

The Westword

www.thewestwordonline.com
Volume 44, Number 3 / December 2016

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

Open campus: senior privileges return

Page 6

WESTHILL HIGH SCHOOL



9 13 25

THE GOOD, THE
BAD, THE UGLY:
2016 YEAR
IN REVIEW

EL ACCIDENTE DE
AVION DE LOS
FÚTBOLISTAS
EN BRASIL

A DETAILED RE-
VIEW ON THE
BALLET, *THE*
NUTCRACKER

The Westword

2016-2017 Staff

December 2016

Note from the Editors

- Editor-in-Chief**
Dong Zhi Guo

Print Executive Editor
Maddy Cohen

Online Executive Editor
Josh Eimbinder

Managing Editors
Caroline Boccuzzi,
Maeve Ronan,
Nicholas Zarrilli

Ombudsman
Noah Klein

Photo Manager
Emily Savitt

Media Manager
Ryan Murace

Business Managers
Nick Smeriglio, Charlie Teeters

Social Media Managers
Erica Abela, Paige Savitt

Distribution Mangers
Matt Masi, Marc DeLuca

Head Illustrator
James Hicks

Creative Directors
Sakshi Patel, Patrik Sokowloski

News Editors
Melanie Gorski, Nova Nahiyan,
Mercedes Sabel

Viewpoint Editors
Sarah Goldberg,
Michael Hernandez,
Addison Magrath

Las Noticias Editors
Yaciana Taveras

Special Editors
Catherine Gaia, Daniel Greco,
Rachel Plotzky

Feature Editors
Amelia Daube, William Evans
Arushi Mathur

Supplement Editors
Jenny Gorski, Janet Manina,
Dan Skigen, Liz Yamron

Scatterbrain Editors
Yael Roll, Elizabeth Ruffels
- Alexandra Watkinson

Limelight Editors
Sasha Ostrovsky
Gabriel Yaghoubian, Iyonna Walker

Express Editors
Yaneira Torres, Dani McNamara,
Hanna Martino

Sports Editors
Tamar Bellele, Joseph DiSalvo,
Ryan Hart, Caroline Ross

Copy Manager
Sahithi Kollipara

Copy Editors
Christian Perez, Meghan Prabhu,
Rishabh Sahu, Jessica Wallen,
Tejas Juware

Pollsters
Zainab Jafri, Lauren Lazo, Alyssa
Goldberg

Reporters
Alexia Boccuzzi,
Bridgette Calderon,
Molly Cannon, Nabilla Harahap,
Charlotte Kriftcher, Micayla Roth,
Zach Rubin, Nathan Salm,
Marley Sklover, Andrea Vega,
Max Zussman, Hannah Nekritz

Illustrators
Matthew Alswanger,
Tamar Frydman, Frantz Gabriel,
Alexis Marchetti, Jonathan Russo

Videographer
Kiley Watson

Photographers
Sabrina Boyd, Valeria Carias,
Brena Harkins,
Katie Hollenberg, Sydnie Lesser,
Devon Ostheimer,
Monika Rydzewski

Photo Editors
Rebecca Alper, Ewa Misiak

Co-Advisers
Mr. von Wahlde,
Mr. Wooley

Las Noticias Adviser
Ms. Mendez

Dear Readers,

As excited as we at *The Westword* are for winter break, we are even more excited to present our December issue!

We would like to thank everyone who participated in Purple & Gold Day and we hope that this movement will be continued throughout the years to come.

This month, our Editorial focuses on the diversity in Advanced Placement classes as well as a more in-depth investigation on steps to take to diversify these classes.

In News, you can learn about the recent success the Mock Trial team had in their last competition and the investigation of the tuberculosis case at Westhill.

Within our Viewpoint section, you can read about how students felt about 2016, as well as an analysis of how society views rape culture.

In Las Noticias, students share what they do over winter break and in Special Report, you can find a comparison of the different world economies.

As you flip through our Supplement issue, you can learn about alternatives to clothes, activities, and more that will save your wallet. In Limelight, read an interview with Yahdon Israel, who came to speak at Westhill about #LiterarySwag and its effects on people.

In Scatterbrain, you can find Trinity Wilson as our From Runway to Hallway feature and different activities to do during a snow day.

Finally, in our Sports section, take a page from our scholar-athletes and learn how they balance their responsibilities.

We wish our readers good luck on their midterms in January and cannot wait to be back again in February!

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

Sincerely,
Dong Zhi Guo & Maddy Cohen
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 Dong Zhi Guo, Maddy Cohen, Josh Eimbinder, Noah Klein, Caroline Boccuzzi, Maeve Ronan, Nicholas Zarrilli, Michael Hernandez, Liz Yamron, Janet Manina, Jenny Gorski, Melanie Gorski, Yaciana Taveras, Sarah Goldberg, William Evans, Mr. von Wahlde, and Mr. Wooley. The Editorial can be found on page 3.

Announcements

The Westword has no announcements at this time.

Corrections

In the November issue, we incorrectly used the symbol for Daoism for Buddhism. Also, on page 5 we said Ms. Obas is the Dean of Students, but her role is the 11th grade administrator.

