

The Westword

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

Marching Band places 1st at States

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THE HILL**

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**DIFFERENT MUSIC
GENRES**

The Westword

2019-2020 Staff

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Note from the Editors November 2019

Dear Readers,

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

Our Editorial this month analyzes social media's impact on increasing divisiveness within our community.

News covers the multiple community drives and the past October Issue's cover.

In Viewpoint, we consider if teachers should be paid based on student performance and welcome two new columns.

This issue, Special Report delves into the causes and effect of the California wildfires as well as federal funding and preventions.

This Supplement insert

shines a light on the world of surveillance including reasons for surveillance, social media's role, and technology's role.

En las noticias hablamos de la vida de Sofía Vergara, una celebridad que abraza su cultura y la muestra a través de sus actuaciones. Vemos como la música y cultura latinoamericana influye en la escena musical Americana.

Feature this issue highlights funny one-liners heard around Westhill and an interview with Luis Gil, the new security guard.

Limelight looks into the different genres of music and live versus recorded concerts.

In Sports, we discuss the Westhill girls' volleyball season and sit down with our Athlete of the Month, Maddy Bautista.

For more, visit 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 Chloe Giulini's mailbox in room 224, Direct Message (DM) us on Instagram @thewestword, or emailing us at westwordwhs@gmail.com.

Sincerely,
Chloe Giulini & Veda Bhalla
Editor-in-Chief & Executive Editor

Editorial Policy

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

The Editorial Board consists of Julia Afsary, Hailey Baloutch, Veda Bhalla, Lexi Boccuzzi, Mary Chobanyan, Emelynicole Chuco, Kristina DeLelle, Chloe Giulini, Michael Quinn McHale, Lucca Metzger, Micayla Roth, Elizabeth Watkinson, Marta Zach, Jason Zarilli, Mr. von Wahlde, and Mr. Wooley. The Editorial can be found on page 3.

Announcements

There are no announcements at this time.

Corrections

The Westword has no corrections at this time.

What's inside

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

Front cover contributed by **Westhill Marching Band**.
Back cover photos by **Sydney Eben** (top), **Izzy Nuzzo** (bottom left), & **Mr. Wyatt** (bottom right) / Photo Manager, Photographer & Contributor.

Combatting social media's divisiveness

It is evident to anyone living in the United States, or anywhere in the world, that our country is plagued by an unseen degree of divisiveness and polarization. The issue radiates from the top down, with public policy being blockaded by the barrier of partisanship, celebrities disputing over "political correctness" and adults within our communities lacking enough open-mindedness to understand their peers.

This antagonism is only compounded by the nature of social media as a platform, with algorithms that gear content based on a users preferences, creating echo chambers that promote divisions. It also creates the perfect environment for "trigger finger fights" with people being able to get into disputes that they would not normally in person due to it being so informal and digital. With our country's leaders suffering from polarization and falling victim to social media bitter justice wars, it is no surprise that teenagers would follow these politicians' suit and imitate their behaviors.

This change in communication through social media is nothing new. As language spread, people began to communicate and become more civilized. Education became more common in countries and as a result more people could read and write. People developed social norms and basic respect for communication and standards for behavior around each other. However, as technology advanced, the norms changed, and so did the manner in which we communicated with one another.

The birth of instant messaging brought upon the changes, and allowed people to speak with out consequence, hiding behind a screen and a user-name. For people who don't have the confidence to say things to someone face to face, instant messaging is a great way to communicate without the social pressure of having someone sitting right in front of them. However, it can also be an outlet for generalized harassment that wouldn't be said to someone's face, but rather behind their back or in the open through a phone.

The comfort of using an account behind a screen can allow people to abuse others, even if they could never do so in person. Without the fear of consequences, people tend to have "trigger fingers" and jump on a topic they may be ill informed on. Anyone can just say anything without the fear of embarrassment and act without thinking. The screen acts as a barrier, protecting those who hide behind it, afraid of what

would happen if they acted the same way in person. While the mutual respect that was expected in the past remains for real face to face conversations, however as for online, this expectation of respect has virtually diminished entirely, creating a free for all.

"Social media has a negative impact on the conversation. One of the ways we see this is through the lack of confrontation that comes from the words we type. We are not as wary of the importance of our words and how it can affect others. The also see this through the use of the term 'Keyboard Warrior'. Another way how social media has deteriorated conversation is from the bubbles people create for themselves. People can block or add sites or

gram account to remind students to pick up a copy. One student commented that the cover looking "hella white." Within the next five hours, over 230 comments racked up. Many students agreed with the original commenter that the post seemed to lack any diversity while others defended the principle news is news, and *The Westword* can not "create" images to portray the school in a better light.

Purple Pack, the Westhill athletics fan section, who were the students featured on the cover, also commented that they encourage all students to attend games and all information is posted publicly on their Instagram. *The Westword* decided not to delete the post but instead appreciated

aspect I found especially troubling: this idea of some students being unable to speake for their race, because they are "white washed." Simply put: society, will never "see" students of color that way, to their disadvantage. You don't get white privilege by association," English teacher and SAGA advisor Ms. Tobin said.

This incident was a testament not only to the value of this conversation but also to how much this issue affects us everyday. As teens raised on social media, we are emulating the behavior of our leaders and letting the heat of our frustrations fuel our speech. We need to grow beyond this epidemic plaguing our country and learn the value of honest and considerate dialogue and the change that

contemplate what steps we need to take to move on and prevent people from feeling as though they are not being represented and that they are unwelcomed from happening again as well as how we can improve our community relations as a whole.

The Westword cosponsored a forum in the days following helping us to reach conclusions and have civil discourse regarding the issues brought up on the post. This was hoseted in addition to a meeting held by the Multicultural Student Union on the day after the incident. Through the open dialogue at these two events, various conclusions were reached about how to resolve this divisiveness in our community.

In an effort to prevent self-imposed segregation, The Purple Pack should continue to encourage all students to join and go to sporting events by reaching across social barriers within the school and to unify over our pride. This will help to ensure that individuals feel less excluded and to bring people together across socioeconomic groups. It will also allow the diversity present at Westhill to be equally represented at our sporting events. Concerns were additionally raised at the Multicultural Student Union meeting regarding individuals feeling unwelcome at games due to the use of racial slurs. As a community we can be more concious of our conversation and reach out to people of all backgrounds in order to better promote the inviting climate that we all want.

The Westword will also make an effort to take more photos so that we have a variety to choose from, more accurately representing our diversity. In addition, we will continue to recruit staff members and promote engagement from people of all backgrounds and walks of life in order to ensure that the student voice we produce most accurately represents our school.

"I think that the students brought up a very real concern about the atmosphere in our school and started a conversation that we needed to have. I do think that some of the comments, on both sides, got a little out of hand but I think that it was necessary in order to start the discussion, which certainly isn't over yet," Teagan McDonugh ('20) said.

On a larger scale, as a school and as individuals, we can have more open discourse with one another as well as being more conscious of our engagement with our fellow students in order to promote a better sense of community.

Bottom Line: We must work together to decrease the divisiveness within our community that is promoted by social media.



Photos courtesy of Reynold Rene & Tim McKeithen (SAGA) / Contributors.

authors or friends that either support or stray from their own opinion," Andrew Olson ('21) said.

This issue has had a particularly large impact on our generation specifically. Raised on the technology which is now peruse throughout our society, our interpersonal skills have decreased significantly. Not only have we become less comfortable speaking with one another, but we communicate with less respect for eachother's differences.

It is easy to say that this is a larger issue that affects the nation as a whole, but we as a school community are immune from. However, we have seen first hand the implications of this lack of effective communication and divisiveness through the recent events regarding the cover of our October issue.

After the release of the issue, *The Westword* management posted a picture of the issue's cover on the official *Westword* Insta-

students comfortably speaking their views. However, despite the important conversation that this post sparked, the manner in which the discussion took place was uncivil and was fueled by divisions in our community.

In response to minorities who cited their representation in the photo, students replied saying that they were "white washed". In addition to that other students replied to this in equal frustration. However, some people also made comments unrealted to the dialogue going on such as "we are going to use this platform to encourage you to come to our next meeting" made by a Westhill club. This creates issue because it devalues and illegitimizes the concerns made by some of the other people commenting, furthering the lack of respectful dialogue.

"But when it [the instagram dialogue] came up in my classroom, I did address one specific

can be sparked from it.

"I believe that social media ignited the discussion of an underlying problem, however, it also led to many to release their emotions, and it led to an uncivil discussion. I believe that it was most needed but people need to be able to have a civil discussion without weighing all their emotions into it," Chris Calderon ('20) said.

Respect is absolutely critical for dialogue whether that be online or in person. We must be concious as a community that in order for our concerns to be heard and change to enact from them, we must treat one another with respect. A larger sense of community within the school and our country as a whole will only be possible if we value one another.

Specifically regarding the incident which occurred on The *Westword* Instagram post, as a school community we need to

Westhill clubs focused on giving back

Allison McSally

Staff Writer

This year at Westhill, November is the month of giving. Three drives took place, all focused towards benefitting local organizations and communities.

The Future Medical Professionals Club (FMP) of Westhill completed a toiletry drive. They accepted a wide range of items, including socks, toothpaste and toothbrushes, hair ties, mini first aid kits, bar soaps, and baby wipes. All collected materials were donated to Pacific House, a local homeless shelter.

"The purpose of the toiletry drive is to give to the less fortunate. As students who hope to someday work in the medical field, we want to do what we can to help those in need

stay healthy and practice good hygiene." Anita Amity ('20), President of the Future Medical Professionals Club, said.

There were boxes located in many classrooms throughout the school where supplies could be dropped off. Donations were organized Ms. Cutolo, the adviser of the Future Medical Professionals Club, in room 502. As of the end of November, FMP collected over 100 hygiene products.

Westhill's annual Thanksgiving Food Drive was held yet again. It is run by both the JROTC and Interact Club. They collected non-perishable foods, ranging from canned soups to breakfast cereals. The food went to Inspirica, a local organization that provides shelter for the homeless and runs

programs that help people find housing and jobs in the area.

The center is based in Fairfield county, so the donations went directly towards the people in the local community, hoping to make their holidays a little brighter.

"It really benefits a lot of families in Stamford. It is all used up after Thanksgiving," Ms. English, adviser of Interact Club, said.

Collection boxes were located in many classrooms around the school. The last day to bring in donations was Friday, November 22. Interact students spent all day packing over 50 boxes of non-perishable items.

This month, the JROTC also conducted a sneaker drive.

This is the first year that

this type of fundraiser was conducted at Westhill. All sneakers were accepted and appreciated, no matter what condition they were in. The shoes were sent to GotSneakers, an organization that compensates up to three dollars for every pair of shoes donated. Worn out sneakers are recycled and used to make other products, including tracks and playgrounds. The organization sends wearable sneakers to many nations around the world, specifically impoverished countries, including Bolivia, Chile, and El Salvador.

According to their website, GotSneakers mission is to help reduce the amount of shoes found in landfills every year, which is over 200 million pairs, while also providing shoes to some of the 600 million people

worldwide who live without them.

"JROTC's motto is to motivate young people to be better citizens, and charity and volunteer work is a big cornerstone of the organization. Cadets pride themselves on being members of the community and helping those in need," Kinga Berent ('20), Battalion Commander of the Westhill JROTC said.

The last day for collection was extended to November 27.

The JROTC will also host a toy and clothing drive during the time leading up to Christmas break. The toys will go to Toys for Tots, while the clothing will go to a local homeless shelter.

Westhill completed another successful year of giving back to the community.

Front cover sparks a school-wide discussion

Mr. Wooley & Mr. von Wahlde

Co-Advisers

In *The Westword's* Instagram post from November 4 promoting the first issue of the year, a picture of the cover drew the most comments of any post to date, and the biggest online debate the paper has ever seen.

"The cover looks hella white," the initial comment on the post read. The commenter critiqued a lack of diversity in the front cover, a picture of part of the Purple Pack, the school spirit booster squad attending a girls' volleyball game while they were the top seeded team in the state.

"The Purple Pack is the label to the student fan section. There are a few leaders who 'run the Pack' and do jobs such as posting on Instagram for sporting events and posting about Westhill sport news. The leaders also lead chants at games," Robert Smeriglio ('20), Purple Pack leader, said.

The picture was unaccompanied by a headline or caption. Most of the image is that of white males cheering enthusiastically, with multiple ethnicities and genders represented in the background of the image. It left some students frustrated.

"It [the cover] does not represent what defines Westhill: being diverse," Belen Santos Zelaya ('21) said.

Within the course of the next several days, 265 comments in multiple threads were added under the original Instagram post, mostly within the first 24 hours.

Comments varied in length, content, and seriousness, but encompassed a range of issues. Many of the comments men-

tioned the front cover for failing to reflect the diversity of the Westhill student population, while others defended the front cover. Some students commented on the use of the "n-word" by white students, others debated issues of identity within minority communities.

"The n-word is a degrading word, it is not a positive word. It is meant to degrade you and dehumanize you. As a white person, you should not say it because people can take it the wrong way," Princila Opoku ('22) said.

One student described the cover as "the straw that broke the camel's back," exposing issues and tensions around race that have been present at the school.

As a publication, *The Westword* stayed out of taking sides in the conversation, moderating and removing only four comments that were ethnically insensitive or laced with profanity.

According to Chloe Giulini ('20), Editor-in-Chief, what the staff did, however, was encourage students to write Letters-to-the-Editor to voice their opinions about the issues presented.

Several *Westword* staff members did comment from their personal Instagram accounts.

The post, to date, has been seen 10,117 times. By comparison, no other post by *The Westword* had reached as many as 1,000 views, according to Giulini.

The Westword published an official response to the comments in a follow up post on November 6 that focused on a commitment to provide students with a "venue for expression" and its "commitment to reporting on the diversity of the school community."

The paper agreed that "con-

text to the cover photo would have been helpful towards readers."

It was an acknowledgment that the picture was not explained as well as it could have been but the paper did not issue an apology.

"The fact that there is a photo that shows a small separate group is indicative of a bigger problem [at Westhill], not something that *The Westword* got wrong," Ms. Kelly-Young, Multicultural Student Union (MSU) adviser and teacher, said.

In response to the conversations about race that surrounded the October cover, the Multicultural Student Union hosted an open discussion after school on Thursday, November 6 in Room 425.

Ms. Kelley-Young moderated a discussion, which was attended by many of the students who were commenters on the original post, members of *The Westword's* management staff, and its advisers, student leaders of the Purple Pack, and others teachers and administrators.

In order to continue the conversation at the school level, a joint forum was convened in the Media Center during all three waves of period five on November 12. Executive members of The Purple Pack, MSU, and *The Westword* were present, as well as nearly 60 other students..

The forum, primarily moderated by the authors of this article, Mr. Wooley and Mr. von Wahlde, advisers to *The Westword*, highlighted issues with the cover, concerns about racial representation within the school and at sporting events.

"An issue brought to light in wake of the front cover was the "self-segregation" of our school.

