

The Westword

Student voice of the Westhill community

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

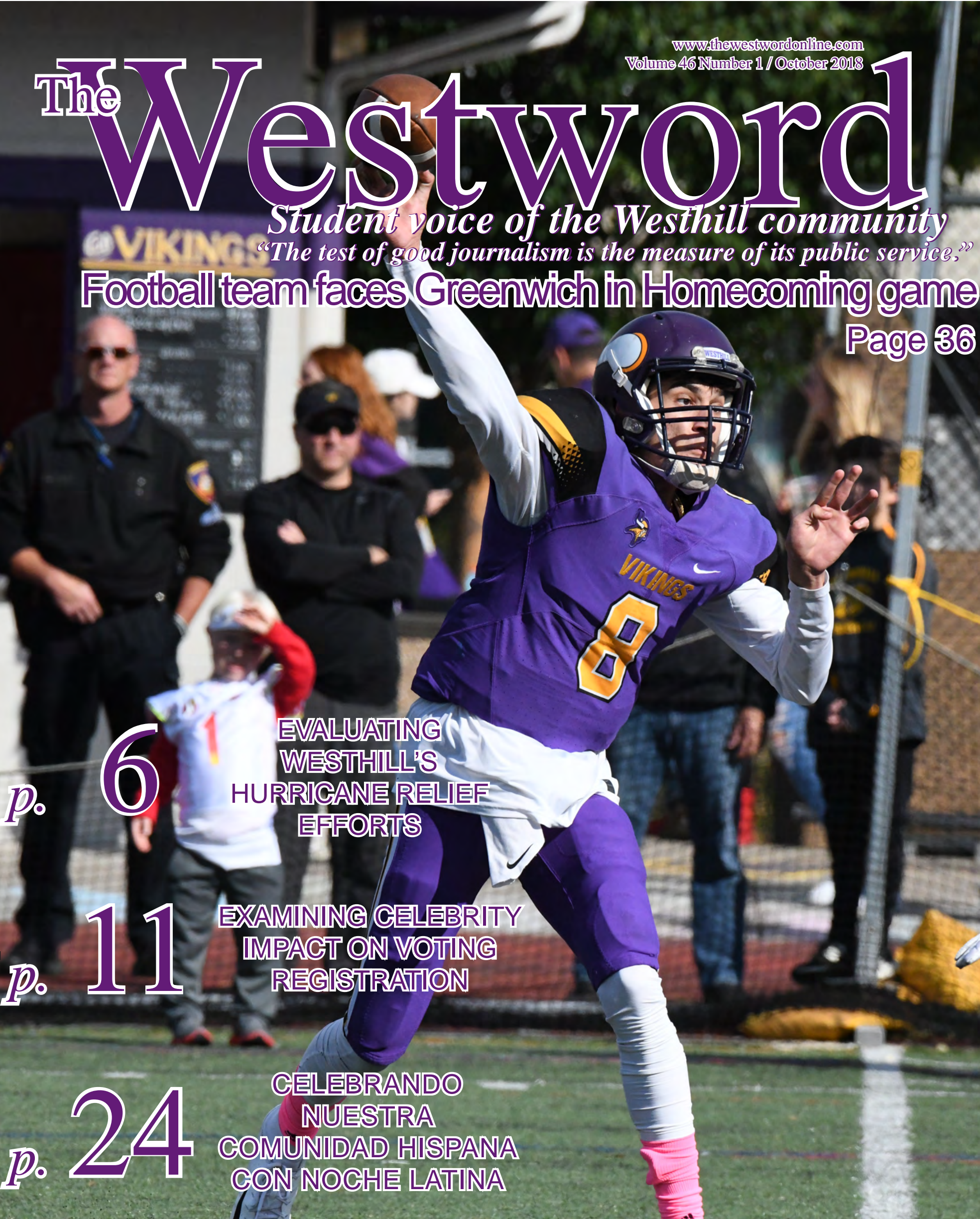
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The Westword

2018-2019 Staff

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Dear Readers,

Welcome to the first issue of the year, we are very excited to get back to work and look forward to another year of serving as the student voice of the Westhill community.

Our Editorial this month discusses why students cheat and the reasoning behind it. We also examine teacher's opinions on cheating.

News highlights changes around Westhill such as the new app and media center renovations. In Viewpoint, we express opposing opinions on the voting age. Additionally, we cover the usage of Donor's Choose by teachers.

Continuando con Las No-

ticias, nosotros reconocemos la diferencia entre Hispano y Latino. This issue, Special Report sheds light on climate change issues and Connecticut news.

This Supplement insert delves into changes and insight to the movie industry, including inequality in the film industry and the change in movie ratings overtime.

Feature contains information on all of the new staff members at Westhill. There is also this issue's Artist of the Month, Paola Gonzalez.

Limelight reviews *Suncity* by Khalid and *The Hate U Give*. Find the Page of Fun and information on in-school food options in Scatterbrain.

In Sports, discover our article highlighting issues with the softball and baseball fields, and our Athlete's of the Month, Colin McLaughlin and Niamh Keogh.

Online we continue to bring news from the community: 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 Addison Magrath's mailbox in room 224 or emailing us at westwordwhs@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Addison Magrath & Rachel Plotzky
Editor-in-Chief & Executive Editor

Editorial Policy

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

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

Announcements

The Westword has been named as a 2019 Crown Finalist by the Columbia Scholastic Press Association (CSPA).

Corrections

The Westword has no corrections at this time.

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

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Visit ourschoolnewspaper.com/Westword
to view our print archives.

Why we cheat

It is estimated that 59 percent of high school students have cheated on an assessment during their educational career. 34 percent of students admit to cheating more than twice on such assignments, according to plagiarism.org.

However, these statistics were self-reported by students. The real numbers may be much higher due to students potentially lying. These statistics evoke the looming question: why do we cheat?

It is no mystery that there are benefits to cheating. If all goes well, high marks are received by the student and they are content with the result. On the contrary, if they are caught cheating, students face grave consequences. Depending on the teacher, consequences may range from a stern lecture to a zero on the assignment.

This idea of high risk, high reward entices some students, but discourages others. In interviewing students, it became clear that not all have the same definition of cheating.

"Cheating is when you know something is dishonest, but do it anyway," Kara McLaughlin ('19) said.

Another student agreed with McLaughlin's idea of dishonesty.

"[Cheating is] writing the answers down on your arm or copying someone else's [answers] during tests," Richard Pierre ('20) said.

Even though students' definitions differed, the consensus among students in why they cheat was to achieve a good grade without an intense effort to do so.

"[Students] are either lazy or they just do not care and are willing to do anything to pass," Andrew Guerra ('20) said.

While some students thought cheating was a byproduct of laziness, other students pointed to different reasons as to why cheating exists at Westhill.

"People cheat because they are stressed, do not have time to do homework or study or feel like they are not smart enough," Savannah Madar ('21) said.

The crucial question of why we cheat has a great deal of depth. Some believe it is due to disinterest or not caring for education, while others say it is due to immense pressure on students to be perfect, cheating acting as their release valve in moments of intensity.

According to oedb.org (Open Education Database), 95 percent of students do not get caught cheating, so they feel no need to stop no matter what their reason for cheating

ing may be.

No matter the motivation, students agree that cheating is employed in hopes of high marks.

When teachers were asked what they consider cheating, they mainly conceded with students in their definitions.

"Cheating [is] anything that is not your own work and something you are taking credit for," Mrs. Mirontchik, math teacher, said.

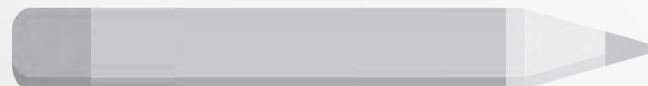
Some teachers believe that there can be other issues a student may face when deciding to cheat on an assignment.

"[Students cheat on assignments] either because it is an insecurity, they want to get an a hundred or laziness," Mrs. Manning, math teacher, said.

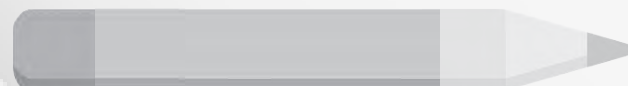
In agreement with Mrs. Manning, other teachers believe lethargy is the culprit to blame in the

(HEAT SHEET

70.8% OF WESTHILL STUDENTS SURVEYED ADMITTED TO (HEATING



64% SAID THEY WOULD (HEAT AGAIN



Poll conducted by **Bella Vaccaro** / Pollster.
*Poll out of 350.

cheating epidemic.

Some teachers are now taking measures to deter cheating, even on homework assignments.

"In my class if there is copied homework, both students get a zero," Mrs. Wheeler, English Department Head, said.

Such attempts are effective in lessening cheating among students, but it does not help them understand why cheating is wrong.

"I see more deliberate plagiarism in my Advanced Placement class than in my College Prep class, and I think there are some students unfortunately for whom it has become a belief in [that] the end justifies the means," Wheeler continued.

Students have become more preoccupied with their Grade Point Average (GPA) than genuinely learning the material for their own education and betterment. This mindset allows them to more easily condone themselves in cheating, even students in high level courses as Mrs. Wheeler described.

Teachers' responses differed from that of their students. They missed the critical point: students

cheat for more reasons than passivity and unpreparedness.

In a study conducted by oedb.org, students who cheated had an average GPA of 3.41, while non-cheating students only had one of about 2.85.

Cheating may be due to the pressure and stress put on a student, especially one of a higher caliber. The fear of not feeling good enough about oneself drives cheating. However, so does loss of a student's attention.

Cheating reaches all levels of students, in every class, in every school, including the Westhill community.

Why we cheat is important, but not as essential as why we should halt our cheating as a student body collectively. We must all make more moral decisions for ourselves in the future, no matter if it costs us the grade.

Photo courtesy of [pixabay.com](https://www.pixabay.com).

BOTTOM LINE: (HEATING IS MORALLY WRONG AND SPRINGS FROM THE DESIRE FOR GOOD GRADES.

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

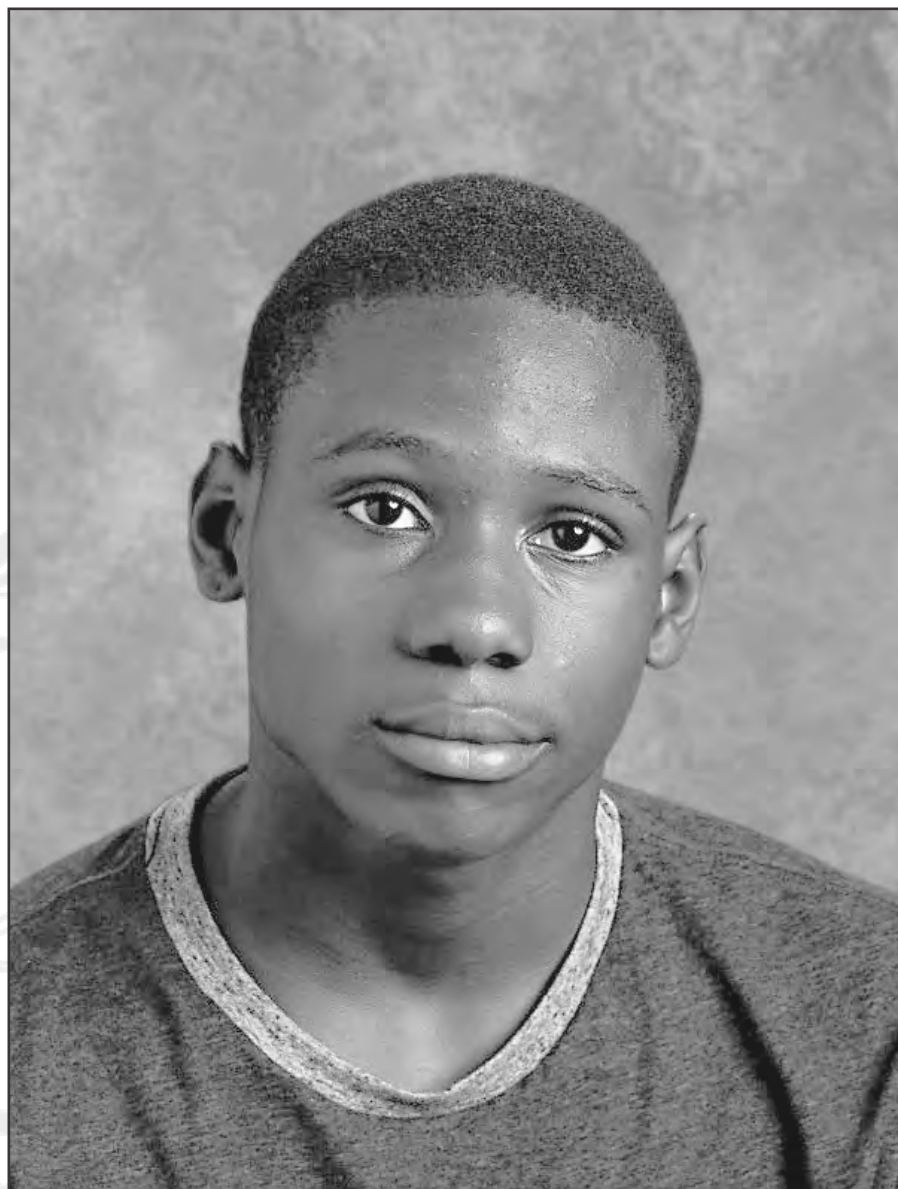
In Loving Memory ... Marcus Hall 2001 - 2018

Marcus was loved by many, and kind to others even if he did not know them. He was the type of person to make anyone's day with either a joke or a simple hug and conversation.

Marcus also was one that loved to do things others would not dare to try. From backflips off of bleachers to skateboarding so skillfully, he was very determined to show others he was fearless and bold.

Marcus Terrell Hall, your memory will forever live on. We love and appreciate you for being the person you were and you will forever be engraved in our hearts.

—Armani McCollum ('19), Nariya Jones ('20), Janetxy Morales ('19)



Marcus was a beloved student and an inspiration to his peers and friends. His memory will live on with us in the Westhill Community.



There has been a tree planted and dedicated to Marcus in the courtyard. The dedication took place on Marcus's birthday, October 30. Family and friends were invited to join the ceremony. The tree will last as a reminder of Marcus and how his community came together to support each other and honor his memory.

"Marcus fully embraced his future and was working toward finishing high school and pursuing college, which was his ultimate goal, as expressed in one of our last conversations. Marcus appreciated the small things in life and was a constant source of encouragement to his true friends. I admired his love for skateboarding and his desire to go pro."

—Ms. McKenzie, English teacher

"Marcus always had a really big smile on his face, he was one of the only people that I saw that was constantly saying 'hi.' He was a really good kid and could always make me laugh."

—Aliyah Carson ('20)

Improving Westhill one step at a time

Madison Thibodeau

Staff Writer

Students, faculty, and parents are closely watching the Westhill community further develop. Many additions and improvements have been made to the school in the past year to increase spirits within the Viking family and encourage inclusivity.

Principal Rinaldi, once a Viking himself, has taken his experience as a former Westhill student to develop a new plan intended to improve the student experience. This plan is called the Strategic Student Engagement Initiative (SSEI), and it stresses the importance of students enjoying their own unique experience at Westhill.

"I want students to be greeted at the door and addressed by their first name in every single class," Rinaldi said.

Rinaldi further explained that the focus of SSEI is positive student-teacher engagement. He hopes that teachers will con-

nect more with their students and will in turn increase comfort within the school, as well as keeping students focused on their studies. Rinaldi believes it is crucial that students feel comfortable enough to participate in their classes.

Rinaldi has informed the school and committee that the Lip-Dub will be an annual production as long as he is principal at Westhill.

"You can see the school spirit that Rinaldi brings every day, and that is probably the greatest change that [could have been] made [at Westhill]," Nikki Newcomer ('19) said.

One of the most recent changes is the media center renovation. The first phase of renovation has been completed; there are now three improved class spaces, several new tables and chairs, private table spaces, and even couches for students to utilize as work spaces.

"There is [still] a lot of rearranging that needs to be done. The couches were just placed

there and we are not sure where to put them yet. There are still some adjustments that need to be made," Mrs. Letson, Media Center Specialist, said.

Compared to last year, the space is more modern and comfortable, but it still maintains an ambiance in which students can sit and focus.

Mrs. Letson also touched on how the media center is now much harder to monitor, but sees that students seem to be enjoying the renovated media center and are still able to balance their studies and socializing.

Another recent change is the enhanced Public Announcement system on the back football field. This is especially new for the upperclassmen who can vouch for the previous system that lacked volume on the field.

Rinaldi was able to show off this improvement to the entire school at the pep rally on October 19.

An upcoming improvement is the installment of a ramp in the courtyard to make the area

completely accessible for students and teachers of all needs.

"There are not too many ways for handicapped students and teachers to get around except the ramp [outside the Finch office] and the few elevators located in the school. Adding a ramp in the courtyard is yet another great accommodation [that will] be made," Dominic

Plateroti, Head Custodian, said.

In the first two months of the school year, Rinaldi's improvements are evident. Westhill's main goal is cultivating a safe learning environments for students.

Students, faculty, and parents are eager to see what other plans are in the making for the next few years.



NEW AND IMPROVED The media center has just finished the first phase of renovations.

Photo by **Isabella Nuzzo** / Photographer.

New developments at Mill River Park

Sam Harris

Reporter

Mill River Park in downtown Stamford has been named a "Great Place in America" by the American Planning Association. The APA is an organization mainly composed of urban planners working together to create a more inclusive environment.

Mill River Park is in the heart of Stamford, and it is hard to miss when downtown.

"When driving downtown, I constantly pass right by Mill River Park. I have never taken the time to stop, and walk through," Joe Brennan ('20) said.

The park originated as a 1997 restoration project started by previous Stamford Mayor, Dannel Malloy. Improvements to the space have accumulated over the ensuing years.

He created Stamford's first urban master plan, one which detailed the idea for a park along Mill River.

With the restoration completed in 2005, the green space has become seen as integral to the functioning of urbanized Stamford. Its recognition as a "Great Place

in America" has only brought more attention to the myriad of recreational opportunities available to any Stamford resident, and by extension, any Westhill student.

The Mill River Park Collaborative has had, and will have other recreational options including free movie nights, playgrounds, mother-child bonding activities, educational walks, and weekly fitness classes.

"I am hoping to eventually take the time and visit the park. It is located in a great area, and I could sit there and study," Tejas Juware ('20) said.

Although the park is located in a very busy part of the city, it is peaceful once inside. Individuals can be found reading their books and painting on the benches or near the river.

On the outskirts of the park, many families visit the carousel. It is located indoors, but the

huge bay windows allow for the perfect view of the rest of the park.

Although the park's recognition has increased, some students may not have had the chance to take advantage of Stamford's high-quality public works.

Mill River Park has a lot to offer Stamford teens, Westhill students in particular. It is natural to assume that the park will only grow in relevance to daily life in

Stamford due to the vibrancy of both its attractions and patrons.

"I am surprised that this is not a more popular hang out spot. Hopefully it will gain the attention of more high school students this year," Cole Cooper ('20) said.

The park is accepting donations to keep its events free and its environment clean.



URBAN OASIS Mill River Park's latest additions in downtown Stamford, including a fountain.

Photos by **Cailey Koch** / Photographer.

Westhill lends a helping hand

Chloe Giulini
Managing Editor

Since the beginning of the school year, numerous hurricanes have destroyed communities around the world, including many in the United States. Westhill students and staff have shown determination to reach out and help those in need after these disasters.

In previous years, multiple clubs have gotten involved with hurricane relief programs.

This year, the Westhill Feminism Club hosted a feminine hygiene drive with all products donated to the Hurricane Florence victims.

The club worked in collaboration with *I Support the Girls*, a non-profit organization based in Texas. *I Support the Girls* was initially started to collect lightly used bras for homeless women.