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

What's inside

- 3
- Editorial Investigating diversity within AP classes
- 5
- News Highlighting the recent success of the Mock Trial team
- 9
- Viewpoint A 2016 year in review
- 12
- Las Noticias La muerte histórica de Fidel Castro
- 15
- Special Report Evaluating the status of different economies in the world
- 17
- Supplement Student guide to smart shopping
- 25
- Feature Gil Daniels makes an SNL appearance
- 29
- Limelight An interview with Yahdon Israel
- 31
- Scatterbrain How to have the perfect winter snow day
- 34
- Express Artist of the month: Crystal Larriviere
- 36
- Sports How Westhill athletes balance school responsibilities and sports

The Westword
Westhill High School
125 Roxbury Road
Stamford, CT 06902
(203) 977-4894
westwordwhs@gmail.com
thewestwordonline.com

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

Steps to diversify AP courses

Each year, Westhill collects one of the most diverse student bodies in Connecticut with 63 percent minority students. These numbers are something to be proud of; different cultures, religions, and backgrounds bring perspective to the table. However, these numbers are not always reflected in the percentage of students taking Advanced Placement (AP) classes. In 2015, only eleven Hispanic students took AP exams which is only 2.6 percent of everyone that took the exam, even though Hispanics make up 39 percent of the approximate 2300 Westhill student population, according to CollegeBoard.

This low number of Hispanic test-takers may be the result of both the enrollment process and exam costs in previous years. “Many student didn’t sit for the test because it is expensive and they aren’t certain the score would be accepted,” said English Department Head Christine Wheeler. Although students with low-income families can apply for a fee waiver, it is often a difficult task to obtain one.

In 2007, after a competitive application process, Connecticut, along with five other states, was chosen to receive funding for the National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI). The initiative set out to end this issue with a proposal for a program to incentivize AP courses and increase AP training.

By applying for the Project Opening Doors grant, the number of African American and Hispanic students taking part in AP program grew.

The program was implemented in 23 high schools all across Connecticut and included a \$13.2 million grant called Project Opening Doors to be spent over the course of six years. This grant would provide course-specific training, online resources, exam fee subsidies, monetary awards for passing scores, and Saturday study sessions.

The funding that students can most directly engage are the Saturday study sessions. Held three

times a school year, students enrolled in AP Science, English, History, and Math classes may attend what is normally a three hour class taught by an AP trained teacher approved by the program. In addition to Saturday Sessions, funding is allocated towards technology that can be seen throughout the school, and is used for classes other than APs as well.

Funding from the grant is geared as a resource that all AP students can benefit from. But, the program also encourages enrollment in these challenging courses. Criteria for student enrollment in AP classes has changed as well. Rather than implementing a minimum grade point average (GPA) requirement, any student, regardless of academic history, may partake in any AP class at Westhill. “It was about getting kids to feel

successful, it was sustainable. It will continue to operate following this year except under the funding of the Allegiance Grant. Studies also showed that this trend continued for years after the grant was initiated. “Every year is different, but we have maintained the growth we were expected to make,” said Principal Camille Figluizzi.

While these grants and programs cause a higher expectation for course load and greatly improve diversity in advanced level classes, there is still more work to be done. Specifically in Westhill, only 13.6 percent of students who took AP exams in 2015 were African American or Hispanic. Even with monetary incentives and study sessions, AP classes are still majority white. “I think [AP classes are] geared to a specific type of person. Being a minority, it was

The Westhill community should consider furthering this program and the success that follows. Holding up not only equal, but high standards for every Westhill student is the root of the issue. To affect the racial gap in AP classes, it is important to break the assumption that a child won’t be able to succeed in an AP class because of past course selection or background.

A program which might make the difference is Equal Opportunity Schools (EOS), a non-profit organization which works to reform the enrollment gap in AP programs. The goal of EOS is to “break the tragedy of twenty feet,” meaning that many students are stuck just across the hall from challenging courses, but are not considered prepared to experience them for themselves. EOS

tion including course load and GPA, but it also considers “educational goal,” “career interest,” and “trusted adult.”

The EOS system looks past a student’s current situation, and focuses on what the student wants for their future and how to prepare them. The EOS program has been implemented all over the country in high schools comparable to Westhill. Glenbard East High School, for example is located in a suburb of Chicago with just over 2300 students. Both schools have similar student populations, are suburbs of a major city, and have high percentages of minority students.

If EOS or a similar program was implemented at Westhill, the number of minority and low-income students enrolled in AP classes over the course of four years could increase by a factor of 2.5, according to the EOS website.

In recent years, Westhill has made strides in closing the enrollment gap of minority students in AP classes with the Project Opening Doors grant.

As peers and friends, it is important that we continue to speak out for diversity in our advanced level classes and work to include any student that is willing to work hard for better opportunities.

The bottom line:

Project Opening Doors led to more diversity within AP classes but without proper funding, there is inequality when it comes to the ability of who can participate in AP classes.

comfortable to go take difficult courses,” said Guidance Department Head Carole DeLuca.