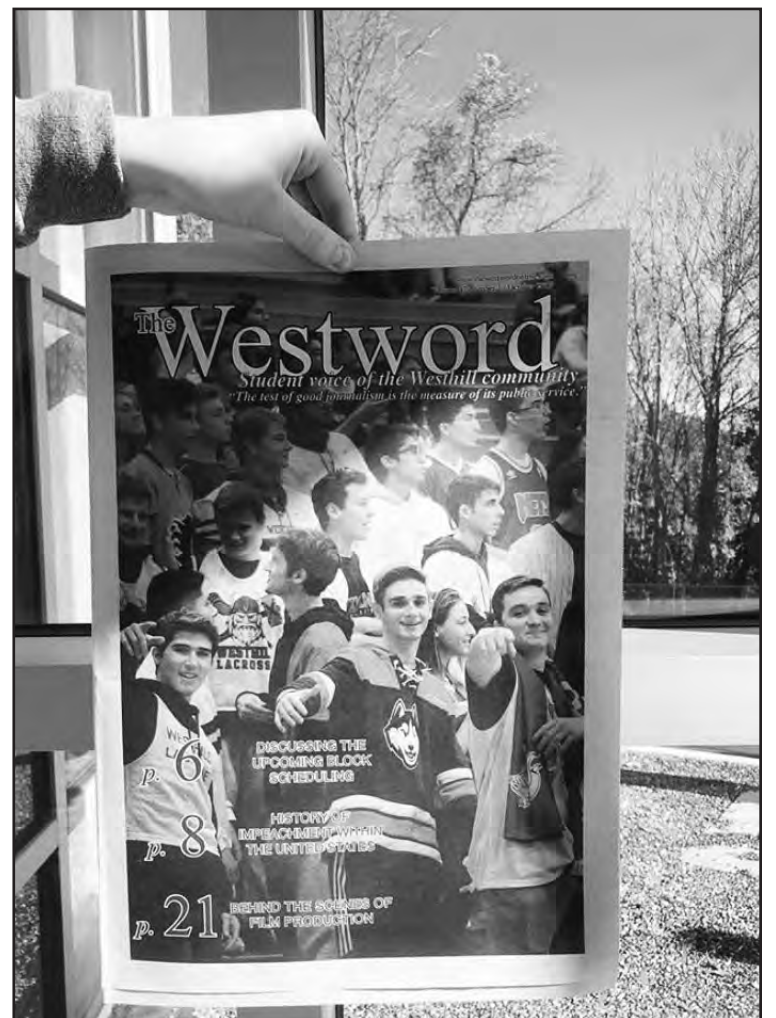
It was greatly implied amongst the student body for years, but there was no denying it now due to the fallout of what happened," Chloe Degraft-Johnson ('20) said.

Some suggestions were also made regarding approaching issues of race as a student body. Suggestions included increasing school sponsored activity options and providing more infrastructure so that students can be more involved in extracurriculars, specifically sporting events.

"In regards to Purple Pack, [the school providing] transpor-

tation to games is definitely an idea in the making. Basketball season is coming up, and hopefully this will be put into place so more people can go," Degraft-Johnson said.

The Westword, Purple Pack, and MSU are planning to continue the conversation in order to advance the race relations in Westhill. Events are in planning stages, but should commence in January. Sporting and cultural events were mentioned as ways to help students at Westhill have a "shared" high school experience.



DEBATE WORTHY *The Westword's* promotional Instagram post for the October issue.

Photo by *The Westword* / @thewestword.

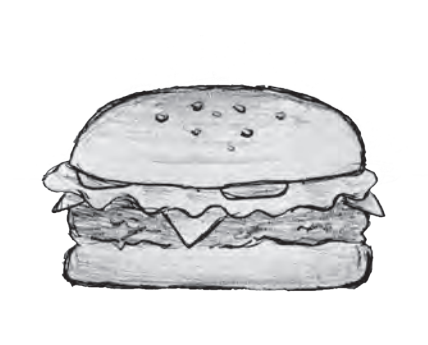
Good Month
Bad Month

Column by
Harrison Green
& Jessica Matloub



Good Month for...

Burger King According to *The Washington Post*, Burger King officially owns the rights to the Impossible Whopper. The Impossible Whopper is designed to taste and have the same texture as a beef burger, but be completely plant-based. The nation’s second-largest burger chain began testing this plant-based burger in St. Louis in April 2018. According to cnbc.org, McDonald’s, Burger King’s biggest competitor, is yet to release a vegan option. By releasing a vegan option before any of their competitors, Burger King attracts a large set of new customers: vegans. Burger King is opening the door to more profit.



Chick-fil-A The popular fast-food chain Chick-fil-A just announced that they will be ending donations to charities criticized by the LGBTQ+ community including the Salvation Army and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. They made the change following outrage by people around the United States. According to *The Chicago Tribune*, the charities in question are very religious groups. Now, the company says that they will mainly be donating to charities for “hunger, homelessness, and education.”



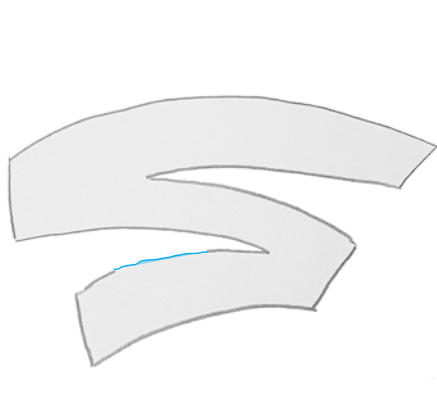
Discoveries of Space There were several discoveries recently about Titan, the largest moon of Saturn. Scientists have recently shown the first map of the Moon, and it looks eerily similar to something else. The map looks similar to Earth. The surface has a lot of water and organic material on its land. It was also discovered that it has an atmosphere similar to Earth’s. It mostly consists of flat plains. It is now known that Titan is the only celestial object in the solar system similar to Earth.

Bad Month for...

Retail For years, retail stores have been closing due to ongoing bankruptcies. According to bbc.org, the marketplace for retail stores is competitive as a result of online competition. Online shopping has taken over retail and become a constant pressure against the finances of many companies. Recently, the issues retail stores have been faced with have escalated significantly. Throughout October, a record of 172 CEOs left their companies. It is unclear what the future of retail stores will be due to the scarcity of people with the proper requirements able to fill empty CEO positions and the competing online market.



California California has been facing severe consequences from the wildfires that have destroyed parts of the state. Though many of the wildfires have been contained, new flames are constantly arising. A multitude of areas are under conditions where there is a high chance of wildfires. These include areas like Los Angeles and Sacramento. According to *The New York Times*, over 100,000 individuals were displaced from their homes. On Twitter, President Trump has threatened to cut federal funds.



Google Stadia Google has just released a new service to the public. The gaming service, Stadia, came out this month. It is being criticized for its prices and performance, but praised for its simplicity. According to a forbes.com reviewer, even though he has internet speeds over Google’s recommended speeds, he still receives poor performance. This, along with paying for a monthly service, plus buying full-priced games, amounts to something that does not seem to benefit the consumer.

New after-school
rules at Westhill

Sanjana Nayak
Reporter

Shortly after the dismissal bell, students are found at practice for sports, club meetings, and after school homework help. While all of these activities are encouraged by the school’s administration, issues arise when students linger around after school without a legitimate reason.

Due to this issue, a new rule has been implemented, stating that students are required to have a pass from the after school activity that they attended that day in order to get on any late bus.

The primary reason for this was to avoid the overcrowding that began on the late buses. The late buses make their way throughout the entire city of Stamford as they drop off students. A large number of Westhill students utilize the buses to make their way home.

The emerging problem was that students who stayed after for academic or recreational reasons were not able to get a spot on the bus due to the lack of available seats on the bus.

Meanwhile, students who stayed after school for unknown or illegitimate reasons were getting rides home on the late bus and filling up all of the seats. This left many students without rides, and they had to resort to finding an alternate way to get home.

“When I was an underclassman, I took the bus home and it was always hard to find

a seat because of how many kids were trying to get on,” Tejas Juware (’20) said.

It is clear that this situation produces obstacles for those who need the extra time after school, and end up being stuck looking for a ride home.

“It encourages people to make the most of our school’s programs while still being provided with a ride home via the late bus,” Bennett Ehret (’20) said.

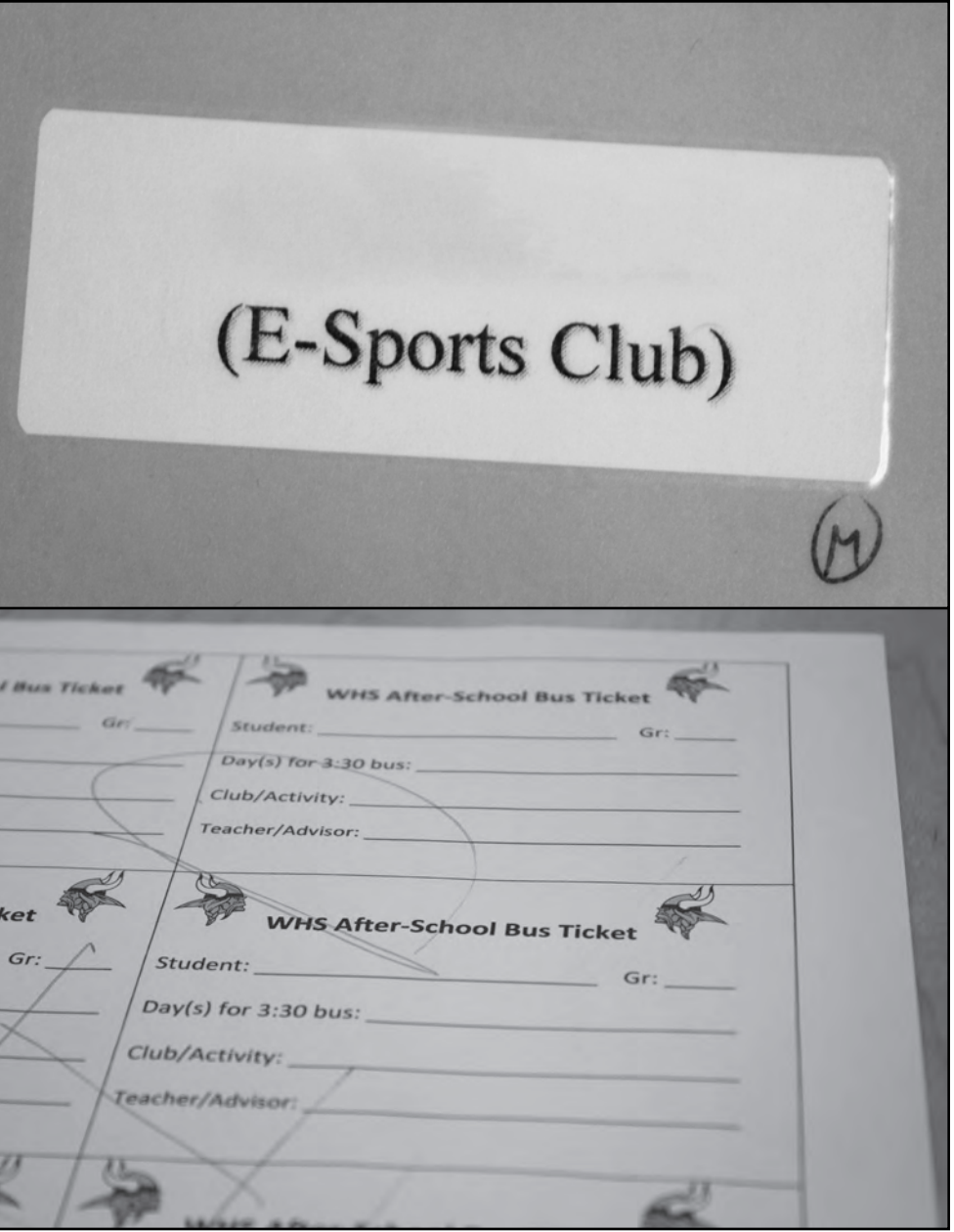
The system impacts students by discouraging them from spending an unnecessary amount of time in school by making it harder to get on the late bus. However, it also encourages students to participate in a developmental activity by promising a means of getting home.

A simple “pass check” by a security guard or administrator will allow a student to meet his or her academic goals over the course of the year by making them comfortable enough to spend time in school.

This new system also provides an alternative to finding transportation to a public library or spending money on tutoring, upholding the academic mission of the school.

“I was able to spend more time with my teacher and did not have to worry about finding another time or place to study,” Sophia Thagouras (’20) said.

As the year progresses, Westhill can expect fine tuning to the system in order to ensure its effectiveness in continuing to assist the dedicated student body.



LATE BUS PASS Students must get this ticket signed to take the 3:30 late bus.

Mr. Gil on patrol at Westhill

Becca Alper
Staff Writer

Mr. Gil has been a security guard at Westhill for some time now. He has been moved all over the school and this year he is in the patrol car. His job ensures that students are not leaving school during class time. The Westword pulled Luis over and got him to answer a few questions.

The Westword (TW): What is it like to be a security guard?

Luis Gil (LG): There is never a dull moment working as a security guard here. Westhill has been an interesting place to work, and that comes with many experiences I would not receive by working somewhere else.

TW: Do you enjoy your new position?

LG: No. I do not enjoy working

outside and would much rather prefer to be inside.

TW: Do you feel less connected to the school being in the car?

LG: Yes, I do feel less connected with the school because there is not much that goes on outside during the day. The kids are good, but I do not get the chance to interact as much. By being outside, I do not get to break up any fights.

TW: What do you do outside of this job?

LG: I usually spend time with my family. Everything from going to church to relaxing at home.

TW: Is this the job you want to have forever?

LG: No, but for now it works.

TW: What did you do before you came to Westhill?

LG: I worked at Crystal Rock. I did not like it there. All I did was

deliver water, coffee, and office supplies all the way to New Jersey.

TW: How did you get this position?

LG: Mona requested to be placed in another position so I got moved here. We do not choose where they switch us around.

TW: What is your relationship with the seniors?

LG: It is a good relationship and I do not let them stress me out.

TW: Are you going to be in the car next year?

LG: I do not want to be, so I will try to figure something out.

TW: Do you have any hobbies?

LG: I am very involved in my church. I have a lot of jobs but the one I enjoy the most is when I work with the youth group. That is why I like being a security guard.



ON GUARD Luis patrolling his new station with a smile.

Photo by **Izzy Nuzzo** / Photographer.

"SO YOU HAD A BAG OF LOTION ON YOUR COUNTER FOR THREE WEEKS?"

"ARE YOU ASKING ABOUT MY ETHNICITY, MY ZODIAC SIGN OR MY DIET?"

"I GOT DISTRACTED AND STARTED EATING CHAPSTICK."

"IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR KIT-KATS TO GET PREGNANT."

"INVERSE 5 SECOND RULE: IF IT IS NOT GOOD AFTER 5 SECONDS IT SHOULD BE GOOD AFTER 10 SECONDS."

"HE IS LIKE A GIRLFRIEND I CAN NOT GET RID OF."

"I DROPPED MY THERMOS IN THE POOL."

"EVER SINCE AL GORE LOST THE PRESIDENCY IT HAS BEEN DOWNHILL."

"IF YOU GO TO THE CAFETERIA AND ASK FOR MUSTARD THREE TIMES, YOU HAVE A 33.3 PERCENT CHANCE OF GETTING MUSTARD."

HEARD ON THE HILL

Band brings home the gold

Ava Spinelli-Mastrone
Staff Writer

After a season of hard work and dedication, Westhill Marching Band came out on top, winning first place in the Connecticut State Competition, and placing fourth at Nationals.

In past years, Westhill Marching Band competed in the group three open. Open class groups have historically been for more established programs.

