Bullet trains debut in Japan

**Bailee Esposito**  
Ombudsman

Bullet trains are a form of rail transport that operate at significantly higher speeds than traditional trains.

These trains can reach up to about 200 miles per hour, according to [acprail.com](http://acprail.com). At such great speeds, travel time for great distances is no longer a burden.

In Japan, these trains are called Shinkansen trains. According to [acprail.com](http://acprail.com), one of the most popular routes, Tokyo to Kyoto, usually takes upwards of five hours to drive, but takes only two hours and 49 minutes on a bullet train.

With the introduction of passenger planes, travel was revolutionized. However, over time, it seems air travel has become increasingly congested and time-consuming. That is due to an issue faced by the extensive security and travel time to airports. Bullet trains were created in hopes of alleviating some of this congestion.

According to [howstuffworks.com](http://howstuffworks.com), these trains are able to go at high speeds due to lack of friction with the rails, an issue faced by conventional trains. The entire train levitates over the rail through electromagnetic propulsion.

“A high-speed train that has little-to-no carbon emissions is the pinnacle of transportation technology. However, it is rather expensive. That makes it not fully available to the general public and for daily use,” Arjun Ahuja (’22) said.

Not only are these trains far faster than traditional trains, like the ones used to commute in the United States, but bullet trains are also much more environmentally friendly.

[Howstuffworks.com](http://Howstuffworks.com) also states that, “bullet trains also have no engine, so they do not use fossil fuels but rather, the magnetic field created by the electrified coils

in the guideway walls and the track combine to propel the train.”

“Hopefully, one [will be] built in the United States so it would be accessible to Amer-

icans in the coming decades,” Julia Hassentalebi (’19) said.

Even though no plans are in the works of a bullet train being built in the United States anytime soon, they might begin showing up in other countries.

According to [ndtv.com](http://ndtv.com), Japan has committed to building a bullet train in India, “funding 80 percent of the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project through a soft loan of crore (ten million rupees). 79,000 crore at an interest rate of 0.1 percent, with a tenure stretching over 50 years and a moratorium period of 15 years.” This means that Japan’s loan amounts to roughly 10,899,600,000 U.S. dollars.

“I would love to ride on a bullet train one day. It is on my bucket list,” Mrs. Porter-Collins, Agriculture teacher, said.

Futuristic bullet trains are in the works as well.

According to *CNN*, “Central Japan Railway Co. has rolled out its new high-speed Shinkansen N700S—or Shinkansen Supreme.”

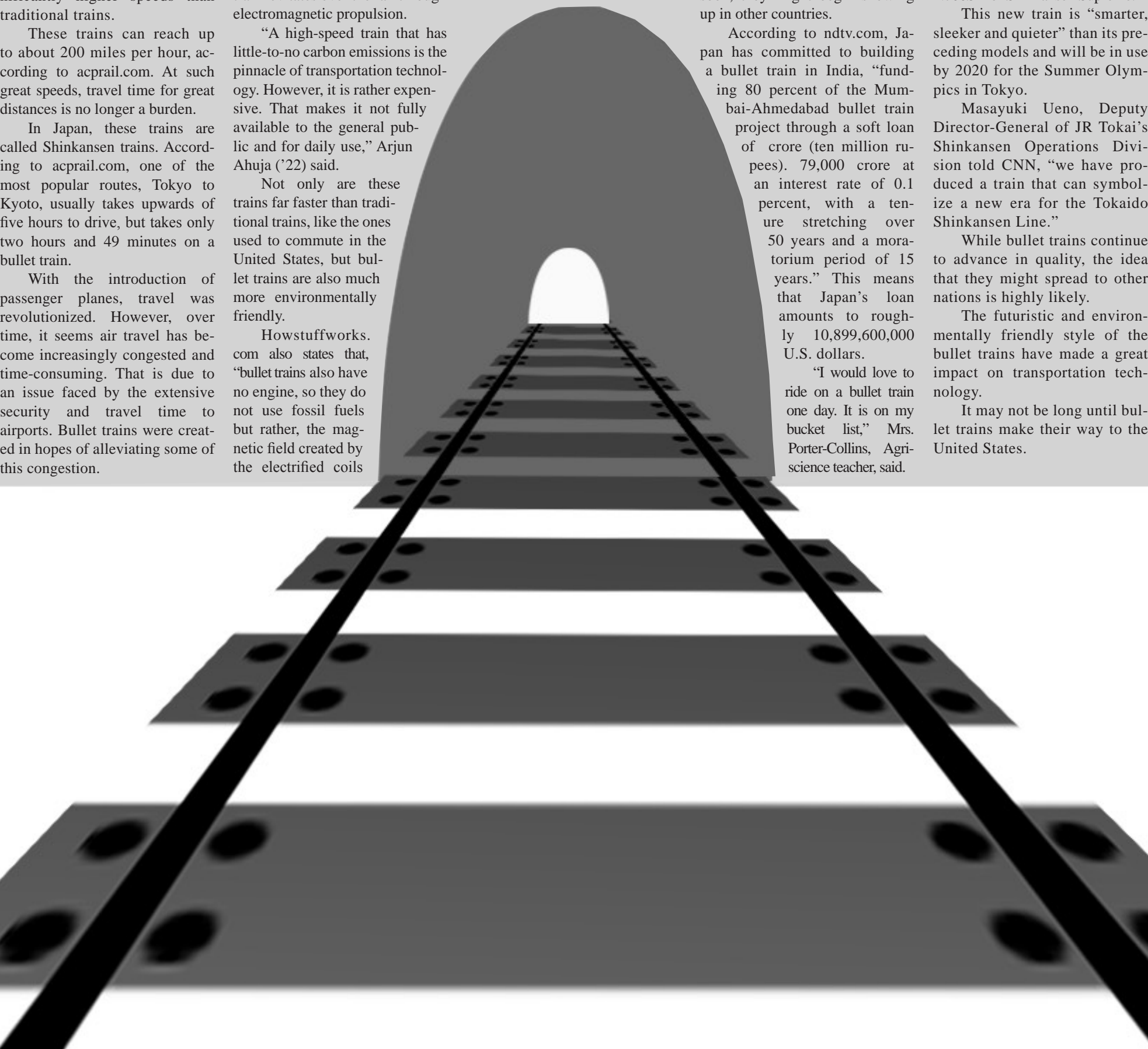
This new train is “smarter, sleeker and quieter” than its preceding models and will be in use by 2020 for the Summer Olympics in Tokyo.

Masayuki Ueno, Deputy Director-General of JR Tokai’s Shinkansen Operations Division told *CNN*, “we have produced a train that can symbolize a new era for the Tokaido Shinkansen Line.”

While bullet trains continue to advance in quality, the idea that they might spread to other nations is highly likely.

The futuristic and environmentally friendly style of the bullet trains have made a great impact on transportation technology.

It may not be long until bullet trains make their way to the United States.





# Modern development of planes

**Francesca Rubino-Chuckas**  
Staff Writer

Airplanes are one of the safest, and most efficient modes of transportation currently existing. They allow people to quickly transport across countries and continents.

Over the past decade, airport and plane safety has increased immensely, from the further development of high-impact seats to specific rules for passenger protection.

These improvements in aviation allow people to feel safe while in the sky.

Since the early 2000s, Transport Security Administration (TSA) security checks, including baggage check and x-ray, have greatly increased.

"The improvement in security has been super beneficial and crucial, especially because of the relevance of gun violence. We have learned so much from terrorist attacks that we are able to improve," Yael Roll ('20) said.

After September 11, 2001, when terrorists hijacked and crashed a commercial plane, contributing to the deaths of thousands, many more lengths have been taken to prevent violence and terrorist attacks on planes.

"We unfortunately learn how to improve things from them going wrong. With terrorist attacks, a lot of the security measures are not only to keep people safe but to ensure peace of mind for them, so that you do not have to worry when you are on a plane," Anna Martelli ('20) said.

Additionally, the United States has taken extreme measures of safety on aircrafts ever since the 1980s, after a string of several accidents occurred where passengers were unable to escape the destruction of the plane due to preexisting injuries or plane damage.

In one instance, Asiana Flight 214 crash landed on the San Francisco International Airport in 2013. There were many issues with the aircraft quality that caused people to have difficulty escaping.

According to *The New York Times*, "two of the inflatable emergency exit slides opened prematurely, pinning

flight attendants to their seats and making those exits inoperable. The front of the plane was severely damaged by fire, and seats beginning at Row 36 were broken, with the backs of some seats facing

this scenario.

"All airlines are now required to have seats that can withstand a downward force 14 times greater than gravity and a longitudinal impact of 16 times

the seat in front of the passenger with information on how to locate the items shown in detail to save their life in an emergency.

Two key items are the life vest, which is often below the seat, and oxygen masks, which are located directly above the seats and are released when needed.

"[TSA] does a pretty good job at preventing most incidents but there could be more measures [taken]," Sydney McDonald ('20) said.

In addition, fighter jets, commonly used in warfare, have advanced greatly over the past few years.

In 2015, China finished developing a fighter jet called the J-20, which will greatly assist their airforce.

In a Fox News article, Navy pilot Matthew Buckley stated, "it is probably leaps and bounds above where we are, and that is terrifying. As a former Navy fighter pilot, going up against something that is stealthy, highly maneuverable and with electronic systems more capable than mine—that will keep me up at night."

It could pose a threat to other countries, but China plans on using it for defensive reasons.

Jets like this are designed to take down other aircrafts in the quickest way possible, and use various exterior weapons, such as missiles, to do so.

Public planes, although normally large in size, tend to go the same speed as private planes or fighter jets. Their speeds are monitored by Air Traffic Controllers, regardless of size.

According to *dailymail.co.uk*, "modern aircrafts use technology which allows engineering teams on the ground to monitor live data from a flight, including engine and speed information."

The fastest speed an aircraft has ever gone is 2,193 miles per hour, which was achieved by the The Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird.

Even though planes are capable of going extremely fast, their speeds are monitored for their occupants' safety.

Along with that, in-depth development is done constantly to improve the quality of passenger's flights and experience.



the ceiling."

While these issues were occurring in the cabin, the seats were able to uphold against great forces to protect passengers.

The protective, high-impact seats used in planes are capable of withstanding great amounts of force and are fire resistant, which was extremely useful in

gravity. Fabrics and other interior materials must be resistant to fire," as stated in *The New York Times*.

The plane's ability to withstand force and flames can keep passengers as safe as possible in most circumstances.

When sitting in the aircraft, there is always a pamphlet in





## Una tradición Americana

**Camila Miranda**

Las Noticias Editor

Cada año, gente en los Estados Unidos celebra el día de Acción de Gracias. La gente se reúne y come pavo, puré de papas, pie de calabaza y muchas otras comidas clásicas a la época.

Todos piensan que saben la historia de cómo se realizó la primera cena de Acción de Gracias. Mitos comunes son que los peregrinos aterrizaron en Plymouth Rock y que se reunieron felizmente con los nativo-americanos y comieron pavo, salsa de cranberry, relleno, y camotes. A todos les tomaría por sorpresa que la verdadera historia fue muy diferente a los mitos que hemos escuchado.

El día de Acción de Gracias es un día para celebrar cuando los peregrinos y los Indios de Wampanoag se reunieron en 1621 y tuvieron una cena juntos. Una misconception común es que después

de la primera celebración del Día de Acción de Gracias, los peregrinos y los nativo-americanos celebraron todos los años después con una cena.