“[The Feminism Club] put flyers all around the school asking for any donations. The only thing that we asked was for the products to be sealed. We were pleasantly surprised with how many donations we received,” Mrs. Dunsmore, club advisor, said.

At the end of the drive, over 60 boxes of feminine hygiene products had been collected, along with other various products.

Normally, the Interact Club at Westhill is the first club to take on hurricane relief drives, and lend a helping hand. However, this year, Interact was unable to create any relief program so far.

This past year, Ms. Berkley, social studies teacher, stepped down from the advising position of Interact. Due to this, the club was focused on getting a new advisor before they organized any new events.

Ms. English, social studies teacher, has now taken on Ms. Berkley’s position, and has planned multiple events for the upcoming months.

“I hope everyone over 17 [donated] blood at our blood drive [on October 25] and everyone should keep an eye out for the Thanksgiving Food Drive,” English said.

Last year, Interact was very involved with donating to Hurricane Harvey as well as Hurricane Maria. The club collected money through online links on Facebook

as well as food and goods.

Some teachers offered extra credit when students donated to their donation boxes in classrooms. Many students took advantage of this opportunity to raise their grades.

Some students were willing to donate, not just because of the extra credit, but also because it made them feel part of a community and that they were making a difference.

Interact also had a large role in the CaribeProm. Funds collected from the admission tickets were donated to relief programs with the goal of helping Puerto Ricans still struggling from Hurricane Maria.

To reach students, flyers are posted all around the school, and many clubs use their own social media accounts to reach the community.

“I made multiple posts on our Instagram to get the word out [about our drive]. It was a mixture of important information and fun behind-the-scenes pictures,” Teagan McDonough (’20), Social Media Manager of The Feminism Club, said.

Many of the school’s club’s social media pages have racked up hundreds of followers. These pages are used to keep their members updated, but also get the word out.

Promoting the Hurricane Florence drive appeared to be more effective with this platform

due to the large use of social media by high school students.

In the future, when natural disasters occur, students should feel confident that Westhill will get involved. Westhill prides itself on how much it cares for its students and the rest of the community.



FILLED TO THE TOP The final box of donations for the Feminism Club’s hygiene drive is filled up.

Photo by **Chloe Giulini** / Managing Editor.

Unexpected changes in the courtyard

Ruby Streett Apicella
Staff Writer

When walking into the courtyard on the first day of the school year, students and faculty noticed that many of the courtyard benches had been removed.

The school administration made the executive decision to take away the courtyard benches next to the 300s because they were a distraction not only to students, but to the faculty in the lower floor of the Raynor building.

“The benches attracted many students to that side of the courtyard, and there was no way to control the noise they created,” Mr. Capriotti, Math Department Head, said.

Faculty who teach in these classrooms view these adjustments as a positive change, as now there is no space for students to sit and intervene during lessons.

There are still chairs that remain in the courtyard, but there are not as many to allow the disturbances there were last year.

“Kids look out the windows and into the courtyard while sitting in the 300s classroom,” Mr. Plateroti, Head Custodian, said.

Plateroti added that it is a distraction from students’ schoolwork, and that the school does not plan on adding any more seating in the courtyard outside of the

Raynor building.

Although the school is not planning on purchasing additional seating, they are planning on putting a handicap ramp on the opposite side of the courtyard. This will allow for students and teachers who need such an accommodation to get around the school much easier.

However, the benches might not have fixed the noise problem entirely. Some teachers and students have hardly noticed a difference.

“In the midst of an AP Calculus test, I witnessed students in the courtyard shouting out another student’s name in my class because they saw them through the window,” Anneliese Ottinger (’19) said.

Although the benches may have been contributing to the noise, it had more to do with students standing outside the windows.

“I had classes in [the] 300s last year when the benches were still there, and the noise that came from outside was just as loud as it is now that the benches are not there,” Claudia Benz (’19) said.

As students disperse to the benches during lunch time, they disrupt the classrooms nearby due to the noise and the sight of them while other students were trying to learn.

Some students still stand in the same area outside of the Raynor building and distract students during class, but now they do not have benches to sit on.

Taking away the benches did not fully eliminate the problem, but it may have created an incentive to stand, talk, or stay somewhere else in the courtyard.



OUT WITH THE OLD Benches around these windows have been removed to try and reduce the amount of noise flowing into the 300s.

Photo by **Cailey Koch** / Photographer.

Good Month Bad Month

Column by
Sanjana Nayak
& Jessica Matloub



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

Donna Strickland Donna Strickland is the first woman in 55 years to win the Nobel Prize in Physics. Since 1901, when the annual Nobel Prize in Physics was first awarded, it has been given almost exclusively to men. Donna Strickland, an Associate Professor of Physics at the University of Waterloo, received the prize for her work on high-intensity laser pulses. Dr. Strickland shared the award with the French Physicist Gérard Mourou.



The Yankees The New York Yankees began October in high spirits having recently won the American League Wild Card Game for the second year in the row. The Yankees went into their third American League (AL) game enthusiastically but were left devastated with a 1-16 loss against their biggest rival, the Boston Red Sox. They went into their fourth game hopeful, but were defeated three to four. This decisive game took them out of the World Series.



The Royal Family Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, have plenty to look forward to with a royal baby on the way. Just prior to the royal couple flying to Australia for their first royal tour, the news of the pregnancy was announced. After hiding her pregnancy for the first 12 weeks, Kensington Palace finally revealed that the Duchess is expecting her first child in the spring of 2019. Additionally, other members of the Royal family have shared how thrilled they are about the news.



Harvard Applicants Unfair admissions requirements are being called to attention: Harvard University's admissions practices are on trial in Federal District Court in Boston, MA. The lawsuit accuses Harvard of discriminating against Asian-American applicants by changing aspects of its admissions process in ways that are difficult to comprehend. Despite accusations, Harvard says it does not discriminate against applicants of any race. Filing this lawsuit will help maintain equality for all students during the application process.

Ford Ford Motor Co. is investing 11 billion dollars into CEO Jim Hackett's plan to restructure the company in order to increase profitability. Though Ford seems confident in these changes, shares of the company have reached below 9 billion dollars, the lowest they have been since 2009. This plan is resulting in an unknown amount of job cuts within Ford's 70,000 workers. This plan will take anywhere from three to five years to complete in order to change the way Ford runs.



Florida Hurricane Michael approached Florida earlier this month as a Category 4 storm and was expected to hit land as the most powerful tropical cyclone in the United States this year. Authorities ordered evacuations as storm shelters opened and schools shut down. The storm moved along a path well predicted by computer models, but the aftermath could not have been predicted. Hurricane Michael was expected to reach Georgia and the Carolinas, including areas recovering from Hurricane Florence.

Westhill outreach expands with its own app

Olivia Butler
Staff Writer

At the beginning of this school year, the spirit committee at Westhill decided to expand its outreach by creating an app.

The committee decided that with the growing community at Westhill, they would have to get in touch with students in the best way they knew how: Phones.

The committee had the idea to create an app called "The Hill." When the students attend and check into a game, they can receive points that grant them prizes such as new spirit wear or free food.

The app informs students about upcoming sports and school related events. This includes rewards, a Fan Cam, student stores, social media alerts, and a link to thewestwordonline.com.

The Fan Cam allows students who were not able to make it to the game to see what is happening. The home page gives students quick information about events including school dances, spirit wear, and fundraisers that they can participate in.

The app offers unique rewards to the Westhill community to encourage them to attend the games.

Any flaws found within the app will be addressed in the upcoming update.

"I always forget to check into the event when I get there, and I think it should be done automatically," Madi Cortell ('19) said.

Many students admitted to forgetting to check in, because the first thing they focus on when they arrive is supporting their school.

"It is enjoyable to see more students participating in school events and they even get rewarded for their pride," Nina Bakradze ('19) said.

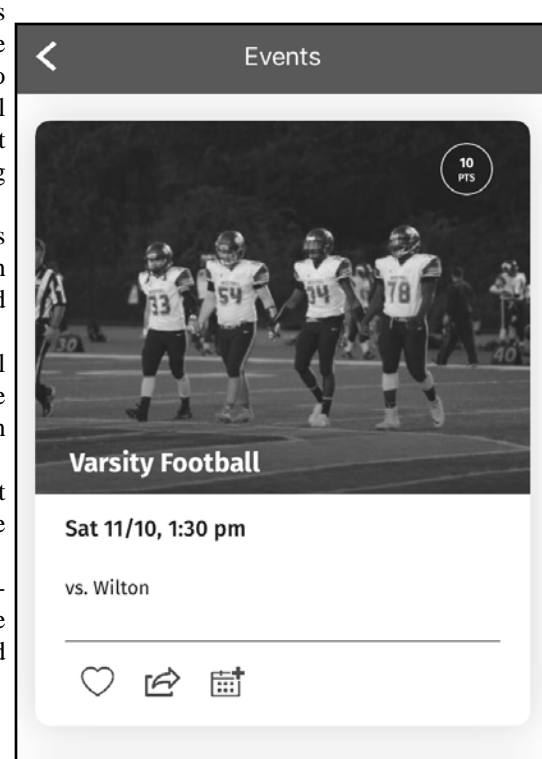
One of Principal Rinaldi's main goals is to engage the student body in school pride this year. Rinaldi wanted to find a way to easily get the word out regarding school pride, and encourage students to believe that there are benefits that come from supporting their school.

Not only does the app connect students with the school, but it connects them with each other, and that is the true purpose behind the app.

By incorporating the most used tool amongst high schoolers, cell phones, the committee was able to gain more attention from students.

"Bringing everyone together is hard, but when we are together, people can truly see the pride Westhill has," Rinaldi said.

The app has the potential to impact Westhill greatly by influencing students to be more involved in their school community, and to spread their school pride.



Should the voting age be lowered?

Lexi Boccuzzi

Reporter

Without question, proper representation in government is one of the founding principles of our democratic country. It is what allows our government to function as it was intended to, “by the people, and for the people.”

Representative government was one of the primary factors that pushed our founding fathers to seek independence from the British monarchy in 1776. As a result, the ability to vote is one of our most precious rights as citizens of the United States.

Nevertheless, throughout our history, this right has not always been granted to all. The original voting legislation limited this right to individuals of a very elite class; the property owning, white males.

Overtime, the Constitution was amended, giving African Americans voting rights in 1870 with the 15th Amendment, and allowing women to vote with the 19th Amendment in 1920. However, a strict restriction still remains intact on the voting age of 18.

“Every voice, no matter how young or old matters, especially

in government. I understand that people need certain qualifications for certain positions, but every voice should be heard. Right now the preferences of the average person have little to no impact on public policy,” Morgana Knopoff (’20) said.

If the last few years have shown anything, they have proved that Generation Z, who has been previously deemed as “self centered” and “ignorant,” is at the forefront of political and societal change.

Around the country, 16 and 17 year olds have been protesting, marching and speaking out for civil liberties in an effort to have their voices heard. Despite their extensive activism, these young adults are still being denied the natural right to vote.

“There has been a significant increase in student led organizations, showing just how ready young individuals are to vote and be active in their society,” James Grosso (’21) said.

Precedent has also shown the dedication and interest that the youth of America have in politics.

According to nydailynews.com, in Takoma Park, Maryland, 16 and 17 year olds were allowed to vote in local elec-

tions in 2013. This resulted in a voter turnout three times higher in that district compared to the total voter registration in the following two elections.

According to the *Washington Post*, countries like Denmark have shown the unexpected effects of lowering the voting age, where parents of voting age children were four percent more likely to go to the polls, a number that increased significantly when the ballot age was 16.

In our country’s voter turnout crisis, instilling Americans at a young age with an understanding of the value of each individual’s vote could change the course of American politics.

The primary argument made by those who oppose lowering the voting age regards cognitive development.

Teenagers are notoriously hot headed and emotional. Nevertheless, teenagers’ cognitive development is effectively developed by 16 and that gives them the capability to act as an educated voter.

Furthermore, by lowering the voting age to 16, high school students would finally have a say in the civic matters that affect them on a daily basis.

One of the most important responsibilities of the government is the education of its underage citizens in the public school systems.

Despite this, following our current suffrage legislation, no one of high school age is permitted to vote for representation in government. As a result, the people most affected by the current school systems are not even allowed to vocalize their opinions on how it should be managed.

“As teenagers, we still

represent acting citizens who use our civic systems, particularly the education system. By 16 we are responsible for paying income tax when we work, and yet we still cannot vote on how these issues are handled,” Tejas Juware (’20) said.

With the legal working age currently set at 16, teenagers are playing an active role in the economy. Along with this, they deserve the ability to have a say in how the economy is managed.

16 and 17 year-olds represent the future of the United States and will quickly become responsible for running the country as they take the place of older generations.

With that being said, these teenagers deserve the same civic rights as those allocated to their counterparts just two years older than them. Just like any other American citizen, 16 and 17 year olds should be provided the ability to voice their opinions on the issues that affect them and receive representation for their opinions in government.

Molly Cannon

Reporter

In 1971, after the Vietnam War, Congress voted 94-0 in favor of lowering the voting age from 21 to 18, creating the 26th Amendment.

This adaption of the law did not come about without just cause. If the United States could draft 18 to 20 year-olds, and deploy them abroad, then they should not be denied the right to vote.

It made sense for the federal government to allow those old enough to serve their country the ability to elect representatives in the government. The voting age of 18 has not changed since then.

When there was a need to grant those drafted the right to vote, the federal government did just that. However, today there is no justification that would warrant lowering the voting age any further.

“I do not feel that people below [the current voting] age are informed on how politics work. [Those below 18] will not take the time to look up who they are vot-

ing for, and they may not have taken government courses [that would guide their decisions]. You should not be able to vote until you know the people you are voting for,” Julien Matrullo (’19) said.

Becoming a legal adult comes with responsibilities, and voting is one of the most respected action an adult can make. It takes careful research when deciding who to elect, and many fear teenagers do not take it seriously enough.

“[The voting age] should stay 18, because you are considered an adult, turning 18, and are mature enough to make decisions for our country,” Sydney McDonald (’20) said.

American citizens 18 and older are called for jury duty and are given full legal responsibility for themselves as well as the right to vote.

There is no reason to allow those who still cannot make their own legal decisions, besides emancipated children, to be allowed the right to vote for federal and state government representation.

When it comes to their contributions



to civil society, children under 18 cannot yet partake in the roles that adults are required to. Most children below 18 have not experienced as much as adults, and are still being taught how the world operates.

“There is no reason why kids should be given the right to vote, but not be given any other legal adult responsibilities,” Ximena Vega (’20) said.

If our government believes that Americans under the age of 18 should be allowed to vote, then there could also be an argument to give them more responsibilities.

“The voting age should stay at 18 because people at that age, are old enough to experience the effects that voting can

have, and the consequences that not voting can create,” Caitlyn Tyrrell (’20) said.

If the voting age is lower than the age of legal adulthood, then the age you are considered a legal adult would need to be lowered as well.

Lowering the voting age would raise more issues than it would fix. This may even lead to a debate regarding whether a teenager should be recognized as an adult by an age earlier than 18.

Currently, there is no solid argument that would warrant lower the voting age. If the voting age is lowered, every American must anticipate the consequences that come with altering the legal age, and how it will ultimately affect our country’s future.

The dangers within YouTube

Addison Magrath &
Rachel Plotzky
Editor-in-Chief &
Print Executive Editor

YouTube can be a helpful tool for parents to utilize to keep their children busy while they are occupied. Videos can teach colors, the alphabet, or kids could even watch some of their favorite characters from shows such as “Peppa Pig” or “Paw Patrol.”

However, these fun and appropriate videos can soon spiral into a train of traumatic and shocking footage based on the children’s admirable characters. Certain YouTube users will attempt to go beyond the algorithm set in place to have their disturbing content seen.

The current YouTube algorithm is built to show the one billion users content that is relevant to their searches and previously viewed videos.

According to an article in the digital magazine *Octaly* about how to raise views using the algorithm, the more minutes that a video is watched, the more likely it is to show up in a user’s

recommendations.

However, some content producers can surpass this barrier. They trick the algorithm by using family friendly titles to get marked content as child-safe. This is how a child could go from watching a colorful cartoon to watching the same cartoon character in an inappropriate setting.

“YouTube needs to fix its algorithm so that [this] does not happen,” Franki Mastrone (’20) said.

Even if the algorithm were to be changed, there are certain negative impacts that could affect harmless YouTubers who just want to be discovered.

“It is kind of a slippery slope because it is hard to get rid of that feature. It is how channels get discovered. And [it is] hard to tell what will be inappropriate. [The algorithm] should be modified. However, it would be hard to control because [Youtube] is open and free,” Lilah Steinberg (’21) said.

Additionally, YouTube employees have a hard time monitoring all these posts due to the website’s magnitude.

According to quora.com, over 300

hours of video are posted to the site every minute, which makes overseeing all of it nearly impossible.

There are still precautions that parents can take to prevent these happenings. If parents think that these inappropriate videos are an issue, they can keep an eye on the screen to make sure this does not happen to their children.

“I have not had small children in a while, but to me the number one thing with small kids is that [while] your computer is at the kitchen table, you need to be there to see what they are clicking [on]. To me, going on YouTube is something you need to supervise like anything else,” Mrs. Tennent, math teacher, said.

Parents could still have full control of what their children are watching by monitoring their kids and adding appropriate videos to playlists. This, however, does not stop suggested videos that may be mature from popping up.

An example listed in an article about the dangers of YouTube for kids in *The New York Times*, mentions a three year old child watching a Paw Patrol

video, and what came next was the child crying, saying they were “scared of the monster.”

The video that appeared contained intense subjects such as demons and suicide revolving around the characters in the previous video the child was watching. This kind of content is not suitable for toddlers and this is something that YouTube should take full responsibility for.

These issues could also occur in the classroom. Even if an educational video is being shown on YouTube, teachers have to use precaution when projecting the video in front of the students.

“That has happened to me in the classroom. The ads will be inappropriate sometimes. Teachers need to preview the ads as simple as it may seem. You never know what is going to [come up],” Mrs. Nelson, foreign language teacher, said.

Whether in the classroom or at home, supervision is needed over the content on YouTube. The website should be fixing this problem from the inside out, starting with the users who are tricking the algorithm into exposing their content to children.



To take or not to take: AP classes

Ashley Shapiro
Staff Writer

With 38 Advanced Placement (AP) course options available at Westhill, most students interested in APs are able to find classes that interest them.

Still, the question remains: are they a college-bound necessity or a waste of time?

Many students at Westhill take AP courses throughout their high school journey. These classes have the reputation of rigorous course loads and long exams, but many students find that the benefits outweigh the necessary efforts.

Some colleges accept high exam scores as credit towards their majors, allowing ambitious

students to start college ahead of many of their peers.

“In a high school environment, it gives students a chance to experience college level rigor,” Mr. Capriotti, Math Department Head, said.

Students take a college level class, and at the end of the course take a cumulative exam on the materials learned throughout the year.

The exams are graded out of five. A three is a passing grade, but most colleges only accept fours or fives to supplement academic credits.

Many students enjoy the academic challenge of APs and use the classes as a way to build on the subjects they enjoy.

“I personally think it is worth

taking AP classes in high school because we are able to challenge ourselves. I take AP Spanish, [and it] has helped me expand my vocabulary and speak properly. I have also learned how to write a lot better and I know it is going to help me in the future,” Emily Morales (’20) said.

Teachers also encourage challenging oneself.

“[Students should definitely take APs], especially the writing [courses which help] in terms of writing development. I have seen juniors grow as writers in terms of skill, style and confidence,” Ms. Denninger, English teacher, said.

Despite its many benefits, the increased classwork has many students doubting their worth. AP

classes are generally more challenging and time consuming.