While in this show, the band performed music which included “Miss Saigon,” “Immortal Beloved,” and “The Mask of Zorro.” All programs ranked highly throughout their competitive seasons and had the opportunity to perform at MetLife stadium.

Last year, however, they competed in group three A, reserved for bands who have recently grown in size.

The band’s program titled “Camelot” made strides throughout the season. They even won the “Best Percussion” award at Nationals, and placed second at State Competition.

Ms. Roberts, the current

Band Director at Turn of River Middle School, has worked with the Marching Band for the past six years. She has made it her duty to create a strong foundation of middle school students who are ready and eager to join The Marching Band once they enter high school, or even before. This year, there was a total of eleven middle schoolers who were part of the band.

“This was such an amazing year. The crazy part is that we were nearly 50 percent rookies so nobody was expecting us to do so well every week. It was such an awesome year, and everyone grew and improved so much,” Helena Dougherty (’21) said.

Throughout the season, the saxophone section had ample growth in size and skill. There are a total of ten saxophone players this year.

Zoe Harris, the band director at KT Murphy Elementary School provides specialized saxophone training for the musicals. These musicians talents were featured heavily in the performance, from a swing jazz

feature, with all ten saxophone front and center, to a saxophone duet which opened the shows finale.

“It was an awesome experience to have the saxophones featured. We worked really hard and by the end of the season we were a whole new section. It was an amazing thing to be a part of,” Savannah Madar (’21) said.

In addition, the percussion section has continued to make strides throughout the entire season. The band was thrilled to win “Best Percussion” at the New England State Championships, which were hosted at Stamford High.

“Winning percussion at states was a dream, and hearing the percussion judge say in his critique tappe that we were demonstrating skill and consistency that far outweighs other groups in our class, was really fulfilling to hear,” Ben Sisco (’21) said.

Their program “Misfits,” depicts the story of a person who did not fit in. As the performance goes on, they learn how to accept themselves and

be content with who they are.

In the program, there were many aspects that were made “out of the ordinary,” to further portray the theme of the production, whether it be the conductor dancing on the podium, the color guard member becoming a conductor, a drummer becoming a dancer.

These stylistic choices were created by Mr. Wyatt, Westhill’s Band Director.

The performance concluded with “This is Me,” from the Greatest Showman, bringing the show to a close.

With continued guidance from the entire creative team, and staff members, the marching band is constantly growing and improving. As these talented artists continue their hard work and dedication, the Marching Band hopes to thrive for years to come.



MAKING NOISE Westhill’s Marching Band strides to first place.

Photo by **Benjamin Sisco** / Contributor.



The Hungry Vikings

Column by Maansi Shah, Micayla Roth, & Bintou Bane

Dhabewala

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

On a chilly November afternoon, the Viking ship set sail for Dhabewala (street food in Hindi), a tiny establishment tucked between two shops on High Ridge Road. The restaurant, a token of the Vegan Viking’s far-away homeland, calls itself an “Indian Shack.”

The Vikings entered to find wooden tables paired with bright yellow chairs. Lights resembling mugs of what modern folk may call “tea” were strung across the ceiling. The multi-colored wooden planks on the walls reminded the Vikings of their ship (just as Mecha Noodle Bar did). The back walls were adorned with photographs of colorful Indian trucks.

Shortly after the Vikings were seated, their server arrived to take their orders. The Vegan Viking happily demanded that her fellow Vikings order their own food so she could laugh at their attempt to speak the Hindi language.

The Hungry Vikings first shared two potato samosas. The potatoes and Indian spices were bursting with flavor, and the pastry was flaky and delicious.

The Vikings divided the samosas into halves to share and were nearly forced to conduct a violent Norse-like battle over the remaining half.

The Vikings did not have to wait long for their main course. The food arrived in boxes divided up into portions for each part of the meal. This was much appreciated due to the Very Hungry Viking’s picky tendency to separate her foods.

The Vegan Viking ordered Rajma Chawal, a famous vegetarian Indian dish. The dish consists of red kidney beans in a flavorful gravy of Indian spices served with rice. It is one of the Vegan Viking’s personal favorites. The rich gravy works well with the kidney beans to create an overall spicy dish. The Vegan Viking was impressed with the spice levels, and how it was just perfect. Since dairy and nuts (the Vegan Viking’s allergies) are commonly used in Indian food, she had to be extra careful. She was surprised to find out that Dhabewala is a nut-free establishment and the staff made sure to confirm that her dishes did not

contain those ingredients.

Viking Number Tou ordered the Lamb Sag lunch special, which includes tender lamb cubed in a creamy pureed spinach sauce. The special also includes basmati rice topped with batter-fried eggplant, a surprisingly delicious appetizer. The meal additionally served a rich and flavorful tomato sauce to be paired with the rice. Viking Number Tou ordered garlic naan, as it was unbeknownst to her that the meal included a side of plain naan. Both types of naan were fluffy and perfectly complemented the lamb and spinach. This Viking was particularly pleased with the service, as they did not even hesitate to help when she dropped her tomato sauce and requested another takeout container.

The Very Hungry Viking ordered the Aloo Paneer Paratha. The paratha (similar to an Indian-style pita) contained paneer (cottage cheese), and was dipped in a potato (aloo in Hindi) curry. The creamy curry was delicious in combination with the cheesy paratha. It was very flavorful but the spice was

mild enough to satisfy the Very Hungry Viking’s spice intolerance. She was very pleased with her meal, and was eager to bring her Viking tribe back to Dhabewala in order to share the wonders of the Indian cuisine. The food was very filling, so the Very Hungry Viking excitedly packed the leftovers for

the next day’s dinner.

The Vikings received the bill in a black notebook, and had no trouble with splitting the check. They left full and satisfied, their only regret being that they had not ordered from the dessert menu. They look forward to their return for even more Indian food to try.



EATING GOOD The Lamb Sag lunch special is full of rich flavor.

Photo by **Micayla Roth** / Online Executive Editor.

SPECIAL REPORT

Wildfires hitting their peak

Ginamaria Fry
Reporter

Wildfires are caused for a variety of reasons. In California's case, wildfires are primarily caused and spread by dry air brought upon by Santa Ana winds.

According to *The New York Times*, "each fall, strong gusts known as the Santa Ana winds bring dry air from the Great Basin area of the West into Southern California".

Gusts of dry air lead to wildfires be-



cause there is less moisture in the air. California, like the rest of the West, receives moisture in the air during fall and winter.

During the summer months in California, the moisture and vegetation start to dry up from a lack of rainfall, as well as temperatures rising as it gets warmer.

According to *bbc.org*, when vegetation is dry and is no longer green, it becomes highly flammable. When the air is dry along with the vegetation, it could cause wildfires to spread more frequently, and faster.

"Poor legislation also greatly contributed to the latest wildfires. Rather than fund the cleanup of, or attempt to cleanup the dead trees in the forest and wilderness, the trees were left there, and once fires started, those same dead trees helped them spread much faster," Andrew Ukhanov ('20) said.

Wildfires in California are impacting civilians greatly. The toxic smoke in the air during and after wildfires is causing people to become ill. Illness is occurring because items such as phones, refrigerators, and cars being burned are creating toxins that are spreading through the air in Northern California.

According to *The Washington Times*, "for people who are generally healthy, headaches, burning and itching eyes, and difficulty breathing are the most commonly reported symptoms."

There are many more severe dangers of the smoke the people near the wildfires inhale. Smoke with high toxins and chemicals can harm the elderly, pregnant women, children, and those with chronic heart and lung disease.

The first wave of wildfires in California started in July of 2018. In 2018, three fires broke out, which caused thousands of other fires to break out and spread.

The first was named "Carr Fire."

The Carr fire started on July 23rd, 2018 and ended on August 30th, 2018. It was caused by sparks from tire failure in a vehicle. This specific fire affected 229,651 acres. It also killed three firefighters and five civilians.

The second fire was called the "Wool-

sey Fire." The Woolsey Fire broke out on November 8 and was put out on November 21. The cause of this fire continues to be under investigation. This fire burned 96,949 acres and killed three civilians.

The third fire of 2018 was named "Camp Fire." This fire broke out on the same day as the Woolsey Fire. This fire was caused by an electrical fire transmission started by PG&E company. As a result of this fire, 153,336 acres were

damaged, 18,804 buildings were ruined, and eighty-five civilians died. In 2018, there were a total of 8,527 wildfires in California. These fires destroyed 1,893,913 acres across California from July 23, 2018 to November 25, 2018.

The Amazon Rainforest has also been subject to an onslaught of fires. In the Amazon Rainforest, wildfires have spread across millions of acres, killing all wildlife in those areas and surrounding ones.

In the most recent case, the Amazon Rainforest caught on fire because of farmers and loggers clearing crops and making land for grazing. Since the farmers and loggers did this task while approaching dry season, the vegetation was dry and severely flammable.

In the Amazon, there have been more than 40,000 fires spread across the rainforest, burning up around 2,240,000 acres of wildlife.

"This must be greatly

devastating to the Amazon's environment," Alexa Smeriglio ('20) said.

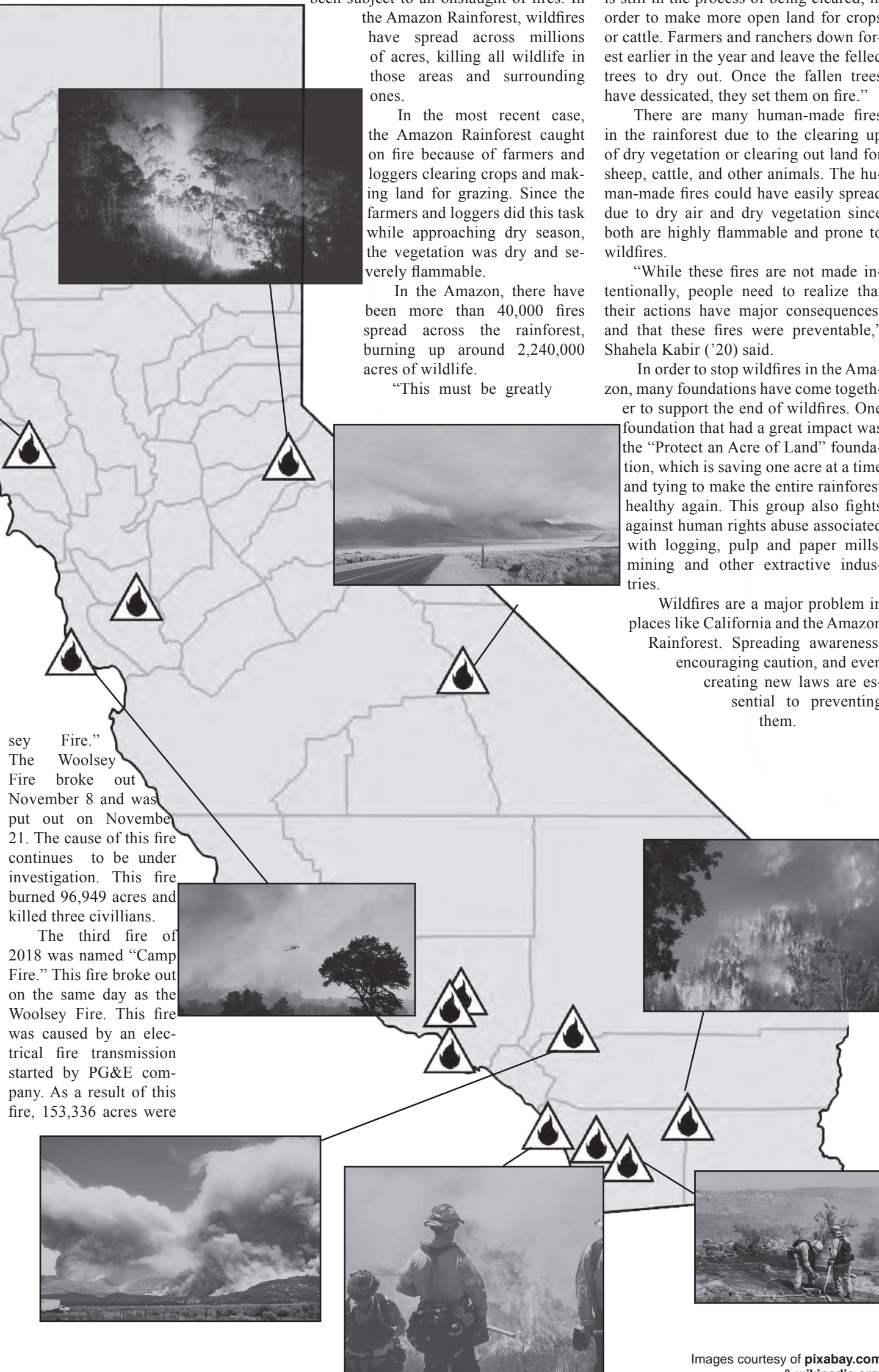
According to *National Geographic*, "most fires observed in the region are caused by humans. Many are set in previously cleared lands in order to quickly remove any excess vegetation that has popped up. Others are set in a land that is still in the process of being cleared, in order to make more open land for crops or cattle. Farmers and ranchers down forest earlier in the year and leave the felled trees to dry out. Once the fallen trees have desiccated, they set them on fire."

There are many human-made fires in the rainforest due to the clearing up of dry vegetation or clearing out land for sheep, cattle, and other animals. The human-made fires could have easily spread due to dry air and dry vegetation since both are highly flammable and prone to wildfires.

"While these fires are not made intentionally, people need to realize that their actions have major consequences, and that these fires were preventable," Shahela Kabir ('20) said.

In order to stop wildfires in the Amazon, many foundations have come together to support the end of wildfires. One foundation that had a great impact was the "Protect an Acre of Land" foundation, which is saving one acre at a time and trying to make the entire rainforest healthy again. This group also fights against human rights abuse associated with logging, pulp and paper mills, mining and other extractive industries.

Wildfires are a major problem in places like California and the Amazon Rainforest. Spreading awareness, encouraging caution, and even creating new laws are essential to preventing them.



California’s crisis

Veda Bhalla
Print Executive Editor

Once again, the California wildfires burned through the state in mid November. Fortunately, firefighters were able to contain over 70 percent of the fires, and evacuation orders were lifted in a matter of days.

In regard to federal funding, President Trump has been threatening to cut funds in his latest tweets.

On his official Twitter account, Trump said: “every year, as the fire’s rage & California burns, it is the same thing-and then he comes to the Federal Government for \$\$\$ help. No more. Get your act together Governor. You don’t see close to the level of burn in other states...But our teams are working well together in putting these massive, and many, fires out. Great firefighters!”

Trump also claimed that Governor Gavin Newsom has been doing a bad job of forest management, and that he has been excessively catering to environmentalists. Trump also believed that Newsom should not listen to the environmentalists, and instead, “clean” the forest floors.

Many of his statements have been criticizing Newsom, as well as the forest management practices in the state of California.

According to *USA Today*, Newsom responded on Twitter that Trump is “excused from this conversation,” due to the fact that he does not believe in climate change.

However, even though federal funds are possibly being cut, the federal government owns the majority of the forests while the state of California only owns only three percent.

Thus, the federal government has obligations rooted in wildfire prevention and containment.