Este mito común no es real. La realidad es que los peregrinos no celebraron el día de acción de gracias seguido. En realidad, los peregrinos ni llamaron esta cena "Thanksgiving." Para ellos un "Thanksgiving" era considerado una celebración religiosa en cual iban a la iglesia y le agradecen a Dios por un evento específico.

Hoy en día, las tradiciones del Día de acción de Gracias son muy diferentes a las de la prim-

era cena que ocurrió en 1621. Les puede tomar de sorpresa que el menú de los peregrinos en el Día de Acción de Gracias era pescado y mariscos. Otra comida que ellos comieron fue

lechuga, espinaca, repollo, zanahorias, y arvejas.

Las comidas que comemos hoy en día son un poco diferentes a las que sirvieron en la primera cena de Thanksgiving. Hoy la gente come pavo, salsa de cranberry, relleno, camotes y puré de papas y aderezo para el pavo.

Tradiciones comunes son que la familia se reúne y cenar juntos. Las familias Americanas también suelen jugar fútbol americano y donar comida a los menos afortunados. Otra tradición es mirar el desfile de Macy's en la televisión. Usualmente las familias se sientan reunidos y disfrutan el desfile desde su casa o van a Nueva York a verlo en vivo.

En 1863, el Día de Acción de Gracias se convirtió en una celebración nacional. El presidente de esa época quién era Abraham Lincoln, hizo una proclamación en la cual dijo que el último jueves de cada noviembre sería el día oficial de Thanksgiving. Después de esto todos celebraron Thanksgiving en esta fecha hasta 1939.

En 1939, el presidente Franklin D. Roosevelt cambió la fecha a el penúltimo jueves de noviembre. Esto fue porque al tiempo, los Estados Unidos sufría de una crisis económica y para que los negocios ganaran más dinero, el presidente cambió la fecha.

El Día de Acción de Gracias es una celebración nacional en los Estados Unidos en la cual las familias dan gracias y celebran la primera cena, en la cual los peregrinos y los nativo americanos se reunieron y compartieron una comida. Esto es reconocido como el primer Thanksgiving.



calabaza pero no en forma de pie. La razón de esto es porque todavía no existían hornos. Unos vegetales que fueron servidos en la cena fueron frijoles, cebolla,

## Westhill logra un nuevo Lip Dub para 2018

**Alessandra Pinto**

Las Noticias Editor

Durante los últimos años, Westhill High School ha participado en la creación de Lip Dub, un evento que muchas escuelas de todo el país han realizado.

Un Lip Dub es un tipo de video musical hecho por los participantes que sincroniza los labios con una canción, lo que implica mucha preparación y práctica.

Este año, uno de los objetivos que tienen los creadores de Lip Dub es lograr una mayor participación de los estudiantes, por ejemplo, al enviar una encuesta solicitando recomendaciones de canciones.

Este año, los estudiantes tuvieron la oportunidad de recomendar canciones que tuvieron la posibilidad de tener lugar en el Lip Dub de este año.

Luego, se enviaría un anuncio invitando a los estudiantes con talentos como la sincronización de labios y giros para la audición para el Lip Dub, que se celebrará dos días en octubre.

Además, los estudiantes que no querían estar en el Lip Dub pero sí querían ayudar con la decoración y la planificación también podían asistir a una de las fechas de la audición.

Durante varias semanas, se enviaron

correos electrónicos al cuerpo estudiantil en busca de bailarines.

Después de las audiciones, se finalizó la lista de cantantes para el 2018 Westhill Lip Dub, que incluía estudiantes de diversos grados y culturas.

En las prácticas, los participantes se dividirán en grupos dependiendo de la canción o el club en el que estaban y se enviarán a partes separadas del edificio para practicar.

En el día del Lip Dub, hubo una energía en los pasillos de la escuela.

Los pasillos estaban decorados con los colores de la escuela púrpura y dorado, y los estudiantes mostraron su espíritu escolar con el atuendo de Westhill High School y los colores de la escuela.

Todos los estudiantes, no solo los cantantes, fueron animados a cantar las canciones reproducidas en el video si estaban familiarizados con las letras.

Durante el rodaje, todos estaban alegres y llenos de espíritu para representar un ambiente escolar feliz y alegre.

En una entrevista reciente con una de las directoras de Lip Dub, se recopiló mucha información interna sobre la creación del Lip Dub.

Como era de esperar, hubo una mayor participación de los estudiantes y más ganas de participar.

Este fue un cambio positivo, ya que más de la escuela estuvo representada a través de los estudiantes.

Además, las diversas culturas en Westhill High School fueron representadas no sólo a través de los miembros del Lip Dub, sino también una canción en español incluida en el video.

Aunque la planificación en sí consumió mucho tiempo, el resultado final valió la pena.

La escuela experimentó una experiencia divertida y colaborativa, llena de la alegría de ser un estudiante de Westhill High School.

Hay más Lip Dubs que esperamos en el futuro, cada uno superando el anterior.

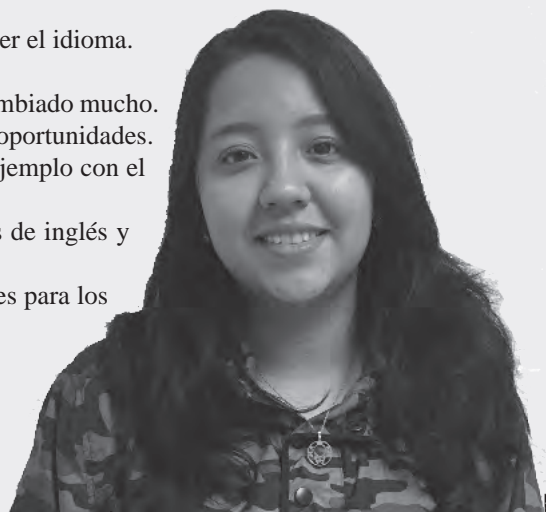


**ARRIBA, ARRIBA, Y LOJOS** Los estudiantes esperan que el dron vuele para participar en el lip dub.

# Entrevistamos recién alumnos de Westhill

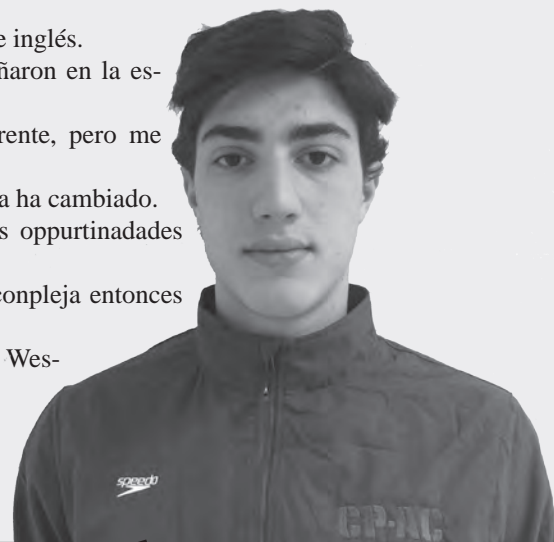
## Celeste Venus

- 1) 18 años.
- 2) Noveno grado.
- 3) Guatemala.
- 4) 6 meses.
- 5) Ya supe inglés.
- 6) No era muy difícil aprender el idioma.
- 7) La escuela es mas grande.
- 8) Mi estilo de vida no ha cambiado mucho.
- 9) Yo siento que tengo más oportunidades. Qui que en Guatemala, por ejemplo con el trabajo y la educación.
- 10) Me gustan los programas de inglés y español.
- 11) Yo me quedo en las tardes para los programas que ofrecen.



## Archie Kracatskhelia

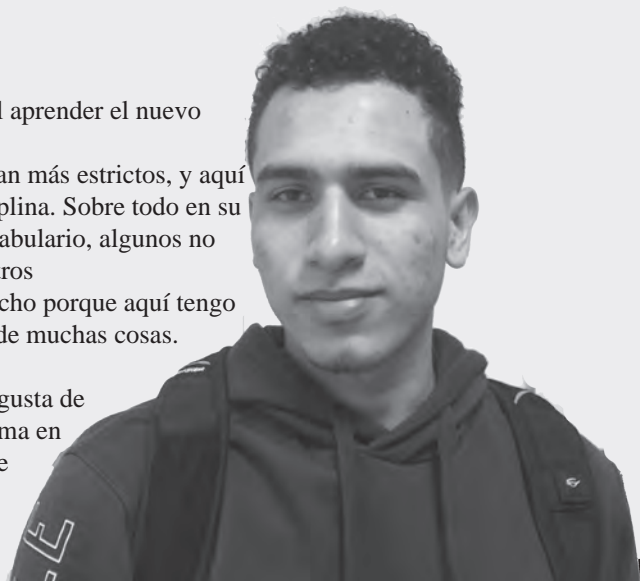
- 1) Tengo 15 años.
- 2) Noveno grado.
- 3) Georgia.
- 4) 6 meses.
- 5) Cuando vine al país supe inglés.
- 6) No, porque me lo enseñaron en la escuela.
- 7) Las escuelas son diferente, pero me gusta Westhill.
- 8) No se si mi estilo de vida ha cambiado.
- 9) No creo que tengo mas oportunidades aqui que en Georgia.
- 10) La educacion es mas compleja entonces puedo aprender mas.
- 11) Yo nado, pero no para Westhill.



- 1) ¿Cuántos años tienes?
- 2) ¿En qué grado estás?
- 3) ¿De qué país vienes?
- 4) ¿Cuánto tiempo llevas aquí?
- 5) Antes de venir ¿cuánto inglés sabías?
- 6) ¿Ha sido difícil aprender el idioma?
- 7) ¿En qué se diferencia Westhill de la escuela a la que vienes de?
- 8) ¿Cómo ha cambiado tu estilo de vida? Si es así, ¿ha cambiado drásticamente?
- 9) ¿Sientes que tienes más oportunidades aquí que de donde vienes?
- 10) ¿Qué es lo que más te gusta de Westhill?
- 11) ¿Qué tan involucrado estás en Westhill?

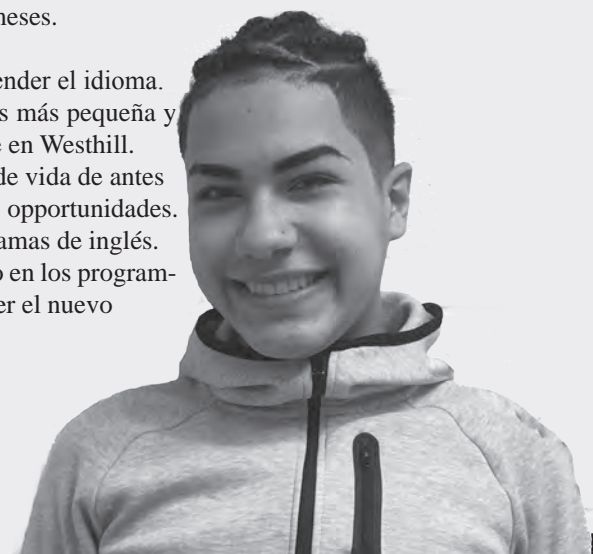
## Romeo Zapata

- 1) 18 años
- 2) Grado 12
- 3) Guatemala
- 4) 10 meses.
- 5) Poco.
- 6) Si, ha sido difícil aprender el nuevo idioma.
- 7) En mi escuela eran más estrictos, y aquí no hay mucha disciplina. Sobre todo en su vestuario, pelo, vocabulario, algunos no respetan a los maestros
- 8) Ha cambiado mucho porque aquí tengo más oportunidades de muchas cosas.
- 9) Si
- 10) Lo que más me gusta de Westhill es en la forma en cómo los maestros te comprenden
- 11) Programas de inglés.