“If you take an AP, you have to put so much of your time into trying to pass the class in general, and when you take the AP test, you have to score a four or five to earn credit which is very hard to do,” Lisa Jagodzinski (’20) said.

According to *The New York Times*, on average only 19.5 percent of test takers receive fours, while only 13.3 percent of test takers receive fives on AP exams.

“If students take the course, pay for the exam and do not pass the exam, [they] have wasted time and money,” Morgana Knopoff (’20) said.

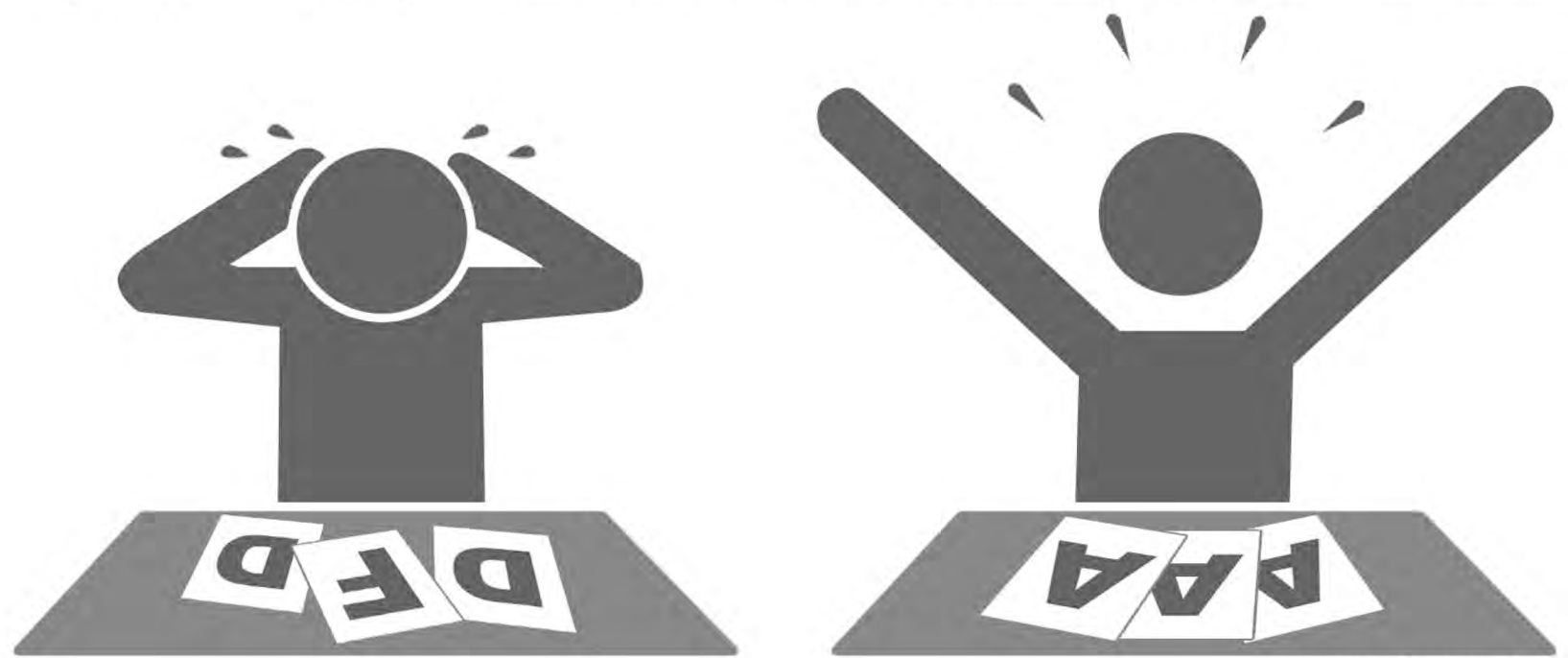
Many students find the summer work intimidating as well.

“I had a lot to do over the summer and I did not have time to do the work,” Simon Capuno (’20) said.

Many students argue that ECE (Early College Experience) courses through the University of Connecticut are the better option. This program guarantees students college credit transferable to many schools, providing they maintain a C average in the class.

“I do not think APs are worth taking but ECE’s are, because you are guaranteed the credit [with a C or above average]” Michael DeNardo (’19) said.

With the average cost of a single AP exam at 94 dollars, it leaves students wondering if the cost and effort is worth it.



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

Donors Choose benefits faculty

Evelyn Vasquez
Staff Writer

Donors Choose is a non-profit organization that allows teachers to request supplies to help enrich their students’ classroom experience. So far, this organization has funded more than 600,000 projects in the United States.

In 2000, this organization was started by a Bronx teacher, Charles Best, hoping to get books for his students. Best was trying to collect multiple copies of *Little House on the Prairie* for his classes.

Best designed a program where donors could find a project that interested them and

donate. The supplies would be gathered, and soon after, be sent to the school.

Donors receive thank you notes and a report of how the money was spent. Donations can either be materials sent in, or funds.

Within the website, there are ways to filter through categories to find which projects interest donors the most. Filters include age groups, supplies, and the amount of supplies or money needed. This makes the website user friendly and it also gives students the opportunity to have their own projects funded.

A student or group of students can design their own project

and have a teacher upload their project into the student-led section. This encourages students to team up with a teacher, and together work to help everyone in their class enjoy a more successful learning environment.

Many teachers in Stamford have been using this website to start up their own projects.

Ms. Perez, ESL teacher, asked for a laminating machine and a book binding machine to help her students make and publish books that would be shared with Roxbury Elementary School. Ms. Perez’s goal is to help her ESL students practice their English writing skills.

Mrs. Gallo, English teacher,

is also familiar with the organization. Her last funded project asked for privacy boards, noise canceling headphones, and microphones so her students can record their book club conversations. These tools help further the students’ ability to work independently and to work together in small groups.

Teachers spend large amounts of money every year buying supplies for their students. Donors Choose helps lift a weight off their shoulders by lending a helping hand.

“It is [not] fair that teachers have to look for outside resources to try to provide for their students because the schools can-

not fund them,” Ariana Azarbad (’19) said.

The school budget limits teachers in providing for their classrooms and these kind donations tremendously benefit the faculty.

“Thankfully, there are organizations like Donors Choose that allow you to get the resources that you want or need for your classroom without having to shoulder the financial responsibility,” Mrs. Gallo said.

Organizations like Donors Choose give the teachers an opportunity to become more involved with their students, and provide them with a better, more inclusive learning environment.

Celebrities boost on voter registration

Alyssa Goldberg
Reporter

Young Americans' involvement in politics has increased dramatically since the 2016 election. Its intensity and divisiveness has sparked the interest of youth on both sides of the po-



Taylor Swift uses social media to encourage her fans to vote.

litical spectrum.

Through social media outlets, information spreads faster and more easily, and people can use platforms that were not as easily accessible before.

In the upcoming November midterm elections, 35 seats in the Senate and all 435 in the House of Representatives are open for reelection. The importance of these elections have inspired various celebrities to encourage their fans to vote.

"In the past, I have been reluctant to publicly voice my political opinions, but due to several events in my life and in the world in the past two years, I feel very differently about that now," Taylor Swift said to her 112 million Instagram followers.

She revealed this statement on October 7, only two days before voter registration closed in her home state of Tennessee.

Despite usually trying to vote for female candidates, Swift told her fans that she would not be supporting Marsha Blackburn due to her previous voting record in Congress. Swift also urged her followers to register to vote, and endorsed Phil Bredesen for Senate, and Jim Cooper for the House of Representatives.

"Please, please educate yourself on the candidates running in your state and vote based on who most closely represents your values. For a lot of us, we may never find a candidate or party with whom we agree 100 percent on every issue, but we have to vote anyway," Swift said.

Young voters have been the drive behind a huge increase in registrations. Following Swift's statements, Tennessee saw a spike in voter registrations of about 6,000 people.

In 2018 alone, voter regis-

tration has skyrocketed. According to vote.org, close to 100,000 individuals between the ages of 18 and 24 have registered to vote, and almost 4,000 people under age 18 have registered.

"Celebrities have a huge fan base and they use social media and their influence to impact younger voters who do not usually vote. Like [with] college kids, if Kanye says go vote, they will go do it," Reynold Rene ('20) said.

On October 9, the last day to register to vote in 14 states, Rihanna posted a image on Instagram showing registration deadlines in each state.

"You have one job today and that is to properly register to vote. I do not care what responsibilities you have today, there is no greater responsibility than being in control of your future and the future starts NOW," Rihanna said to her 65 million followers.

Through social media, as well as political activism, the youth are influenced by the views of celebrities. When popular names support different political causes, such as *March for Our Lives*, young activists begin to stand behind the cause. Various celebrities spoke and performed at the March, therefore drawing in a younger crowd.

"Celebrities have an immense impact on citizens, especially during political events such as the midterm elections. As they retain a large fan base, and already have an influence on their voters, their say goes a long way," Hoshahnia Kumaran ('19) said.

These celebrities have used their platform to influence the views of their fans for, in their opinion, the betterment of our country and political environment.

Image courtesy of flickr.com.

OP-ED

Conflict surrounds Kavanaugh's appointment

On Saturday, October 16, the Senate voted to send nominee Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court Bench. Leading up to the final 50-48 decision, accusations surfaced from Dr. Christine Blasey Ford, Deborah Ramirez, and Julia Swetnick regarding alleged sexual assaults. The allegations are based on events occurring during the 1980s, and one anonymous accusation from 1998.

When it was announced that Kavanaugh was nominated for the position, Blasey Ford said that she felt the need to come forward and tell everyone her personal story.

Kavanaugh attended high school at Georgetown Preparatory while Blasey Ford went to Holton-Arms School for girls. She claims she was sexually assaulted by him at a party. Kavanaugh allegedly pinned her down and groped her while one of his friends watched.

According to Blasey Ford's testimony, after the sexual assault,

she made the personal decision to not inform others about what had happened. In the years following, she only told a select group of close friends, but never said a name.

Ramirez and Kavanaugh attended Yale University in the 1980s. Both of them were at a local party having a "good time" while both under the influence.

Ramirez claims Kavanaugh stood firmly in front of her face with his genitals out. Ramirez was shocked, as she recalls never asking for this to happen.

Additionally Senator Cory Grander of Colorado received a letter claiming Kavanaugh also assaulted a woman in 1998. The letter explained that a mother, her daughter and several friends had been out drinking, and as they were leaving, he pushed one of the friends up against the wall aggressively and sexually assaulted her.

These issues lack closure. With the poor support from the

White House, and the minuscule amount of time they allowed to investigate the allegations, they were not able to complete a full in-depth investigation.

"More backing should have been done with the investigation, and it could have gone a little more in depth. As with any official, the American population [should] want them to be law abiding citizens. If Kavanaugh was proven not guilty, I would have no problem with him on the court, but the evidence is just not substantial enough." Tori Morgan ('20) said.

With the lack of evidence and research to support either side, many people do not know whose side to believe.

When Kavanaugh was in front of the Senate committee, he appeared to be extremely uneasy. He dodged multiple questions, and his responses to questions were often very short and uninformative.

"The way he behaved in the trial hearing was not appropriate and is not the way a Supreme Court Justice should behave," Zoe Kallenekos ('20) said.

Many thought he should have been much more mature during such an important hearing.

Kavanaugh began talking about his background of excessive drinking and partying, and when asked if he has ever blacked out, he proceeded to ask Senator Amy Klobuchar the same question to avoid answering.

Kavanaugh used diversions, such as this one, to avoid deteriorating his image. Many people saw these diversions as defenses and did not hold anything against him.

"It is unlikely that he did do the crime, and he is a good candidate no matter his political party," Kinga Berent ('20) said.

Many believe there is not enough evidence to support any of the allegations, and regardless

of the accusations, the supposed events should not affect his nomination.

The possibility of finding any exact evidence is slim to none, and the events are so far in the past that his view of women could have changed by now. Kavanaugh has dedicated countless hours to the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit and dealt with many issues properly.

His appointment is protected by Blasey Ford's lack of evidence from the night of the assault. Since she sent a letter to Senator Dianne Feinstein regarding the alleged assault, she has been verbally attacked, including death threats.

Meanwhile, Kavanaugh is getting comfortable in his position on the Supreme Court Bench. Blasey Ford's accusations have either been taken as a joke or as a monumental step in the prejudice against sexual assault survivors.

—Francesca Rubino-Chuckas ('20)

Plastic bag ban in Stamford

Devonte Atwell

Contributor

In April of 2019, plastic bags will be banned and replaced with paper bags in Stamford.

The Board of Representatives for Stamford intends to implement this city-wide ban on plastic bags and charge ten cents for each paper bag used.

Businesses will then be given six months to prepare for this change.

If approved, this makes Stamford the third city in Connecticut, after Westport and Greenwich, to ban plastic bags. This ban, however, will be the first to charge for paper bags.

"I am in favor of banning plastic bags. We have alternatives that we can use. They are filling up landfills and oceans, and they will last even longer than I will," Mr. Pinsince, English teacher, said.

Plastic bags are lightweight and can be easily blown into trees, fences, or water, which can harm animals in various ecosystems.

According to earth-policy.org, the amount of energy needed to drive a car half a mile is equivalent to the energy needed to make about six plastic bags.

Most plastic bags are made up of polypropylene, which consists of petroleum and natural gas.

Since it is made out of petroleum, it does not degrade easily. It is broken into tiny pieces that are blown into the ocean. These pieces end up being mistaken by wildlife for food, causing many animals' deaths.

Plastic items, such as soda can holders, can become entangled with smaller animals. The rings can limit the mobility of their wings, fins, or feet, and prevent them from eating if it is wrapped around their neck.

Oceancrusaders.org reported that there are about 46,000 fragments of plastic floating in every square mile in the ocean.

Some marine life, such as sea turtles and fish, mistake plastic bags and other plastic materials for food and end up swallowing them. When these animals consume plastic, their digestive system becomes damaged, which leads to health infections and even death.

Plastic bags can be a problem to human health as well. When marine animals, such as fish, consume plastic, it stays in their body. Therefore, when humans end up eating that fish, their health is also affected, as they are consuming the same chemicals.

The recycling rate for plastic bags is around five percent. Banning plastic bags will reduce their usage and be-

gin to minimize the damage of plastic pollution, according to waste360.com, a waste industry trade publication.

"[A plastic bag ban] is a good idea because it helps the environment. They do it in Europe already, and it has been successful there. It is nice that they are doing the same in Stamford," Kristina Long ('20) said.

The Hartford Courant's website, courant.com, reports that about one billion plastic bags are used each year in Connecticut. Plastic bags are becoming a prevalent problem in recycling machinery. Towns are charged when there are too many plastic bags mixed with glass, paper, and other recyclable materials.

In spite of the many attempts to bring awareness to this issue, plastic bags continue to contribute to the world's pollution.

According to biologicaldiversity.org, plastic bags are used for an average of 12 minutes but they take more than 500 years to degrade in a landfill.

Paper bags are much less damaging to the environment compared to plastic bags, but they too have the potential to become an issue.

"I grew up with brown paper bags. I also raised my kids up this way. Instead of ziploc bags, for school lunch, we use wax paper," Mrs. Moncure, Fine Arts teacher, said.

Do you use reusable or plastic bags?

Reusable
55.2%

Plastic
44.8%



Despite the negative impact of plastic bags, they can be better than paper bags in some cases. Paper lasts longer, and takes up more room.

According to greenliving.lovetoknow.com, paper bags have been shown to take up nine times more space than plastic bags do. Due to this, plastic bags make up less than one percent of visible litter.

Reusing other bags instead of plastic bags, especially in warmer weather, can lead to the increase of bacteria. The bacteria from bags will not only spread to food, but also to shopping carts and checking counters.

This growing problem of plastic bags continues to be addressed in different cities of Connecticut. The processing of the new ban is a step in the right direction to combat the state's pollution. However, the outcome of the ban can be unpredictable, based on other cities' results.

The hopes of this new law are to decrease the state's contribution to ocean pollution and the dangerous health effects that plastic bags bring.

See thewestwordonline.com for tips on how to minimize your plastic usage.

New laws enacted in Connecticut

Leiny Otero
Staff Writer

Since October 1, all children under 15 must wear helmets while riding a bicycle, skateboarding, or roller skating in a law referred to as Conor's Law, according to usnews.com.

In 2016, a 14-year-old high school student, Conor Irwin, suffered a traumatic brain injury after not wearing a helmet and passed away.

Conor's mother did not want this to happen to any other families and advocated to have a helmet safety law bill pushed forward.

Currently, there are 75 new acts that Connecticut is trying to ratify, including mental health community investments, reports for motor vehicle

accidents involving fatalities, and an act concerning the fair treatment of incarcerated people.

According to courant.com, Connecticut lost 51 riders last year from motorcycle accidents. This indicated that further enforcement of rider safety was needed to protect the people of Connecticut.

A poll conducted by AAA found that almost 75 percent of Connecticut drivers would support a law that requires motorcycle or bike riders to wear a helmet.

"Universal helmet laws are necessary for every state because we are talking about the safety of all kids and adults. We want more people having fun and enjoying their time in nature, not in the hospital

getting stitches," Michell Rovelto ('20) said.

Another main act that was passed involves bump stocks and other means of enhancing the rate of fire on a firearm. When bump stocks are attached to weapons, they are able to fire at a rate similar to a machine gun.

The banning of bump stocks stemmed from the mass shooting in Las Vegas, NV, where the accessory was used to kill 59 people.

Governor Dannel Malloy signed this act at Bulkeley High School in Hartford, where Malloy was surrounded with support by solely democratic legislators.

"Bump stocks are so dangerous. I generally feel safe, but feel even more so now,

knowing that the Governor is banning things that will speed up guns," Deony Ramos ('19) said.

It is now considered a class D felony to sell, purchase or possess bump stocks, according to NBC Connecticut. Making having bump stocks punishable by up to five years in prison and up to 5,000 dollars in fines, excluding military personnel.

Another new enacted law banned the shackling of incarcerated women during childbirth, as well as requiring that inmates be provided with the proper products for their menstrual cycles.


"It is not fair at all to be a female inmate and to not have the basic hygiene products. And then to have to give birth tied up because they are in jail, that

is wrong and extremely unfair. I am grateful that these laws are being created to create change," Analisa Muniz ('19) said.


Another act that was passed concerned benefits for certain veterans who have been diagnosed with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury, or who have had experience of military sexual trauma.

According to the Office of Legislative Research Public Act Summary, this act extended certain benefits to veterans who suffered from mental health issues, and were not discharged for dishonorable reasons.

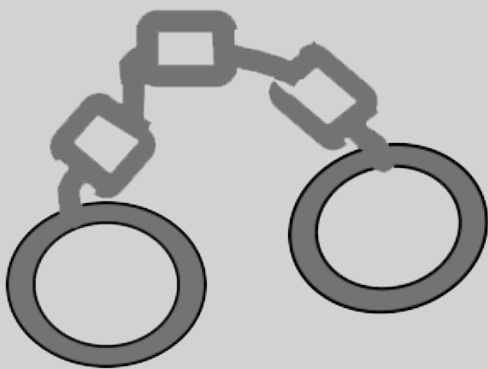
The new laws were put into motion with the intentions of bettering communities and creating a safer environment for all in Connecticut.



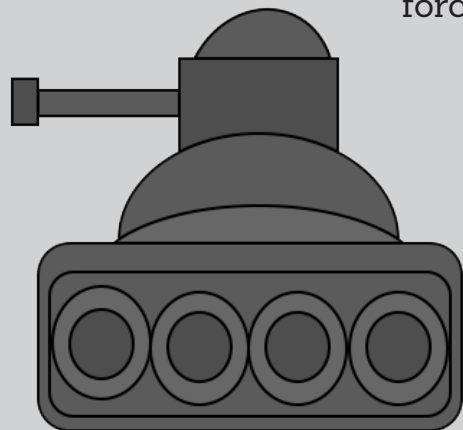
"All children under the age of fifteen must wear helmets when bike riding, skateboarding, and rollerskating."