“When I heard that Trump was planning to cut the funds on wildfires, I was honestly upset. That is such a terrible decision, in my opinion, because those wildfires ruin people’s lives. Houses burn down, people lose their lives, and even animals are harmed. Animals lose their homes and our precious trees are being burnt down. The wildfires have been getting worse

lately, and as our president, he should be increasing the funds, or at least increasing awareness. I have nothing against Trump, it is just that this one decision I have heard about is something that I am not okay with. I wonder what people in California think about this decision, because they actually know how dangerous and intense the fires are. I do not even live there and I am concerned for all of them. Hopefully Trump can see that his decision was very inconsiderate, and that something has got to change,” Elizabeth Gagarin (’20) said.

With regard to aid towards the wildfires, students at Westhill feel that it is necessary.

“As someone who has many close friends who live in the area of California that is so closely affected by the wildfires, it truly is devastating how little the media is recognizing these tragedies. So many unimportant issues have become centralized in the media lately, yet some of the most important stories, such as environmental concerns, barely even show up. It is time to face the facts: California is going downhill fast. It is up to us to fix this issue before it is too late,” Lilah Steinberg (’21) said.

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, presidential candiate Kamala Harris proposed a new bill, the Wildfire Defense Act, which is to set aside one billion dollars a year for communities prone to wildfires.

This money will go toward better infrastructure, land use, and evacuation route planning. This bill is to use funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and will award municipalities a grant of approximately 250,000 dollars for strategizing plans, which include fireproofing buildings, evacuating residents and improving land use planning.

“The idea that the federal government would cut funds for the recuperation of California is appalling. America is supposed to be an international superpower that supports the world. If we cannot protect and support our own, then how can we ever contribute to the protection of others? We as Americans must

continue to aid California in restoration and must take steps to prevent future disasters,” Emma Rimerman (’21) said.

According to npr.org, during the month of October, many residents, the first being in Northern California, experienced planned power outages as a result of an attempt to prevent wildfires. However, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), a power company in California, was criticized greatly for inaccurate outage maps and inaccessible call centers.

Governor Newsom has criticized PG&E, and the company has filed for bankruptcy.

This attempt at wildfire prevention has been leaving millions of people in the state without power.

Harris’s bill would allow for the supply of power to California residents, despite the main power grid being cut. However, whether or not Congress will approve the bill is uncertain.

This year, the state was prepared for the wildfires with air tankers and helicopters on standby.

According to *USA Today*, “fire officials say this time, Southern California was prepared for the round of big winds. Ventura County fire officials say their aggressive efforts to require homeowners to chop down brush within 100 feet of homes made a difference.”

Over 300 fire engines and crews from out of state are in California, helping to take on these wildfires.

Some 324 fires were put out in a 24-hour period before the latest winds came, Newsom told reporters Tuesday in predicting that “absolutely, we are prepared,” for the winds.

His spokesperson, Jesse Melgar stated that “the reality is that while California has increased fire prevention investments and fuel management projects, the federal government has slashed its funding of those same activities.”

Firefighters work relentlessly to suppress these wildfires, and have been successful at containing a substantial amount.

However, the future of California, as well as federal aid, remains tentative as wildfires continue to run rampage throughout the state and arguments stand unsettled.

THE WARMING
TEMPERATURES, DROUGHTS,
AND IRREGULAR RAINS OF
TODAY’S CLIMATE ARE ALL
FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO
WILDFIRES.

CHANGES IN CLIMATE
ALL SIGNIFY BIGGER AND
LONGER-LASTING ISSUES, AS
WELL AS MORE IMPACTFUL
DAMAGES TO CURRENT
FORESTS.

FIRST RESPONDERS TEND
TO NAME FIRES AFTER ANY
MEADOW, CREEK, CITY, OR
TYPE OF PLANT THEY SEE.

RESPONDING TO WILDFIRES
IN THE U.S.COSTS AN
ESTIMATED 5 BILLION
DOLLARS ANNUALLY

THE NET ANNUAL ECONOMIC
IMACT OF WILDFIRES IS
ESTIMATED TO BE AROUND 72
BILLION DOLLARS.

SOME FIRES CAN GET
LARGE ENOUGH TO SPURR
HURRICANE FORCE-LIKE
WINDS THAT
BLOW UP TO 120 MILES PER
HOUR.

FIRES TEND TO BURN LESS
INTENSELY AT NIGHT, AS
HUMIDITY IS KNOWN TO
DAMPEN FUEL, THUS SLOWING
THEIR SPREAD.



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Driving Hours	We know of students from other driving schools that have needed to go to other towns to finish their driving hours. Some schools do not even offer in-car sessions on a regular basis!	We drive 7-days a week, all year long. You're assigned an instructor who's dedicated to providing you with the best driver education experience possible. Plus, we pick-up and drop off ANYWHERE locally.	
Off-site Testing at the School	Possibly.	Always available in Stamford multiple times a month since 2005 - And always will be!	
Customer Service	Questions, phone calls, and DMV paperwork usually handled by a corporate office or a branch office in another town, generally only by phone. Some schools do not generate DMV CS-1 certificates in Stamford. VERY limited office hours in Stamford, if at all.	We're almost ALWAYS open – in person or by phone. All phone calls, certificates, and paperwork handled in Stamford. No phone queues or customer service reps, we deliver REAL customer care with our dedicated Stamford staff. We invite parents into our facility, and offer training and support to ensure the time spent driving with your teen is productive.	
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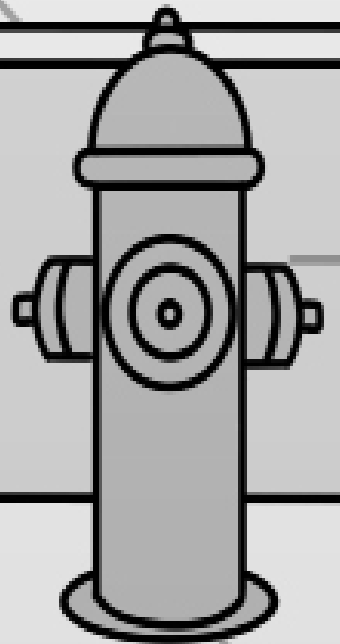
The Westword Supplement

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ON US

ALWAYS BEEN
WATCHED
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THE RISE OF
SURVEILLANCE
TECHNOLOGY
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BENEFITS OF
SURVEILLANCE
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ALWAYS BEEN WATCHED

Micayla Roth

Online Executive Editor

As more and more companies gain access to personal information through technology, a rise in concern regarding personal privacy in the digital world has begun. However, technological surveillance is not new; surveillance has actually been occurring in the United States for centuries.

According to smithsonianmag.com, people began listening in on telegraphs, a practice known as wiretapping in the 1860s in order to sell information to stock traders. This practice was quickly banned, but it did not stop the surveillance.

According to history.com, as the World War I and II era evolved, government surveillance became increasingly popular in order to seek out enemies, and as a result wire tapping became officially legal with the Olmstead v. United States case in 1927. Fear began to shift towards communists, who were believed to pose a threat to the American democracy, and the Armed Forces Security Agency began collecting telegrams to screen for Soviet spying.

Government surveillance increased dramatically in the 1940s and 1950s. As a result, the House Un-American Activities Committee was formed to combat what was known as the “Red Scare,” due to the association of communism with the color red. Federal employees and workers within industries like Hollywood were investigated in order to pick out suspected communists, Senator Joseph R. McCarthy created a list of said suspects to bar them from employment.

Many supported surveillance for national security purposes but

many thought that law enforcement was taking advantage of the power.

Since the 1990s, surveillance has become less individually-focused and more widespread in scope. Rather than physically listening in on individual phone calls, the National Security Agency (NSA) has the ability to track the metadata of the public’s phone calls. While they can listen in on conversations, they are much more likely to track information about the data; such as who was called, when they were called, and where the call took place.

“In the history of the civilized world, every government that has spied on its own people has always given the same reason: we are doing it to protect the public. The citizenry of every country needs to decide when it becomes too much. Of course, we have to balance the need

for privacy with the need for security. Perhaps the best test case for this in the United States remains the Patriot Act,” Mr. Sarkar, computer science teacher, said.

Surveillance began to take on a new

only 46 percent of Americans today approve of the government’s collection of their data, and warranted wiretapping occurs for criminal investigations twice as often as they do for national security.

have caused controversy over the benefits of surveillance in these situations.

“Surveillance can be really important sometimes. I do not think it violates my privacy because it makes me feel safe and protected. Surveillance could be used better in some situations, but overall it is valuable,” Aaron Eben (’22) said.

THE RISE OF SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGY

Marta Zach

Managing Editor

Surveillance technology has benefited society in a multitude of ways: from reducing crime, to lowering chances of a terrorist attack, but nowadays, many feel as if it has crossed the line.

As technology’s horizons broaden, peoples’ ambiguity lessens. In today’s world,

monitored and investigated civil society groups and climate activists, and maintain that they do not need to prove probable cause of criminal activity in order to use facial surveillance technology.

“It feels like someone is watching me constantly and there is

to remove data. While there have been no imminent threats stemming from this data collection, many users were still put at an unease.

While this was all in the policy, most users expect privacy on their own cell phones.

The concept of “fingerprinting” is also on the rise. The theory is that this involves pinpointing the specific device someone is using and following them as they use the internet and applications. Thus,

lection of such characteristics creates the barely-there online “fingerprint” that becomes a way for advertisers to track an individual’s online activity. This technology is hard to detect and block. Unlike cookies, which can be seen and removed, these digital fingerprints are much harder to identify.

Another modern feature on phones is location tracking. A notion that was once reserved for the government is now widely-used by the general public. For example, parents can track their child’s location through various apps including the popular Life360.

“There are lots of pros and cons with regard to this topic. Location tracking might save your life if you ever go missing, but it can also cause paranoia because whoever has your location tracked always knows where you are,” Chris Lara (’20) said.

While family location tracking is a feature that is enabled intentionally, many apps track users’ locations without their knowledge.

The New York Times looked into just how invasive these location tracking practices are. Applications know when a person was at a grocery store, at the mall, or at the

gas station, and share this information with other companies.

For example, Facebook users cannot opt out of location-based advertisements. Even if users do not have their location turned on, Facebook still has access to where they are in general, and has the ability to advertise to users.

Although, some people do give consent, by using Facebook’s “check-in” feature, it allows users to check in at places like hotels and restaurants. This makes that information public and accessible to Facebook.

President Trump and Congress agreed upon the need for a national privacy law, but lawmakers continue to disagree on parts of a theorized bill. Therefore, mandates are nowhere in sight.

There are ways for individuals to maximize online privacy and keep their information safe from threat. Using encrypted data and two-factor authentication keeps information and passwords safe. It is important to be wary when using public Wi-Fi to make sure that data is kept safe. Turning off unwanted location services on applications and reading privacy policies also keeps users aware.

Some users do not feel threatened by digital surveillance.

“If you are using these apps you are technically consenting to having your information collected,” Jove Luna (’22) said.

While location tracking might be a nuisance and invasion of privacy, there are few risks associated with it.

According to PewResearch.org, 81% of Americans have smartphones. That means over 200 million other people are being tracked in the same exact minimal way.

meaning in 2001 after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

According to history.com, immediately following the attacks, President George Bush signed the Patriot Act to hopefully prevent future domestic terrorism.

Under the Patriot Act, law enforcement is allowed to use wiretapping in order to track suspected terrorists, and federal agents can “seek federal court permission to obtain bank records and business records to aid in national security terror investigations.”

According to pewresearch.org,

ty. Surveillance videos inside people’s homes are becoming popular with the availability of products like Ring, which films the area surrounding the front door when the doorbell is rung. By using facial recognition technology, police can then look at Ring’s video footage to identify possible package thieves, burglars, or even shooters.

“I am certain that surveillance is going to grow rapidly in our society within the near future, and I see both pros and cons to this. It would help in having more definite evidence in crimes, but will simultaneously invade our right to privacy,” Skye McLeod (’20) said.

Facial recognition technology is not just used to identify potential suspects.

According to nbcnews.com, retailers in China use facial recognition to identify consumers and their buying preferences in order to tailor the advertising and shopping experience towards them. Concerns over privacy

From navigation apps to traffic cameras to virtual assistants, surveillance permeates society. Video cameras stationed above busy intersections record traffic violations. This footage can be requested by the public up to 30 days following the date of the video.

According to cnn.com, even virtual assistant products like the Amazon Echo or Google Home have people behind them listening to interactions in order to improve the Artificial Intelligence.

“With [technology] companies, our information is the product they sell. We enjoy being on Facebook and, in turn, Facebook sells our information to make money... whenever a company provides a service and does not overtly charge for it (think Google, Facebook, etc.) you can be sure that your information is how they are making their money,” Mr. Sarkar said.

Since the 1860s, surveillance has increased dramatically in scale. Technology will only continue to develop, leaving the future of surveillance yet to be discovered.

DO YOU BELIEVE SURVEILLANCE
IS A PROBLEM FOR TEENAGERS?
87% YES
13% NO

digital privacy is an abstract notion.

With an onset of technology entering and propagating the market, there are countless means of data collection. Computers, smart watches, drones, Google Home, and connected cars, all have access to people’s private information. As does the government.

According to aclu.org, due to facial recognition technology, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has at least 640 million images of adults living in the U.S. in its database, and can identify someone if need be. They have

nothing I can do about it,” Peu Das (’20) said.

In July of this year, concerns were brought to light when the public realized that FaceApp, the Russian photo app that made users look old, was keeping their data. In their policy, it stated that upon installing the app, users granted FaceApp permission to store and use their data for commercial purposes, even after they deleted the app. In their defense, the company said that photos stored are used to better the app, and accepted requests

like a fingerprint, data collected can be used to identify that person later on.

For example, websites are provided information like a person’s screen resolution in order to properly size the site on their computer. The col-

BENEFITS OF SURVEILLANCE

Franki Spinelli-Mastrone
Staff Writer

Walking the hallways of an American high school, taking a look around at the students, it is apparent that just about every single student is either scrolling through social media, listening to music, or simply holding their smartphone.

According to surveys conducted by the *Pew Research Center* in 2019, 81 percent of Americans own smartphones. That is over a 50 percent increase since 2011; less than ten years ago.

"I cannot think of anyone I know that does not have a smartphone of some sort. Also, the age that kids get their first smartphones seems to be getting younger and younger, so I would assume that the percentage of smartphone owners would be closer to 100 percent," Mia Labriola ('21) said.

With the growing intelligence and sophistication of computer and smartphone technologies comes the question of inappropriate surveillance. These phones have both front and back facing cameras on them, forcing individuals to wonder if there could potentially be someone, somewhere seeing everything that they are seeing. Depending on certain applications, the phones also have a constant availability of the location of the user. That could be disabled but that would render the phone practically useless for certain activities as it would no longer provide GPS or other location-oriented features.

People also often make claims that their phones can hear the conversations they are having, and use that information to divert specific advertisements to the user's social media pages.

"I have looked up something on Amazon and there were visual advertisements for it on YouTube as well as websites on

that same topic shortly after," Brian Smith ('22) said.

These devices contain all of an individual's private information, yet there is almost no way to prevent unwanted surveillance from occurring on them.

According to *Business Insider*, the idea of whether information input into a smartphone can technically be considered private has caused great debate, and questions of human rights violations have been raised.

Google, Facebook, and Apple, three of the largest internet corporations in the world admit to using individual's private information to collect data in order to direct advertisements to the user based on demographics. This is a concept known as data-sharing.