Project Opening Doors took a huge step forward in solving issues of racial segregation in classrooms. The grant “substantially increased the number of African American and Hispanic students taking AP courses and earning qualifying scores,” said Mort Orlov, Vice President of Northeast programs for NMSI. Data collected from over 650 school participants showed that schools that were given the grant had 70 percent more passing scores by African American and Hispanic students than the national percentage in just one year. “I have observed a greater number of minority students in my AP courses. We are running 17 sections of AP English,” said English Department Head Christine Wheeler.

Not only was the program suc-

cessful, it was sustainable. I think there is always something to prove when you are a minority. There is always that underlying pressure of matching up to everyone else,” said Imani Morgan (’17), who has taken several AP classes such as AP US History, when asked if she feels minorities are provided the same type of push to be in AP classes. Others think the issue is about lacking motivation, not a systemic problem.

“I do not feel like there is an issue with diversity [in AP classes]. It is based on what you think you are capable of doing, and how much you want to challenge yourself. I do see that there is a smaller percentage of minorities in AP classes, though, and I would like to see that change, but I do feel like there are equal opportunities,” said Chelsea Valdez (’18), who is currently taking AP Language and Composition.

tackles this issue with a survey of each student and an advanced analytics software system to create profiles for each student. The system records standard informa-

WHAT THE...?



Julius Caesar A caesar salad was found in the AG parking lot; if lost, please submit all inquiries to *The Westword*.

Please submit op-eds and letters to
Dong Zhi Guo’s mailbox in Room 224 or
email them to westwordwhs@gmail.com.

Mock trial knocks out state champions

Maddy Cohen
Print Executive Editor

The Westhill Mock Trial team, composed of 10 seniors and two juniors won their first regional competition on December 2. Civics First, the non-profit association that promotes law-related programs throughout Connecticut schools, held the competition at the Stamford Courthouse. The program tailors to students who love to act and are interested in future careers in law. Mock Trial is set up to have two sides on each court case students are given. One side, called the plaintiff, was

led by cocaptain Andy Putterman ('17), focused on the prosecuting side and went up against Sacred Heart High School, a first-year team in the program. "We were given a fictional case that was real in nature. As a team, we prepare our own direct and cross examination questions, opening and closing statements, and mimic the litigation process in competitions with all court formalities," said Putterman. The defense, led by cocaptain Leah Schwartz ('17), was faced with Weston High School, the two-year running state champions for Mock Trial. This win was especially sig-

nificant because last year, as the Westhill Mock Trial team faced off against Weston and lost to the Weston Mock Trial in the semifinals. Weston then went on to win the state title. This meant that the Mock Trial team would debate against their rival, and ended up victorious. "We all put in a lot of work. It was a really close competition and it helped that since no one graduated last year, everyone on our team had a lot of experience," said Schwartz. According to Schwartz, the Mock Trial team began preparing for the case around mid-September, after the distracted driving and negligence case

was posted on the Civics First website. "We usually practice about once a week, and then two to three times a week leading up to competitions," said Ben Freedman ('17), a participating Mock Trial member since his junior year. The Mock Trial team's next round, the quarter finals, will be in January and their opponent has yet to be announced. "Now that we've beat our biggest competitor early on, we feel stronger than ever going into the next round. But this also doesn't mean we're going to let our guard down. We know what we need to tighten on both sides of the case and

we are ready to take our team all the way to the state finals. Our team is in desperate need for people next year. People tend to think Mock Trial is only about knowing law, but this is not true at all. Mock Trial is for people who are interested in acting, debating, or delving into the world of different characters and their stories," said Jordan Benzaken ('17). This is the last year the Mock Trial teacher advisor, Ms. Loesch, will be part of the team because she is retiring in June. The club is losing their advisor along with 10 members, and they are working hard to recruit for next year.



Photos contributed by Maeve Ronan / Managing Editor.

NO OBJECTIONS HERE Westhill's Mock Trial team won their first competition of the season against Sacred Heart High School and Weston High School to advance to the next round of trials.

The Untold Stories

Column by Noah Klein



This issue, I sat down with Gleidy Guevera from Mr. Sandoval's 7th Period Bilingual US History class. Special thanks to Maria Mirafuentes for helping to translate and allow Gleidy the chance to share her story in the easiest and most comfortable way possible.

The Westword: When did you come to the United States and why?
Gleidy Guevera: I came to the United States in 2015 from Honduras, I did not really want to, but my mom forced me to come. I was nervous because I really did not know what it would be like. I lived with my grandma in Honduras. I had not seen my mom in thirteen years.

TW: How does school compare in U.S. from Honduras?
GG: In Honduras, they let us do whatever we want. There is a lot of bad people. For example teachers knew kids had drugs and would not do anything about it. Kids would sell drugs in the hallway and it would not be reported or anything.
TW: What do you miss most about Honduras?
GG: I miss my grandmother. I love my grandma more than anything else.
TW: What class is your favorite?
GG: I like English a lot but I need a lot of practice. I can understand it but I get really nervous when I speak it.
TW: What do you plan to do after high school?