"No person may sell, offer to sell, otherwise transfer or offer to transfer, purchase, possess, use or manufacture any rate of fire enhancement."



"Correctional staff of the York Correctional Institution shall not use any leg or waist restraint on any inmate of the institution who is known to be pregnant or in the postpartum period."



"Veteran" means any person... honorably discharged... or with a qualifying condition, as defined in said section, who has received a discharge other than bad conduct or dishonorable from active service in the armed forces."

The damages of climate change

More than a million species face potential extinction due to disappearing habitats, changing ecosystems, and acidifying oceans.

In 1910, Glacier National Park hosted over 150 glaciers. As of June 2017, there are only 26 left.

The Arctic region may have its first completely ice-free summer by 2040.

If everyone in the world lived the way people do in the United States, it would take five Earths to provide enough resources for everyone.



Humans endangering the environment

Alexandra Watkinson

Online Executive Editor

On October 8, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) delivered a striking report: the Earth is a mere 12 years away from a climate disaster.

According to CNN, “the planet will reach the crucial threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels by as early as 2030, precipitating the risk of extreme drought, wildfires, floods and food shortages for hundreds of millions of people.”

This report informs us that climate change is already in action.

“It is surprising that it has taken this long for someone to refer to climate change as ‘genocide,’ nothing is new, if [we] do not change our way of life and attempt at repairing our environment, we will cease to exist altogether,” Marcello Staiano (‘19) said.

Climate change stems from an overproduction of carbon dioxide. This gas is getting trapped in the atmosphere, which is, in

turn, warming the planet. Negative impacts can already be seen, such as rising sea levels due to polar ice melting.

According to *The New York Times*, “hard evidence, including studies that use radioactivity to distinguish industrial emissions from natural emissions, shows that the extra gas is coming from human activity. Carbon dioxide levels rose and fell naturally in the long-ago past, but those changes took thousands of years. Geologists say that humans are now pumping the gas into the air much faster than nature has ever done.”

To prevent more damage to the planet, there would need to be a decrease in greenhouse gas emissions, which is more difficult to achieve than it sounds.

From a political standpoint, President Trump has previously stated that he intends to increase the burning of coal, which increases the concentration of greenhouse gases, and withdraw from the Paris Agreement, an agreement signed in 2015 between countries in the United Nations (UN) to battle greenhouse gas emissions and

climate change.

“It is more important than people realize, and the government needs to take steps to make it a priority,” Zoe Kallenekos (‘20) said.

The current administration does not appear to prioritize climate change. The problem here lies in the fact that the United States is one of the top emitters of greenhouse gases, right behind China.

“The Trump administration has become a rogue outlier in its shortsighted attempt to prop up the dirty fossil fuel industries of the past. The administration is in direct conflict with American businesses, states, cities and citizens leading the transformation,” Al Gore, former Vice President of the United States, said.

The United States would also need to shift its main source of energy towards renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power.

However, much larger steps must be taken to avoid catastrophes.

According to *The New York*

Times, “to prevent 2.7 degrees of warming, the report said, greenhouse pollution must be reduced by 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030, and 100 percent by 2050. It also found that, by 2050, use of coal as an electricity source would have to drop from nearly 40 percent today to between one and seven percent.”

If these changes are not made, current “abnormal” weather trends will become the norm. During heat waves, temperatures will rise three degrees Celsius, or about five degrees Fahrenheit. Droughts will become more common in certain areas, and intense rainfall, such as in Hurricane Florence, will become frequent in others.

In addition, coral reefs will decay quicker, with an expected 70 to 90 percent across the oceans dying off.

“It is crazy that this is what it has come to, and that nothing has been done to prevent it in previous years,” Abigail Lupinacci (‘19) said.

This climate change report is daunting, but not surprising. There have been signs of climate change

for years, and little legislation has been put in place to prevent it, other than the Paris Agreement.

While this issue may seem too large to tackle on your own, there are many changes which individuals can make to prevent this event. The IPCC suggests that people could carpool, use electric cars, take public transportation, use energy efficient products in the home, and eat 30 percent less meat.

“It is good that the UN is addressing the major issue climate change has become so people realize the changes that have to be made to restore the climate,” Maggie Fritz (‘19) said.

To ensure that this rise in temperature does not occur, politicians must take steps toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

For now, everyone can start small by riding a bike to work instead of driving, or replacing hamburgers with veggie burgers. These would be small yet important steps in the right direction. This projection can be stopped, but only if action is taken.

Two thirds of the Great Barrier Reef has been damaged as a result of climate change.

Sea levels are currently rising at the fastest rate in over 2000 years.



Don't Enroll In The Wrong Driving School

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

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

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

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

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

THE HIGH RIDGE DRIVING SCHOOL ADVANTAGE

	Other Driving School Options	High Ridge Driving School	<div>FREE TEST DRIVE! Any student accompanied by a parent can sit in on one of our weekday classes absolutely FREE so you can get a feel for our school, our curriculum, and our teaching methods.</div> <div>INTERESTED IN ONLY THE 8-HOUR DRUG & ALCOHOL CLASS? We offer 16 & 17 year old students the chance to take just this class every weekend. (EXCEPT MAJOR HOLIDAYS) Always separate classes for teens and adults.</div>
Flexible Schedule	No, they schedule sessions that begin and end. So, if you miss a class, you might need to go to another town, or wait quite awhile to finish your training.	Our classes NEVER end. We teach in the classroom 52-weeks a year. In the summer we offer up to 3 classes a day!	
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.	
The Oldest Driving School in Stamford	No.	Yes, High Ridge Driving School has been locally owned and operated since 2005!	

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- Taking the Driving Test Here in Stamford • Having Ownership Local and Involved...

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The Westword

Supplement



Movie going the way it used to be

Shaira Sunbeam
Reporter

The innovation of technology has made enjoying films increasingly more convenient for consumers without being restrained to a viewing time or paying for movie theater prices and concession stand snacks.

According to businessinsider.com, movie ticket sales declined from 1.32 billion dollars to 1.24 billion dollars.

Going to the theater used to be a planned, sometimes formal occasion, as families would go together and teenagers would bring their dates. Now it seems like a hassle to most.

“When the whole dating

scene was going on, you would take your date to the movie theater and sit on the balcony,” Mr. Pinsince, English teacher, said.

How people watch movies is always evolving.

When motion pictures gained popularity in the early 1900s, theaters—often drive-ins—would charge around five cents to moviegoers.

Once watching movies at home became an option in 1965, those who could afford it would watch movie at home.

Then came the VCR and DVD era, which millenials have lived through.

However, the ability to watch a movie at any time on TV was life-changing, for the

older generations.

Blockbuster, a DVD rental store founded in 1985, thrived for a long period, as everyone went there in order to rent movies each week.

However in 2010, Blockbuster declared bankruptcy, due to competition with Netflix and other streaming sites.

As DVD and movie theater sales decline year by year, online streaming services are rising in popularity. Many prefer the comfort of their homes over the theaters.

“I do not go to the movie theaters, I do not find any interest in it. I would rather watch it at home than at a movie theater. The experience is the same,”

Catalin Medina ('19) said.

Netflix is now worth around 1.7 billion dollars, and is continuing to grow.

Furthermore, due to its affordability, many households are dropping cable and replacing it with streaming sites. These can be taken anywhere thanks to its compatibility with tablets, laptops, and smartphones.

“Now that technology has evolved, people do not go to the movies. I watch [shows] on my phone,” Flor Fabela ('19) said.

The development of streaming sites offers many economic benefits, but there are also tradeoffs. Theaters will always have the newest movies, while for streaming services,

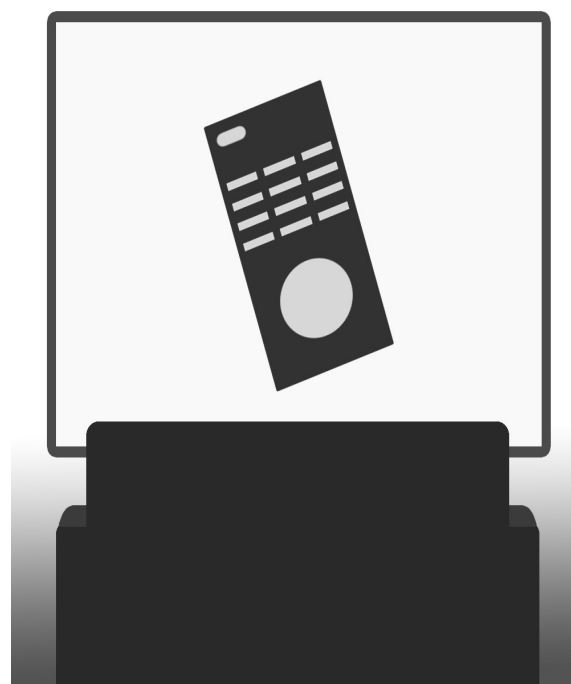
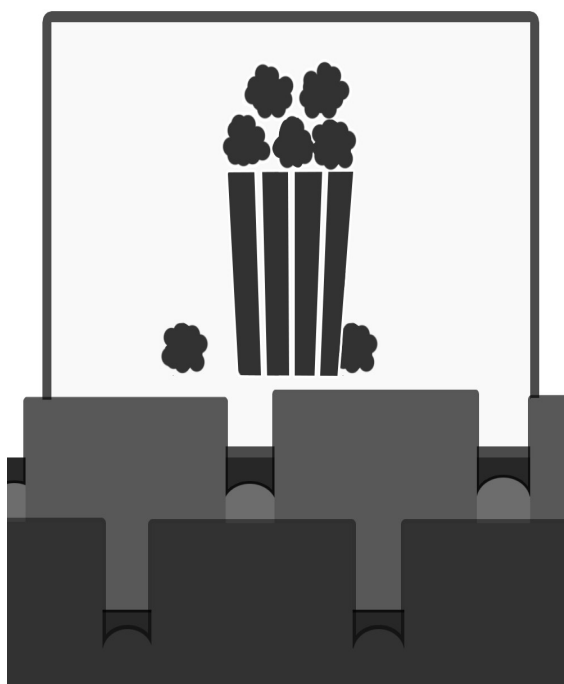
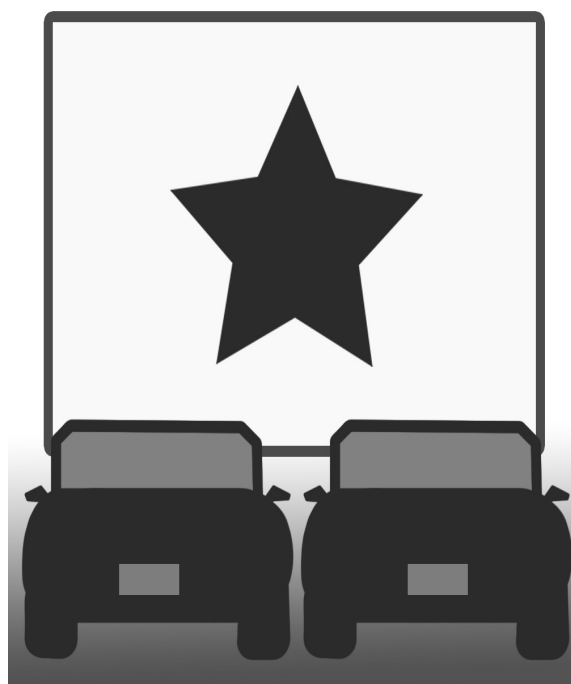
you may have to wait months, or even years, for the movies to be available.

However, Netflix frequently releases original movies that are not available in theaters, such as *To All the Boys I've Loved Before*, a novel adaptation.

In addition, unless someone has a home movie theater, the size of the screen might have an impact on how they watch the movie.

While there has been a definite decline in the movie industry's revenue, movie theaters are not yet on the path of shutdown. The historical changes in forms of moviegoing indicate that it will likely continue to change in the future.

NOW PLAYING



Movie ratings over time

Addison Magrath
Editor-in-Chief

Everyone has wanted to see a movie at one point that they could not get into because it was deemed inappropriate for their age. This is all thanks to the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), the organization responsible for America's film ratings.

Currently, the ratings are: G (General Audiences), PG (Parental Guidance), PG-13 (Parental Guidance suggested under 13 years of age), R (Restricted under 17 unless accompanied), and NC-17 (no one under 17 admitted), but it was not always like this. The movie industry has gone through different rating systems before the ones used today.

According to an article on gizmodo.com, "A Brief History of the Movie Rating System" by Matt Blitz, the alleged first case of film censorship took place in 1894 in a film called *Carmen-cita* by William K.L. Dickson. The film's featuring of a Spanish dancer, whose legs and undergarments were slightly revealed, caused certain locations to not screen the film.

In 1915, after major cities, such as Chicago and NYC, began rating movies to be adult-only and shutting down theaters playing what police deemed "reprehensible," the Supreme Court ruled that film would not be protected under the First Amendment. In other words, all films were subject to government censorship.

This led to the establishment of the MPAA in 1922. Their job was to warn filmmakers of what might be censored, such as religious ridicule, drug dealing, and sexual situations, to name a few.

"When the rating system was first created, we were much more conservative about our views on what could be shown on film, [including] nudity and violence," Emily DiGiacomo ('19) said.

In 1930, the MPAA began seeking approval from the Catholic Church through an organization called the Legion of Decency. After this point, movies began to receive lettered ratings, but their meanings then are far different from what they are now.

When filmmakers became upset with the amount of censorship and bad ratings given by the Catholic Church, they started producing whatever they wanted, diminishing the Legion of Decency's power in movie ratings. This prompted the MPAA to begin their own rating system in 1968. Some of the ratings that are

known today came about in 1968: G, M (Mature Audiences), R, and X (no one under 17). M was changed to PG in 1970 due to confusion in its meaning.

The PG-13 rating was brought into the list by director Stephen Spielberg. The movie *Jaws* (1977) was rated PG at the time of its release because it was not violent enough to be rated R. The same issue occurred with Spielberg's films *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984) and *Gremlins* (1984), which were both rated PG.

Spielberg suggested a PG-13 rating because of the gap between PG and R. The MPAA agreed with this, and first instituted the PG-13 rating for *Red Dawn* (1984). However, this PG-13 rating did not protect young children from violence for long.

According to a NBC News Study on violence in PG-13 and R-rated movies, violence in movies has almost quadrupled since the 1950s.

Violent movies from the 1980s, such as *Terminator* and *Die Hard*, were rated R. Now, films featuring a comparable amount of violence, like *Taken* and *The Hunger Games*, are receiving PG-13 ratings. Even though all of these movies are based on violence, over time, ratings have become less strict.

People that grew up watching movies before and after the changes in movie ratings have different opinions regarding the strictness of the ratings.

"[The MPAA] has greatly relaxed the language requirements for PG-13 [ratings], so in terms of language, what used to be an R would [now] be PG-13. [The] violence and language standard have been eased, so younger children are exposed to more sex, violence, and language than in the '80s," Mr. Denbaum, English teacher, said.

"More movies [are becoming] violent but I would say that the rating system is still fair," Erick Bustillo ('19) said.

Much has changed in the movie industry, especially the rating process, with time. This could all be due to what is focused on in society.

"Today, we are much more open about [nudity and violence] as a culture, so it is reflected in what we show on screen. We have become desensitized to violence because of the world we live in, so has the rating system to showing violence on film," DiGiacomo continued.

Movie ratings can be considered too strict or too lenient, it is all depending on the viewer and the current state of the world around them.

A GUIDE TO THE MOVIE RATINGS

G

**GENERAL AUDIENCES:
ALL AGES ADMITTED**

PG

**PARENTAL GUIDANCE:
SUGGESTED
SOME MATERIAL MAY
NOT BE SUITABLE FOR
CHILDREN**

PG-13

**PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED
SOME MATERIAL MAY BE INAPPROPRIATE FOR CHILDREN
UNDER 13**

R

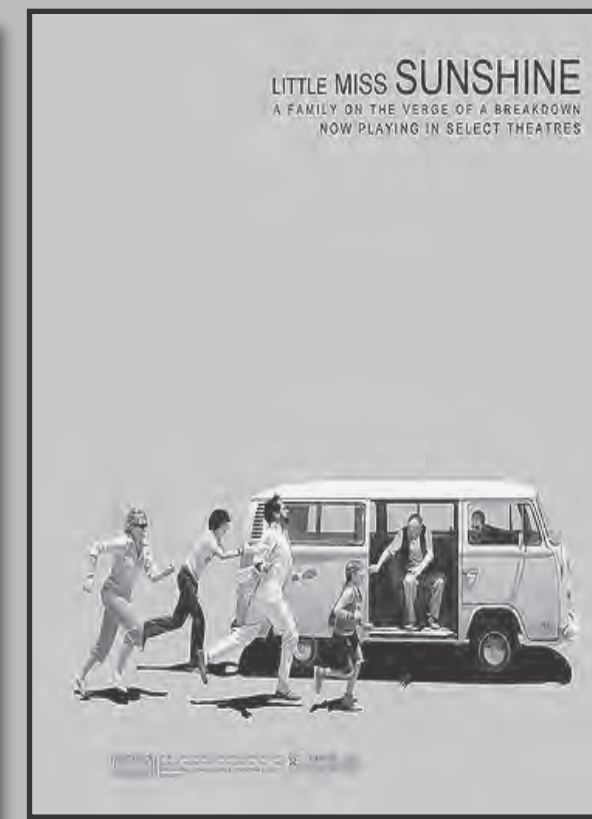
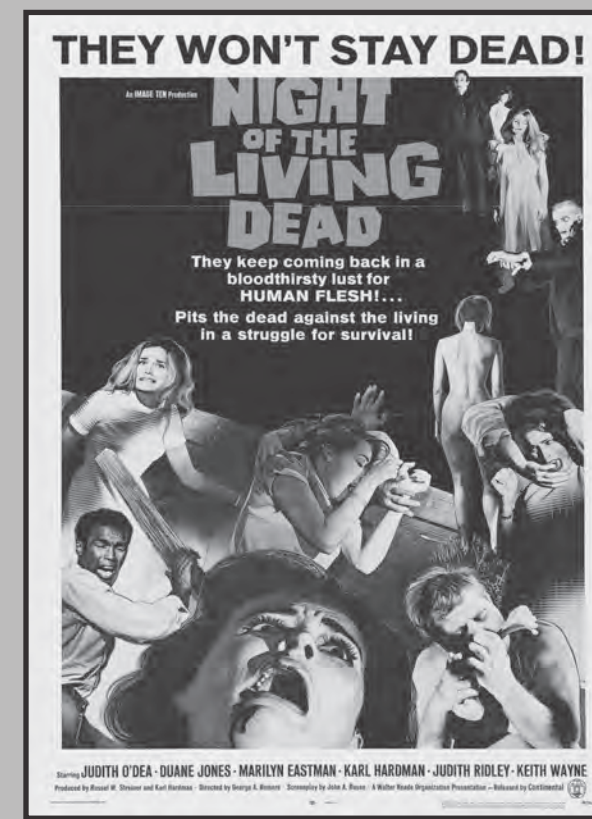
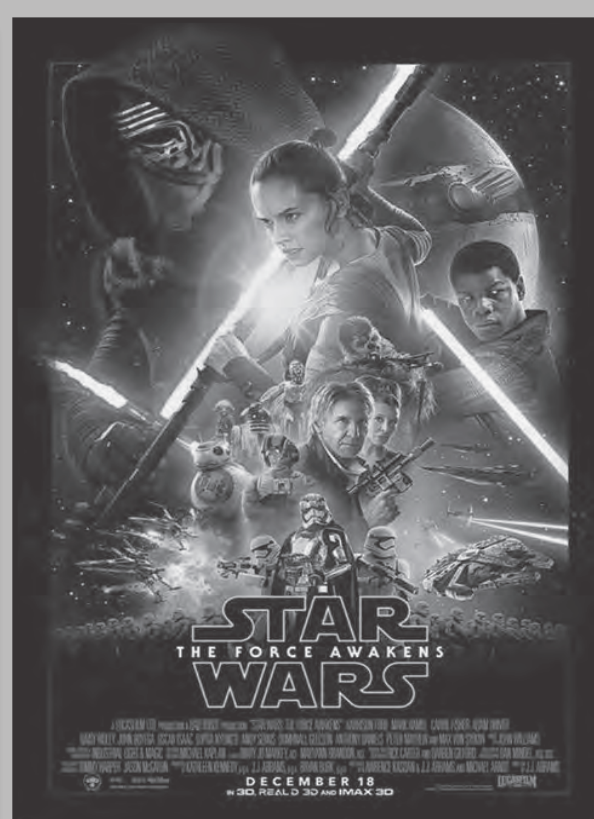
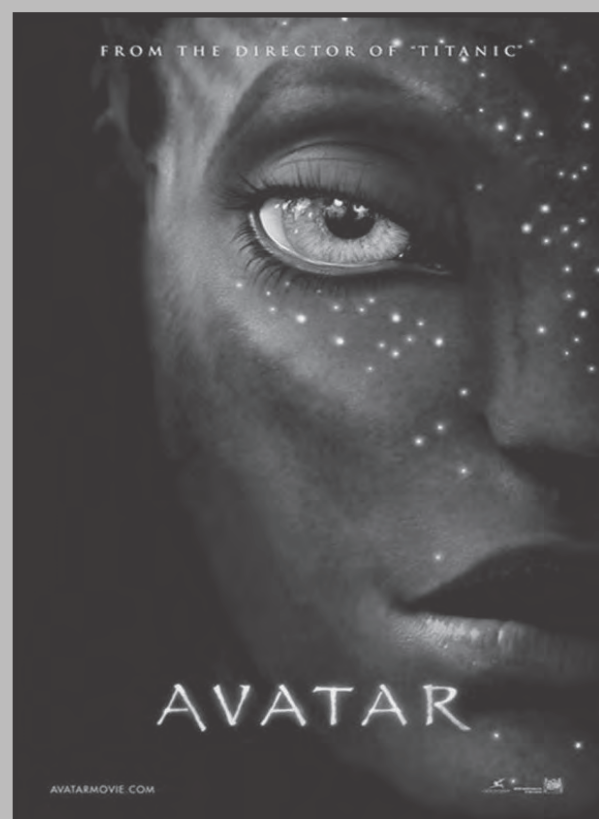
**RESTRICTED:
UNDER 17 REQUIRES
ACCOMPANYING PARENT OR
ADULT GUARDIAN**