## Yoel Marquina

- 1) Tengo 18 años.
- 2) Estoy en el onceavo grado.
- 3) Yo vine de Venezuela.
- 4) Llevo un año y tres meses.
- 5) Yo supe poco inglés.
- 6) No era tan difícil aprender el idioma.
- 7) Mi escuela anterior es más pequeña y hay menos personas que en Westhill.
- 8) Llevo el mismo estilo de vida de antes
- 9) Si siento que hay mas oportunidades.
- 10) Me gustan los programas de inglés.
- 11) Yo estoy involucrado en los programas de ingles para aprender el nuevo idioma.





## The animals within Agriscience

The Agriscience (Ag) building is home to 18 animals of varying species.

These animals are very useful in the Ag program for the teachers to effectively teach lessons regarding specific care for species, as well as restraint, health, temperature, pulse respiration, and baseline data.

The animals were donated to fit the need for the curriculum, specifically for the Ag 1 and Ag 2 classes.

Ag teachers are able to bring their pets to work as stress relievers for students and to be used for their lessons.

The Ag program includes many courses pertaining to animal anatomy, behavior, and treatment. Having animals in the room allows the students to have hands-on experience with the topics being discussed.

Ms. Jefferies has two dogs that she frequently brings to school: Malibu, a black labrador, and Jack, a toy Fox Terrier. Malibu is a sweet and affectionate dog who loves food while Jack is feisty and very vocal.

“Being able to bring my dog to school is very beneficial because I get to work longer hours without worrying if my dogs are okay. Also, these dogs are a source of comfort for the students who have class here,” Jefferies said.

“I really love when Ms. Jefferies brings Malibu and Jack to school. [They are] so cute,” Abigail Lupinacci (’19) said.

Ms. Martin, who teaches Animal Science, has two dogs, Luna and Humble, and a bearded dragon that lives in her classroom, named Angus.

She uses her pets for her lessons about restraints, animal care, veterinary science, animal be-

havior, animal management, and general compassion for other life forms. The students also enjoy having these animals in the class.

“It makes [my students’] day. Students ask to take Angus out daily—he is very popular,” Martin said.

PC also has many animals that come to work with her. She has a labrador named Tonks, a pitbull named Tig, and a kitten named Lugnut.

Her animals play different roles in her lessons: Tig helps her teach restraint, anatomy, bandaging, splinting, wound care practice, and blood draws.

Furthermore, Tonks is used for restraint, anatomy, bandaging, and splinting, as well as physical exam practice.

Lugnut, is instrumental in learning about physical exam practice, kitten/neonatal care, and restraint.

“My favorite pet in Ag is PC’s cat because Lugnut is so sweet, and it is so comforting to have animals at school because sometimes school is stressful,” Catherine Caragine (’19) said.

Not only do her animals play an important role in her lessons to her Ag students, but they are also used for comfort for her students.

Numerous furry creatures live in Ag as well. There is a ferret named Gismo, a chinchilla named Lasagna, and a bird with the classic name Oliver. There are also two rabbits: the black and white rabbit is called Tux, and the golden brown rabbit is called Peanut.

“The personalities of all the animals varies,” PC said.

The building is also home to a guinea pig named Samoa and a hedgehog named after the famous actor Shia Labeouf. The guinea pig is very sweet, but the hedgehog is very timid and is taking a while to warm up to the Ag staff and students.

There is also Doggy Day Care offered in Ag, where the students take care of and offer services for the dogs brought to the building. This is an open service to the community, teachers, and students on Tuesdays from 6:45 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

For students, the program is ten dollars, for teachers, it is 15 dollars, and for the community, it is 20 dollars.

Doggy Day Care also offers different types of grooming services with varying prices depending on the dog.

To register your pet, there is an application that must be filled out, along with state and program requirements about the different shots needed. All the dogs must be fixed or neutered.



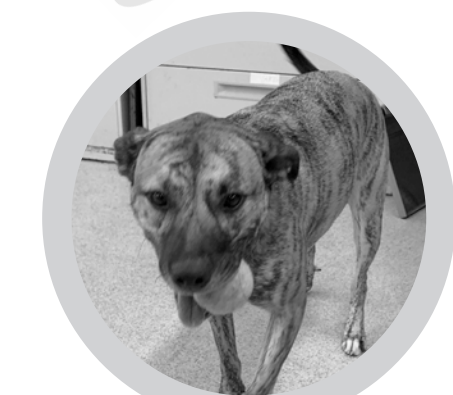
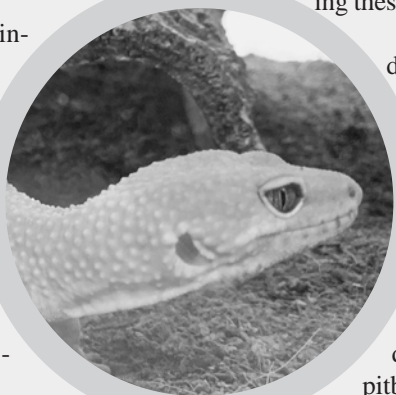
Many different reptile species live in the Ag building, including turtles, a tortoise, geckos, and snakes.

The four red-eared slider turtles are named Leonardo, Donatello, Michelangelo and Raphael, after the famous cartoon *The Ninja Turtles*. The Russian tortoise’s name is Shawn Jr. The leopard geckos’ names are Big Guy and Little Guy. Cornelia and Fast Ed are the names of the snakes.

“The turtles are food hounds and the ferret is very loving. The tortoise enjoys chilling in his pond, while the rabbits differ in personalities,” Mrs. Porter-Collins (PC), Agriscience teacher, said.

Unfortunately, the two dumpy tree frogs have not been given names.

In the springtime, the Ag program also breeds Mexican water dragons and axolotls.



# Teacher Talk

Column by Mr. Stone

When asked to write a short article about myself, my first thought was dread. I am not much for talking about myself, but I do think that it is important for students to get to know their teachers on some level. If we are going to build a strong community at Westhill, we cannot all be strangers. So here it goes.

Depending on who you talk to, people know me as Scott (it is okay for students to know my first name, just do not use it), Mr. Stone, Coach Stone, or Lieutenant Stone.

I have been teaching social studies at Westhill for almost five years. I have also been coaching lacrosse and football here for almost ten years. Way before that, that I was a student-athlete here as well.

When not in school, I am an Infantry Officer in the Army National Guard, which sometimes pulls me out of the building for periods of time.

Those are just the things I do for work; they are but a few of my many identities that also include husband, dog dad, skier,

traveler, and amateur lumberjack. Just ask the Tobins.

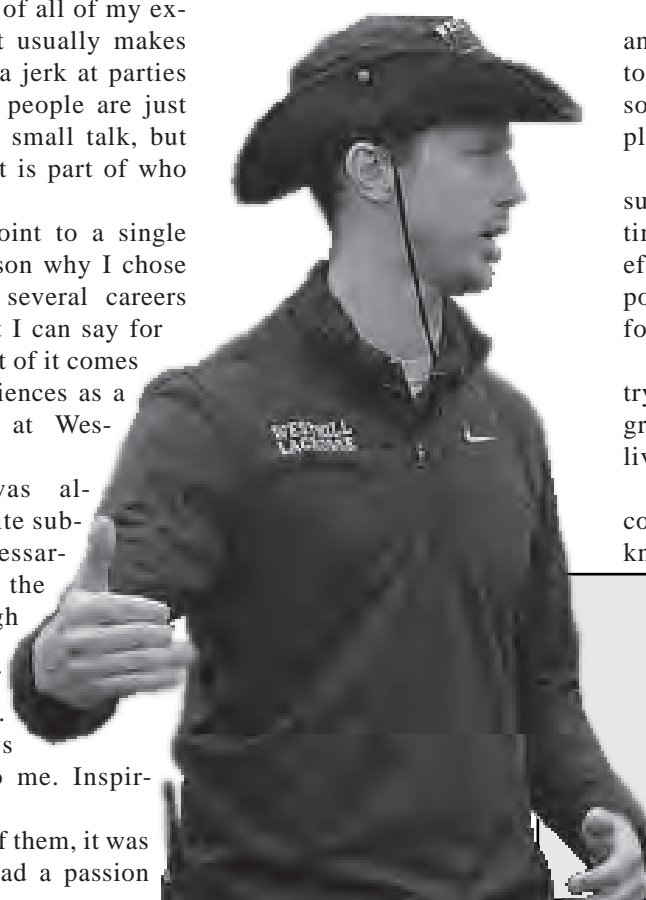
For me, it is important to not define myself by my career or what I do to pay my bills, but by the sum of all of my experiences. That usually makes me sound like a jerk at parties when innocent people are just trying to make small talk, but then again, that is part of who I am too.

I cannot point to a single moment or reason why I chose to pursue the several careers that I have, but I can say for certain that a lot of it comes from my experiences as a student-athlete at Westhill.

History was always my favorite subject—not necessarily because of the material, though I did love it, but because of the teachers. They always seemed real to me. Inspiring even.

For many of them, it was not that they had a passion

for their subject, it was that they had passion.



Even as a ninth grade history teacher now, I remember very little of my own ninth grade history class, but I remember my teacher, Mr. Harris.

Similarly, playing football and lacrosse sparked my desire to coach athletes and to lead soldiers. Again, it was the people, and it was the process.

We did not have a lot of success on the field during my time here, but it was the team effort, camaraderie, and the opportunity for leadership that I found appealing.

These are all values that I try to bring to the lacrosse program here, and values that we live by in the military.

As a teacher, which is the context in which most of you know me, I try to apply what

I have said above about myself in my classroom. I really do not care too much if my students do not remember some of the finer points of the ninth grade world history curriculum at the end of the year (don't tell Dr. Forbes).

What is important to me is that they are inspired to be better people, better citizens, better leaders, and pick up some of the skills that they will need to be successful in that endeavour.

It is not ever about just one subject, one sport or one job. I am a better teacher because I am a coach, and I am a better soldier because I am a teacher.

I owe a lot of that to my time at Westhill, and hopefully I can use some of my experiences in each of these areas to inspire my students.

If you wish to nominate a teacher or wish to write for Teacher Talk, email us at:

[westwordwhs@gmail.com](mailto:westwordwhs@gmail.com)



## The Hungry Vikings

Column by Maura Johnston, Mary Leydon & Alexandra Lazo

### Elm Street Diner

Service: ★★★★★  
Taste: ★★★★★  
Ambiance: ★★★★★☆

The three Vikings ventured to the opposite side of their homeland in search of the place that all the other Vikings spoke so highly of. Between Elm Street and Halloween Street, they spotted their desired location: The Elm Street Diner. They walked into the restaurant and were seated immediately.

After being given menus, the Vikings were overwhelmed with what seemed like millions of options, ranging from entrees to desserts.

Customers can choose from the vast amount of items listed on the menu or opt for even more secretive ones listed on their so-called "Instagram." The three Vikings agreed

upon sharing the pricey Reese's Peanut Butter Cup Milkshake that consisted of vanilla ice cream with globs of peanut butter, hot fudge, and peanut butter cups. On top was a slice of cake, a hostess cupcake, a sugar donut, a chocolate popsicle, and numerous Reese's cups.