GG: I do not really know but I want to keep studying. My mom does not really support this so much, so I would need to work in order to study.
TW: Whom do you live with?
GG: Right now, I rent my own room alone near Exit 9. I used to live with my mom and step-dad but they kicked me out because they did not approve of my relationship with my ex-boyfriend.
TW: Do you feel you are treated differently because you are an ESL student?
GG: No, everyone here is the same, everyone is equal.
TW: Do you like Westhill?
GG: I like it a lot. I like learning different things and when I am in school, I escape reality and all the problems I face outside of school.

TW: How do you like living in Stamford so far?
GG: To be honest, I do not really like Stamford because this is where all my problems started. But one day, I would like to move to another state; something different from here.
TW: Would you ever go back to Honduras?
GG: No, because in Honduras there are a lot of gangs who would try to recruit me and get me to do bad things. I am not interested in that. I like to learn.
TW: Do you do anything after school at Westhill?
GG: I would love to play soccer for Westhill, but I waitress at the Guatemalan restaurant Antojitos Chapines until 10:30 every night to support myself, then I

go home and do my homework. I have all A's and B's except in Mr. Sandoval's class.
TW: What is your favorite memory in the U.S.?
GG: I am not really sure, because so much has happened, but meeting my mom after thirteen years was really amazing.
I would like to thank Guevera for taking the time to discuss these difficult topics and giving us a glimpse into her personal life. Guevera's story may be one of struggle, but it is that struggle that makes her stronger and gives her the drive to succeed in school. She is truly an inspiration and proves that there is no excuse not to achieve if one is persistent and motivated.

BRIEFS

"New" passes for late buses

Recently, a policy regarding late bus passes has been enforced at school. For many, this was the first time they heard of this policy and did not quite understand the sudden change. However, Dean of Students Mr. Pereira confirmed that "this policy has always existed." The recent enforcement comes from a lack of buses for the high number of students staying after school. "We have to give priority to the kids who are staying after for legitimate reasons, be it extra help or a club," said Pereira. The rule is, if a student is in a club, that advisor should give them a pass for the certain day that they meet, and if the student is meeting with a teacher, the teacher should give them a hall pass for them to have access to the bus. This will ensure that the kids who need to stay after are the ones who have access to the late busses to get home.

French Club Food Drive

The French Club was started this year, with the intent of promoting French language and culture. In addition, the club members wanted to extend the scope of interest of the club so that it was not limited to only profitable activities. The club then began the project of collecting food items for the Backpack Program. In fact, all the items collected will be allocated to Westhill High School. The French club is looking forward to serving the school community in the coming months. "The French club food drive was definitely a success. The members of the club felt that being a new club this year and it being the holiday season, this was the perfect time to do our first community service project. We collected many cans to donate to The Backpack Program held at Westhill and we are excited to do many more service projects for the community", said club member Samantha Gallant ('17).

Briefs by **Charlotte Kriftcher & Michael Hernandez** / Reporter & Viewpoint Editor.

You're hot and you're cold

Amalia Skoparantz
Staff Writer

Temperatures vary throughout all three buildings in Westhill. Not only is this problem a result of the opening and closing of doors and windows, it is a result of the lack of proper, working heating and cooling systems in Westhill.

Typically, the only building that has a comfortable and regulated temperature is the Freshman building. It is the most controlled environment because it is a newly renovated building. There are few complaints from students and teachers who spend the day in this building. "My room typically stays at a comfortable temperature. The problem is when I take my classes to the media center, and it is either

extremely hot or cold," said Health and Human Behavior teacher Mrs. Cutolo.

As for the media center, most days the temperature remains around room temperature. Other days, the temperature reaches extremes of hot or cold. None of the windows are allowed to be open in the media center for safety reasons. This means that the open space lacks ventilation. For students and teachers, it is okay to withstand the extreme conditions because you are there for a short period. However, for staff members that work there all day long, it can become a serious nuisance. "The temperature is unreliable," said chair of the media department, Mrs. Benedict. "It is very unpredictable," said Mrs. Letson,

media specialist and Benedict's coworker. The media center employees agreed that it is frustrating to have no control of the temperature in their workplace.

In the 400s building, where upperclassmen classes are, there are always mixed reviews. It all depends on the specific location of the classroom because some rooms do not have windows while some do. Some teachers leave both their windows and doors open for a cross breeze to ventilate their rooms. Others try to keep in the heat in the best they can by shutting all the doors and windows. "Usually in the 400s it will be hot, but teachers will open up their windows and it will get really cold. So it is really hard to figure out what to wear in

the mornings," said Shannon McDonough ('17).

The problem has been addressed to Westhill authorities. Mr. Carlo Buccino, head of the custodial staff, and his crew are constantly being called by teachers to help fix their radiators. Although he is able to make short term fixes, he has made the issue aware to higher authorities who can get the proper fixes made. Buccino says that the entire system is outdated and needs to be replaced. "I am simply the middleman who reiterates the complaints and makes the service calls for the head department," said Buccino. It is clear that there is no single person to blame. The hope for a better environment lays in the hands of higher authorities than the staff at Westhill.