Amnesty International, a non-governmental human rights organization based in the United Kingdom (U.K.) has expressed extreme concern about the actions of the two corporations. Amnesty claims that "Facebook and Google's persistent surveillance of billions of people around the world threatens human rights and free expression." This is because individuals do not know that their information is being cultivated

ed for data and research. It is entirely true and entirely legal.

Major media corporations are not the only ones trying to track peoples every move. Smartphones applications such as Life360 are utilized by parents in order to track where their children are. This may feel like an invasion of privacy by parents, but it can be very successful in ensuring the safety of young teens as they can share their location if they feel unsafe in a sit-

uation.

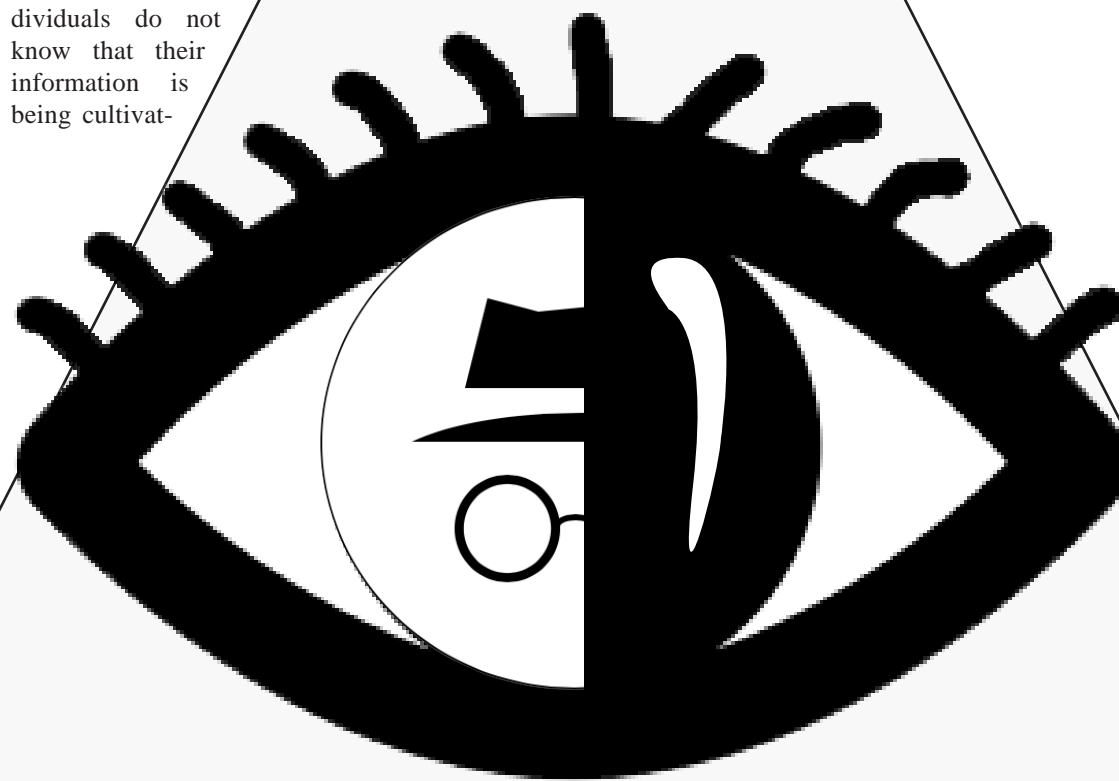
Other apps like Noonlight or Safezone are designed specifically to ensure safety. The user inputs their home address and emergency contact information. If one feels unsafe walking home at night, on public transportation or in an

Uber or Lyft, they can open the app and it will track their location. If something dangerous occurs, the user simply presses a button and law enforcement is immediately sent to the location and is provided with the updated location of the phone whenever it may change.

According to un.org, kidnappings and human trafficking have been on the rise and surveillance apps such as these can dictate the outcome of a life-or-death situation.

The prevalence of smartphones is increasing, and technology is improving. With this rapidly growing industry comes availability of information that has never existed before and that needs to be managed accordingly.

The utilization of location sharing apps can help save lives in dangerous situations. However the influx of personal information into social media platforms can be manipulated. This new era of technology requires careful balance, otherwise it will become invasive.



WHAT ARE AMERICAN CONSUMERS' OPINIONS ON DATA-SHARING BEING A PART OF THE MODERN ECONOMY?

62% AGREE THAT IT SHOULD BE
A PART OF THE MODERN ECONOMY

38% DISAGREE WITH IT BEING A
PART OF THE MODERN ECONOMY

Influencias española en la música Americana

Emelyncole Chuco
 Editora de Las Noticias

Desde la salsa hasta el merengue o las baladas de amor a la música que se encuentra en un club nocturno para bailar toda la noche, la música latina ha tomado el mundo por sorpresa y tener toneladas de escuchas en varias plataformas de música.

La música que circula dentro de la nación americana va del pop al rap e incluso la música pop coreana a medida que la música sabe en la nueva generación crece y cambia con el tiempo. Lo que se puede considerar la nueva ola de la música es, de hecho, la música latinoamericana. Artistas como PRETTY MUCH, Little mix, Drake, Selena Gomez, Justin Bieber, Cardi B, y muchos otros se han unido a la tendencia de colaborar con artistas latinoamericanos para hacer canciones que se hicieron

virales y llegaron a la cima de las listas de música.

Con tantos nuevos artistas latinoamericanos entrando en escena y historias variadas que se pueden contar a través del lenguaje universal de la música, es imposible negar que la música latina o española se está convirtiendo en una tendencia importante entre la gente.

Pero, ¿qué motiva a los artistas a organizar estas colaboración? Lo que se cree es que la gente quiere escuchar algo nuevo basado en los tiempos que los rodean. Canciones como “Señorita” de Shawn Mendes y “Soltera” de Bad Bunny se había hecho popular durante el verano y fue percibido como canciones que son adecuadas para esa temporada. Una canción que es optimista, bailable y relacionable es lo que la mayoría de la gente parece buscar en la música.

Lo interesante de esta combinación de estilos musicales es

quién se une para producirlos. Gente como Beyoncé, Selena Gomez, Demi Lovato, Cardi B, Chris Marshall e incluso estrellas como Usher que se habían unido para hacer canciones españolas en años pasados y en estos últimos años. Algunos dicen que estas celebridades estaban pensando lógicamente, utilizando la cultura española para atraer a un nuevo grupo demográfico a su música, mientras que otros asumen que los celebrites quieren experimentar una cultura que puede ser completamente nueva para ellos.

Lo mismo ha sucedido invertidamente, los artistas de la música latina han invitado a cantantes estadounidenses a unirse a ellos en una canción y se puede especular que estos artistas fueron invitados a probar algo nuevo y actuar de una manera que está fuera de sus zonas de comodidad. Ahora los artistas americanos quieren estar separados de to-



TIEMPO DE MÚSICA El grupo PRETTYMUCH con CNCO empezando el rodaje del video musical para su más nuevo canción “Me Necesita.”

Imagen cortesía de [pixabay.com](#).

das las cosas hispanos o latinos que quieren coser en nuevas canciones que, con suerte,

ganarán tanta fama y estrado como cualquier canción pasada accesible al público.

El mundo de las clases protegidas

Lubymichelle Chuco
 Editora de Las Noticias

Muchos estudiantes luchan con las clases en la escuela. Desde cursos difíciles como

primer paso que podemos dar para mejorar la forma en que estructuramos nuestros cursos y cómo podemos beneficiar a los hablantes no nativos de inglés, en lugar de perjudicarlos.

prender el idioma, y eso se nota en su escritura y gramática. Pero otros estudiantes que luchan por hacerlo se ven significativamente afectados en clase. Son capaces de com-

perjudicando a los estudiantes inocentes.

A pesar de las circunstancias, algunos estudiantes prosperan y prosperan en clase. Una estudiante llamada Litzy

decía tanto ellos a mi como yo a ellos.

Pero fue algo diferente, había personas tratando de ayudarme los primeros días que no hablan español pero trataban de ayudarme, algunos de ellos usaban traductor mis maestros trataban de comprenderme y que yo comprendiera la clase, aprendiera un poco de eso tal vez puede que eso suene algo pequeño para mi en ese momento pero hasta ahora sigue siendo algo valioso porque es algo raro e incomodo llegar a un lugar donde no conoces a nadie, de tal manera sabes que te dará un poco de trabajo comprender lo que dicen pero realmente me alegra que haya alumnos, maestros, security como docentes de este lugar que talvez no hablan español pero tratan de ayudarnos o hacernos sentir cómodos en este lugar, porque algo que he aprendido en esta escuela es que no importa quien seas ni de donde seas todos son iguales tienen el mismo valor, nadie es más que nadie.

Por mi parte siempre ha sido un lugar muy familiar para mi, entiendo y aprecio sus culturas; Lo difícil en este caso es hacer todo esto sola, luchar contra mis miedos, mis papas no estan conmigo, justamente por eso quiero salir adelante por mi misma para ser su orgullo.

Pero también sé que ellos me apoyan a través de la distancia y esa es mi mayor motivación.”



EL CONOCIMIENTO ES PODER Estudiantes protegidos trabajando duro y aprendiendo en clase.

el cálculo, hasta otros como la escritura creativa. Lo que esta escuela a veces no nota es cómo la barrera del idioma afecta a sus estudiantes que no son fuertes para hablar inglés.

Hay muchas perspectivas a tener en cuenta en torno al tema de los cursos de inglés “protegidos”: estudiantes, profesores, ayudantes de profesores, hay muchos aspectos de la historia que a veces pasan desapercibidos. Abordar este tema es el

Los estudiantes deben estar dedicados a hacer el trabajo en sus cursos para cualquier efecto. Si bien es cierto que algunos estudiantes no completan el trabajo que se les da, no podemos generalizar a todos los estudiantes de esta manera. Como profesor asistente, ver el esfuerzo y el trabajo de los estudiantes de primera mano abre los ojos.

Algunos han dedicado muchas horas a estudiar y com-

prender los conceptos, pero no pueden expresar sus pensamientos en palabras.

Tener que enseñarles la forma completamente opuesta de las funciones de gramática desde su idioma de origen no es fácil. Tampoco debe entenderse que estos estudiantes no quieren tener éxito. Viniéron a este país para aprender y prosperar en un mejor sistema educativo. Si no les proporcionamos esto, estamos

Foto por [Matthew Wint](#) / Fotógrafo.

Ponce tuvo la amabilidad de contar su historia como estudiante hispana en cursos de inglés.

“Se que muchos de los estudiantes hemos pasado por esto al llegar a Estados Unidos, ya que eso implica comenzar de nuevo. El primer día en la Westhill no voy a negarlo me sentía incómoda al ver a demasiadas personas y pensar que no iba a ser igual porque no iban a comprender lo que

La gente de Chile desea protestar

Melanie Brito

Editora de Las Noticias

Las protestas chilenas de 2019 continuaron la lucha de una década en la sociedad chilena sobre la inestabilidad económica que han soportado sus pueblos. Los líderes políticos chilenos han prometido al país una economía próspera durante años, cada uno decepcionando a su pueblo.

El gobierno del país cambió de dictadura a democracia en 1990, seguido de un crecimiento económico constante. Sin embargo, este aumento en la economía no llegó a todas las personas en Chile. Después de varias situaciones de corrupción y evasión fiscal, la clase media lucha por mantenerse al día con los altos precios.

Además, la gente comenzó a cuestionar la brecha entre cuánto pagan las personas ricas y cuánto pagan. En un intento por restablecer el orden en el país, el presidente Sebastián Piñera decidió aumentar la tarifa del metro en cuatro centavos que desencadenaron las primeras protestas.

Las protestas fueron respondidas con los militares barriendo las calles bajo las órdenes de Piñera. Las protestas continuaron, lo que llevó a Piñera a dar un

discurso en vivo en la televisión para disculparse, prometiendo a la gente salarios más altos, impuestos justos, un mejor seguro

tarifa de metro propuesto y a las tres décadas desde que terminó la dictadura.

Las protestas fueron provo-

suponía que la educación debía salir de la pobreza, pero el sistema educativo parecía estar hecho para excluir a cualquier chileno

nos y brutalidad policial; todo el dolor infligido a los civiles ha sido perdonado por el presidente Piñera. Reconoció públicamente la brutalidad y el abuso del poder y declaró que no habrá consecuencias por su comportamiento. En las últimas semanas, al menos 2,381 personas han resultado heridas, 24 han muerto y se han presentado 5 cargos de asesinato. Piñera cree que las acciones de la policía y el ejército son necesarias en momentos como estos, donde las protestas están fuera de control.

Las protestas comenzaron originalmente por un aumento en la tarifa del metro en la capital, Santiago, pero se extendieron rápidamente por todo el país y se ampliaron a protestas más generales contra los altos niveles de desigualdad, el alto precio de la atención médica y la escasa financiación para la educación.

El presidente Piñera declaró que comenzará el proceso de reconstrucción de una nueva Constitución si eso es lo que la gente quiere. Pero el anuncio del referéndum planeado no logró calmar las protestas en Santiago, donde los manifestantes se reunieron nuevamente en la Plaza Italia y pequeños grupos se enfrentaron con la policía.



de salud y menores ingresos para la política. Sin embargo, la gente no le creyó.

Las protestas continuaron por toda la capital en parques y en las calles. "No son 30 pesos, son 30 años" se ha convertido en uno de los lemas de las protestas; una referencia al aumento de

cadras por el aumento en el precio de la tarifa del metro, pero ahora su propósito es exigir justicia por todos los años de opresión a las familias de bajos ingresos. No solo sufrieron económicamente, sino que sufrieron, y aún sufren, los estereotipos de ser de pueblos de bajos ingresos. Se

que viniera de pueblos de bajos ingresos. En el papel, los estudiantes de estas áreas pueden ser un éxito, pero se sabe que los empleadores discriminan a los candidatos de las clases sociales más pobres.

Las protestas han sido respondidas con gases lacrimóge-

Imagen cortesía de es.wikipedia.com.

Celebridad española en una sociedad de habla inglesa

Lisbet Rivera

Escritor Personal

Sofía Vergara es una actriz de Barranquilla, Colombia de 47 años. Empezó su carrera artística a los 17 años en un comercial de Pepsi que fue transmitido en la televisión Latina. Después comenzó a asistir a un taller de actuación, de cual le ayudó a ser su primera telenovela Mexicana y modelaje.

Hoy en el 2019 ella es una de las actrices más pagadas por el octavo año consecutivo con 41.1 millones de dólares, no solo es una actriz y modelo pero también tiene su propia línea de ropa y perfumes. A pesar de todo su éxito se ha tendido que en enfrentar a fuertes enfermedades.

En el 2000 ella fue diagnosticada con cáncer de tiroides algo que decidió tratar personalmente sin el ojo del público. Años después en una entrevista compartió su experiencia de cáncer y en 2008 ella dijo en la revista de Health que aunque haya vencido el cáncer ella se toma un pastilla de synthroid por vida, que ayuda a controlar el metabolismo de su cuerpo y le da a su cuerpo los niveles que ella necesita. En el 2009 Sofía tomó el papel icónico de Gloria Delgado-Pritchett en Modern Family por el cual ahora ella

es más reconocida, de ahí ha tenido el placer de ganar nominaciones 4 Consecutivas a los premios Emmy y 4 de Globo del Oro y tener la oportunidad de trabajar en otros proyectos como 'Happy Feet Two', 'The Smurfs', 'Chef,' y 'Hot Pursuit'. En el 2000 ella fue conocida como una actriz de cine en la película 'Big trouble' protagonizando junto a Tim Allen, en el 2009 la actriz debutó en el escenario de Broadway jugando el papel de Mama Morton en 'Chicago'. Sofía ahora está haciendo la última temporada de Modern Family que se estrenará en el 2020 en ABC.