NC-17

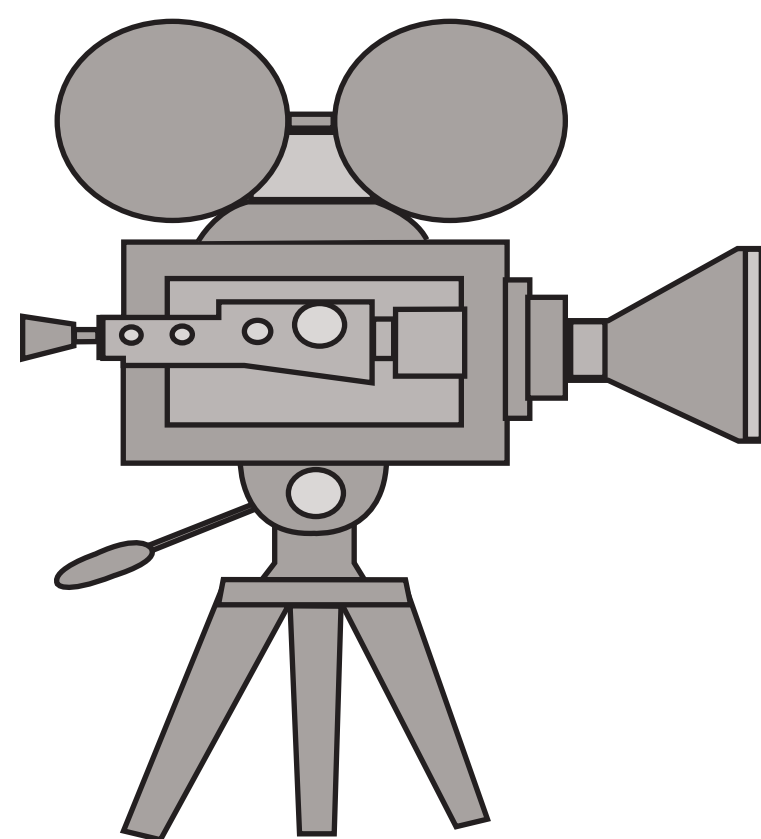
NO ONE 17 AND UNDER ADMITTED

A look into blockbuster and indie movies

BLOCKBUSTER



INDIE



Myra Perez & Katie Gaia
Reporter & Managing Editor

Blockbuster films have always caught the majority of the public's eye because of their advertising and publicity. From posting on social media to the art that it is inspired by, blockbuster movies have certainly had an impact on people.

Popularity of films is determined by the quality of a movie's visual effects, as well as the cast and the production as a whole.

People tend to watch movies that their favorite actor or actress stars in, which impacts popularity as well.

These box-office hits are often released by top directors, or from companies like Warner Brothers or 20th Century Fox. This entices viewers due to the director or company's reputation of producing high-quality films.

According to *The Guardian*, "the score requires hours upon hours of te-

dious work in the editing and VFX room."

Although this can vary between movie genres, the soundtrack plays an important role in setting the tone for the film, thus enhancing the audience's experience.

Some people think that there are not many differences between blockbuster and indie films.

As indie films are created and directed by a small team of people, there tend to be more personal connections among the cast. This intimacy creates more emotional scenes, which draws the audience in.

"I prefer indie movies because they are made with the intent of sending a message or conveying a feeling to its audience. A blockbuster movie, while it may be entertaining, is made mostly to make money," Maya Rai ('19) said.

The primary difference between blockbuster and indie films lies in the disparity in budgets.

Blockbuster movies often can af-

ford to add major special effects to films. Many of the most iconic science fiction films, such as *Star Wars* and *Avatar*, are reliant on these special effects.

However, indie films do not have as much money available for special effects, so they typically stray towards realistic settings.

"I enjoy blockbuster films more because they have special effects, like lighting and design, that add excitement to the movie," Erica Gonzales ('19) said.

Most of the time, when people are asked if they have seen an indie film, they will probably say that they have never heard of it.

Indie films are independently made, and usually have a lower budget. They typically depict the brutal reality of life or a realistic situation.

In addition, they often have more complex and deep storylines than many blockbuster movies. Some well-known indie movies include *Little Miss Sun-*

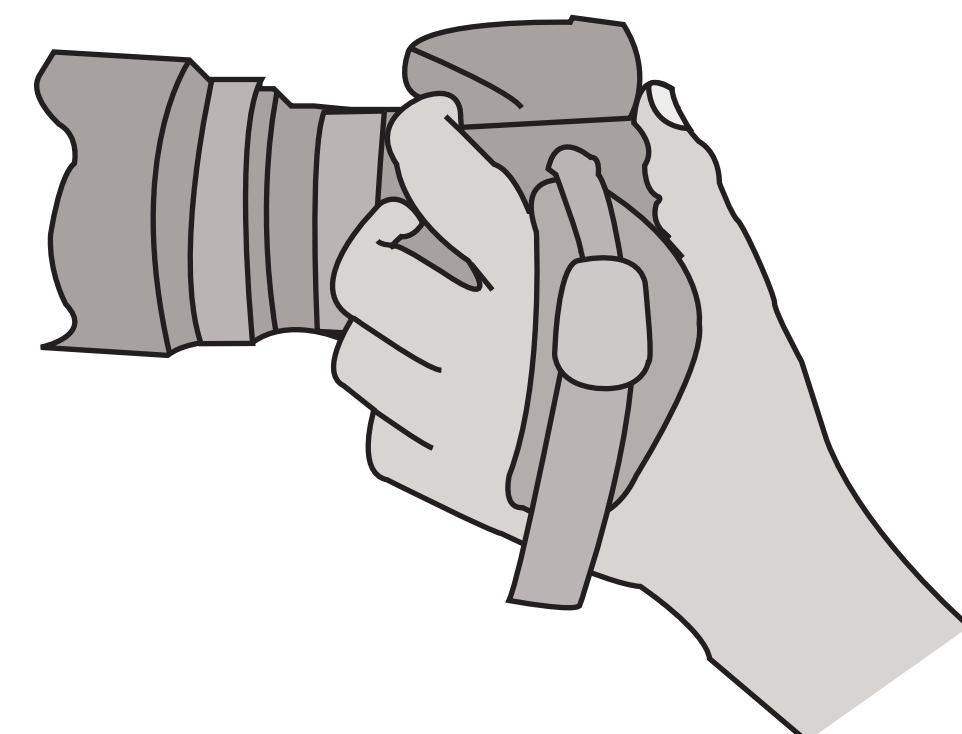
shine, *Night of the Living Dead*, and *The Blair Witch Project*.

"I like indie films better than blockbuster movies because I feel like indie movies are more relatable and personal," Angela Padilla ('20) said.

People have different views on what truly makes a film successful. Some say that the production needs to have a big budget, or that the amount of props being used in the film need to be expensive because that is what is more aesthetically pleasing to the person watching.

Others argue that a smaller-budget indie film is more intimate and deals with more controversial issues.

Regardless of the differences between blockbuster and indie films, both appear to have movies that thrive in theaters. Some people may not even realize that the movie they are watching is independently made.



Insight into movie production

Mr. von Wahlde

Co-Adviser

"I just go out and shoot and see what I get. That's how I put together my film."

This infamous quote did not come from Tarantino or Scorsese, Hitchcock, or Hetherington. It is a composite quote from the vast majority of my students who throw together documentary or narrative film projects. They do this without thoughts of shot lists, storyboards, location scouting, camera angles, lighting, cast selection, or script writing.

"First, you have to get people. Wait, you need a script. No, you need a theme. It starts with a theme," Jah Nelson ('21) said.

The movie first gels in the head of a scriptwriter, and those ideas are the initial glimmers of what will become a film.

That first step, from idea to script to funding, is called development.

From the author's first ideas to a long process of writing and revision comes a script. After it is obsessed over, written and rewritten, and shopped around from production house to house, the huge first hurdle is jumped.

Next comes funding, initial budget and spending decisions in the boardrooms.

The production company then decides which director they would like to work with on the script. The writer and director start working over ideas and concepts and hire a director of photography to start scouting

or starting pre-production.

Pre-production is where the magic behind the magic happens. The script edits begin in storyboarding, which is a process of cartooning out the scenes of the film and every single camera angle change and suggested edit. It is there that decisions begin to be made about how the scenes should be shot and ordered.

Casting, wardrobe, outfits, insurance, and permits all happen in pre-production. All of the problems that might come up during filming try to get answered at this stage.

"It is important to grasp the

full concept, from beginning to end, before shooting the film," Christian Colgrave ('20) said.

The basic idea is that pre-production gets rid of, or at least addresses, all the foibles that might happen when the cameras actually start rolling in the next phase: principal photography.

Principal photography, or "filming," is what most people think of when it comes to Hollywood moviemaking. The cameras are rolling, people are on set, and the action is intensely focused on creating the tapes that will eventually make up the substance of the film.

A list of shots and locations are made from the storyboards. Locations are then visited with all the actors, directors, and the less-recognized staff. The majority of the people listed in the credits are all out in the real world working to create the fake world of the film.

Despite what many think, the film is never shot chronologically. Environmental factors, permits, and even actor availability often wreak havoc on scheduling, so sequences are filmed when they can.

Just because something is seen happening in the morning in a film, and then the day progresses, do not assume that those

scenes were shot in that order.

When the acting, B-roll, and filming are all done, that is the "wrap." All the actors go back to their houses, while the director starts getting to work with the post-production staff in post-production.

During this stage, all the clips get edited into a cohesive piece. The clips get chosen and sequenced, clipped to length, and then put in order and corrected for lighting, sound, etc. Effects and music are added as well.

Post-production takes significantly longer than the filming. Any student who has put together a film for a class understands this: the magic really happens in post-production, not only in the shooting of the film.

"In post production or final processing, the editors are making the movie as coherent as possible," Joshua Charleston ('20) said.

Once everyone involved is satisfied, the business professionals take over and get the movie ready for release during distribution.

When it is "in the can," the film gets distributed. Release dates, amount of films to be distributed, getting preview copies out to reviewers, and red carpet events are all part of distribution and can greatly affect the reception of the movie by both critics and audiences alike.

Whether the film stays in theaters or goes straight to Netflix is often figured out before distribution. The successes of a film are also often almost predetermined during distribution.



Inequality in the movie industry

Katie Gaia
Managing Editor

Throughout cinematic history, caucasian men have unquestionably dominated the film industry—in both salary and recognition. According to Forbes magazine, though females are prevalent in the vast majority of films, they are paid significantly less than their male counterparts.

In addition, “whitewashing,” a term used when white actors are casted in originally non-white roles, is argued as one of the most pertinent issues still faced in cinematography today.

The issue of unequal pay between genders stretches across all fields and is common in the film industry.

Actress Jennifer Lawrence brought attention to this issue in 2016, when, according to *TIME* magazine, Lawrence released an open letter that questioned why her male co-stars earned more in the film *American Hustle* than she and Amy Adams did.

In addition, a 2014 study in the Journal of Management Inquiry found that pay for female movie stars increases until they turn 34, then rapidly drops. For men, however, the peak earning age is 51, and there is no significant decline in wages beyond that age. This study further illustrated to the public the double standards regarding pay in the film industry.

Some of the most famous movies from the 1900s had racist portrayals of non-white characters. White actors frequently used blackface, the practice of using black paint or coal on the face.

The 1915 film *Birth of a Nation*, which depicted the formation of a friendship between an abolitionist and confederate family during the Civil War, portrayed

white men in blackface running from the newly formed Ku Klux Klan.

A *Washington Post* article argued it as, “the most racist movie ever made,” the film’s blackface actors portrayed their characters as buffoons with primitive behavior.

Similarly, the iconic film *Breakfast At*

“People should be treated equally in any type of activity they involve themselves in. In the film industry, non-white people do not get enough [roles],” Akshita Viridy (’22) said.

Historically, non-white actors have lost roles meant for them to white actors, which has recently sparked major uproar in

for having casts that reflect the plot and setting,” Alex Phillipson (’19) said.

The excitement towards the films is evident in the turnout for their theater releases.

According to an article in *The Daily Nation*, *Black Panther* opened as the most successful movie composed of a predominantly non-white cast in history during its release.

To many actors and filmmakers of color, this film served as a sign of hope and progression.

“Those films received so much praise as audiences are appreciating that Hollywood is finally becoming more accepting of everyone, not just one race,” Zoe Karukas (’19) said.

However, there has also been controversy regarding films such as *Everything, Everything* and *The Hate U Give*, in which the same lighter skin biracial actress was cast to play the role of the African-American character—Amandla Stenberg.

“People with [darker] skin are under-represented, whereas black people with a lighter skin tone are preferred,” Emma-Rose Strom (’19) said.

According to *Entertainment Weekly*, actress Amandla Stenberg was offered the role of the Black Panther’s younger sister Shuri in the movie, but chose to decline the role in order to let someone more suitable for the position take her place.

As the film is set in a fictional African country, Stenberg felt that the role should go to someone that would better fit the role, and had a darker skin tone to better reflect the setting.

Despite the controversy, the progress towards racial equality in the film industry is indubitably present. As more films featuring majority non-white casts arise, the gap



Tiffany’s was centered around a young escort who befriends her new neighbor later forming a romance. It features a white actor playing a Japanese landlord that succumbs to many Japanese stereotypes.


Rather than hire an Asian actor, the producers hired a white man to portray the character, an offensive decision to the Japanese.

and outside of the country.

In recent years, the strife towards ending the practice of whitewashing is evident in movies with non-white people casted for the major roles.

“It just serves as a testament to racial inequality in the film industry in America. Films like *Black Panther* and *Crazy Rich Asians* are receiving so much praise just

Outing the Oscars

OSCARS 2018 BY THE NUMBERS	Out of the 665 top directors:	There are only	25.9%	5.7%
	31 are black	43	of	of
	2 are Asian.	female	female actors	to
		directors in the Academy.	are dressed in “sexy attire”	male actors



El mes de los Hispanos

Fatima Santos
Las Noticias Editor

El mes de la hispanidad empezó el domingo 15 de septiembre y terminó lunes el 15 de octubre. Esta celebración de hispanidad se inició en el año 1968. “El mes de los hispanos celebra el aniversario de independencia de cinco países latinoamericanos, los cuales son Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras y Nicaragua.” Otros países como Chile, Belize y México celebran su independencia en otro fecha. La conmemoración del día de la raza es el 12 de Octubre.

Westhill celebró este mes tan importante para muchos, haciendo cada día una publicación de una personas hispanas importantes hablando de sus vidas. También hubo una noche latina a los finales del mes.

El dos de octubre, Westhill hizo un reconocimiento al escritor Gabriel José García Márquez quien nació el seis de marzo del 1928 en Aracataca, Colombia. García Márquez creció escuchando a los cuentos fantásticos de su abuela, esas historias ayudaron a formar su estilo de escritura conocido como “realismo mágico.” Márquez era una figura clave en el renacimiento literario latinoamericano. Sus novelas cien años de soledad y amor en los tiempos del cólera han atraído a audiencias mundiales y ganó un PREMIO NOBEL en 1982, Márquez murió el 17 de abril de 2014.

Julia Alvarez nació el 27 de marzo de 1950 en Nueva York,

pero pasó sus primeros años en la República Dominicana. Ganó su fama con el libro COMO LAS NIÑAS PERDIERON SU ACENTO, esta novela relata su aventura creciendo en dos culturas, ganó el premio PEN Oakland / Josephine Miles. Es considerada una de las escritoras latinoamericanas más importantes y exitosas de su generación y se le atribuye la apertura del camino para los contemporáneos.

Celia Cruz fue una cantante cubana-estadounidense conocida como la mejor artista y cantante de salsa en la época oro. Nació en la Habana Cuba el 21 de octubre de 1952, sumó 23 discos de oro. Murió el 16 de julio de 2003, a la edad de 77 años. Ella fue una cantante legendaria y una de las cantantes latinas más queridas y populares del siglo 20.

En el 25 de octubre Westhill High School tuvo en evento espectacular, con el cual se cerró el mes de los hispanos. Tuvieron comidas y bailes típicos de diferente culturas latinoamericanas. Se inició la celebración con una cena. Tuvieron comidas típica de diferentes países como: Guatemala, México, Perú, etc. Después de la cena hubo un expositor espectáculo que vino hablar de su vida.

Hubo espectáculos que representan las culturas de muchos países como Guatemala, Honduras, Perú y República Dominicana. También hubo un desfile de banderas, donde muchos estudiantes recorrieron la escuela agitando las banderas mostrando que orgullosos están de ser hispanos. JROTC

también asistió sosteniendo nuestra bandera nacional.

Después del desfile de banderas, el señor Ranaldi subió al escenario y habló en español. Nos contó cómo aprendió español visitando Puerto Rico. Mientras estuvo en Puerto Rico, aprendió sobre sus tradiciones y cultura, el espíritu y la gente. Dijo: “Soy un verdadero hispano de corazón.”