Holidays and harmony at Westhill



Photos contributed by **Maeve Ronan** / Managing Editor.

ENLIGHTENING THE ROOM WITH MELODY The Westhill choir performs in the Stamford Mall in downtown in preparation of the Winter Concert. They sang Christmas carols and other traditional songs.

Janet Manina
Supplement Editor

Every fall, the band and choir music programs of Westhill work tediously in preparation for the annual Winter Concert. The purpose of the concert is to spread holiday cheer to students during the coldest season of the year. Being the first performance of the school year, the Winter Concert is a time when the band and choir groups start rehearsing with a new group of students, including the incoming freshmen and other newcomers. The 2017 Winter Concert was held on Thursday, December 22, in the large auditorium of Westhill.

The singers rehearsed during their class periods in school. The group of singers who performed at the concert included the Gospel, Concert, and Chamber choirs. In addition to a class devoted to practicing their pieces, there were occasional rehearsals approximately once a month after school for the singers. "I enjoy the practice leading up to the Winter Concert, especially because it is the first performance of the year with a group of new members. The Winter Concert is very holiday oriented, with an array of festive songs," said Ben Freedman ('17).

The song choices executed at the Winter Concert seemed to get students in a merry

mood. The singers hoped to provide the audience with a festive show and were practicing for singing Christmas-season songs at this year's Winter Concert as early as November. Songs performed at the concert include, "Daniel Daniel Servant of the Lord," "Deck the Hall," "The First Noel," "Joy to the World," "Carol of the Bells," and "Silent Night."

The Chambers and Concert Choir performed together as well, featuring the song "Canticles of America." The Gospel and Concert Choir also performed a conjoined piece. A major piece, done annually, is the "Hallelujah Chorus." The Band and Choir exhibited this tradi-

tional song together and their merry sound echoed throughout the Westhill auditorium.

In terms of the Band, there are school classes as well as many hours of after-school practices devoted to each performance. Being the Band's first performance of the year as well, both groups worked tirelessly to prepare for the Winter Concert, followed by multiple performances over the course of each upcoming school year.

The Chamber Choir also got to show off their new set of holiday songs at the Stamford Town Center on Tuesday, December 13. The sweet sound of holiday tunes filled the mall and brought winter season joy to those who shopped that day.

Safety lanyards in schools

Marley Sklover
Reporter

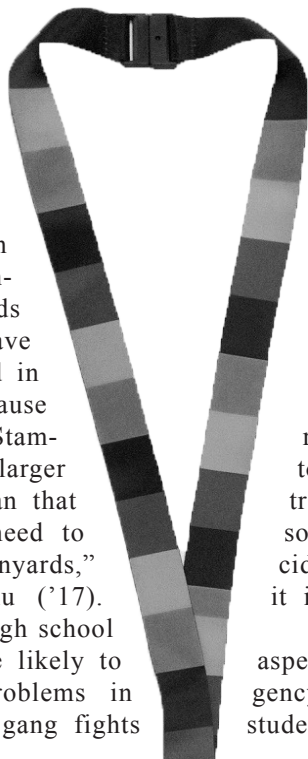
With any new policy comes great controversy. One issue that has recently struck a chord regarding public safety is gun threats in school. In the wake of recent tragedies such as Sandy Hook, there is great debate about methods to protect America's schoolchildren, such as allowing security guards to carry weapons, practicing lock down drills, and requiring weaponry shop employees to run intense criminal background checks on potential mentally ill customers.

In an attempt to create safer schools, elementary school teachers were given lanyards with emergency buttons that directly contact the police about two years ago. The purpose of these emergency lanyards was to shorten first responder time in case of a school shooter or any other emergency situation.

These buttons were origi-

nally mandatory but the policy has since changed. These emergency lanyards were never given to middle school and high school teachers. "The lanyards may never have been implemented in high schools because high schools in Stamford are much larger which would mean that the city would need to pay for more lanyards," said Courtney Xu ('17).

Middle and high school students are more likely to cause serious problems in schools, such as gang fights



CALL THE POLICE

and drug deals. However, with proper school security, these issues can be solved.

The problem is that some teachers may not realize this and go straight to the police themselves, when the right thing to do is to notify administrators and security so that they can decide whether or not it is a police matter.

Another negative aspect of having emergency lanyards is that students may try to cause

false alarms in an attempt to aggravate those around them.

However, one benefit of having emergency lanyards in elementary, middle, and high school classrooms is that there can be immediate response to serious emergencies.

For example, if there is a medical emergency, paramedics can be notified immediately. When it comes to medical emergencies, every second counts and time cannot afford to be wasted.

Ultimately, middle and high school students are significantly more capable of handling emergency situations such as intruders and school fights, but they may use their awareness of the lanyards for wrong-doing, whereas elementary schoolers are less experienced in dealing with uproar and may cause widespread panic, creating a need for lanyards. In any case, the safety of school children is the most important concern.