To complete the presentation, the glass was coated with frosting and Reese's Pieces. They devoured the shake and were full after only a few bites and sips of the masterpiece.

The Picky Viking ordered the breakfast burrito substituting bacon for the chorizo. This burrito was a tortilla stuffed with bacon, pico de gallo, avocado, scrambled eggs, and pepperjack cheese, with a side of

home fries.

The Picky Viking was only able to eat half because of how full she was from the milkshake.

However, the half she was able to eat was delicious. There was a perfect ratio of ingredients that blended beautifully together. The home fries were cooked to a perfect crisp and well-accompanied her meal.

The Hangry Viking came storming into the diner, angry and hungry as always. She immediately requested a glass of water and the Greek omelette. Inside the omelette laid feta cheese, tomatoes, onions, and spinach.

As The Hangry Viking's dish was served, she was pleas-

antly surprised to find that crispy home fries surrounded it. She could not finish her meal because, as expected, the dish was massive.

The Hangry Viking left satisfied, knowing that her food was reasonably priced for its size and great taste.

THE Viking was excited to feast on a warm breakfast upon being seated. She ordered the french toast with bananas and strawberries and a side of fries to dip in the milkshake.

After having a sip of the milkshake, she was so full that by time the fries came out, she did not have the stomach to eat them.

Unfortunately, THE Viking's french toast was not as

warm as expected and had little flavor. The strawberries were fresh, but the bananas tasted as though they had been sitting next to onions.

THE Viking would have left very disappointed if not for the unique milkshake that impressed her. Luckily, the staff and milkshake made her experience a pleasant one.

As the Vikings boarded their ship to set sail on their next adventure, they all agreed they would return to Elm Street Diner. The numerous unique options on the menu left them wanting to try more, and the service caused them to leave the restaurant with a smile. The restaurant is suitable for people of varying taste palates.



# Recognizing troops of the past, present, and future

## Veteran's Day Efforts

JROTC students visited many classrooms in Westhill leading up to Veteran's Day, November 12, to gather names of students' relatives who had served in any branch of the military.

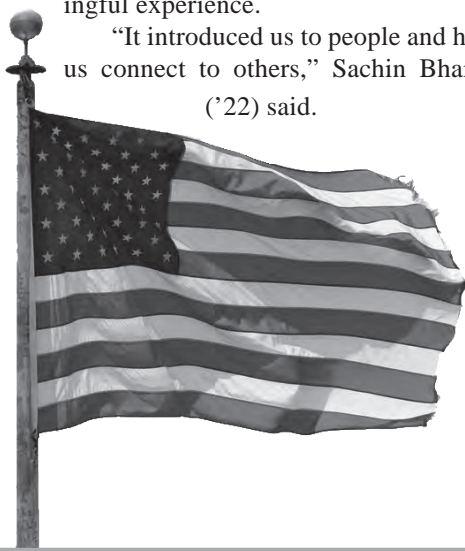
The students then made certificates to honor the veterans for their bravery and service for our country.

The students who received a certificate were encouraged to give them to their family members to honor their service.

The person in charge of the activity was Sergeant Major, and he assigned new students to the program to execute the task.

"We asked the [freshmen] classes to try to recognize all the veterans that are part of the Westhill community. We wanted to honor them for Veterans' Day," Sergeant Major said.

Many new students felt it was a meaningful experience. "It introduced us to people and helped us connect to others," Sachin Bhardwaj ('22) said.



## Interview with a student with a parent in the military: Zach Ostroff ('21)

**The Westword (TW): Who in your family is currently serving in the army?**

**Zach Ostroff (ZO):** My father, Sergeant First Class Ostroff, Larry Ostroff, is currently serving.

**TW: How long has he been serving?**

**ZO:** He has been in the army for around eight years.

**TW: What is his position and where has he served throughout his career?**

**ZO:** He is a combat engineer and has been deployed twice to Afghanistan and Kuwait.

**TW: Do you think Veteran's day in America properly honors veterans?**

**ZO:** Veterans are properly honored on Veteran's day by most people, but it has become very commercial and to some, it just seems like another day off from

## Interviews with students planning to join the military:

**The Westword (TW): What made you want to join the military?**

**Kevon Mclean (KM):** I do not feel that college is for me. I think going into the military would be cool and I could also see the world, and have a job where it would not feel like I am going into work.

**TW: When did you decide that you want to go into the military?**

**KM:** I decided my freshman year.

**TW: Is there a specific branch you are planning to go into?**

**KM:** Yes, the army.

**TW: What morals do you think you need in order to serve?**

**KM:** Some important morals people need are to never give up, be fast, and learn from your mistakes.

**TW: Do you think enlisting is a way of respecting and appreciating veterans who formerly served?**

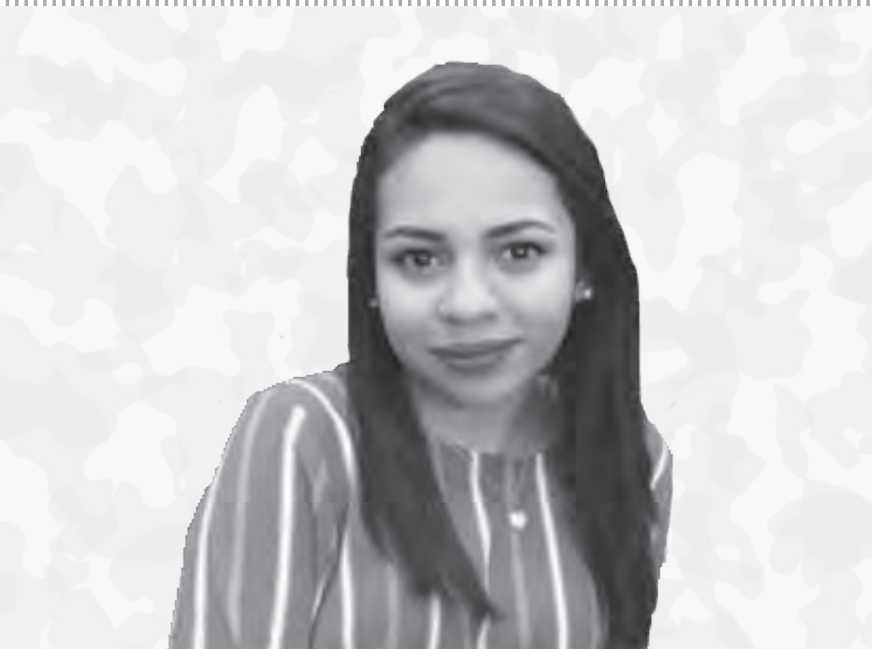
**KM:** Yes.

**TW: What would you say to a freshman or other student who is thinking about enlisting?**

**KM:** This program is the best way to start. It gives you a foot into the door of military life.



**KEVON MCELAN ('19)**



**ALLISON RUIZ ('19)**

**The Westword (TW): What have you enjoyed most about the JROTC program in Westhill?**

**Allison Ruiz (AR):** This program has helped me so much during high school. The discipline they teach you can actually be useful in your life.

**TW: When did you decide that you want to go into the military?**

**AR:** I decided in my junior year that I wanted to join the army.

**TW: What morals do you think you need in order to serve?**

**AR:** You need to be responsible. You have to be morally sure, and you have to be strong, because your family might not want you to join. You have to be strong-minded.

**TW: Do you think enlisting is a way of respecting and appreciating veterans who formerly served?**

**AR:** Yes, it is, because there is a legacy that they left after they retired, and someone else has to take over.

**TW: What would you say to a freshman or other student who is thinking about enlisting?**

**AR:** I would tell them to follow what they believe in. If they really want to serve this country, they should stand up for what they believe in, even if people tell them not to.

# Slay of the Month

## Instagram



shayla\_siljkovic



95 percent of the time, I am running late to something, and 100 percent of that time, it is because I am picking an outfit to wear. My love for fashion is not something that began in high school, it is something that I have always had.

From the age of five, I was changing my outfits constantly and wearing three bags on each arm to match my sparkly shoes. I can honestly say that there has never been a time in my life where I did not care about my style or fashion.

At school, I will admit that most days, I get lazy, and am not

in the mood to wear the edgier pieces I own. This is where my comfortable pieces get their money's worth.

One of my go-to outfits include workout pieces from Nike or Lululemon with Nike Air Force 1's and a baggy Brandy Melville sweatshirt.

Another staple in my closet is my sweatpants, paired with a boyfriend-fit jean jacket and sneakers, so I can make myself look more presentable while still being comfortable.

When I need to put more effort in my look, I usually pick pieces based on a certain theme I

am going for. Finding my inspiration usually takes a lot of time on VSCO, Instagram, and Pinterest.

There are tons of bloggers and influencers in the social media world that most people can identify with when it comes to what they want to see themselves in.

Based on those pictures and after going through my closet, I choose items that resemble what I am going for and base everything off of that.

Right now, I often coordinate my clothes around a chunky sweater from one of my favorite stores, Ruby & Jenna, or my Dr. Martens.

Especially during the colder months, it is difficult to want to look fashionable and still stay warm. So, having key pieces and accessorizing them is my go-to method.

I can completely change my look using dainty gold jewelry and tons of stacked rings. Doing this is probably my favorite part of getting ready, because those details are the ones that differentiate me from everyone else.

The accessories people use can tell a lot about them and what trends they connect with. Sunglasses and shoes have allowed me to express myself the most,

and I use them to make the same outfits look completely different.

Getting to do this has always been something I look forward to. Seeing other people and their style has always been helpful for me. There is always something new to try and new ideas are being showcased daily by people I see on the street or models in catalogs.

Fashion and how I represent myself is something I have always valued and I am so excited to see what pieces I will be adding to my closet soon.

Photos contributed by **Shayla Siljkovic**  
/ Contributor.



# ARTIST OF THE MONTH: Giselle Estevez

**The Westword (TW): What first made you interested in art?**

**Giselle Estevez (GE):** A TV show [I watched] when I was little called *Avatar the Last Airbender*. I just drew all the characters. When I was little I always had the inclination to draw. Then, it kind of exploded because I liked the show so much. I just started drawing these little anime people and loved doing that. Eventually, I drew so much that my parents would talk to me about it saying, "you know, you can do that as a job." I was shocked.

**TW: Are your parents supportive of your plans?**

**GE:** Yeah. My dad was a little shaky at first because he did not

know if you could be successful as an artist because of the "starving artist" struggle. But that is not really a thing anymore. If you work hard and do what you want to do, and really push for something that you want, then it is totally doable.

**TW: Do you think you have improved since then?**

**GE:** Obviously, yes. Besides classes here, I did not think of it as learning; I just saw it as fun. I used to watch videos to help me improve. It is more like if the teacher were to say, "I am going to teach you point perspective," I would take that principal and put it into something I want to make. It was like fun learning.

**TW: What is your favorite me-**

**dium to work with?**

**GE:** I like pencils, just regular graphite pencils, and watercolor a lot.

**TW: Are there pieces of work you have made that you are most proud of?**

**GE:** Yes, they are usually little cute ones that have good color.

**TW: Is there any specific message you want to convey with your art or is it more of a personal hobby?**

**GE:** Well, it used to be a personal hobby. Then, I realized that I could use it to talk and influence people. When I am older, I want to make a show, not for little kids, but for teenagers.