También hubo un invitado especial el señor Galdino Velasco, quien nos habló sobre su vida cuando vino a los Estados Unidos. “Un Líder mexicano que ha trabajado y luchado por los derechos de la comunidad latinoamericana en la ciudad de Stamford, Connecticut por más de 50 años.” Cuando llegó por primera vez a los Estados Unidos, su vida era muy mala, debido a que no sabía el inglés por lo cual tuvo que aprenderlo; esto fue en 1966. En 1972, construyeron la primera iglesia hispana. El Sr. Velasco dijo que “el 14 por ciento de los empleados con los que trabajaba son hispanos.” Fue reconocido en Stamford al colocarle su nombre a una calle.

Después del discurso del Sr. Galdino Velasco, presentaron a la reina de Stamford Guatemala y los estudiantes hicieron bailes tradicionales de Guatemala, entre los que estaba El ferrocarril de los altos, hubo también bailes de Honduras, Perú y República Dominicana.

Los estudiantes también entonaron canciones, para culminar la noche un mariachi nos alegró con sus canciones.



Hispano o Latino - ¿Cual es correcta?

Alessandra Pinto
Las Noticias Editor

Muchas personas alrededor del mundo usan las palabras “Hispano” y “Latino” (“hispana” y “latina” para mujeres), como si tuvieran el mismo significado. Este es un error gramático común, ya que estas palabras se tratan como sinónimos y tienen diferentes significados.

Aunque ciertos significados de estas palabras se superponen, el término “Latino” se refiere a “un Nativo o habitante de América Latina,” o aquellos descendientes de Latinoamericanos. En contraste, la palabra “Hispano” cubre a las personas que hablan Español, o las que descienden de los nativos que hablan Español, como menciona el diccionario Merriam Webster.

Es importante tener en cuenta que los países a los que se aplican estos términos también difieren. Por ejemplo, América Latina cubre más de 25 países, como

Brasil, México y Guatemala, excepto España. El hecho de que América Latina no incluya a España es la principal diferencia entre los Hispanos y los Latinos. El término “Latino” no incluye a los de España, mientras que “Hispano” incluye a los Españoles, sin embargo, no incluye a los brasileños, pero “Latino” sí lo hace. La razón de esto es que los brasileños no son de origen Hispanohablante, y como se mencionó anteriormente, “Hispanos” sólo se refiere a los Hispanohablantes o descendientes de ellos.

Usar estas expresiones como una clasificación racial sería incorrecto, ya que “Hispano” se usa para definir la etnicidad y no la raza. La razón de esta clasificación errónea común es que las personas de países como México y Puerto Rico están agrupadas como “Hispanas,” sin embargo, su cultura es muy diferente. Por lo tanto, muchas personas eligen simplemente declarar su raza (o país de origen) como su etnia en sustitución, aunque es incorrecto. Expresiones como “Mexica-

nos” o “Puertorriqueños” serían correctas para definir la raza, no la etnicidad. La etnicidad de una persona de un país de origen Hispanohablante sería hispana, ya que abarca los países de habla hispana.

De manera similar, el término “Latino” describe a personas de muchos países, sin ser una raza. La expresión “Latino” es una forma abreviada de la palabra Latinoamericano, por lo tanto, cuando “Hispano” se relaciona más con el idioma, “Latino” aplica más a la geografía. Es por esta razón que los Españoles no son considerados “Latinos,” sin embargo, se les considera “Hispanos,” ya que su idioma principal es el Español, como se explicó anteriormente.

Un estereotipo que ha confundido al público es el término “Mexicanos,” ya que en varias ocasiones durante la campaña electoral de Donald Trump, hizo de la inmigración un tema popular. Etiquetó a todos los Hispanos indocumentados como un todo, llamándolos “Mexicanos,” confundiendo a muchos y ofendiendo a

otros que han venido de otros países de habla hispana. Desde que ocurrió esto, muchos han tratado el sinónimo de “Mexicano” e “Hispano,” tanto como el tema de “Hispano” y “Latino.”

Como se aclaró anteriormente, la palabra “Hispano” se usa para referirse a aquellos de o nativos de habla hispana. La causa de este error de juicio común es que los Mexicanos representan aproximadamente dos tercios de la población hispana, en otras palabras, son la mayoría de los que hablan Español. Solo una persona nacida en México o residente de EE. UU. con ambos padres Mexicanos puede identificar correctamente su raza como Mexicana.

Estos términos se usan principalmente en los Estados Unidos, ya que en otros países los individuos se refieren a sí mismos como su raza (país de origen). Las palabras “Hispano” y “Latino” tienen un trasfondo diverso, y muchos están orgullosos independientemente de su origen étnico o raza.

Naturaleza, manifestaciones y desastres

Camila Miranda
Las Noticias Editor

Los desastres naturales afectan a muchas personas. Aunque desastres naturales ocurren por todo el mundo, muchos de estos no pueden ocurrir en algunos lugares debido a la geografía y el clima.

Tomando como ejemplo a Centro, Sudamérica y Stamford cada una de estas regiones están localizadas en diferentes partes del continente, causando que tengan climas muy distintos y los sucesos de la naturaleza en cada una tengan manifestaciones diferentes.

Por ejemplo, en Stamford la temperatura anual es 51.1 grados Fahrenheit. En el invierno la temperatura media es 32.6 grados Fahrenheit. En la primavera la temperatura media es 54.55 grados Fahrenheit. La temperatura media en el otoño es 53.7 grados Fahrenheit. En el verano, la temperatura media es 70.7 grados Fahrenheit.

En lugares como Centro y Sudamérica, no se marcan las cuatro estaciones de clima. Solamente hay verano e invierno. Por ejemplo, un país de Centroaméri-

ca es Guatemala. La temperatura anual es 79 grados Fahrenheit. En Guatemala el invierno se considera como los meses lluviosos.

En 1985 ocurrió una erupción volcánica en Colombia y fue la cuarta peor erupción en el mundo. El peor terremoto que ha sucedido fue el terremoto de Valdivia que sucedió en Chile.

Como pueden notar, estas son dos ubicaciones completamente diferentes con características geológicas distintas. Esto significa que una erupción volcánica es imposible en Stamford y un terremoto poco probable.

Esto hace que haya una gran diferencia geológica entre los dos lugares. La razón por la que es poco probable que haya un terremoto en Connecticut es porque el anillo de fuego, el lugar donde las placas tectónicas están ubicadas y causan los terremotos, no está ubicado en la costa este de los EE. UU., Lo que hace que sea geográficamente imposible.

Un desastre natural reciente fue la erupción del volcán Fuego en Guatemala. La tragedia ocurrió el tres de junio, del 2018. Hubo 113 muertos, 197 desaparecidos y 28 heridos. 13 mil personas fueron evacuadas de sus hog-

ares. La erupción afectó a lugares de Escuintla y Chimaltenango.

“El Gobierno informó a mediados de junio de que 11 países y organismos internacionales enviaron ayuda a la nación tras la explosión del volcán, lo que significó un total de 125.000 dólares en dinero y objetos de necesidad,” dijo CNN.

La comunidad de Stamford fue consciente de la necesidad debido a la tragedia y muchas escuelas y lugares en Stamford ayudaron a recaudar dinero, ropa y artículos básicos para cubrir parte de las necesidades de las personas afectadas.

El año pasado Westhill ayudó a recaudar dinero y artículos para mandárselas a las víctimas de esta tragedia. Todas las donaciones se las dieron a una organización llamado, el Grupo Quetzal. Ellos llevaron las donaciones a Guatemala y se las entregaron personalmente a las víctimas del volcán.

En conclusión, nos damos cuenta que la manifestación de los desastres naturales es en base a la ubicación geográfica y por ende climatológica de cada región.



New Staff

Ms. Baird



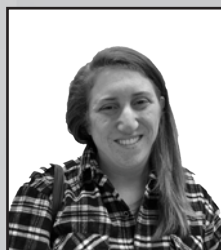
Ms. Baird is Westhill's newest English teacher. Before working at Westhill, she worked in numerous school districts including the Bridgeport Public School system.

"I am excited to be a new member of the Westhill family," Baird said.

"She is nice and if you need, she [will] help you out a lot," Lucas Giantomidias ('22) said.

FUN FACT: She loves going to the beach.

Ms. Beckoff



Ms. Beckoff is one of Westhill's newest special education teacher. This is her first year teaching professionally.

"It is my first experience in a high school, which is always what I thought I would teach when I went into teaching so I was very excited to get that call when I was hired," Beckoff said.

FUN FACT: She plays hockey.

Mr. McIntosh

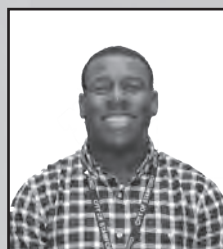


Mr. McIntosh is Westhill's newest addition to the custodial staff. Before coming to Westhill, he worked at Northeast Elementary School and Stamford High School.

"I like a lot of the guys that I work here with... I have heard a lot of good things about Westhill. I worked at Stamford High before and it was a good time, and now I am here and plan on having a better time," McIntosh said.

FUN FACT: He likes to tell jokes.

Mr. Joseph



Mr. Joseph is Westhill's newest guidance counselor. He worked at Trinity Catholic High School, Norwalk High School, Stamford High and Brien McMahon before coming here.

"It has only been a few weeks, but I really do like it. It is a really big school with a diverse population and I really feel like I am a part of the Westhill family," Joseph said.

FUN FACT: He likes Reese's Pieces Peanut Butter cups.

Ms. Martin

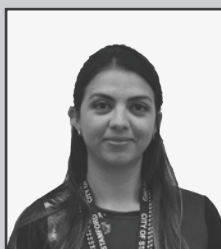


Ms. Martin is the newest addition to the Agricultural Science program at Westhill. Previously, she taught animal science in a rural school district in Litchfield county.

"She is very well qualified and enthusiastic about the subject and her tattoos are really cool," Zac Kitay ('20) said.

FUN FACT: Her bearded dragon's name is Angus and anyone is welcome to go take a picture of him.

Ms. Murray



Ms. Murray is Westhill's newest Foreign Language teacher. Before coming to Westhill, she worked as a substitute in Guilford, CT and Colombia.

"I am very excited to be here and be a part of this school community and I am hoping to get to know the teachers and the students," Murray said.

FUN FACT: She loves to practice yoga.

Ms. Malloy



Ms. Malloy is Westhill's newest Physical Education teacher. Before arriving at Westhill, Malloy taught at a high school in New Jersey and at Davenport Ridge Elementary School.

"She likes to play [every sport], she pays attention to her students and helps other students play," Dany Gonzalez ('20) said.

FUN FACT: She has a total of 36 nieces and nephews.

Mr. Pierre-Louis



Mr. Pierre-Louis is Westhill's newest Special Education teacher. This is his first teaching job, as he just graduated from the University of Connecticut, where he received his bachelor's

"I am happy to be doing something I am passionate about and I am happy to be teaching in the town I grew up in," Pierre-Louis said.

FUN FACT: He was All-state when he played football in high school.

Mr. Ahumada



Mr. Ahumada is Westhill's newest addition to the Social Studies department. Before coming to Westhill, he studied at the University of Connecticut's School of Education.

"I am really excited to be here. I went to this school, so it is a great experience to be back here teaching," Ahumada said.

FUN FACT: He played Football and Lacrosse, and was in JROTC when he went to Westhill.

Ms. Rosales



Ms. Rosales is Westhill's newest Social Worker. Before coming to Westhill, she worked as a clinician at the Department of Mental Health and Addiction services.

"I am enjoying being here and I am very inspired by all the staff and students working here. Overall I think I am very easy to talk to. I think that students will find that there is an ease talking to me," Rosales said.

FUN FACT: She loves to snowboard.

Ms. Ramsey



Ms. Ramsey is Westhill's newest addition to the Fine Arts department. Before working at Westhill, she worked at KT Murphy elementary school for 12 years.

"She is awesome. She is very productive and very caring for her students. She shows a great amount of respect for us and we do the same for her," Lenyn Garcia ('20) said.

FUN FACT: She is going to culinary school.

Westhill's safety and security updates

Sara Gatz
Staff Writer

Many updates have been made to Westhill's security since last year. Not only staff, but physical features have been changed, as well.

Numerous features have been added to security guard Mona's car, and there is a new Head of Security, Mr. Frager. A few people on the security staff have monitor other parts of the school, and there is a new security guard.

These changes are highly valued, as many students feel that security is an important aspect of the school's environment.

"Security has always been important, but after the threats last year, having many security guards seems even more crucial. I am happy that all of them are so great," Marley Schweber ('20) said.

After concerns from a misleading message left in a Westhill bathroom last year, the upgrades are making students feel more secure in the school environment.

"The staff is great, as usual. The new head of security, Mr. Frager, and the new Se-

curity Guard, Jamar, are both amazing. The school is running in tip-top shape and we are one big, happy family," Ms. Birch, security guard in the 500s, said.

Almost everyone agrees that this year's security measures have been helpful in improving school safety.

"The good thing about the updated security car is that when kids are trying to leave during school, I am able to yell their names over the loudspeaker and they just turn back around," Mona said.

Not only was a loudspeaker added, but a siren as well. The car's new additions will likely help keep the kids who cut class to a minimum.

"I feel safe at school. There are security guards stationed all around and they are constantly walking through the halls and making sure there is nothing wrong," Brandon Shapiro ('22) said.

Keeping everyone safe is their top priority and it appears to be working. With security guards in every hallway, students always know that if there is an issue, they have someone to turn to.

"We did not have as many

security guards walking the hallways last year. They seem to be more strict this year when it comes to being in the halls and trying to leave school." Christian Colegrave ('20) said.

The new Head of Security, Mr. Frager, is excited to have joined the Viking family. Having only joined in the beginning of October, he is still getting familiar with the processes and procedures of school security.

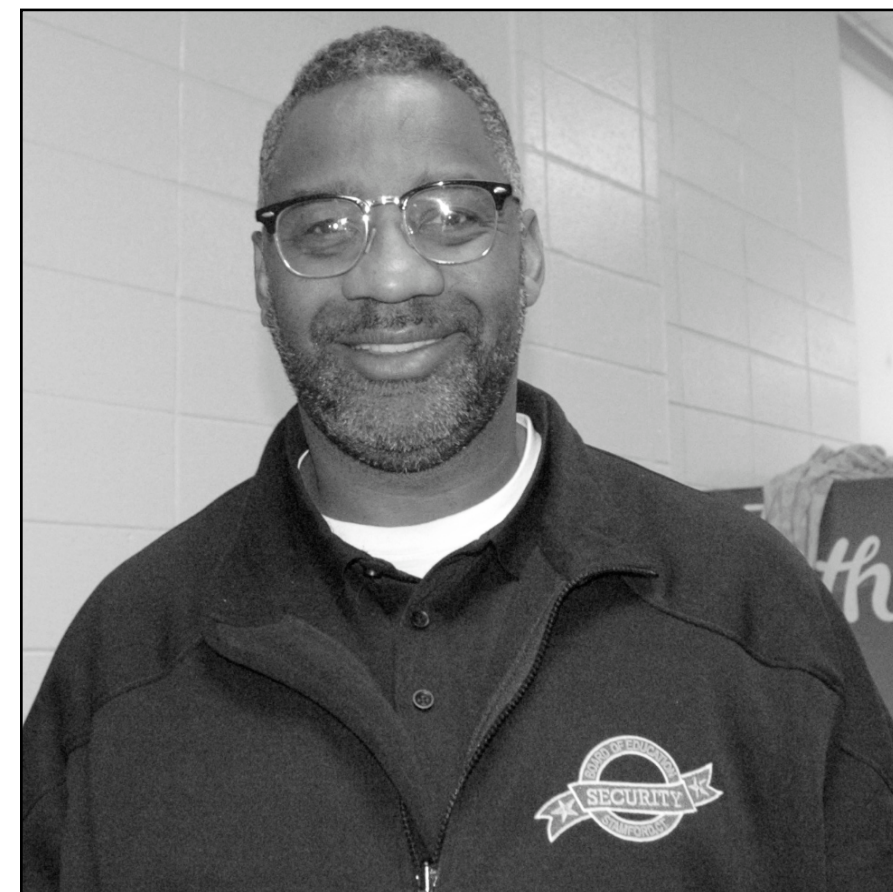
"I am looking forward to making sure everyone at Westhill is safe and getting to know all the students and faculty," Frager said.

As security is crucial in ensuring the school's safety, Mr. Frager's role is integral to Westhill.

Overall, the security this year is hoped to be the best Westhill has seen yet. Students and staff alike are looking forward to an amazing and eventful year with the new security team.



Photos by Sydney Eben & Jayden Lesser / Photographers.



CHANGE OF AUTHORITY New Head of Security, Mr. Frager, poses for the camera.



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*Westhill students with their ID
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the purchase of a meal every
Monday through Friday
from 2 pm - 5 pm.*

New ways to get involved

**Husayn Biggs &
Rachel Plotzky**
Staff Writer &
Print Executive Editor

With over 80 clubs preexisting in the school, students continue to form new clubs each year based on their interests or by drawing inspiration from a club they participated in prior to high school.

Two new clubs at Westhill this year are the Rock Climbing Club and Kiva Club. The Rock Climbing Club was founded by Zac Kitay ('20).

"[I started the club because] I enjoy climbing as a workout and extracurricular activity and know that other students feel the same way. Since I work at a climbing gym, I wanted to help share that experience with everyone," Kitay said.

There are around 15 to 20 people currently active and attending the club meetings. This size is perfect for their club, as the introduction of more members could lead to financial issues that would be too large for the club to handle in its early stages.

As the group just started up in October, they are still working on raising the funds needed for transportation and are currently brainstorming ideas for fundraisers.

The members that help advertise the club are Kylie Roth ('21), Eli Roth ('21) and Owen Pollard ('19). Their advisor is Mrs. Bosco, science teacher. Mrs. Bosco

also helped Kitay run the Hiking Club.

The club plans to travel to an indoor climbing gym, Beta Climbing and Fitness, in Shippan, every other week.

"[The club is good for beginners,] it can be beneficial for anyone who wants to start climbing because the best way to get better at something is to keep trying it," Kitay said.

Kiva club was also established this school year. The club uses the website kiva.org to donate microloans to people around the world, specifically targeting developing regions.

The co-founders are Veda Bhalla ('21), Willow Furrer ('21), and Caitlyn Tyrrell ('21). Mrs. Manning acts as their advisor and provides her room, 320, to them for meetings.

"In middle school, we had a Kiva Club, and we had a teacher that was very influential and persuaded us to make a Kiva Club here too," Tyrrell said.

The club currently has about 20 members and meets every Tuesday after school in 320. Their meetings are about 45 minutes and they always have snacks.

At their first Kiva meeting, they presented a slide show explaining Kiva to all their new members and got to know one another.

In the upcoming weeks, they plan to have a bake sale and other fundraisers to raise money to donate to kiva.org.



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The Hungry Vikings

Column by Maura Johnston, Mary Leydon & Alexandra Lazo

Fortina

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

The three Hungry Vikings (the Picky Viking, THE Viking, and the Hangry Viking), set sail for a long summer vacation through the Long Island Sound and around the world. After many months of archery, running, swimming, tug-of-war, and wrestling, they finally returned to their home in Stamford.

Once they arrived, they immediately spotted a restaurant called "Fortina" located across from where they docked. They were intrigued by the name and bold letters across the front, so they wandered in, their stomachs growling.

When they walked into the restaurant, the Vikings admired the open layout and the rustic feel reminded them of their ancestors. The perfect combination of a new and old layout caught The Vikings'

eyes along with the large wood-burning oven.

The seating was comfortable and they had a personal and convenient service system. With just a placement of a card, the waiter was alerted and would immediately come to the table to tend to the customer's needs.