Open campus for second semester seniors

Charlotte Kriftcher
Reporter

For years seniors have advocated for the privilege to leave school during their study hall, in other words, an open campus. It was not until the beginning of this school year that students began to actively campaign for a change. Westhill Principal Ms. Figluizzi recognized this issue and began the process towards a change in the matter of a closed campus policy at Westhill. Instead of jumping right into a whole new policy, "This year we are going to have a soft start," said Figluizzi.

Rumors have been circulating regarding what exactly this change would entail. Figluizzi confirmed that starting second semester, seniors who have a study hall first block can come into school late and those who have a study hall last block can be dismissed early if they choose to be.

The specifics of the system used to monitor this are still being worked out. "Students just have to be responsible for themselves," said

Figluizzi. The new policy is not a result of the ideas of the administration. "The administration was never really convinced," said Figluizzi. This change is a result of students advocating for themselves.

Seniors in previous years have had the same opportunity to gain this privilege but were more passive in their hope for change. Ben Freedman ('17) and Jorge Cordova ('17) took the open campus policy to the Board of Education. They are the true reason it is being implemented.

Seniors at Westhill are very happy with the prospect of this progression towards change. "It is about time," said Paige Sottosanti ('17), "This is a good way to start being held accountable for our own choices." Others are excited to utilize this new policy to leave school during the day.

"It will be nice to get a break during school and actually be able to leave a period early if we choose to," said Charlie Teeters ('17). Instead of staying in school, the extra hour at home doing work or prepping for after school activities will allow seniors to use their time



FLASH THE PASS Starting second semester, seniors with a study hall will be able to leave campus if they have the proper pass and identification.

much more efficiently.

For teachers and administrators concerned that this policy will affect attendance in other classes, there is no need to worry about attendance. "Having open campus during study hall would not keep me from going to my other classes regularly. If anything, it will give me a little break to look forward

to during the day, motivating me to be productive in the rest of my classes," said Amalia Skoparantzou ('17). In six months these students and their fellow senior peers will be responsible for themselves in college or other pursuits after high school, and this small privilege appears as though it is the first step in gaining their independence.

BRIEFS

Holiday Bazaar

As the holidays are slowly approaching, Westhill's Holiday Bazaar allow students to purchase items from their peers from Mr. Temelini and Mrs. Poyser's Entrepreneurship students. The students go to the wholesale district in New York City, with \$40 provided by their teachers. They buy products to sell at the Holiday Bazaar, and in return they have to give back the loan to their teachers. This year, many students successfully raised more than their \$40 loan. The top students made about \$200 each. These students sold gloves, hats, food and toys, and many other goods. "It is an excellent experience for any student in the school to learn how to borrow money, pay back the loan, and make a profit. If they make a loss, they can learn how to overcome it," said Mr. Temelini. In addition to providing Entrepreneurship students with an insight into what business is like, the Holiday Bazaar is an activity that a lot of Westhill students enjoy.

SantaCon Success

SantaCon was in full swing on Saturday, December 10 in New York City. Over 20,000 festive Saint Nick's showed up in the city to enjoy the parade. Extra police officers were on hand to ensure the event was safe and went as planned. The New York celebration is traditionally the largest in the world, with a reputation of being out of control and disorderly. No matter the consequences, the event is held in good spirits. Participating Santas were required to make a \$10 donation to charity in order to participate in the event. Tens of thousands of dollars were raised for charity during the day-long celebration. The city of Stamford held its own SantaCon downtown on Saturday, December 3. Both events were hits that supported their respective cities.



Good Month Bad Month

Column by
Max Zussman &
Matthew Greenbaum

Good Month For...

Hip-Hop/R&B This month was big for hip-hop and rap fans. Some of the top artists released new albums. On December 2, Childish Gambino released *Awaken, My Love*. The album portrays a very unique soul-electronic vibe. On December 9, J. Cole dropped *4 Your Eyez Only* while Post Malone released *Stoney*.



Cancer Awareness The NFL recently announced that they have moved on from "Pink October," and will now dedicate the month to any type of cancer a team chooses. October was previously dedicated to raise awareness for breast cancer with the entire NFL sporting pink attire. In the upcoming season, teams can support more than one kind of cancer. Each season, a team may change their chosen kind.



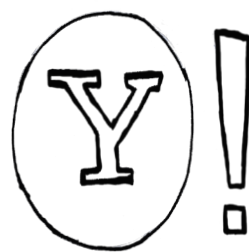
Clean Energy For the first time in America, ocean breezes and winds are generating clean renewable power. Producing this energy is crucial to avoid the effects of global warming. The first off-shore wind farm was developed recently by a company called Deepwater Wind. The turbines blowing in the wind are supposed to bring energy to Block Island, which used to rely on diesel fuel.

Bad Month For...

The Homeless Being a "good samaritan" to the homeless in your community may come with consequences. All over the country, cities are passing laws making it illegal to shelter and feed the homeless. Instead of trying to help the homeless with an open heart, many cities are simply trying to push the issue to the side.