Imágenes cortesía de flickr.com.

Allowing students to retake individual ACT sections

Izzy Nuzzo
Staff Writer

In order to alleviate a teenager's stress regarding standardized testing, ACT officials have recently announced that as of next September, students who would like to improve one score will have the ability to retake individual sections of the four part test.

The ACT is one of two main standardized tests that colleges can decide to review. The top achievable score is a 36.

According to act.org, only 0.9 percent of students receive this prestigious score.

The test is three hours long with sections such as English, Math, Reading, and Science. Students also have the option to take an optional essay-prompt which usually takes about 40 minutes more than the actual test.

Students currently have to sit through the whole test again if they want to improve one section. This can be strenuous on students.

There has been some debate as to if letting students retake certain sections would benefit them or not.

By allowing them to retake one single section, students will be better prepared and less exhausted from the other sections taken prior.

In September, students will have a "superscore" of their highest scores from each section that

they decide to retake. Students in the future will be required to have taken the complete ACT at first and afterwards retake the subsections of the test later on. This will help them to better improve their scores.

"I took the ACT in September, and I did really well in every section except for Math. I would much rather retake only the Math section than have to take the whole three hour test over again. It makes a lot more sense to retake the test by section than to take the whole thing because there is no point in retaking the sections you

already did well in," Mia Labriola ('21) said.

Overall, having this new policy for the ACT will benefit future high school students greatly. Retakes for the sub-sections will be available to students on the same dates of the national ACT test days, which occur seven times a year. In fact, some schools have already decided to build their own super score based upon test scores as it would be a benefit to students.

The prices to retake certain sections of the test are still unclear but as of now the current cost of

the ACT is 52 dollars without the optional writing section and comes to a total of 68 dollars with it. There is no doubt that by allowing students to improve upon the section of their choice, it would be a benefit to students who take the ACT when it comes down to cost.

"The ACT process as a whole is really stressful and it generates a lot of anxiety from students taking it. By allowing students to take individual sections, it will allow them to be more focused and collected when taking the test," Jada Berry ('21) said.

Students who are studying for the test would be able to shift their focus to the subject they are looking to improve. For example, if a student was struggling with math they would not have to spend the extra time and money on studying for all the other sections that would be a part of the test as well.

This would also be a huge benefit to students who have extra time, including 504s because they would be able to see what they were struggling in and not have to deal with the test as a whole over and over in order to perfect their score.

A 504 is a testing accommodation that allows certain students a time and a half for testing. Students can have 504s for varying reasons including anxiety, dyslexia, and chronic illness.

"Being stuck in a testing room for hours on end can wear on the mind of an ACT-taker. This change ensures that the minds of students are fresh enough to get through a section without difficulty, or mental fatigue," Lucas Pinto Leite ('20) said.

Allowing students to retake sections of the ACT without having to retake the test as a whole will be a huge benefit to students who are preparing for it. To have a student who scored perfectly on every single section of the ACT is a very unusual thing. By opening this up to upcoming classes, this also opens windows of opportunities.

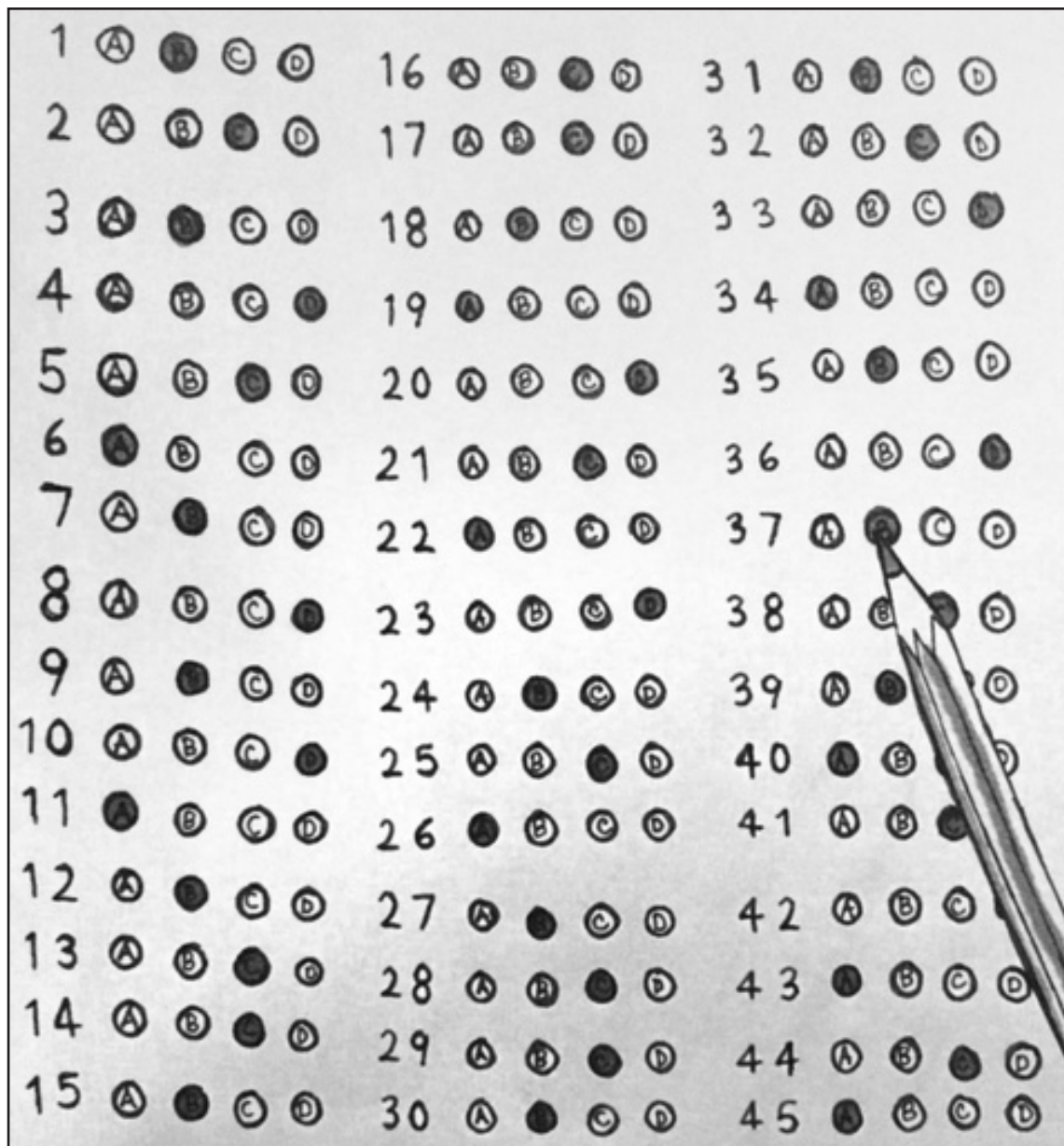


Illustration by Neeka Baclayon / Head Illustrator.

Morgana Knopoff
Staff Writer

In a time where more colleges are allowing test-optional students to apply, the ACT, one of the two standardized tests colleges look at when considering prospective students, has made major changes to its testing requirements.

Starting in September of 2020, students will be able to retake individual sections of the ACT numerous times instead of retaking the entire test, to superscore which is the highest markings from each section.

This would allow students to raise their overall ACT scores by just a couple points without retaking the entire test. In addition, the ACT is superscoring the numerous test scores of students as well as offering students the option to take the test online which would allow their scores to be seen faster than if taken on paper, receiving them as early as two business days after the test.

These changes not only alter the way in which students can take the test, but alters the values of the new scores.

The highest score one could

get on the test, which comprises of English, Math, Science, and Reading with an optional Writing section, is a 36, though the average score is a 26.

According to act.org, the retesting of single sections "gives students the opportunity... to best show their knowledge."

While retaking individual sections can help students focus, this devalues the entire exam because the collective scores do not display what the students know, but that students can get higher scores through putting more time and more money into a test which colleges put too much emphasis on.

According to *The New York Times*, through funneling money

into retaking certain sections numerous times, the score produced becomes less of a marker of aptitude, and more of a burden for admissions officers who would have to consider whether it was fair to compare the superscores of students who retook the whole test with those of students who retook just part of it.

"The new system reduces the value of the ACT. A 36 does not have the same value as before, changing the landscape for college admissions," Guarov Bansal ('21) achiever of a 36, said.

As a result of the disparity in how much of the test students retook, the new ACT changes bring about concerns about how much

weight to now put in test scores.

What the new ACT changes is the actual value of the score.

"With the planned changes to the ACT, the value of the test scores would diminish. If kids can retake each section it would be easier to obtain a 36 which is a perfect score. Like we all know, the more people that get these high scores, the less the perfect score means. The SAT is a very balanced and regulated test that is known for getting a perfect bell curve in scores. The ACT will have a large amount of higher scores, unlike the SAT," Divya Gada ('20) said.

If every student has the ability to easily raise their score to a 36,

the score no longer becomes a correct marker of their intelligence as anyone can now get a perfect score.

In addition, the ability to individually change test scores puts students who cannot afford test tutors at even more of a disadvantage than before.

Tutors usually work with students to prepare them for the entire test, but with the new ACT changes, they can focus on specific sections such as English or Science. For students who cannot afford private tutors, they get less preparation, and therefore worse ACT scores than other students.

In addition, if they cannot afford tutors, they most likely will not be able to afford to retake sections of the test. Altering one's scores so drastically without retaking the entire test not only takes away the actual marker of how well one does on the test, but it is not fair to the students who did not have the opportunity to do so because of financial issues.

The new ACT changes not only the way students can retake the test, but devalues the idea of a perfect score if students can retake certain sections an unlimited amount of times.

Freedom of speech should extend to employees

Lexi Bocuzzi
Ombudsman

Freedom of speech is arguably our most valued and prized liberty as Americans. It is the fundamental groundwork for which our democracy functions.

Free speech is a necessity for representative government, education, truthful journalism, and so much more. Our founding fathers noted its importance, protecting it with the First Amendment to the Constitution, "Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech." However, this does not mean that the value of free speech and how speech is "defined" has been left unregulated and undiscussed.

"Free speech is very important. It is particularly important in today's political climate. With the degree of polarization in our country, it is vital that people utilize their right to free speech and use their voices to promote change, on both sides of the political spectrum," Talia Kunin ('21) said.

Censorship in the United States can be dated back to the Sedition Act of 1978, which al-

lowed the government the right to prosecute anyone spreading "falsehoods" about its institution.

Even after outright sedition was repealed, the Constitution still prohibits speech that incites violence as well as that which directly slanders another individual or institution according to the United States House of Representatives Archives.

Nevertheless, despite the tumultuous history of free speech in the United States, one of the most relevant aspects of this issue today is employee free speech in the workplace.

As with many elements of civil liberties, the protection of free speech only extends so far as speech made in a public forum, outlet, or at a federal government managed institution. Private companies however, under U.S. law are permitted the right to censor and even fire their employees as they please on the grounds of their speech.

This justification

comes largely on the basis that employee speech is a reflection upon the companies themselves for how they present themselves as well as the opinions they are voicing. However, there are degrees of protection that employees are granted under the National Labor Relations Act.

Under this legislation, employers cannot fire an employee on grounds of their discussing wages, unlawful conduct in the workplace as well as other conditions of their employment. In many cases, this employer regulation of speech can extend to digital platforms as well, with institutions regulating their employees social media activity and other online content. according to shrm.org.

"As a teacher, your speech is limited because of your position educating students. We are not allowed to talk to students about our political or social views and we cannot post about them if we allow students to follow us on social media. For social studies teachers this is actually really important because it helps us differentiate between telling kids what they should believe and how they should form their own opinions," Ms. English, said.

This issue is becoming more and more relevant with the platform provided by social media for expression of opinions on controversial issues.

The controversy between the National Basketball Association and the Chinese government is a clear exam-

ple. It began when the Houston Rockets General Manager, Daryl Morey tweeted "Fight for freedom, stand with Hong Kong," condemning the Chinese government's stifling of protesters advocating for democracy in Hong Kong. In response, the Chinese government shut down all NBA affiliated offices until the NBA issued an official apology.

In order to combat China's threat, Adam Silver, the commissioner of the NBA, officially condemned the GM of the Rockets, clarifying that the NBA did not stand with Morey's opinions.

According to foxnews.com, although China subsequently opened up relations with the NBA again, the company is seeing the possibility of major deficits as a result of the controversy.

As an American and a public figure in particular, Daryl Morey rightfully used his platform to stand up against the powerful Chinese government's oppression, particularly given his league and team's affiliation with the country.

However, at the same time, the dilemma put the NBA in an extremely difficult position as they were forced to take a stance that would appease their employees and American consumers or face a loss of the 500 million dollar annual profit that results from their NBA China league.

According to foxnews.com, much of the manufacturing and production for the league's products also takes place in

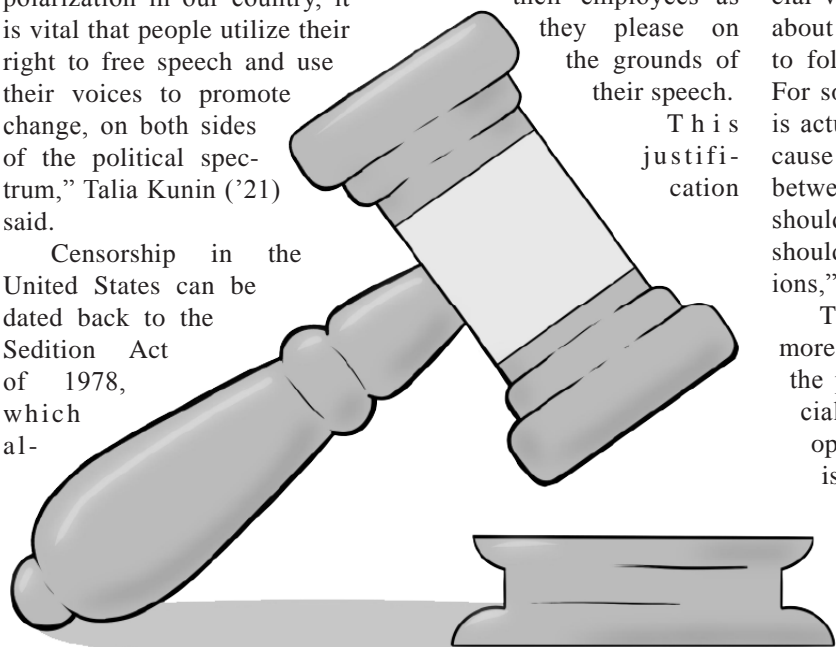
China, and this controversy could have risked the loss of that industry as well.

This situation is just one very recent example of how tenuous employee speech and employer regulation of speech can be as an issue. Every individual, no matter where they work, should be entitled to speak their mind as they please and use their platform, as in the case of Daryl Morey, for good, without facing repercussions from their employers. However, a lack of disclosure on the part of employees delineating who they are speaking on behalf of, can lead to significant confusion and necessary damage control on the part of employers. Had Daryl Morey disclosed that his opinions did not represent that of the NBA or the NBA had regulated his online activity from his official account, the company would not be facing a possible 500 million dollar deficit or the possible layoffs of its affiliated employees.