The Picky Viking ordered the Luigi Bianco Pizza. The pizza was wood-fire cooked, and topped with burrata, robiolona, parmesan, and black truffle.

With just one bite, the burrata melted in her mouth, and she was amazed. There was a perfect amount of black truffle that topped the pizza and the ingredients blended well together.

The Picky Viking ate all but one small slice and took her

left overs on the boat for lunch the next day. The Picky Viking knew she would be returning to this restaurant and ordering this genius idea of a pizza again.

To accompany her pizza, she ordered a mocktail called the "Tina Turner." She was not used to having such a large wine glass that held awkwardly in her hands. However, the drink was delicious and included iced tea, fresh orange, lemon, and mint. It was so refreshing that she ordered a second one.

THE Viking ordered the wood-fired paccheri. Upon first sight, THE Viking was confused if she ordered an appetizer serving because there looked to be only twelve pieces of pasta. After eating half the bowl, THE Vi-

king realized just how filling it was, and did not need any more than what was given to her. The veal meatballs melted in her mouth, and the pasta tasted like it was straight from Italy.

THE Viking also enjoyed her mocktail "Preggo Mama," which was a delicious, fizzy grapefruit drink.

The Hangry Viking ordered the arugula salad. She felt it was unsatisfying. As an avid salad eater, The Hangry Viking was immensely disappointed to discover that the lettuce was not moderately chopped. It was as if the Hangry Viking was just eating leaves picked from a tree!

She knew she would not be bothered by returning to this restaurant ever again. To wash

down the leaves, she drank the "Preggo Mama."

While the drink was flavorful, she did not appreciate having to order a drink with such a creative name, being that her biggest pet peeve is having to order items off the menu with silly names.

Overall, the experience was a comfortable and satisfying one. The majority of the Vikings wished they could have ordered more and knew that they would all return for dinner soon.

The lively atmosphere of Harbor Point was also a plus, especially when seated outside. However, the check sure was pricey. When living on such a limited viking budget, Fortina is expensive, but worth spending the money on.

Slay of the Month: Oliver Halbro



My personal style revolves around color coordination. I feel satisfied when my outfit matches in one or two colors.

The easiest colors to wear solo are black and white, as they match easily with other colors. I sometimes wear solely white or black, or black with a vibrant color like green.

In my first days of coordinating my clothes in ninth grade, I wore neon colors such as yellow, green, orange, and red. I got the nickname "Highlighter" because of this.

After I grew out of most of those clothes, I slowly shifted over to more basic colors which I currently wear.

My outfit choices are based on my mood, as I normally wear sweatpants and a hoodie when I am tired. When I feel better, I like to wear twill joggers and a sweater or jacket. When I wear my "No-Sleep" sweater, it reflects my night and my lack of energy.

For shoes, I like to walk around in Nike high tops, including my custom Lebrons, my white Air Force shoes, and my black SF Air Force mid-shoes. When it gets warmer, I like to wear low-cut and ventilated shoes, such as my black Adidas.

The color of my shoes, however, are always the first step for my outfits, as they dictate the rest of my outfit.

When I am wearing black shoes for instance, another part of my outfit has to include black.

If any piece of clothing gives a slight hint of a color, it will further dictate the rest of my clothing choices, such as a small black line or printed image.

As for clothing brands, H&M is my favorite. Nearly all of my clothes come from there. I own sweatpants, joggers, sweaters, hoodies, t-shirts, and a bomber jacket from there.

Whether I am in downtown Stamford, NYC, or Denmark, I always go into H&M. I typically check for any new sweaters, hoodies, pants, or t-shirts to widen my variety in clothing.

Nothing I get from H&M disappoints me. If I am missing something or need to match more of my clothes, I can always go to H&M to find something.

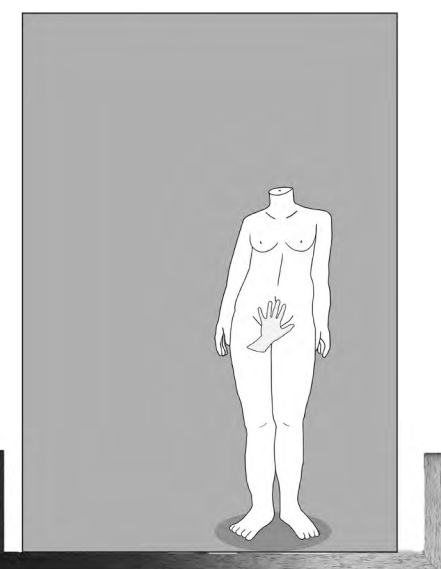
Another brand I also enjoy is Adidas. Though they can be pretty expensive, I really like their shoes and sweaters.

They generally have more basic designs, but I like the trefoil logo and the striped arm sleeves on their hoodies. In addition, their track pants are both comfortable and stylish.

Lastly, I also like Nike because of their various color options in clothing whether it is white, black, orange, neon yellow, or a mix of them. This helps my color matching obsession, as I legitimately feel uncomfortable when I do not match my colors.



ARTIST of The MONTH: PAOLA GONZALEZ



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

Paola Gonzalez (PG): I first got interested in fourth or fifth grade. I would see videos on YouTube or see pictures online. That inspired me to start drawing and get to know how [artists] got so good. I just wanted to improve my skills.

TW: How do you think you have improved since then?

PG: I still have a lot to learn but from when I first started, I think I have improved quite a bit.

TW: What is your favorite medium to work with?

PG: I would say digital because it is easy to erase mistakes, traditional art has to be too precise and clean.

TW: Is there a piece of work you have made that you are most proud of?

PG: I do not think so. I am not usually not proud of my work. I like it, but I always feel like it could be better somehow.



Photo by Raquell Hardy / Photographer.



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

PG: It is more of a personal hobby for me. I just like creating character designs.

TW: Do you see yourself progressing to art school or even a career in art one day?

PG: I would hope so, that would be really cool, but I also do not know.

TW: How has Westhill shaped your experience with art?

PG: I think Westhill has definitely helped me improve. I have gotten more involved with art in Mrs. Moncure's classes because she makes us keep a sketchbook and continue drawing in it, so I have spent more time drawing.



The Hate U Give receives great praise

Danielle Gleaton

Staff Writer

After selling more than 100,000 copies, the young adult novel, *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas, has hit the big screen.

The movie had a limited premiere on October 5, but was released nationwide in theaters on October 19.

The novel follows the life of its protagonist, Starr Carter, after she witnessed her close friend, Khalil, get shot by the police.

The New York Times best selling novel was published in February 2017, at a time when America's social climate could be considered on edge due to its divide over

racial topics.

It addresses topics such as the Black Lives Matter movement, police brutality, gun violence and poverty.

It also addresses topics such as the feeling of not fitting, youth activism, and racial discrimination in predominantly white areas.

Many people see the movie as something positive because of how it directly addresses issues and gives people of color a voice.

"It is a great time for a movie like *The Hate U Give* to come out, because it showcases the violence that happens in our communities," Guerdie Sajous ('19) said.

Like many novel adaptations, there have been controversies regarding the casting decisions of the characters. In the novel, Starr is described as having medium brown skin, unlike the light brown skin tone, the actress who plays her, Amandla Stenberg, has.

The decision to cast her brought up the topic of colorism as well as proper representation in Hollywood of darker skinned women.

In early 2018, actor and YouTuber Kian Lawley was fired by the film's producers due to the surfacing of a video of him using racial slurs. Many found this ironic because of the film's main

theme of anti-racism.

The character was eventually recasted, and given to KJ Apa, whose most notable role is Archie Andrews on the CW show *Riverdale*.

Despite all of the controversy, *The Hate U Give* currently has a 97 percent rating on Rotten Tomatoes, and has been seen as a much needed film because of the issues it fearlessly addresses. Even though it is rated PG-13 due to its "mature thematic elements," people of all ages can relate to it.

We live in a country where children in lower income neighborhoods notice that they are different compared to kids from wealth-

ier backgrounds. Due to the amount of technology kids have access to, they see the news and learn about the world around them.

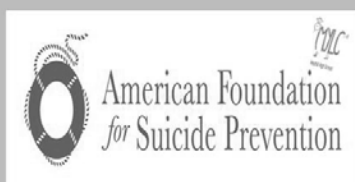
Whether it is gun violence, police brutality, or overall crime, children begin to take notice at a young age. That is part of the reason why Starr's white friends in the movie do not truly understand her struggle.

By highlighting topics like this in movies and literature aimed at young adults, it exposes ideas that should be discussed by all, not just those affected by them. It educates teens about a world possibly different from their own.



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The spotlight on *Suncity*

Olivia Berni
Staff Writer

On October 19, 2018, 20 year old artist Khalid released his new extended play (EP), titled *Suncity*.

The young artist's EP consists of seven new songs, each with their own unique elements. The R&B singer includes songs with monologue, truly acoustic songs, and even bilingual songs, something that he has not done before.

Khalid labeled his EP as the "start of a new era," on Twitter.

"I never go in thinking about making a hit record. I just go into the studio with people I love and respect and see what happens," Khalid said when he spoke to Billboard Music.

His long-awaited EP has definitely showcased his hard work. The first song on his EP is called "915." There are no lyrics, but there are background vocals and dialogue.

It says, "The people of El Paso, TX proudly present the key to the city, to Khalid Donnel Robinson forever, from the city of the 915."

The song makes it seem as if Khalid, whose full name is said during the song, is becoming the ruler of his city. "915" is the area code for El Paso, TX Khalid's hometown. Although the song is only 55 seconds long, it establishes a theme for the rest of the EP.

"I liked it. It was different from other songs that are popular now," Alexa Smeriglio ('20) said.

The EP's second song is called "Vertigo," which portrays a powerful message. Its slow, funky beat takes the listener on a journey through Khalid's mind as he tries to figure out why he feels the way he feels.

He sings, "I go blurry when I'm thinking, is it me or vertigo?" He also repeats the lyrics, "Are we alive? Or are we dreaming?"

The powerful lyrics tells a

story to the listeners to help them navigate Khalid's feelings.

Suncity's third song, "Saturday Nights," is an acoustic song. Khalid utilizes the lyrics and makes this song into a ballad.

He sings, "All the things that I know that your parents don't, they don't care like I do, know well like I do."

His emotion-fueled lyrics gives the audience insight to Khalid's mind and allow them to feel as if they were in his situation. He tells a story of how he is in love and cares for a girl an immense amount, more than her parents do.

"It is great! It is different, and I love it," Amanda Veseli ('19) said.

The fourth song on the EP is called "Salem's Interlude." The song is one minute and twenty seconds full of pure dialogue.

Salem Mitchell, a model and friend of Khalid, speaks about how she is fearful, but feels that this emotion is holding her back.

She explains how her mind goes back and forth and makes her doubt herself.

At the end, she appreciates her happiness, saying that she cannot complain about anything, even though she does not want to feel anything.

The song is an interlude, and will most likely soon be followed by another song explaining the lyrics.

The next track "Motion" uses a funky beat and emotion-packed lyrics.

Khalid sings, "I'm in love with the moment to me fallin, to me goin' I'm in love with the moment to me fallin, to me goin'," and "that made me feel like I'm just speeding, doing 60 in a 35. We're sitting in a car and just holding hands."

This lyric expresses a state of euphoria, where everything is practically perfect.

The second to last song on the EP is called "Better." The

ballad describes Khalid's overwhelming love for someone, and how nothing can top that feeling.

He recites, "Nothing feels better, ooh now. We don't gotta hide, this is what you like, gotta admit."

The last song on the EP is called "Suncity." The mix of English and Spanish lyrics, and fast pace sets up an exciting tone for the listener.

Khalid sings to another female artist and expresses his love for her. He allows the listeners to feel to what he is feeling which is an intense love for this one girl who does not love him back.

"It is different than his last EP, but in a good way," said Reilly D'onofrio ('20).

Overall, Khalid's new EP, *Suncity*, although a drastic change of style, has received positive feedback and continues to make a positive impact on listeners everywhere.

WHAT ARE WESTHILL STUDENTS LISTENING TO?

WHAT PLATFORM DO YOU LISTEN TO YOUR MUSIC ON?



WHAT DECADE HAS YOUR FAVORITE TYPE OF MUSIC?



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Tracking down affordable snacks in Westhill

Glorimar Chiruzzo
Staff Writer

It can be hard to concentrate during the school day on an empty stomach. Westhill has many affordable food sources that can help prevent this.

On every full school day, the school cafeteria is open throughout all three lunch waves and in the mornings for breakfast. Vending machines in the cafeteria are stocked with ready-to-go meals.

Students type in their pin numbers, and the money is automatically deducted from their account.

These machines offer varieties of sandwiches, hot lunches, drinks, and other meals. All of the meals are pre-approved by the Stamford Public Schools nutritionist.

There are also snack and water vending machines in both the Raynor Cafeteria and outside the gym.

Then in the 200s, one of Westhill's clubs, Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), has a store. Snacks can be bought there while transfer-

ring to classes with everything costing a dollar or less.

The stores offer a variety of snacks including chips, water, Gatorade, and soda. However, the FBLA store is not open during the lunch waves.

"Food in school comes in handy when we are sitting, waiting for dismissal and need a snack," Leanny Hernandez ('20) said.

It is also helpful when students are having a long day at school. They can take a small trip to one of the many places to get a snack and then return to class with a full stomach.

The River Hill Cafe in room 209 is another popular place for students to eat. The cafe no longer has a strict schedule, and Ms. Nester only cooks when they have the opportunity.

When they are cooking, the cafe is open all three waves. Students can go in the morning to order, and then pick it up later.

Ms. Nester runs this along with the rest of her students in the special education program where students use practical skills to reinforce their academic skills.

The cafe also allows these

students to have conversations with people who are not in their program.

Students are eager to purchase food from the River Hill Cafe because of its home-cooked style. It is also a favorite among the faculty.

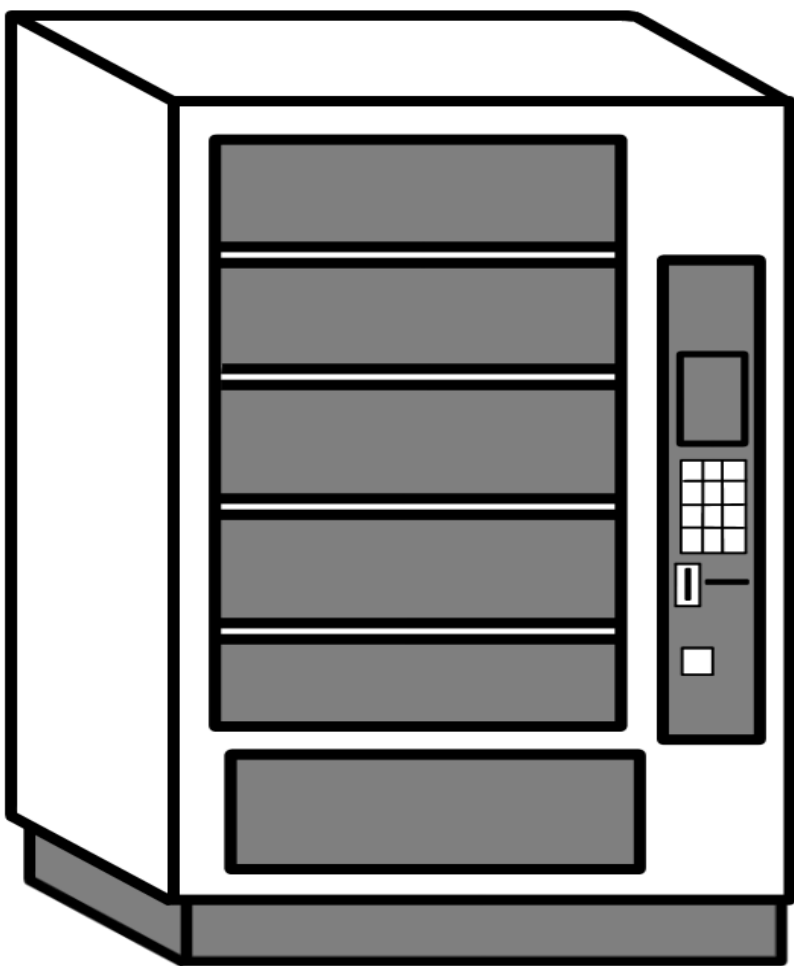
Additionally, Ms. Tobin sells napkins everyday in 432. When you buy a napkin, a complimentary bagel comes with it. She will sell napkins every passing time until they run out. All of the money goes toward the senior class to help out with their prom expenses, yearbook, and senior dues.

Lastly, JROTC has their own store open in room 14. Many snacks and drinks can be found there for cheap prices. However, they are also not open during the lunch waves.

"I get snacks everyday so the whole school day I will not be functioning on an empty stomach. I usually get snacks while we transfer to each class. On average, I waste four dollars every day for some chips and candy," Adriana Barrett ('22) said.

These are just some of the ways to get food during the school day.

Graphic by **Neeka Baclayon** / Illustrator.



Westhill then and now: '80s style

Column by Isabella Adamo

Upon flipping through my stepdad's 1989 Westhill yearbook, I discovered a piece about popular fashion styles during the time. It was titled "Wit And Whimsy Help To Put It All Together." Being obsessed with vintage and retro styles, I decided to give it a read for future outfit inspiration. After looking through all the pictures, I noticed many similar outfits individuals still wear today.

There were many trends in the book that I still see constantly in the halls of Westhill today. Some of the most popular items included fishnets, big graphic sweaters, jean jackets and many more pieces that have suddenly become popular once more.

Fashion has evolved a great amount since the '80s, but recent trends are currently taking a large influence from retro pieces.

"The styles have definitely changed several times throughout the decades, but I actually think '80s fashion is making a comeback," Franki Mastrone ('20) said.

Students have taken a liking to these past trends and are attempting to bring them back into the spotlight. There will always be different groups within fashion, and each have their own pieces and themes they religiously use and follow. However, new trends cause these groups to make adjustments to their wardrobe.

The article mentions accessories students could not leave their house without, and the unique styles of the Westhill community at the time.

School will always be a place for self expression whether it is through art, writing, or fashion. Although styles change through

the years, the desire to express oneself stays constant. Fashion can be seen as a way to speak one's mind or to convey personal styles, and every high schooler is searching for something that makes them unique.

Today, when taking a walk through the halls, it is easy to notice popular trends taken from the '80s. Different groups of students have utilized these trends in their own unique way.

For example, scrunchies and high waisted jeans have made a comeback and can be frequently be seen throughout the halls.

Chunky patterned sweaters have become a common statement piece. They are seen as tacky by some, but other riskier students express their love for the ageless style.

"Older trends in general

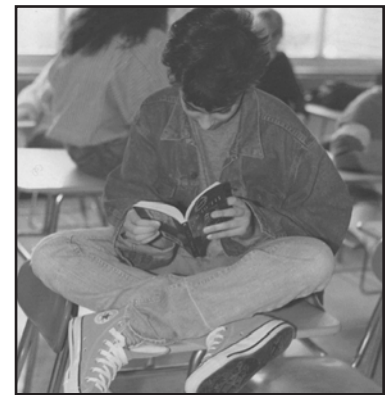
have been making a comeback into mainstream popular culture. For fashion specifically, a lot of trendy outfits today are knock offs of iconic clothing pieces from the '80s," Emma Sawch ('19) said.

Many designers are incorporating these older designs into their modern pieces. Pieces that were once seen as unattractive, have been beautified by fashion companies and emerged as new trends from today's models.

The 1980's were a remarkable and influential period for fashion. Aspects of the '80s are still prevalent in today's trends, and for many individuals, quite a bit of their wardrobes are influenced by this decade.