Craig Sager Craig Sager, a former sports reporter, died at the age of 65. He was a longtime sideline reporter for Turner Sports, and a host for CNN Sports Tonight. People will remember him especially for his colorful wardrobe. Sager died just before being inducted into the Sports Broadcasting Hall of Fame. In 2014 he was diagnosed with leukemia and has battled with it ever since.



Yahoo Yahoo has recently disclosed that more than one billion accounts were hacked in 2013. The attack involved a breach in the confidentiality of the users telephone numbers, dates of birth, passwords, and security questions. Yahoo is telling all users to change passwords and unencrypted security questions. The most troubling part of the hacking is that it took three years for it to be discovered.

Tuberculosis case at Westhill

D'angelo Howard
Staff Writer

Tuberculosis, a global epidemic disease that killed nearly 1.8 million people alone in 2015, is now affecting the Westhill community. This new potential case of tuberculosis is currently being investigated in our school community. On December 2, the Stamford Department of Health circulated a letter to the Westhill community informing students, parents, and staff of the new potential case and the steps they are taking to look into the case. They also stated that they will be conducting interviews to determine if anyone had enough close contact with the patient to be in danger of contracting tuberculosis. The letter offered up the services of the Stamford Health Department Tuberculosis Team to those at Westhill.

This is the second case of tuberculosis that has been investigated at Westhill by the city and State Health De-

partment in 2016. According to the *Stamford Advocate*, 31 people had been tested in the earlier case for potential exposure to tuberculosis.

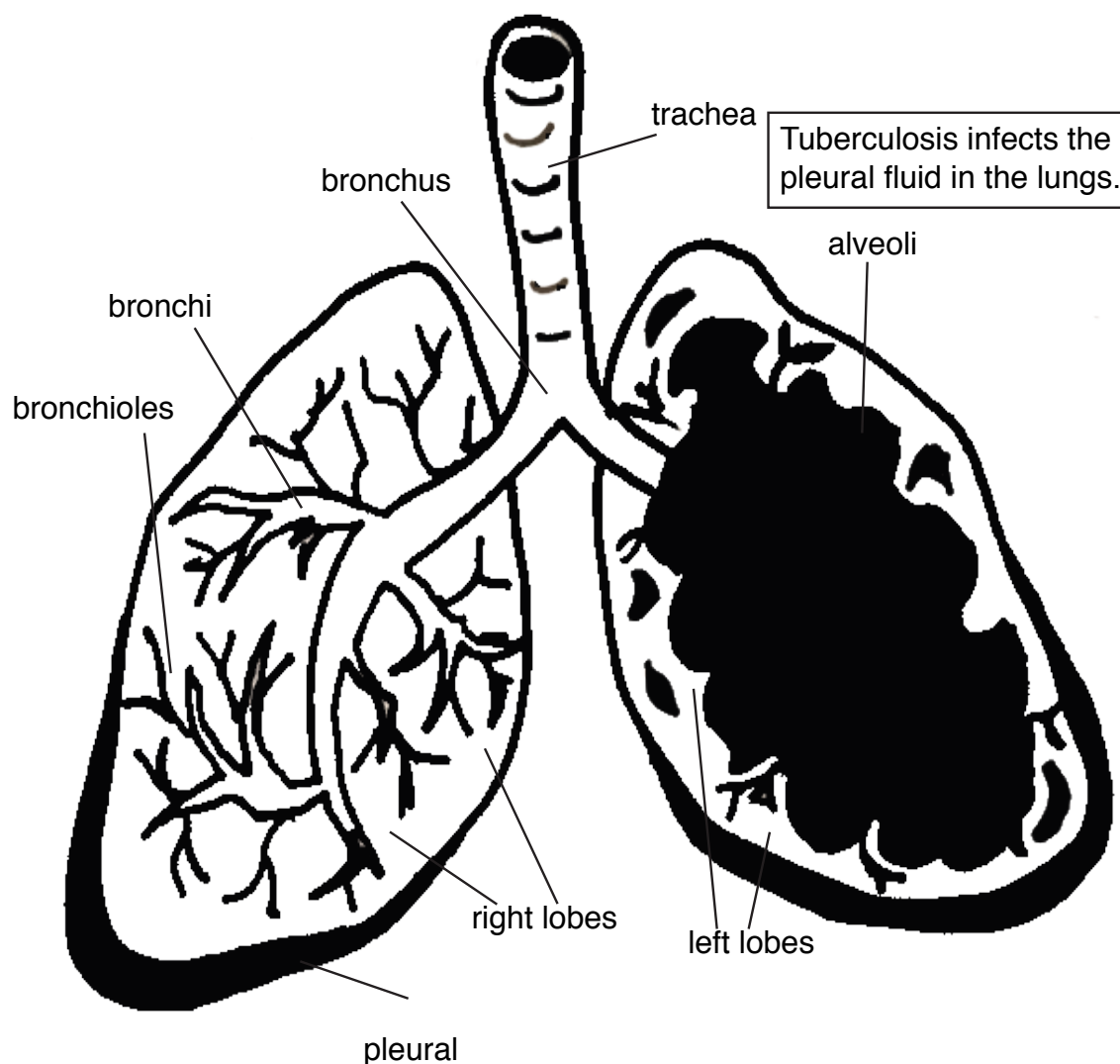
Tuberculosis is a bacterial infection that can spread through the lymph nodes and bloodstream to any organ in the body. It is most often found in the lungs and can be fatal if left untreated for a certain period of time. In the U.S., fewer than 10,000 cases have been seen, and worldwide, over 10 million people have been affected by tuberculosis in 2015. Tuberculosis is treatable and curable, but the drug treatment requires that a number of antibiotics be taken for a prolonged period of time, usually six to nine months. In some cases, tuberculosis is caused by a type of bacterium called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* that are resistant to common antibiotics. Tuberculosis has symptoms such as chest pains, coughing up blood or trouble breathing, chills, fatigue, night sweats, unintentional weight