**TW: Do you see yourself pro-**

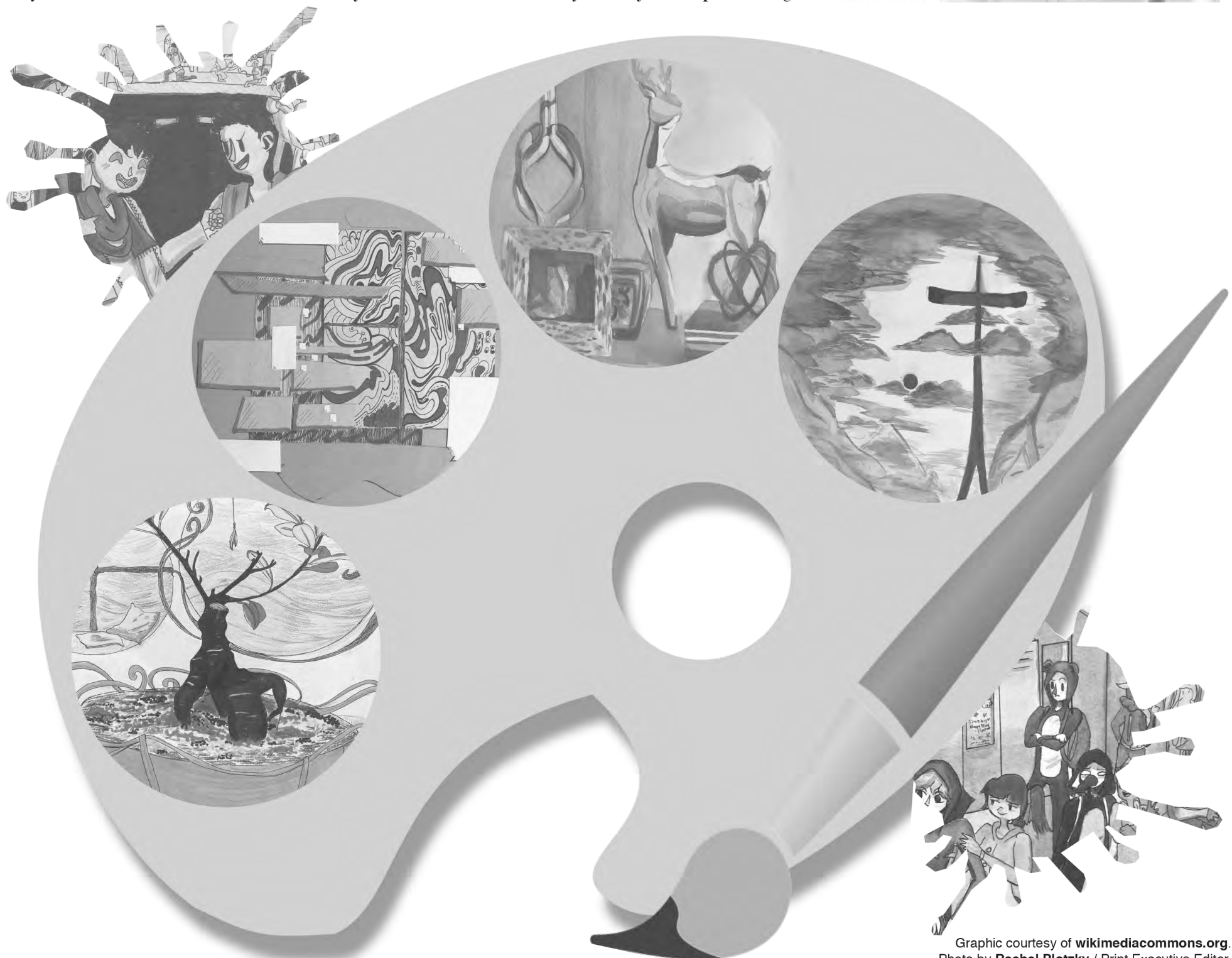
**gressing to art school or even a career in art one day?**

**GE:** Yeah, definitely. [I am] aiming for a top animation schools. The School of Visual Arts (SVA) is the third best [animation school in the country] and is in New York City, which is kind of perfect. It is pretty hard to get in, but I am going to try.

**TW: How has Westhill shaped your experience with art?**

**GE:** I would not say Westhill, it is more Ms. Moncure, she is the one teacher [that really shaped me]. I thought my work was great, and then she showed me a bunch of different new things. I never thought about the ele-

ments in my art and what makes it look good. [She taught me] how to make better and more concise art that had more thought in it and was not all over the place like how it was before.



# Westhill student begins rapping career

**Danielle Gleaton**  
Staff Writer

Anthony Huertas ('19) never expected to join a music group. However, he would not change a thing. Nearly a year ago, Huertas and his friends created the group TBG and it has become more recognized within Westhill since then.

Their songs became popular because they were recognized in the community for their bravery of being a high school rap group. TBG's age makes them more relatable to other high school students listening to their music.

During the summer of 2017, Huertas met the first members of TBG.

"Nyah and my friend Der-

ek started rapping together. My friend and neighbor Shamar hung out with me every day that summer and eventually, Nyjah came over to chill with us and that was how we met. They asked me to tag along to a recording session and we have been chilling ever since," Huertas said.

"It all happened so fast. I did not even expect to fall in love with music this much. TBG exceeded my expectations and because of the amount of time it caused us to spend together, it made us closer," Huertas said.

Growing up, Huertas constantly listened to music. Some of his earliest memories include music being played at barbecues and around his family.

"When I was growing up, I loved Timbaland and Linkin Park. In middle school, I even went through an EDM phase," Huertas said.

Starting a rap group in high school is both as difficult and random as it would seem.

"The first studio was not even a studio. It was a bedroom. Before we even got near a studio, it was literally just a laptop and a snowball microphone. That is pretty much the SoundCloud artist starter-pack," Huertas said.

His history of music traces back to his early childhood. As a kid, he played the trumpet, the guitar and the drums but it never really stuck.

"In middle school, I would make beats on the desks and lunch tables with pencils. I think everyone went through that phase, not just the kids that would grow up and become artists. My mom eventually got me the Beats by Dre HP laptop so I could experiment with making beats and it is really helpful," Huertas said.

For him, the entire experience has been great but it had a bit of an unplanned beginning.

"I was not even supposed to even be on a song but they asked me to hop on a track and it went better than I thought it would,"

Huertas said.

"My proudest moment was all of the moments that happened because of our song 'Barnacles.' It got us [a lot] feedback from kids from all over Stamford. Kids at AITE and Stamford High were listening to us. We even performed it at a party last year," Huertas said.

An upsetting thing about producing music is when you put your blood, sweat and tears into a project and it does not get the same energy back from the fanbase.

For Huertas, the great part of working with friends is that everyone can be there for one another.

"We have been through a lot together. Those guys are my family and we are all connected to each other," Huertas said.

What started out as just a few friends recording in a bedroom, trying to produce hits is now a 14 member band who plan to keep on expanding.

"Big things are coming November, so be on the lookout," Huertas said.



**IN IT TOGETHER** Pictured above is the TBG band. They are hoping to promote their music throughout Westhill.

Photo contributed by TBG / Contributor.

## Movie review: *Bohemian Rhapsody* falls short

**Shaira Sunbeam**  
Reporter

*Bohemian Rhapsody* is the film biography of Queen's lead signer, Freddie Mercury. It shines a light on how the group came to be and their journey to stardom.

The film proves to be a bittersweet cinematic journey. Although it allows the audience to experience the evolution of Queen, it is also restrained and in many ways, cliché.

Many watchers were prepared to be introduced to a whole new side of Freddie Mercury. However, no matter how beautifully Rami Malek played the lead singer, the aftertaste of the unimaginative cinematography left some fans wanting to return their ticket.

It felt as though there was a checklist screenwriter Anthony McCarten and director Bryan Singer were following. The story of an auspicious band that becomes famous out of nowhere, check. The beloved frontman becomes egotistical and turns to drugs to deal with the crippling fame, check. The inevitable break up of the band and then the last 'hurrah' when they reunite, check.

They also did not focus as much on Mercury's sexuality. Many were expecting to finally understand his truth, but were left disappointed with only minor hints.

Paul Prenter, played by Allen Leech is the chosen villain. From the beginning,

the audience is meant to be wary of him, as he introduces Mercury to then promiscuous lifestyle of homosexuality. Jim Hutton, played by Aaron McCusker, is seen as the hero who tamed Mercury.

The music was the main focal point of the story, and pulled together the rest of the scenes. Fans appreciated seeing how the band created hits such as "Bohemian Rhapsody."

Queen's fearless attitude towards creating music and their energized interaction with the audience is what made them so iconic. However, the last 20 minutes of Queen performing for Live Aid, was a waste of screen time.

Also, key moments in Mercury's life were changed to make for a more ironic effect. Mercury announced his HIV/AIDS diagnosis to his fellow bandmates prior than releasing it to the public, but he did not say it right before the Live Aid show in 1985.

Also, many were expecting to get to see more footage regarding how Queen acted behind closed doors. Instead, fans had to watch a 20 minute clip of a show that anyone can watch on YouTube.

*Bohemian Rhapsody* was meant to show a new side of Queen and a new side of Freddie Mercury; not just the Hollywood approved version. Fans wished to see Mercury's personality showed more clearly and more interaction with the band

members.

Most people have a good idea of what Mercury's life was like and who Queen was. Even for those who have no clue who the group was, they are bound to recognize one or two iconic songs.

However, many fans left the theater

still not knowing details of their private lives. The movie was marketed to be a tell-all of Queen, but not much else was told.

All things considered, I would not give *Bohemian Rhapsody* a great rating, but its amazing cast, and two hours of great music made it watchable.



**WE WILL ROCK YOU** The original band was composed of (from left to right) Brian May, Freddie Mercury, John Deacon, and Roger Taylor.



# Album Review: Takeoff takes off with new music

**Myra Perez**  
Reporter

Kirshnik Khari Ball, known as Takeoff, is a popular American rapper. He is best known as a member of the hip hop group Migos, Quavo and Offset.

Takeoff recently released he decided to release his first solo album, *The Last Rocket*. The introduction starts off with a countdown to a launch, and then leads into Takeoff rapping.

The album's first song is "She Gon Wink." This song is most likely to be found on a party playlist because it is a song everyone can dance to.

During the next song in the album "None to Me," he raps about how fame and money can change people over time, and how fame does not mean as much to him as it does to other people.

He also discusses how he is not a materialistic person, something he is very proud of.

In the following song "Vacation," Takeoff tells the story of his past travels and how he is now able to go to places he never could before.

In the next song, "I Remember," listeners learn more about Takeoff's early life. He raps about his life before becoming an artist, and the things he did when he was younger.

The song allows listeners to get a better understanding of who he was before he was in the spotlight.

Pitchfork.com reviewed this album as

"revealing more of his personality through a diverse set of strongly rapped songs... for the first time listeners are starting to see him not only as a solo artist, but who he is as a solo artist."

Throughout the next song "Lead the Wave," Takeoff raps about his originality, and all the music he creates.

On the following song, "Soul Plane," Takeoff sings about his success and the wealth he has created for himself.

Although this is his first solo album, he explains that he can do just more than just rap.

Takeoff shocked his listeners with his range of vocal abilities. Many listeners found this to be quite surprising.

The album art is also very unique. It is colorful, and the vivid art shows a cartoon version of him on a rocket. The art shows the overall space theme throughout the album.