"Workers should really have the ability to voice their opinion, especially in situations where they could possibly be impacted either directly or indirectly. That is why employer limitations of employee speech have to be regulated," Tejas Juware ('20) said.

As a result, it is critical that both employers and employees alike define the lines between workplace conduct and speech and that of their private lives to ensure that they still have the liberty to say what they wish while also protecting the company's bottom line.

Graphic by **Angela Ramirez** / Graphic Designer.



The World Depends on our Leadership

Column by James Gerard

James Gerard
Columnist

The crises our nation has faced brings name to all those who have found peace in an atmosphere of war. To be a figure that ends conflict, disarms enemies, or extends a helping hand to less-formidable allies in dire need, proves the character that citizens are oftentimes deprived of: leadership when it is needed most.

To comfort both factions in foreign conflict is an action many people consider unresolving: you cannot desire both war and peace, both arms and diplomacy, or both brinkmanship and isolationism. But, in finding a middle ground or moral necessitation across the

battlefields requires such a disciplined mentality, that it scores significantly well for leaders by any reputable political scientist.

Whether or not you believe the Cuban Missile Crisis was a causation of John F. Kennedy's own actions, it is evident that the problem of a nuclear presence was rapidly evolving in Cuba. Kennedy's grace under pressure had helped invigorate the need for a diplomatic solution.

This contrasts Nikita Khrushchev's leadership, where he insisted Russia's preponderance over the United States, and most every other country, in his infamous United Nations speech where he disrupted a decolonization summit and yelled out defiantly, "we will bury you."

The Cuban Missile Crisis

represents a time in our nation's - or the world's - history, where the safety of each state depended on one good leader. Because of this, Kennedy saw his public image rise markedly, and his approval rating jumped from about sixty-two percent up to over seventy-five percent.

Leadership earned him a successful presidency to most, and even with the disruptions over whose fault it ended up being, no intimidating president would have escaped Russia's hunger to put itself in a position of ascendancy over the United States.

This, of course, is not the only instance of great leadership in times of crisis, but it had the best results and consists of the most polished confection between two styles of leadership,

and which one prevailed.

In today's day and age, we see the United States' brinkmanship clashing with brinkmanship abroad. As powerful and potentially destructive as this route is, it triumphed during the Cold War in the 1980s with Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev.

It is hard to determine whether or not President Donald Trump can find channels of peace in North Korea, as negotiation is in the early stages and proves a grueling road ahead, but to bring such a maniacal tyrant as Kim Jong Un to the table is an accomplishment in its own right. To triangulate peace between them and South Korea, that is history.

Whether or not you believe the current leadership is satisfying its role in global diplomacy,

we need to realize the extent of our influence. From Kurdish and Syrian wars to tension in Turkey, strong diplomacy is required to administer foreign threats. It is with this drive for peace that we test the character of our leaders, and whether they can defend our country or flounder under pressure. That test is well under way for our current president.

As a nation we find ourselves indebted to great leaders. Men and women who have dedicated their lives to protecting ours earn their honor, and we always tend to favor them. When the world is on the brink of decimation, and the clock is ticking, global leaders turn their heads our way. It takes courage to monitor these crises, but history never forgets that sacrifice.



Performance should not decide the paycheck

Hailey Balouch
News Editor

Paying teachers based on student performance is an unfair plan which would exacerbate socioeconomic divide. Such a policy guarantees that children of lower-income homes, as well as immigrant children, will receive a lower quality of education. Furthermore, teachers in disadvantaged communities would have lower salaries regardless of their ability.

Research performed by Dr. Betty Hart and Dr. Todd Risley of the University of Kansas confirms this.

According to education.com, the amount of words spoken to a child up to three years old affects their grades in elementary school. Those who hear 30,000 English words or more a day as young children receive better marks in third grade, as indicated in their research.

This study confirms that children whose parents are fluent in the English language have a better chance of raising students who thrive in grade school. This places students whose parents are not fluent in English at a disadvantage, as their parents can not converse with them in English.

Communities with less English fluency are often immigrant communities. These communities would be avoided by quali-

fied teachers if grades determined salary, as the children's grades are lower. Such a policy would ensure that teachers gravitate towards English-fluent regions of the country, where the most qualified individuals would be selected to teach. Immigrant communities would consistently receive teachers with less expe-

rience, unfairly diminishing the quality of education received by immigrant children.

Responsiveclassroom.org reports that "students with involved parents are more likely to have higher grades and test

scores, attend school regularly, have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school."

This means that parents with lenient work hours are more likely to raise children with good grades, as they have more time for involvement.

Children in high-income

homes are more likely to have a stay-at-home parent, whose involvement would therefore allow their child to receive better grades. If teachers were paid based off of student grades, teachers in wealthy communi-

ties with high levels of parent involvement would be paid more. This results in increased divide of educational quality between wealthy and working-class regions of the country.

"Although teachers can help students to a certain extent, their speed of learning is out of their hands," Jove Luna ('22) said.

be lower. Furthermore, classes with struggling students would receive teachers with less experience, as they would not be as requested due to undesirable salaries.

"This might motivate some teachers to be more invested in their students, although there is a trade-off that some students do not recognize that some classes may be too hard, or a teacher did not prepare them for the following year," Marissa Crevecoeur ('22) said.

Since socioeconomic factors contribute to grades regardless of actions taken by the teacher, educators in underprivileged areas would receive lower salaries regardless of their work performance. This is unfair, as teachers would be punished simply for existing in areas where students have smaller support networks.

Additionally, some may feel pressure to give their students higher grades, regardless of their abilities.

"It would be some kind of incentive to push grades higher. Grades are high enough and properly given by teachers now. Fairly, for the most part," Mr. Lukas, english teacher, said.

Educators should not be paid based on student grades. Academic success depends on a variety of external factors, which teachers should not have their salaries dependent on.



WORKING HARD Mr. Sarkar, computer science teacher, stays afterschool with AP Computer Science A student to help review course material.

Photo by **Anika Tandon** / Photographer.

Franki & Maddie Try to Change the World

Column by Maddie MacDonald & Franki Spinelli Mastrone

For the second issue, we chose to focus on Planned Parenthood and their role within the nation and our community. In all of our columns, we will discuss our view of each political party's opinion on the subject, and end with our own final viewpoint and thoughts.

In recent years, protesters have stationed themselves outside of Planned Parenthood in Stamford. They stand outside protesting against abortion and discourage individuals from going into Planned Parenthood for varying reasons.

Planned Parenthood is a healthcare provider for women all over the U.S. They provide STD testing, pregnancy testing, mammograms, cancer screenings, birth control prescriptions, and abortion care services. Planned Parenthood operates on a sliding payment scale for patients without health insurance. A patient provides an estimate of how much they will be able to pay for the treatment, whether it be 20 or 100 dollars, then Planned Parenthood covers the rest.

According to plannedparenthood.org, Title X is a public law that provides funding to help low income and uninsured families pay for healthcare. The organization received its government funding from Title X, and prior to the new legislation under the President Trump administration, received 40 percent of the allotted Title X budget.

According to npr.org, Planned Parenthood has since been pulled out of Title X because any healthcare provider that administers abortions or information about abortions is no longer funded by the law.

Democratic View:

Many Democrats believe that Planned Parenthood is crucial to the health and well being of individuals across the U.S.A. Many people donate independently to Planned Parenthood in response to its defunding from the Trump administration. People protest in support of the organization at demonstrations such as The Women's March, or Women's

March Alliance. It means a lot to people that the organization provides life saving medical testing such as mammograms, HIV testing and uterine and cervical cancer screenings. Many Democrats believe that the government should fund Planned Parenthood under Title X legislation precisely for that reason; it saves lives.

Republican View:

Over the course of 2019, the Trump administration has made changes to Title X, changing the organizations eligible for funding unless the organizations change their policies. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the rule changes will allow organizations to mention abortion but they will not be allowed to refer clients to receive abortions or refer them to places that promote abortion. Pro-life organizations have been fighting for many years for a separation between federal grants and providing abortions. Many of these organizations believe that the government should not assist organizations that provide abortions for their patients. Many pro-life groups are praising the Trump administration for following through with their campaign promises. Many Republicans hope that this will open up funding for religiously based organizations and organizations that counsel women against abortions.

Our view:

Planned Parenthood is a vital resource for women. The organization helps women from low-income households. Planned Parenthood becoming ineligible from Title X is denying many women access to free or reduced healthcare. While Planned Parenthood provides abortions, they also provide many other health and wellness services that positively impact lives all over America. The organization promotes sexual health for all sexual orientations and socio-economic groups.

Difference between a live and recorded concert

Ashley Shapiro
Staff Writer

For many people, listening to music is habitual. There is a debate about the proper listening experience. The argument is between those who prefer going to live concerts and those who would rather listen to their favorite artist from the comfort of their home.

There is an indescribable energy when one attends a concert with crowds ranging from dozens to tens of thousands of fans. The experience creates a lively environment for people who all enjoy the same artist.

"I prefer concerts over listening to music for two reasons. Firstly, music always sounds better live and it is a crazy experience seeing someone you admire in person. Secondly, the atmosphere of a concert arena is crazy. There are hundreds of people who love the same music as you and it feels like a family coming together and celebrating. I prefer to enjoy things I love with others. I would say that is the main reason I like going to concerts," Emily Morales ('20) said.

A live performance allows the artist to interact with the

audience on a more personal level. This allows audience members to see a different side of the artist. A live performance demonstrates the true quality of an artist without editing. This gives fans a better insight into any band or artist's chemistry and ability.

It is not uncommon for an artist to adjust their set-list on stage to play off the audience's mood. This helps create a personal connection between the artist and audience members.

Concerts and festivals add a different aspect to socialization. Attending a concert with friends can be a memorable experience as well as create lasting bonds. An entire day can be spent going to a concert or music festival.

"I enjoy going out with my friends and having fun at a concert rather than just listening to the album alone," Julia Reilly ('20) said.

The concert serves as an outing and activity rather than just a music listening experience. Seeing an artist one admires is a surreal experience for many fans.

"A lot of people will say going to a concert is better. Though it is expensive [when you go to a concert], people will get the experience if they

see their favorite music star or band. For example: going to a festival like Rolling Loud or Governor's Ball one will see stars like Da-baby, A\$AP Rocky, Lil Uzi Vert, Travis Scott, and more. When we see them in person we get that excitement, it is like going to Disney World," Mohammed Arsh ('20) said.

Listening at home allows for the most comfortable ex-

perience.

"Although going to concerts and listening to albums are very different experiences, there is something about listening to an album in the comfort of your own space or room and really just enjoying it," Anissa Jahaj ('20) said.

Listening to songs at home does have its benefits. The quality of the music is always at its best with no error. For

those sensitive to sound, listening to music at home allows the individual to control the volume. Listening at home also allows individuals to listen to their favorite songs and skip the one they are less interested in hearing.

The great thing about the music listening experience is that it can be customized to suit every music lover's preferences.



FEEL THE ENERGY People enjoy going to concerts because of the experience and energy

Photo courtesy of flickr.com.

Album Review: Kanye moves to gospel

Zoe Kallenekos
Reporter

On October 25, 2019, American rapper Kanye West released his ninth studio album titled *Jesus Is King*.

Inspired by a period of growth in his Christian faith, this project marked a significant shift in Kanye's musical style. In the span of this brief, 27 minute-long album, Kanye fuses rap, soul, and gospel to share his newfound appreciation and devotion for God.

Originally titled *Yandhi*, Kanye's ninth album went through drastic changes and a plague of missed release dates since the start of its production during the summer of 2018.

After postponing the project indefinitely in November 2018, Kanye formed gospel group "Sunday Service." Following an Easter performance at popular music festival *Coachella*, Kanye was inspired to begin seriously practicing his faith. This is reflected in the final product, which

has no explicit lyrics.

The final version of the album features collaborations from hip-hop artists such as Ty Dolla Sign, as well as Kanye's own Sunday Service choir. The highlights of the album are those which are comprised only of Kanye's vocals and samples of other songs. Tracks such as these provide a more personal look into Kanye's experiences and allow his creativity and artistry to shine.

"Follow God," was released as the first single on *Jesus Is King*. Kanye samples Whole Truth's 1974 song "Can You Lose By Following God," juxtaposing mellow soul against rap to recount Kanye's struggles to live a Christian life. The sample makes for a catchy hook leading into a satisfying beat drop back into Kanye's verse.

Another highlight on the album is, "God Is." It is one of the few songs on the album that has vocals all the way through. Backed by powerful choir vocals, Kanye takes a

moment to sing in praise, testifying of his recovery from struggles such as addiction and bipolar disorder through God's power.

Jesus Is King has received mixed reviews from critics. This split in opinion is evident in a score of 55/100 from *Metacritic*, which averages out scores from a large sum of public reviews.

"The entire album was definitely not my cup of tea but it was not awful. I would be willing to give it another listen and maybe my opinion of it will change," Lily Carroll ('20) said.

This wide variety of opinions could be found in Westhill as well. Kanye's reputation, marked by controversy regarding stances on political and social issues, dissuades many potential listeners.

"I enjoy the beats Kanye uses on the album. Regardless of his political views, he makes music that anyone can

vibe to," Joshua Charleston, ('20) said.

Others choose to separate Kanye's personal views from his art.

"For him to go the Gospel route was a very bold choice, and I give him credit for following his convictions rather than following where he thinks the most money will be," Mr. Curri, music

teacher, said.

Overall, this album is a worthwhile listen in terms of musical enjoyment. It gives listeners a window into the mind of one of the most interesting artists in the music industry. This album keeps things interesting and genuine, making for a short and sweet listen. This album gets a 3.5/5.

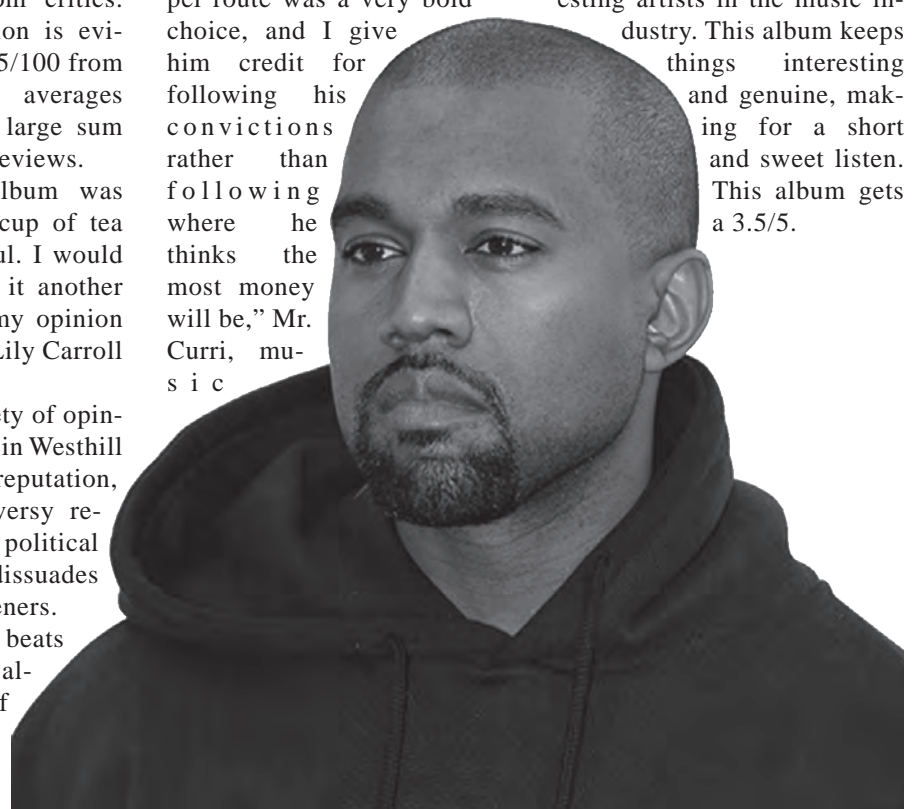


Photo courtesy of pixabay.com.