Many students in Westhill are not afraid to take risks with their style. They are fearlessly bringing back older pieces and making a

statement. Students who take the first step in introducing new trends are creating a chain reaction for other students to follow. Trends are constantly changing, but as of right now, nobody can seem to let go of the '80s.



ALL STARS A student featured in the yearbook of '89 sports Converse and a denim jacket.

Photo courtesy of **Isabella Adamo** / Columnist.

SPOOKY WORD SEARCH

M	L	T	F	W	N	B	L	L	U	F	S	S	T
U	W	S	M	U	E	I	L	W	Z	R	C	K	R
M	O	O	H	O	L	R	F	O	V	C	A	E	I
M	E	H	O	C	N	L	E	F	O	O	R	L	C
Y	I	G	E	L	W	S	M	I	O	D	Y	E	K
S	R	E	K	C	I	N	T	O	P	C	B	T	O
R	E	H	C	N	A	R	W	E	O	L	S	O	R
T	I	I	W	Z	M	E	R	S	R	N	L	N	T
V	A	M	P	I	R	E	T	W	I	A	Y	R	R
S	T	A	E	R	T	R	U	T	N	D	X	L	E
D	E	A	T	H	I	T	T	T	N	I	T	K	A
B	K	A	G	C	Z	L	E	A	W	I	T	C	T
X	A	I	K	O	E	R	C	T	L	N	V	A	J
F	N	T	C	A	N	D	Y	C	O	R	N	Q	N
B	O	N	E	S	P	U	M	P	K	I	N	S	T

- BAT

BLOOD

COFFIN

CANDY CORN
- DEATH

FULL MOON

GHOST

LANTERN
- MONSTER

MUMMY

SCARY

SKELETON
- PUMPKINS

TRICK OR TREAT

BONES

VAMPIRE

Riddles that will make you jump out of your bones

1. A witch is found murdered on a Sunday morning. Her husband calls the spooky police. They question the husband and staff and give the following alibis: the husband says he was sleeping, the ghost neighbor was cooking breakfast, the werewolf gardener was picking vegetables, and the goblin maid was getting the mail. After hearing the ailbis the spooky police immediately arrested the murderer. Who did it?
2. This place has hardly any lights, but a lot of creaking floors. There are all kinds of strange noises and some random slamming doors. What is it?

Does committing affect academic effort?

Rachel Plotzky

Print Executive Editor

The road to commitment can be rigorous and start at a young age. Many athletes in middle and high school focus on improving their academics and training for their respective sport in order to one day commit to college for a sport. This goal can take hours out of student's daily lives and impact their academics.

The recruiting process can start around eighth and ninth grade, but students should be dedicated to their sport well before then.

This creates a stressful environment for students trying to get recruited. However, Westhill students who have committed to schools continue

to work hard both academically and physically.

"[Committing] made me stay on top of my academics even more," Grace Hansen ('19), who is committed for Division I lacrosse at University of Massachusetts - Lowell, said.

Hansen is able to see what APs her school accepts and take more specific classes for her wanted major by committing. Hansen is currently taking Bio Tech which she would most likely not have been able to take if she had not yet committed.

Additionally, Hansen believes that committing to University of Massachusetts - Lowell has made her strive to work harder on improving her lacrosse skills as well as staying on top of all of her academics.

"Committing to colleges requires responsibility, and

you have higher expectations from everyone, so you have to be a model person on and off the field," TJ Wainwright ('19), who is committed for DI baseball at Fairleigh Dickinson University, said.

Wainwright stayed on track academically and worked hard to ensure his extra baseball training did not impact his academics greatly. Wainwright committed during sophomore year and has promised himself that he would not stop working to be great.

Wainwright currently has the same routine and workout from before committing and plans to use this method to avoid starting on the bench when he arrives at Fairleigh Dickinson.

This coincides with a 2010 report by the Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention (CDC) that states "increased time in physical education appears to have a positive relationship... with academic achievement."

Another recruited Westhill athlete is Claudia Benz ('19) who will be playing DI soccer at the University of Delaware. Benz did not let committing stop her academic interests.

"I took the same number of APs and tried [just as hard] as before [committing]," Benz said.

Benz did not see committing as an opportunity to slack off and stop taking hard classes. The University of Delaware will still check up on her, and she needs to maintain a certain GPA to study there in the fall.

However, similarly to Hansen, Benz was able to take Law and Justice rather than a generic core class this year. Benz

is pursuing her interest in law, her intended college major. If Benz had not already committed, she most likely would not have had the ability to take Law and Justice this year.

Once committed, these students have the privilege of applying to one school and only needing to focus on requirements for that particular college. This takes away some of the senior year stress and enables them to pour more of their energy into their schoolwork and workouts.

Overall, at Westhill, students work hard to get recruited and once they are, continue to work on excelling in their academic performance.

Football team refuses to be weighed down

Timothy McKeithen

Reporter

As students walked onto the field to watch the Homecoming game, it was clear who had more supporters. Greenwich fans tremendously outnumbered the purple and gold Vikings.

"It was sad to see Westhill not really supporting its football team with a strong turnout," Shivani Annumala ('19).

However, the football team still made an energetic entrance. They came out with an explosion of excitement. Westhill fans and the Purple Pack worked to keep the enthusiasm high with their loud cheers from the bleachers.

"Greenwich is a good team and will score but it all comes down to being where we are supposed to be," Coach Devellis said before the game.

The confidence of the Viking football team echoed throughout the field exciting the entire audience. As the audience got more energy, the players were more on top of their plays.

Westhill Alumni who were there could feel the confidence radiating off the players. The Homecoming game is one of the

most popular games of the year, and it attracts one of the largest turnouts.

"This is the game they just cannot forget," Wyklend Turrene ('19) said.

Earlier into the first half, Sam Edouard ('19) rushed in and picked up a fumble giving the Vikings the ball. This play placed them in great field position.

A few drives later, Jakai Young ('19) read the defense and caught a pass giving the Vikings the ball once again.

Once halftime rolled around, the score was 39-0 with Greenwich in the lead. All of the previous passes and catches did not help the Vikings get on the scoreboard.

The halftime show consisted of a performance by the Westhill Lady Vikings, the step team, and Westhill's Marching Band. Both performances received much praise from both sides of the field.

Once the second half started, many fans had lost their initial enthusiasm. Despite the tremendous score difference, the Vikings still kept their spirits high and their plays clean.

"It has been a tough first half, but the Westhill faith is still there," Ryan Kipness ('20) said during the game.

The team kept the energy going and managed to only allow Greenwich an extra 14 points in the second half. This number

could have been much higher if the Vikings had not been so determined to redeem themselves. In the end, the Vikings lost 53-0 to the Greenwich Cardinals.

Despite the loss, the Vikings are not going to let it affect their upcoming games. They are de-

termined to end on a high note.

Although the teams lost, they still plan to work their hardest and put their best foot forward for the rest of the season. Both JV and Varsity will be more determined and driven in their next games.



STEPPING UP Westhill Vikings face off against Greenwich for the Homecoming game. The Vikings were defeated 53-0, but kept their spirits high.

Photo by **Jayden Lesser** / Photographer.

Athlete's superstitions before games

Sabrina Boyd
Staff Writer

Some Westhill athletes have unique traditions and superstitions that they adhere to with religious devotion. They partake in these rituals to get hyped, excited, or focused for their upcoming game. These practices are meant to bring the teams good luck during the game.

Emir Hrustemovic ('19) of the boys soccer team said that before a game, they usually hang out with one another, getting each other pumped, while listening to music.

For field hockey, Alexandra Exantus ('20) gets ready for games by listening to music away from the rest of team to calm herself down. She also trash talks the opponents in her head to prepare for the game and gain confidence in herself.

For the girls soccer team, Grace Hansen ('19) said that they each wear a bun for every game day, and if it is an away game a groutfit is necessary. Also, on the bus rides, the girls soccer team

enjoy eating wheat thins and granola bars.

The volleyball team traditions are more serious and inclusive which they believe contribute to them doing well in their games.



ute to them doing well in their games.

"We mentally prepare for the game [all together], and group bonding is key," Caroline Boyd ('20) said.

"We share inspiration and motivational quotes, and we say positive things about each other," Vana Servos ('21) said.

"Once it is almost game time, our favorite thing to do is go in the locker room and have a long talk about our goals for the game," Nikki Newcomer ('19) said.

"We do a lot of positivity activities and team bonding because we think that it helps bring us close and keep a positive vibe on the court. We do this hand activity where we stack our hands and rope each other in random order and remove them. It is a mind connection thing we believe helps us regroup. We do sports meditation where we picture ourselves playing well and of course we bump music," Sophia Thagouras ('20) said.

For the girls swim team carbo-loading is what they normally

do before a game according to Reilly D'onofrio ('20).

Emily Morales ('20) swimmer, prays three times before her meets starts.

Jordon Jang ('19), the Captain of the boys swim team explains that the boys focus on their game plan for the meet, and hype each other up. They believe this

plays a big part in their success.

Different teams have their own way of mentally and physically prepare for their meets and games. Individuals also have their own personal routine apart from their teammates to prepare for their games. Together, these rituals get the players ready to do their best.



Illustrations by **Neeka Baclayon & Tamar Frydman** / Illustrator & Head Illustrator.

Volleyball girls on their way to the top

Julia Lozynska
Staff Writer

The girls Varsity Volleyball team is having a great season. With a record of 19-2. The team is on their way to the top with their only losses being against St. Joseph and Fairfield Ludlowe. They ended last season with a 14-7 standing.

Last year, the girls were focused on becoming more connected as a team. This year, they are focusing at a more advanced level, and they are all determined to tackle every team they face. This season, the girls plan on building on last year's achievements.

"We stay focused and have fun at the same time. That is the key to success," Nina Bakuradze ('19) said.

Their team has such a close bond, and that connection transfers onto the court. Playing well is about making all of their players in sync throughout the game.

It is crucial during games that all of the girls are connected.

Players have to know when to step back and let the other make the play, or when it is their time to shine.

"Do not get me wrong, last year our team was good, but [with] this year's team I feel it is even better. We have gotten so much closer as a team and we trust each other on the court," Elsa Amiri ('19) said.

Having a close-knit team outside of practice is also important so that they all stay in sync on the court. They are constantly trying their best to maintain the team's positivity.

"It is a great experience to be able to help lead such an amazing team. We all share such strong goals, and we all work really hard together to achieve them. I could not have asked for a better group of girls to end my high school season with," Nikki Newcomer ('19) said.

Captains Newcomer and Bakuradze are both nominated for Val Dickinsons Award Scholarships for leadership exhibited on

the court. As captains, they are both trying to keep the team as strong as ever.

"This season has been especially great. We have an amazing group of girls who are not only extremely talented, and versatile, but they are also very dedicated," Sophia Thagouras ('20) said.

The team is currently in first place for FCIACs. They played their first FCIAC match against Staples and won 3-0. If they had lost, they would have been eliminated from FCIACs.

Even when the pressure is on, the team refocuses their energy on winning.

"I strive to lead by example and, give my full effort in everything we do as a team. With a lot of tough and important games coming up ahead, I hope that we can continue to use our strengths as a team to our advantage and pursue a fun exciting season," Thagouras said.

Their mentality this season has been focused on one thing: making it as far as possible.



SETTLING THE SCORE Pictured is Betsy Sachs ('20), a middle for the varsity team.

Photo by **Harrison Travaglini** / Photo Manager.

Keogh guards her way to the top

Tamar Bellete
Managing Editor

Niamh Keogh, junior, is the goalie for Westhill Girls Varsity Soccer. She has shown extreme talent and potential for the sport since she was a freshman. She also has received the honor of being awarded All-FCIAC when she was just a sophomore. The Westword sat down with her to talk about her experience and accomplishments on the field.

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

Niamh Keogh (NK): I started when I was three.

TW: Why did you start playing?

NK: My parents played all their lives, and they wanted me to do the same.

TW: What position do you play, and why?

NK: Goalie. I hate to say it, but I was the fattest on the team,

and they made me play goalie. After that, it just stuck.

TW: What is your favorite part about soccer?

NK: Winning and bonding with my teammates both at Westhill and in my club team.

TW: What is your most memorable moment from the past three years?

NK: I would have to say starting FCIACs and States during my freshman year.

TW: What are some of your strengths?

NK: My biggest strengths are not being afraid of the ball and just putting my best effort forward.

TW: What are some pre-game rituals you do?

NK: I do not believe in pre-game rituals. I just get pumped.

TW: If you did not play goalie, what would you want to play?

NK: Probably forward, but not playing goalie was not really an option.

TW: What are your goals for

the rest of the season?

NK: I am out for the season due to a concussion, but my goal for the team is definitely to get to FCIACs and States.

TW: Are you thinking of playing in college?

NK: Yes, I would like to and my parents really want me to.

TW: Do you play another sport?

NK: I play Gaelic football [which is] an Irish sport similar to rugby.

TW: Who is a player that you look up to and why?

NK: Probably [Manuel] Neuer, a goalie for Germany and Bayern Munich. I say this because I have known [of] him since I was young, and I watched him as I started my goalie career.

TW: What advice would you give for people who want to start playing soccer?

NK: Do not give up! It took me 13 years to get to where I am now. Everyday I learn something new about my game.



KICKIN' IT Keogh makes sure nothing gets past her during this game against Staples High School.

Photo contributed by **Niamh Keogh** / Contributor.

McLaughlin sprints to the finish

Maria Mirafuentes
Staff Writer

Colin McLaughlin is a sophomore at Westhill High School. As a freshman he ran cross country, then took an interest in track sophomore year. He is a young athlete who is doing what he loves. McLaughlin still has two years to run on the Westhill track team, and he has interest in running for the University of Colorado someday. The Westword sat down with McLaughlin to discuss his achievements.

The Westword (TW): When did you start running, and why?

Colin McLaughlin (CM): I started running in sixth grade because I wanted to be active, and my dad did cross country when he was in high school so I thought it would be cool to try it.

TW: What do you like about running?

CM: Running helps clear my mind and helps me feel less stressed.

TW: What is your best accomplishment so far?

CM: Last year I ran a 4.50 minute mile for the freshman class, and it is the freshman record for Westhill. I also won in a race against Trumbull, Trinity, Norwalk and Bridgeport Central. I came in first out of 80 [contestants].

TW: What is your main goal this year?

CM: My main goal this year is to come top ten in the FCIAC. It is the most important track meet this year.

TW: What do you do before races to help you perform?

CM: I warm up with the team and with two others by running 100 meter strides. I take it as just another meet so I do not get too nervous.

TW: What is your inspiration to keep running?

CM: What keeps me running is the possibility to run for

colleges and hopefully even more after that.

TW: How many times a week do you run?

CM: I run five days a week with my team, and on Saturday and Sundays, I run by myself. I ran all summer, since cross country is such a short season, so if you do not train before, you will be behind.

TW: What is your favorite thing about track?

CM: My favorite thing about track and cross country is that anybody can do it. You do not really need to have a certain body type. If you put the work in, you can excel.

TW: Who stands out to you the most on the team?

CM: The people who stand out to me are pretty much all of the underclassmen. We had three sophomores that broke five [minutes] in the mile, and then some new people that are just starting who have shown a lot of potential.



RUNNING WITH THE WIND McLaughlin made the freshman record for fastest mile at 4.5 minutes.

Photo Contributed by **Colin McLaughlin** / Contributor.

Renovations needed at the fields

Marta Zach
Staff Writer

Westhill's softball and baseball players are concerned with their field's current state. As of now, there is maintenance needed to get it back into its best shape for the spring season.

"If you can play on this field you can play anywhere," is the phrase commonly used by the softball team about the disrepair of their playing field.

Both the baseball and softball teams report having poorly maintained fields, which they have to tend to themselves outside of the spring season.

The softball team had to place mulch and plant grass on the field themselves last season.

"Last year, Hannah Burston ('20) and I had to fertilize the field by ourselves, because nobody else was going to do it," Tessa Mannella ('20) said.

There are patchy grass areas in the outfield and the infield is covered in dirt. The field does not get watered down enough and the hose rarely works. These tough conditions can seriously affect performance.

The softball team practices at Stamford High during the fall and on turf throughout pre-season due to their field's unsuitable condition.

The baseball team also finds themselves practicing under inapt conditions.

"We have not had batting cages in

four years," Mr. Mulvaney, baseball coach, said.

Despite all of this, no individual is to blame. The problem is not negligence.

"The maintenance [team] and janitors do a great job of getting it ready for games," TJ Wainwright ('19), captain of the baseball team, said.

Staff, coaches, and athletes work hard to maintain their fields throughout the season. The custodians cut the grass and line the field, among other tasks to restore it.

However, this maintenance is the custodial staff's responsibility only for the brief season. The custodians will tend to the fields throughout the season, but it is not their job to maintain it during pre-season.

"Once the season ends, maintenance [operations] go to the city," Mr. Plateroti, Head Custodian, said.

This creates issues for the teams because there is a lot that goes into keeping a field in good condition. Grading, the act of removing water away from the field to prevent excessive water damage, is essential to making sure that any accumulated dirt is smoothed down.

Puddles created by uneven fields can often times lead to cancelled games and practices. This routine ensures that the field will always be available for use.

According to mlbcommunity.org, a recommended practice is also raking and

dragging the field after each use to ensure safety and ensure a proper grade. It is also important not to use wet fields, or relocate any water from the dirt field onto the grass.

Maintaining a softball or baseball field is difficult. The fields do have potential, but there is a lot of hard work that needs to be put in to achieve that goal. The fields are priorities, but only during active

seasons. Otherwise, they are turned over to the city and subject to use from anyone.

"It is pretty bad, but it does help us get better. Like I said: if you can play on this field you can play anywhere," Madi Cortell ('19), said.

Regardless of the field being in the state that it is, the athletes practice persistently and take on an optimistic point of view.



HARD CONDITIONS Players must practice in the conditions above despite them voicing their concerns.

Photo by **Isabella Nuzzo** / Photographer.

Coach Devellis starting on the right foot



WESTHILL REPRESENT Coach Devellis proudly posing in his jersey while coaching against Trinity Catholic High School.

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

Bella Vaccaro
Staff Writer

In the summer before this school year, Coach Devellis was named Head Varsity Coach for the Westhill football team.

After a 2017-2018 season of 6-4-0 as Defensive Coordinator, Coach Devellis was selected to be the head coach after the resignation of Coach Marcucio.

Devellis plans to work hard with the players to improve their technique on and off the field. He is shaping the upperclassman to be leaders that will encourage and improve the attitude of other younger players.

"[The other coaches and I] are going about changing the culture of the program," Devellis said.

Coach Devellis has been laying the groundwork for a great season and holding the players to a higher standard both on the field and in the classroom. He hopes to teach the

players accountability.

Coach Devellis' main goal is to set up the team for future successes, along with improving their underclassmen players, considering there is a large group of seniors graduating.

Coach Devellis has experience in the program, but he feels now the boys have grown a much stronger relationship with him.

"He has created a great bond between the players and himself," Richard Felius ('19), running back, said.

"Devellis is very enthusiastic," AJ Laccona ('19), captain and quarterback, said.

Coach Devellis wants to build trust throughout the team, and let the players know that he has their best interest in mind.

"I coach student athletes to mold them into better people," Devellis said.

According to Coach Devellis and the team, a main weakness for them

is communication on the defensive side. Coach Devellis is pushing the team to build confidence in communicating with each other as well as helping one another out.

On offense, when the players talk to each other up front and help out, they are able to block well and get the ball moving.

"[Coach Devellis] brought a new attitude to the games and practices that get me more excited about going to practice everyday," Daniel Brennan ('19), captain and line-backer said.

While watching the boys run through practices and compete in games, the heart and passion that Coach Devellis and the team put in is clear.

Coach Devellis' aim is to encourage the boys to put forth the work that will prepare them for later success. He wants to teach the boys that everything is earned, and nothing is given.

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