As a whole, this album is enjoyable because it had major differences from any other traditional rap album.

Although there are songs on the album that talk about his wealth, he discusses the negative impacts money has had on him and people around him.

Unlike other rap albums, listeners will find that this album does not have as many features as most top hip hop albums do. This is better, because listeners get to see how different his music style is from others.

I would recommend this album to any individuals who want to listen to something



**SOMETHING NEW** Takeoff's new eye catching cover art for his individual album.

Photo from @yrntakeoff on Instagram.

upbeat and exciting.

However, many of the songs in the album have explicit language, so younger children should not be encouraged to listen to his album.

Overall, this is a great album

because of the production, art, and lyrics that portray Takeoff's individuality and creativity. Fans and listeners are looking forward to any future individual work.

## How comedy has changed over the years

**Kelly Fox**  
Feature Editor

Comedians often walk a thin line between appropriate and offensive jokes.

Comedy has evolved tremendously throughout the decades. Today, comedians are making jokes that could not have been made just a decade ago.

Time periods and trends determine what comedians include in their sets. For example, LG-BTQ rights can now be spoken about more openly during bits.

In the 1990s, comedians who were open members of the LG-BTQ community were immensely criticized and unaccepted by many. Current talk show host, Ellen Degeneres, made a huge step towards change when she came out on the cover of *TIME* magazine in 1997.

The cover of the magazine was her picture with the title "Yep, I'm Gay." Readers loved how her humor still managed to radiate

even with such a touchy subject.

Degeneres then went on to speak with multiple talk show hosts, including Oprah and Diane Sawyer.

According to celebrity news website, *newnownext.com*, Degeneres received a tremendous amount of backlash for her decision, with companies pulling their advertisements and stations refusing to work with her.

In the end, Degeneres finally booked the *Ellen Show*. Watchers saw that she was still the same lovable person she was before. This only gained her more respect in the end.

Today, sexuality is commonly a topic of humor for comedians in both stand-up and television.

This is extremely different from past decades where sexuality was deemed inappropriate to publicly discuss.

Similarly in the 1970s, British comedians were known to make offensive "poof jokes" that sometimes mocked gay people.

Another way comedy has progressed is certain words no longer being banned. For example, the word "pregnant" was highly controversial, and could not be asked on television or radio.

According to *thechicagotribune.com*, in the early 1950s, *I Love Lucy* was one of the first comedic day shows to feature a pregnant woman. Since the characters could not actually say the word "pregnant," they were forced to use euphemisms such as "expecting."

The sitcom using a pregnancy in their storyline broke boundaries in comedy and television. *I Love Lucy* went about this topic in a sweet way that kept people entertained, which helped the controversy die down.

Also according to *thechicagotribune.com*, curse words were never used in comedy segments. Profanity was censored from jokes in television and movies until the late 1960s to early 1970s.

Nowadays, swear words are

heard constantly and comedians are not afraid to incorporate them in their jokes.

"I feel like comedy has adapted to societal norms and platforms which play a major part in it. I feel like for comedy to be funny, it has to be relevant, and all forms of comedy have that aspect of finding a way to be relevant when the times are always changing," Samuel Essinfeld ('19) said.

Modern technology such as YouTube and social media have been fundamental to comedy evolving. These platforms allows for comedian's jokes to be heard by a much larger audience.

"[Listeners] are not really paying attention, but when they hear a certain trigger word, like 'abortion' or 'suicide,' they pop up and get offended, even though they have not actually been listening to the routine," Tiff Stephenson, an actress and comedian said about people in comedy clubs during her stand-up show.

It used to be that comedi-

ans could tell if they went too far based on the reaction of the crowd. Today however, people know they have crossed the line when a swarm of posts appear on social media.

Many jokes can be taken out of context and listeners jump to their own conclusions. This sometimes leads to outrage on social media platforms.

"Politics is always a go-to for comedians, it is easy and relatable. There is always something relevant to joke about," Ries Allyn ('19) said.

Comedians have to be careful about what they say, and create more responsible and politically correct comedy. If not careful, it can quickly lead to controversies.

Comedy has changed tremendously throughout the years, but individuals still go out of their way to listen to what comedians have to talk about. Whether or not the listeners agree, hopefully they get a laugh out of it.

# Steps to improve sleep

**Alexandra Watkinson**  
Online Executive Editor

Different sleeping habits can be beneficial towards one's overall health. Sleep is far too imperative to one's health to not receive the proper attention.

For some people, sleeping can be difficult. The pressures of everyday life can weigh heavily upon people, causing them to be unable to sleep.

"Current events, school, and college applications keep me up at night," said Kevin Harrington ('19).

However, it is important to get

proper sleep, as it reinforces memories, speeds up metabolism, ensures good health, judgment skills, and more.

While getting proper sleep can be difficult, there are different habits that can be taken on to ensure that a good night's sleep is achieved.

Many choose to take melatonin pills to tire themselves. Melatonin is a hormone naturally made by the body which regulates a person's sleep. A melatonin supplement about an hour before bed helps people fall asleep faster, ensuring one gets the proper eight hours of good sleep.

Lighting a candle, spraying a room

spray, or diffusing an essential oil can lead to falling asleep easier.

In a study done for the *Journal of the Medical Association of Thailand*, it was found that lavender oil was relaxing to participants, causing a "significant decrease of blood pressure, heart rate, and skin temperature."

While lavender is well known for its sleep aid properties, having any relaxing scent ruminating through a room can lead to sleep. Recommended scents include vanilla, valerian, jasmine, and any scent that puts one in a good mood.

According to a study conducted by sleep.org, run by the National Sleep Foundation, one's bedroom should be between 60 and 67 degrees for ideal sleep. Also suggested that one wears socks to sleep, which "will help dilate your blood vessels faster and push your internal thermostat to a more ideal setting."

Weighted blankets have been shown to help those with insomnia dramatically.

According to the *Journal of Sleep Medicine and Disorders*, when people slept with weighted blankets, "sleep time increased...participants liked sleeping with the blanket, found it easier to settle down to sleep and had an improved sleep, where they felt more refreshed in the morning."

Additionally, using a phone too

much before bed can be detrimental to one's sleep, as the type of light used to light the screen activates the brain.

"I struggle to fall asleep because I use my phone until really late at night," said Veronica Misiak ('20).

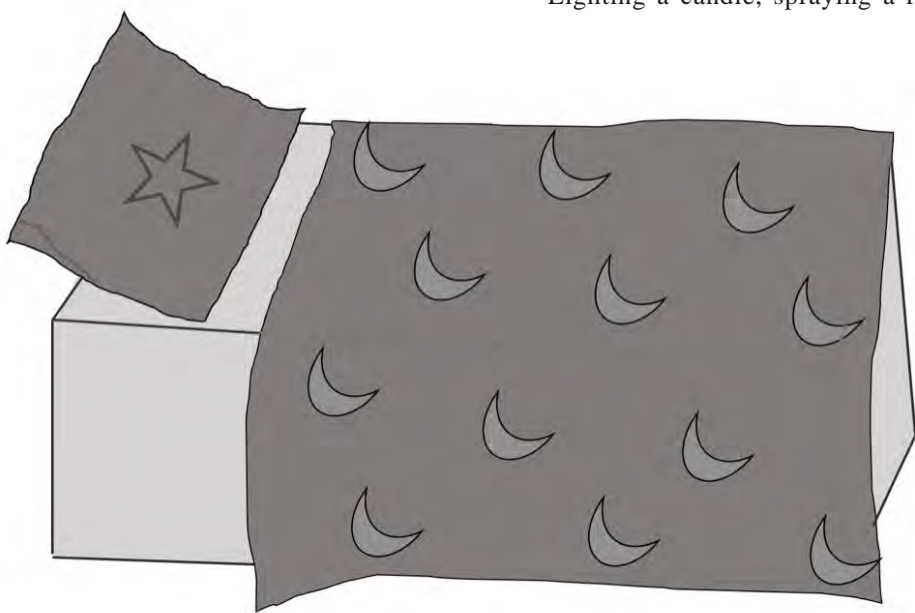
Instead, journaling about the day or doing some light reading can be very beneficial to helping someone fall asleep.

Taking a warm shower or bath about an hour before bed relaxes and calms the body. However, ensuring that an adequate amount of time is left between leaving the shower and going to bed is crucial, as the body needs to cool down between the shower and sleep.

Unfortunately for those with a sweet tooth, eating foods with large quantities of sugar can change sleep patterns. According to sleep.org, "the more sugar that you eat during the day, the more often you are going to wake up in the middle of the night."

Avoiding eating sugar, especially later in the day will benefit the individual when trying to fall asleep.

High school students should take their sleep very seriously. There is a reason that everyone always says eight hours is needed. Getting a substantial amount of sleep can lead to overall better physical and mental health.



Graphic by **Ryka ChandraRaj** / Creative Director.

## Why Thanksgiving is so important..

"I spend a lot of time with my family without any distractions and we remember all the things to be thankful for in life."

—Leslie Caltenco ('19)

"It is a time where everyone remembers to give thanks, and realize all the good things they have in life."

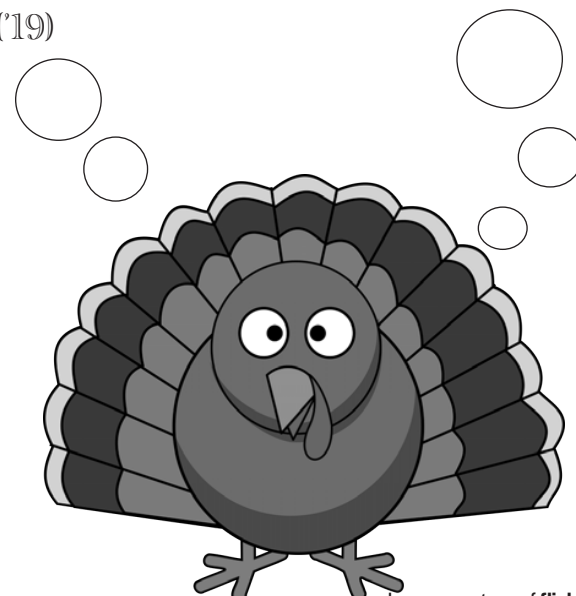
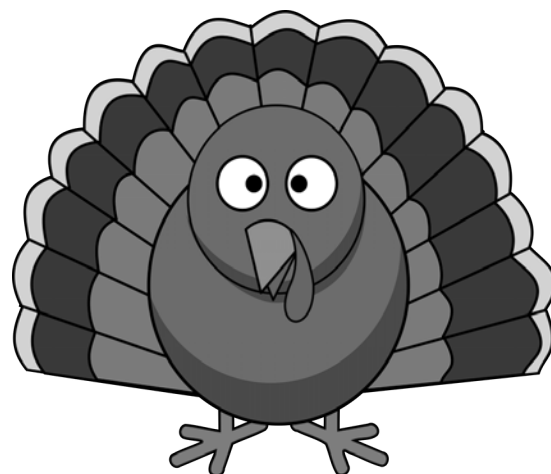
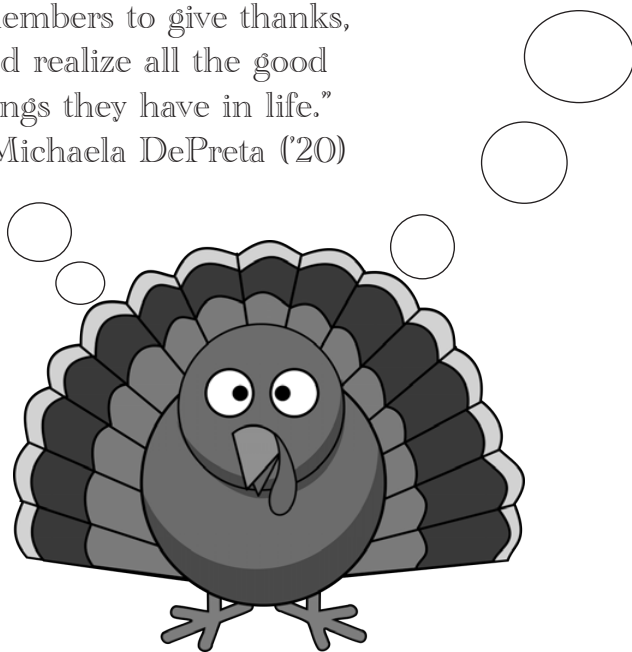
—Michaela DePreta ('20)

"It is an invigorating holiday where I am able to spend time with most of my family, and get to be grateful for the plethora of proclivities, people, and life itself."