Most popular music genres today

Country

The rise of country music started in the 1930s in the southern United States. It was one of the earliest genres of music to emerge, and its style has influences ranging from folk music to church gospel. During this decade, country music was played with guitars, fiddles, bass, and the banjo. Some of the most well-known country artists today are Florida Georgia Line, Kane Brown, and Blake Shelton.

Rock

Rock music gained popularity in the 1950s when Chuck Berry grabbed his guitar and inspired people all over the world. He is known as "The Father of Rock 'n' Roll" and the inventor of revolutionary blues. Rock draws its inspiration from blues, jazz, alternative, and metal genres. Rock music utilizes instruments such as electric guitar, drums, bass, keyboard, and acoustic guitars. It continues to grow as a genre every day. The most famous rock artists to date are Panic at the Disco, Queen, The Beatles, and Twenty-one pilots. Rock has something different to offer everybody.

Rap

According to *The Rolling Stone*, rap began in New York City in the early 1970s, when DJ Kool Herc started experimenting with different types of sounds on turntables. Rap took off in 1979 when the Sugarhill Gang came out with the song "Rapper's Delight." Due to the popularity of this song, big record producers began noticing the genre. It is a genre that has always had an appeal towards teenagers and young adults. Over the years, rap has grown from artists like Jay-Z and Snoop Dog to AAP Rocky and Lil Uzi Vert.

Dance

Dance or electronic music has been around since the 1970s. It grabs inspiration from genres such as disco, pop, and blues. Electronic music is known to be played at events such as raves and discos. It is a great way to get people together to dance the night away. Today, there are many festivals dedicated to this genre and clubs that draw people in with its unique sound. Some of the most famous artists of this genre are Tiesto, Avicii, and David Guetta.

Alternative

Alternative music began in the late 1990s and has stuck ever since. It is a style of rock music within a more progressive sound. It can captivate listeners and draw them in. Alternative music differs from rock by breaking the norm. Some of the most well-known alternative artists are Coldplay, Green Day, and Weezer.

Girls' volleyball goes to states

Chloe Giulini
Editor-in-Chief

The Varsity girls' volleyball team has just completed their best season in years. The thirteen girls worked and trained hard to make it to the State Finals for the first time in over thirty-three years.

State games did not begin until after the FCIAC Championship. In early November, the girls hoped to take home the FCIAC Championship, but instead they fell 3-2 in the final game against Fairfield Ludlowe High School, taking second place again.

The year prior, the girls had lost in the FCIAC Championship to Trumbull High School, a team they battled to beat in this year's FCIAC semi-finals. They won in a five match set after being down 2-0. During the semi-final game against Trumbull this year, the girls were behind 2-0 and pushed through to win 3-2.

The girls' volleyball team is known for being incredibly close-knit. With multiple pre-game rituals, hanging out on and off the court, skill, and their exciting energy, the girls have drawn masses to their games.

Purple Pack, the student-led fan section for Westhill, has made an appearance at almost every game. Having such a successful team has helped Purple Pack reach its full potential. Their chants and empowering en-

ergy help support the girls as they work unrelentlessly. Up to one hundred students decked out in purple gear gather at home games to cheer on the team.

"Purple Pack energy during our volleyball games is unmatched by any other student fan section that we have faced. As soon as we score or win a match, our [Pack] erupts in cheers and maintains constant chants to cheer on our girls," Sydney McDonald ('20) said.

Before reaching the State Championship, the girls had to go back up against Fairfield Ludlowe after their tough loss in FCIACS finals. On November 20, the semi-finals were held at Darien High School, a neutral ground for both teams. Large crowds turned up for both Westhill and Ludlowe.

Westhill beat Ludlowe 25-13 in the first two sets. In the last set, Fairfield Ludlowe brought back the heat, but Westhill girls pulled through to win 25-23. A huge Purple Pack was there to cheer them on.

"We never felt better. We deserved it more than anything and could not wait to step out there and show everyone who the better team really was. There was no doubt in anyone's mind that we were winning that game and it just felt much better when we finally did win," Maddy Bautista ('21) said.

The year prior, the girls lost in the State semifinals against Amity High School.

This year, captains Betsy Sachs ('20), Sophia Thagouras ('20), Coach Marianna Linnehan and the six other seniors who played on the varsity team last year were thrilled to have the opportunity to finally make it to the State Championship.

"I am so proud to see how everyone is grown as a player and a person. We have been on the court together for years now and it is so rewarding to see all of our hard work pay off," Betsy Sachs ('20), Captain, said.

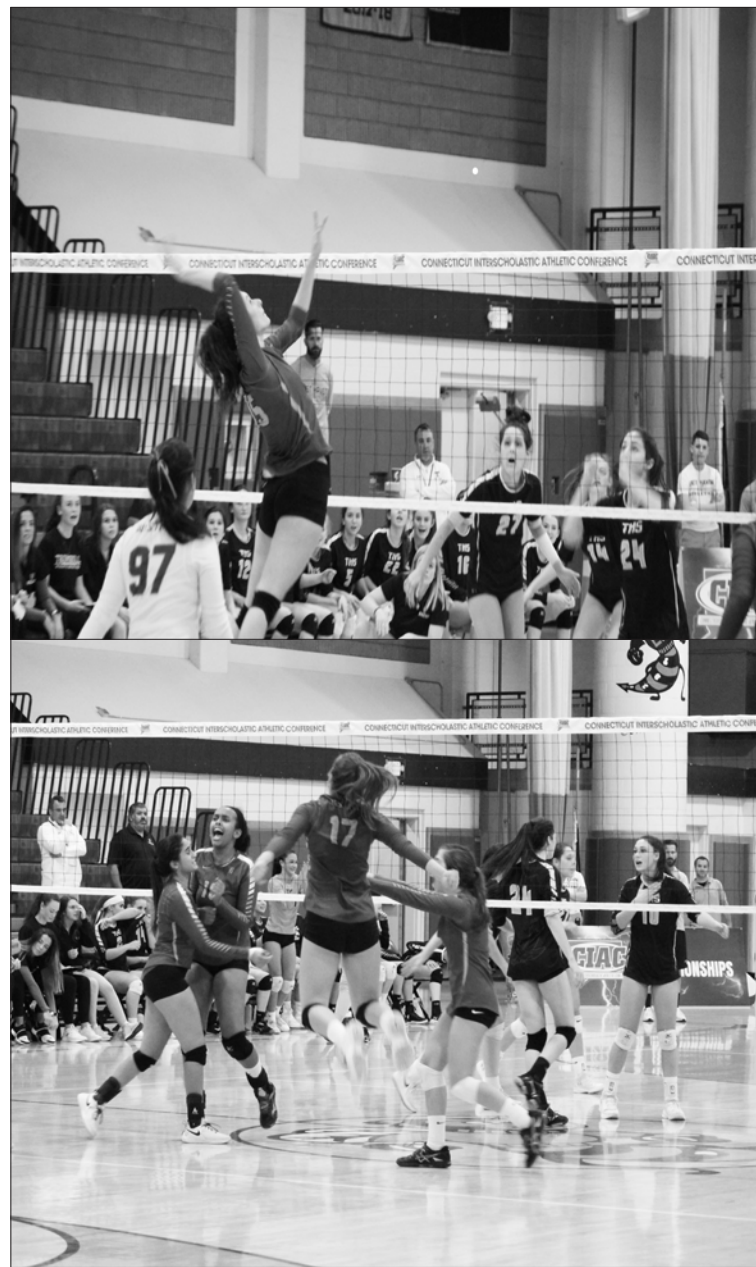
On November 23, at East Haven High School, the girls took on Trumbull yet again. The girls fell 3-0 against the Trumbull Eagles.

Regardless, the Purple Pack and the Westhill community could not be any more proud of the strong effort from the group of girls and their ability to place second in States.

Captains Thagouras and Sachs ended their season being named First All-State Players.

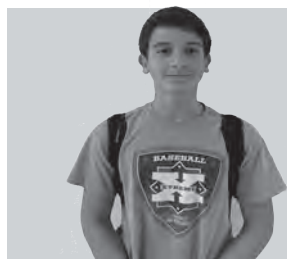
Juniors Vana Servos ('21) and Maddy Bautista ('21) were also recognized for their efforts on the team.

Despite a difficult loss, the girls are celebrating a successful season with their eight seniors, and hope for another great season next year.



STATES FINAL ROUND Westhill's face-off against Trumbull.

Photo by **Sydney Eben** / Photo Manager.



Max's Corner

Column By Max Savitt

The NBA season is finally underway, and there have been many surprises since the beginning of the season.

The first surprise is the Golden State Warriors' underwhelming start to the 2019 season. With star shooting guard Klay Thompson out for the majority of the season, and the departure of All-Star small-forward Kevin Durant, the Warriors' season is already filled with concerns. With the glue of their team and arguably the best point guard in the NBA, Steph Curry, going down with a season-ending hand injury, hopes for a good season quickly vanished for the Warriors and their fans.

Another surprise in the NBA season is that the two teams playing the best game as of now are the Boston Celtics and Los Angeles Lakers.

The Boston Celtics started their season with a 9-1 record on

top of the standings in the Eastern conference, while the Lakers started 9-2 on top of the standings in the Western Conference.

The Celtics are playing great team basketball and things seem to be clicking for them. They have three players averaging 20 points or more. These players are Jayson Tatum, Jaylen Brown, and star point guard Kemba Walker. The Celtics are playing with amazing chemistry and seem to be having a championship caliber season. Their record this year has improved tremendously compared to past seasons.

In the Western Conference, the Lakers are being led by dynamic duo Anthony Davis and LeBron James. The Lakers, who failed to make even the playoffs in the previous season, are now proving themselves as the top dog in the West.

LeBron James has started

off hot, averaging 24 points per game, eight rebounds per game, and 11 assists per game, showing people why he is still the best player in the league.

The Celtics and Lakers have not started off a season this intense since 2010, when the Lakers were led by Hall of Famer Kobe Bryant, and the Celtics were led by hall of famers Paul Pierce and Kevin Garnett.

The last surprising aspect to the start of the NBA season is Carmelo Anthony being signed by the Portland Trail Blazers.

The Trail Blazers, who had a stellar season last year, reaching the Western Conference and falling one series win short of the NBA finals, are not off to a hot start in the 2019 season.

In need of a spark this year, the Trail Blazers signed all-star veteran Carmelo Anthony to a non-guaranteed deal for the 2019 season. Anthony has not played

in an NBA game since November 8, 2018. His comeback to the NBA has been long awaited and will be very exciting to follow.

Moving on from the NBA, the NHL season has also just started. This year some players have made sure to take a step up from last year and are really showcasing their talent.

The players that have come out this season and have made the biggest impact so far have been David Pastrnak of the Boston Bruins, Leon Draisaitl of the Edmonton Oilers, Auston Matthews of the Toronto Maple Leafs, Alex Ovechkin of the Washington Capitals, and Connor McDavid of the Edmonton Oilers.

These guys have started the season hot, and they do not seem like they are going to slow down anytime soon. These players have helped their team out so much that the Oilers, Capi-

tals, and Bruins are some of the best teams in the NHL thanks to these players.

Despite other teams' successes, the team in the NHL that has played the best as a team so far, and are my bold prediction team to win the Stanley Cup are the New York Islanders.

The Islanders started off the year strong with 13 wins in their first 17 games, including an 11 game win streak. The Islanders are led by head coach Barry Trotz, and he has the Islanders playing a great season. With great team defense and young star Mathew Barzal, the Islanders have proven themselves early on.

I believe that the Islanders, led by mastermind Barry Trotz, can really be a dark horse in the race for the Stanley Cup. Keep an eye out for a more in-depth analysis of winter sports in the next issue.

Bautista has her team's back



KEEPING AN EYE OUT Maddy Bautista ('21), in the Libero position, is always ready to dive for the ball.

Photo by Jayden Lesser / Photographer.

Vana Servos

Sports Section Editor

Maddy Bautista ('21) has devoted herself to volleyball for the past three years. She works non-stop to balance multiple AP courses, the struggles of junior year, and being the starting libero of Westhill's Varsity volleyball team. The Westword was thrilled to sit down with her to find out more about her everyday schedule on the court and the success of the team this past season.

The Westword (TW): When did you first start playing volleyball?

Maddy Bautista (MB): My first time playing volleyball was in seventh grade for the Turn of River Middle School team.

TW: Why did you decide to try out for Westhill's volleyball team?

MB: I decided to play volleyball because I was the kid who wanted to play every sport and volleyball was the only sport I had not tried yet. All of my friends thought it would be fun and we decided that we would try out together.

TW: How does it feel to be the starting Libero as a junior?

MB: Being the Libero as a junior is an honor. I know that I play a big role on the court and that my team needs me to be there for

them, so I have worked very hard throughout the past three years to earn my spot on the court.

TW: Was it difficult going from being the starting Junior Varsity (JV) to Varsity Libero of the team?

MB: It was not difficult making the transition from JV to Varsity because I had been a floater on Varsity the year before, and was already used to the tempo and intensity of the Varsity games.

TW: Can you describe your Libero position?

MB: The Libero position differs from the rest as it follows an irregular rotation and substitution with the middle hitters. They control the front row while the libero is in charge of the back row. Indication of this player to the referees is the different colored jersey.

TW: How do you balance junior year with the demands of the sport?

MB: The demanding volleyball schedule actually helps me with my time management. It is pretty easy to balance out school with practice and games as it forces me to do my work whenever I can, instead of leaving me with time to procrastinate.

TW: How is the team doing this season?

MB: The team is doing great. We are having one of the best seasons ever as a volleyball program. We are Division Champions, FCIAC Runner-Up, and, hopefully, we

can finish it off with a CIAC LL State title.

TW: How would you describe your relationship with your fellow teammates?

MB: The relationship between us is one of the main reasons as to why we are as successful as we are. We all love playing with each other and our chemistry on the court is a lot stronger than that of most teams. We all share the same athletic and academic goals and interact well with each other both on and off the court.

TW: Was there a student that graduated that you looked up to on the team?

MB: As an underclassman, I looked up to Nina Bakuradze ('19). She graduated last year in the same class as my brother, so we had already been friends, and she played the same position as me. She was a great teammate, friend, and mentor who always did everything she could for the team.

TW: How do you think the team will be next year?

MB: I think the team will be pretty good next year once we build up our chemistry, as it will be a very different set of players. That is because this year we have eight seniors, six of which are in the starting rotations. We have a couple of girls already practicing with us and others who are willing to work hard, so it is going to be exciting to see what we can do.

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