—Milton Hall Jr. ('19)

"It is a time where people appreciate the things around them and spend time with friends and family."

—Casey Bean ('19)





# Spot the difference: Rinaldi's office

Before

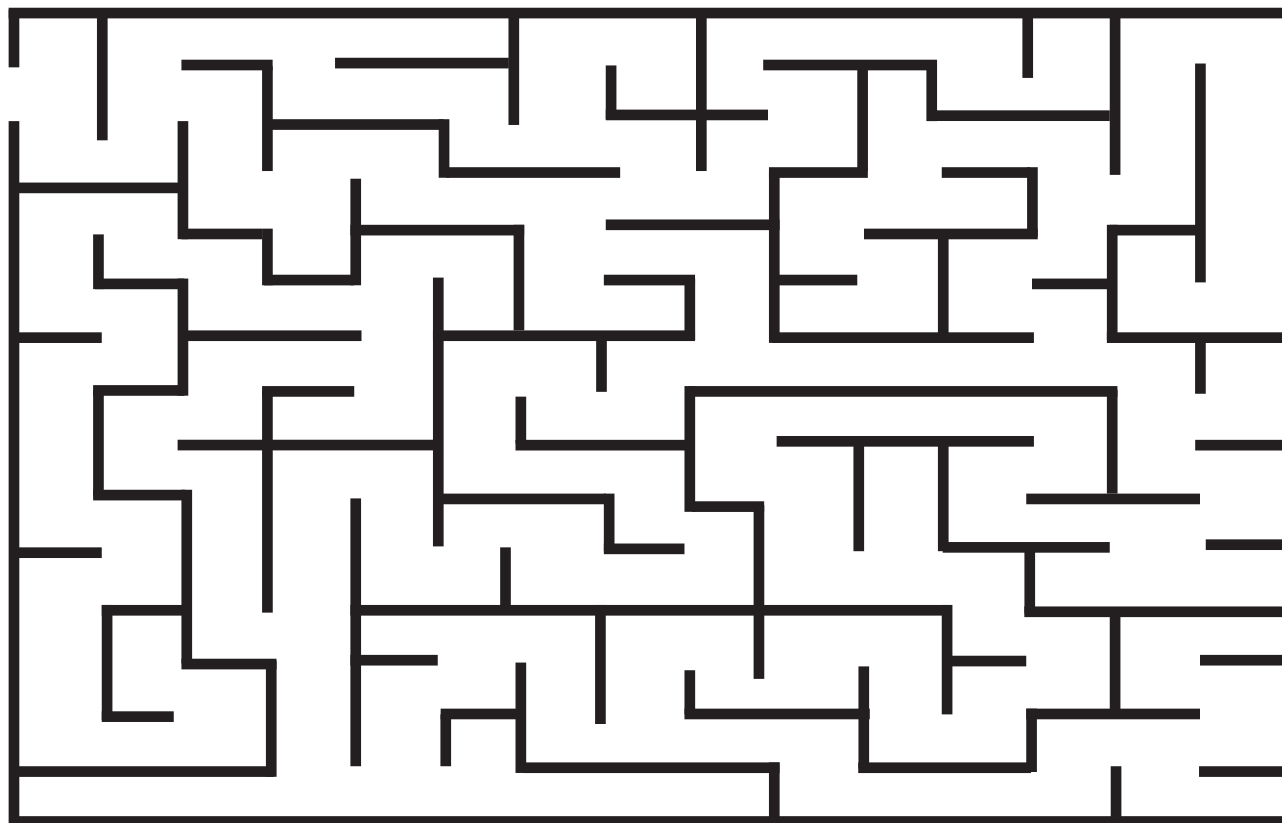
After



Carefully examine the pictures. Then, spot and circle the five differences between them.

Photos by Rachel Plotzky / Print Executive Editor.

## Help guide the family to the feast!



Images courtesy of flickr.com.

A sloth has 10 neck vertebrae, which is three more than a giraffe has. McDonald's once made bubblegum flavored broccoli. Theodore Roosevelt had a pet hyena. It has never rained in Calama, Chile.

# The outreach of Ruden Report

**Bella Vaccaro**

Staff Writer

The Ruden Report, run by Dave Ruden, is the only sports only website in Fairfield County. It covers everything regarding high school sports and their athletes.

It covers school's wins, losses, and highlights that had an impact on the ending score of the game or match.

High school games, interviews, and highlights are filmed and uploaded directly to multiple different social media outlets for instant access.

The Ruden Report has many social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube, The Ruden Report podcast, and The Ruden Report website.

The Ruden Report podcast invites players and coaches to speak about their upcoming games and season workouts. The listeners are interested in how the players are staying

in shape on and off the field.

The Ruden Report is meant to be an easy way to gain access to information regarding all Fairfield County sports news. For everyone who cannot attend the events, including parents, family members, or friends, the Ruden Report is constantly uploading coverage for all to watch, read, and listen.

"It is useful in that I provide a broad range of coverage," Ruden said.

One of the Ruden Report's main attractions is the Player and Team of the Week. This allows schools to vote for specific players and teams that showed determination and excellence in their game.

These teams and players are nominated through their coaches and Dave Ruden himself. Whoever wins the award receives a Ruden Report t-shirt, and a shout-out on the social media platforms.

This past fall season, girls vol-

leyball had multiple players nominated, and the varsity team. Many Westhill players are nominated for their skill and determination in their sport, and teachers see how hard the players work and they are more inclined to help them win.

"It got our team really motivated and everyone worked together to make sure everyone we knew voted," Madi Cortell ('19) said.

This motivated the team as a whole to work harder towards accomplishing their goal.

"The Ruden Report is a great idea and it motivates and encourages students to play to the best of their ability. It also creates a sense of unity and school spirit when our school rallies together to watch our students perform," Thomas Boccuzzi ('19) said.

Ruden Report is a well-known sports news outlet that gains a lot of attention.

This platform allows athletes to



gain more recognition and the opportunity to be scouted. College recruiters can view videos, pictures, and athlete's statistics being posted on the website.

They can then contact the high school athletes directly or through their high school. This is an efficient way for eager athletes to get their name out there and communicate with the people who bridge their high school and college sports careers.

According to dangwood.com, while Dave Ruden was a junior at Union College, he took many courses involving reading and creative writing. Throughout his college years, many instructors pushed him to write based on what he was passionate about, sports. Dave Ruden

has worked for many companies like CBS, *The New York Times*, and ESPN.

While working for the *Stamford Advocate*, he realized he had a great interest in high school sports.

"I have developed close relationships with the people I cover. There is nothing more satisfying than making a kid who will never play anything after high school feel special, or having someone tell me they have got my stories in their scrapbook," Ruden said.

The Ruden Report allows athletes and students alike to remain up to date on sports news. Dave Ruden has created the go to place for information on all high school sports in Fairfield County.

## The switch from fall to winter sports

**Maria Mirafuentes**

Staff Writer

Athletes who play sports in multiple seasons have had to learn to balance free time, school work, and practices. Playing any sport competitively takes up hours of hard work, so multi-sporters are often pushing their bodies twice as hard.

For those who play more than one sport, there is little time to prepare in between seasons.

After playing a full season in the fall, there is less than two weeks to prepare for the winter season. This proves to be very stressful for many athletes. These players get no time to take a break, and enjoy time away from the field.

Even in the two weeks before the upcoming season, they have to practice and train for tryouts.

These athletes are devoted to their sport, and most attend daily practices that are up to three hours. During the school year, it becomes very difficult balancing school work and athletics.

However, an upside to being multi-sporters is the respect that comes with it. Athletes are recognized for their hard work and determination.

If athletes want to play in college, it makes recruiters more interested in them. This determination gives multi-sport athletes a better opportunity to get signed.

"I really never have time in between sports, and to be honest I do not think I would know what to do with my free time. I am always so busy," Madi Cortell ('19) said.

Playing multiple sports helps athletes stay in shape all year round. Though many athletes find it difficult to balance school and sports, they always find a way to enjoy themselves.

"It does get hard always having practice and getting home late everyday all year around," Marcellous Bells ('19) said.

Playing multiple sports can also be a great college application booster, but the long seasons and hours can become mentally and physically exhausting.

There are many more fall athletes who play during the spring as well.

"When the football season ended, I went to the gym the next day and just worked on everything I forgot how to do for the basketball season. It is rough, but the opportunity and good things that come out of playing more the one sport are great," Tylon Cobbs ('19) said.

Athletes who play multiple sports are well aware of the choice they have made. They have come to terms with the long hours, harsh practices, and constant working out. These athletes have gained the respect of many within their teams and throughout the Westhill community.



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Visit our website [Lusheonline.com](http://Lusheonline.com)

**Westhill students with their ID**  
*will get \$3 milkshakes with*  
*the purchase of a meal every*  
*Monday through Friday*  
*from 2 p.m. - 5 p.m.*



# Ice hockey players battling it out in the cold

**Olivia Berni**  
Staff Writer

Ice hockey is a fast-paced, intense sport that requires incredible stamina, determination and persistence. Here at Westhill, ice hockey is provided for both boys and girls.

The boy's varsity team consists of members from both Westhill and Stamford High, while the girl's varsity teams contains members from Westhill, Stamford High, Trinity, AITE, and Staples in Westport.

The girl's Varsity season lasts from early November until early March while the boy's Varsity season lasts from early December until March. Both teams have the longest seasons out of all the sports offered at Westhill.

A long season comes with highs and lows. The Varsity girls endure the brutal cold because practices are often held outside at the Longshore Rink in Westport.

Outdoor practices take place throughout the entire season, forcing the girls to experience all of winter first hand.

Along with freezing outdoor practices, morning practices are common. Morning practices can start as early as 5:20 a.m.

Most girls have to wake up

as early as 3:50 a.m. Waking up at 6:30 a.m. is challenging for most students, so many find it hard to imagine having to wake up three hours earlier.

High school students, for the most part, are already sleep deprived, and taking away more of their sleep does not help. According to cfah.org, only about eight percent of high school students get enough sleep on an average school night.

One last aspect of the season is their constant practices. Sports teams practice often, but ice hockey players most often have to dedicate more time to practicing. The girls practice everyday: weekdays, mornings, weekends, holidays, and vacations. There is no decent break.

"Having such a long season can be challenging. It can be hard sometimes to balance school and hockey, along with everything else going on, but after playing together for so long, the team becomes really close and that makes the long season worth it," Abby Sotile ('19), girls captain, said.

Even though the season brings on a lot of hardships, there is a bright side. Being with a group of 20 people everyday for five months allows them to get to know

each other very well. It creates friendships and bonds that could not be found anywhere else.

"It just gives us more of a chance to bond with the team and more opportunities to improve," Peyton Reilly ('20) said.

The Varsity boys also have to experience the long, cold season. Although the boys do not practice outdoors, their practices are still often and rigorous. They too have to endure morning practices, and sometimes they will have a game or a second practice in that same afternoon.

"It affects my social life," Luke Graziano ('19) said.

Not only does the long season affect player's academic work, it stakes a toll on the player's social lives. From the start of the season until the end, the hockey team members can only really focus on two things: school and their sport.

With all their attention being directed to these two routines, it is hard to focus on other activities they enjoy besides hockey.

"Another positive side of [our] long season is the fact that it helps them stay organized. Having practice daily helps me organize

my time and keeps me in shape," Rachel Mensah ('20) said.

Overall, both ice hockey teams at Westhill contain people who must be dedicated to the sport. Although the season is the longest in the school, many positive aspects come along with it.



**KEEPIN' WARM** Boys ice hockey team smile for a group photo at Terry Conners Ice Rink.

Photo by **Jayden Lesser** / Photographer.

## Captains use their voices to increase spirit

**Tamar Bellete**  
Assistant Managing Editor

Captain's Council is a group made up of captains from all sports teams. This is the second year it has been in effect. They do not meet

a set amount of times per month, but they do come together for important events and fundraisers that are in the planning process.

The captains discuss many important events going on in the Westhill community regarding their teams and players. The Captain's

Council works with Westhill's Purple Pack to promote school spirit, especially when attending athletic events.

"It allows us to be involved in the athletic community," Nina Bakuradze ('19), volleyball captain, said.

The Council not only started to promote athletic events, but their main goal is to have the captains help their teams reach their fullest potential.

"It was surprising that some of [the captains] did not know each other. They are team captains in the same athletic program and school. They all have the same goal to do well in their season, but some of them did not even know [each other]. So, we wanted to bring them together. The biggest goal we had was to develop more unity among our different programs across all three seasons in order to build some leadership skills," Mr. Cerone, Athletic Director, said.

The Captain's Council promotes school spirit by picking the Captain's Council Game of the Week. Every week, the captains pick one home game to promote. The Purple Pack makes sure to help with this by coming to the game to loudly cheer on the Vikings.

"We usually look at all the home games

that week and month and then make sure that every team gets the same amount of games of the week," Grace Hansen ('19), soccer captain, said.

They believe this process of picking the game of the week is fair. Most of the time, the games have a significance to them, such as playing against city rivals Stamford High and Trinity.

Not only do they promote school spirit, but they can be seen doing numerous fundraisers to help the Westhill community, such as selling Pink Out shirts for the annual Pink Out football game. The Pink Out game is held every year, and is played to promote awareness for breast cancer, and raise money for research.

"It [helps] leaders come together to do good things like selling Pink Out shirts and donating the profits to the Bennett Cancer Center," Madi Cortell ('19), softball captain, said.

They promote their events during the morning and afternoon announcements, and also on social media. Follow them on Instagram @westhillcaptainscouncil to keep up with the latest news in the Westhill athletic community.

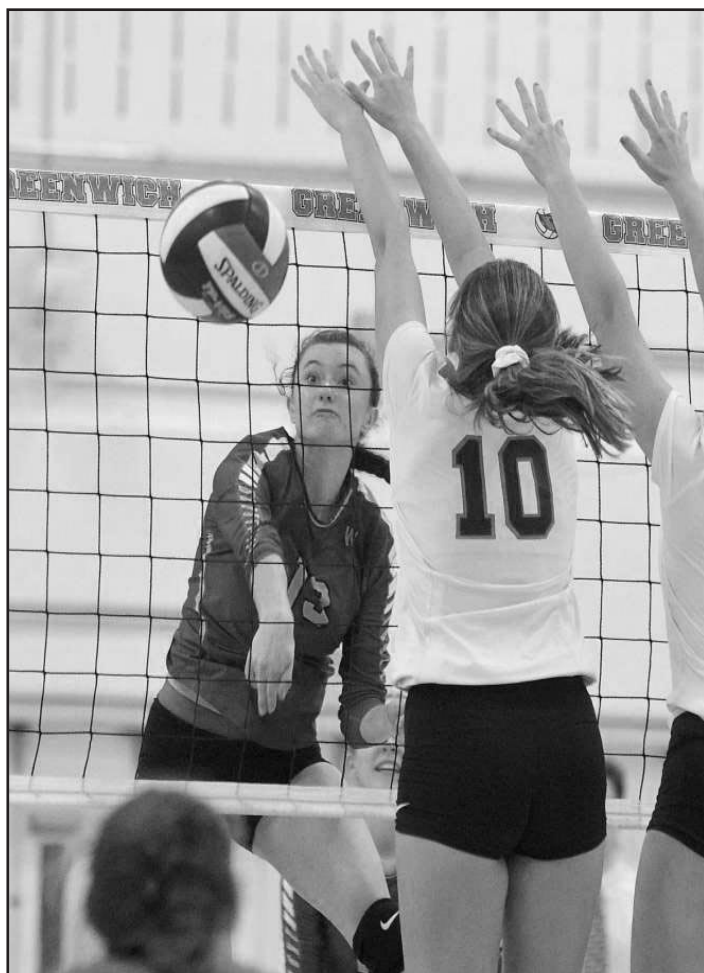


**STEP UP** Captains from all three seasons pose for a group picture wearing their new Captain Council shirts.

Photo by **Harrison Travaglino** / Photo Manager.



# Sachs is killing the game



**ON TOP OF IT** Sachs is positioned in the front row, so she is constantly going for kills.

Photo contributed by **Betsy Sachs** / Contributor.

**Kate Williams**  
Supplement Editor

*Betsy Sachs has exemplified the definition of hard work and determination. In true Viking style, she has not let any expectations or boundaries limit her career, making the varsity volleyball team as a freshman. A star athlete since the sixth grade, she has dedicated herself to volleyball for a countless number of hours, landing her the title of Female Athlete of the Month for November. The Westword took the time to talk to Sachs, and get an inside look into her volleyball career.*

**The Westword (TW):** When did you start playing volleyball?

**Betsy Sachs (BS):** I played for my middle school team starting in sixth grade.

**TW:** What peaked your interest in the sport?

**BS:** In middle school I wanted to play every sport they offered every season. I was an insanely tall sixth grader so the coach easily convinced me to do it.

**TW:** What position do you play and what does it entail?

**BS:** I am a middle hitter, so basi-

cally I block, hit, and serve.

**TW:** What is your favorite part about volleyball?

**BS:** Volleyball is simply a giant, super competitive game of keep-it-up. The six players on the court sacrifice their body so the ball does not hit the floor, and people can get really creative with plays.

**TS:** Who is the most important person in your volleyball career?

**BS:** My coach Marianna Linnehan. She believed in me even when I had no experience, and [she] is responsible for everything the team and I have achieved this season.

**TW:** What is the proudest moment in your career?

**BS:** One game against Greenwich I had 27 kills (sharp hits) which was my personal best by far. After this game, I was interviewed by a *GreenwichTime* reporter and was nominated for Ruden Report Female Athlete of the Week.

**TW:** When you are not doing volleyball, what is your favorite activity?

**BS:** After practice and games, I hang out with some of my teammates and together we "catch up

on schoolwork."

**TW:** What is your most memorable moment?

**BS:** I will never forget losing the last point in the state semifinal game against Amity. I looked around at the team and thought about how I will never be able to play with the seniors again.

**TW:** What are some of your strengths?

**BS:** I am not afraid to get set in big situations or make a mistake.

**TW:** Do you have any pre-game rituals?

**BS:** Before games, we go into the locker room to scream and dance really weirdly. It definitely wakes us up.

**TW:** Are you planning to play in college?

**BS:** I do not want to give up the sport any time soon, but for my position, I am no where near tall enough to play.

**TW:** What advice do you have for anyone looking to start playing volleyball?

**BS:** You do not have to be playing since you were six to be good. Try to play for a club team off season to get more experience.

# Young working his way to the top



**CATCH AND PASS** Young playing wide receiver and constantly being on the move with the ball.

Photo contributed by **Jakai Young** / Contributor.

**Rachel Plotzky**  
Print Executive Editor

*Jakai Young is a hard working football player who has trained relentlessly since third grade to be a great player. He is committed to being a leader and is highly motivated on the field. His determination throughout this football season has landed him the Male Athlete of the Month for this issue. The Westword sat down with Young to talk about his history with the sport and why he loves playing.*

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

**Jakai Young (JY):** I started because it was a family sport and my older brother played. I wanted to be like him, and I thought this would be a good way to.

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

**JY:** I play wide receiver and corner during the games.

**TW:** Have you always wanted to play these positions?

**JY:** No, when I was younger I always wanted to play quarter-

back and safety, but later realized I was better at wide receiver and corner.

**TW:** How do you think the team is doing so far this year?

**JY:** We are struggling a lot but I think that is because we have a lot of younger kids. However, I feel like it is a process and we are improving.

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

**JY:** The contact—the hitting part.

**TW:** Who is your favorite football team? Why?

**JY:** The Dallas Cowboys. It is also my family's favorite team. Football is big in my family.

**TW:** Will you continue to play football in the future?

**JY:** Yes, I plan on playing football in college.

**TW:** What colleges do you think you would want to play football for?

**JY:** Connecticut Central State University (CCSU) or Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU).

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

**JY:** I love the locker room experience and getting hype before games as a team.

**TW:** What individual goals do you have for football?

**JY:** I plan on cutting down on my mistakes, to stop dropping the ball, and [get better at] tackling in the games.

**TW:** Do you have any fears or issues that stem from football?

**JY:** Getting injured is my biggest fear especially since I have never gotten hurt from playing football. I have never missed one game due to being injured.

**TW:** What is your proudest athletic achievement?

**JY:** Going all FCIAC last year for football.

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

**JY:** I always eat Skittles or Starburst before every game. Also as a team we always run out on the field together which I like.

**TW:** Has this sport taught you any lessons?

**JY:** Football has taught me how to work with other people and how to be a leader. It has also taught me how to be patient.



# How winter sports prepare for their seasons

*The Westword* talked to multiple winter athletes about their upcoming winter season. *The Westword* was interested in how these players prepared for the season beforehand.



## ICE HOCKEY

**"Most of the boys played in a separate club team from August until now."**

**—Luke Graziano ('19)**



## WRESTLING

**"The wrestling team prepared with other wrestling clubs by playing other sports such as lacrosse and football."**

**—Kevon Mclean ('19)**



## SKIING

**"[Ski team] mostly worked on legs and core. The most important workouts are stair drills and a lot of squats."**

**—Reilly D'Onofrio ('20)**



## BASKETBALL

**"[Basketball team] worked out four times a week to make sure that they were in shape and ready for the season."**

**—Eli Stockman ('19)**



## GYMNASTICS

**"We started pre-season conditioning about two months ago. We met in the weight room two days a week, and did basic strength building and training."**

**—Lexi Shultz ('20)**

Interviews & photos by **Timothy McKeithen** / Reporter.

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