loss, and shortness of breath.

There has been evidence of tuberculosis from up to 9,000 years ago. It is also the cause of one-third of all deaths in the world. Tuberculosis can be spread through the air by someone who has it but not by sharing food or drinks. "Anyone who is infectious will be a concern because they can transfer the disease. Right now, the only concern is people who are in close contact with those with the disease," said health teacher Ms. Cutolo.

"The tuberculosis case is still ongoing. The number of students that were in contact was not verified. The student who was hospitalized was in communications with the Stamford Health Department and notified the Westhill community. The information came from our school nurses," said Ms. Figluizzi. This notification was sent out the same week the case was brought up to Stamford Health Department. "The safety of our students and staff is always highest priority."

Diagram of the lungs



Should students be able to request lateral switches?

Michael Grafstein

Staff Writer

At the beginning of every year it seems as if half the school is at the guidance counselor's office looking to change their classes. Whether it is because the class may be too easy or too hard, it is not a subject they are interested in, or they want another teacher, students work with counselors to create the perfect schedule.

To many students, having the right teacher is very important. Some teachers and students work together better than others. "Although it is forbidden, certain teachers are better for students and vice-versa, I think it should be allowed and it is

great," said Jake Dardis ('17).

An overlooked aspect in school is how important a student-teacher relationship can be. Some student-teacher personalities just do not mesh well together.

"Some students work well with any teacher, while others struggle when they do not feel like they connect with their teacher. It is possible they may be more successful when their style of learning matches up with a particular teaching style," said Guidance Counselor Mr. Marchesani. An out-going, edgy student will not fit a strict teacher's policies, in the same way a teacher who does not like to teach by the books is not the right fit for a student who can only learn from strict rules and

regulations. This strained relationship can severely affect a student's performance in that class.

Certain teachers have very distinct teaching styles. Some base their grades purely on tests and quizzes, while others use homework and classwork as well. If two students are considered "bad test takers" are in different classes, and one class is based purely on tests and quizzes while the other includes homework, classwork, and projects, is it fair to the student in the other class? The way teachers grade is important, and most do not grade or teach in the same way, so students should have every right to decide for themselves which teacher best suits their needs so

they can succeed.

At the beginning of every school year, the same question is brought up to teachers by students: do you give any extra credit? Whether it is getting points back on tests or extra assignments, some teachers do and some do not. Coming from personal experience, a teacher who allows students the opportunity to do extra credit can make a huge difference in one's grades.

There are going to be some teachers that certain students do not get along with. It happens to everyone. Of course this should not get in the way of how the teacher grades or how understanding they may be to their student's situations and issues, but there

is no doubt that a bad relationship can interfere with the students learning experience in class. "A positive aspect of it [lateral switching] is that students get to pick the teachers with whom they believe they would be successful," said English teacher Ms. Reap. If a student experiences this issue, not only should the student be allowed to switch, but the school should be obligated to get the student a different teacher.

Every class can be the difference between getting into your top choice college and not. Why not give each student the best opportunity to earn the best possible grade they can? It is up to the school to give each student a fair chance to excel.



Photograph by Katie Hollenberg // Photographer

Nicole Segal

Staff Writer

"He/she gives too much work." "They just do not like me." Or, the best one yet, "They cannot teach." Guidance counselors often hear these words from students who want to switch teachers of the same subject. Switching out of a class because the teacher does not fit a student's needs should drive them to push yourself to acquire new learning skills instead of remaining in their comfort zone.

When a student makes a lateral change, they are not switching the level of intensity in the class, just the

teacher. Some may be under the assumption that when students switch teachers, they are switching to someone with better qualifications. While that can be the case, most students are switching to a teacher that has equal qualifications and skills as other teachers.

Although switching to a teacher one prefers sounds like an ideal choice, they will not be able to stay in their comfort zone their whole life. As students get older, they will not be able to switch to a better boss or the college professor of their choice. "Using my personal experience, lateral change is a non issue. If my child wanted to switch teachers I would say absolutely not.

You get what you get and you're going to have to live with that now and through college," said an anonymous source. Even though it may be possible that students do not mesh well with a certain teacher, it is important for them to learn how to manage with them.

When switching to a teacher that they like better or has their preferred teaching style, students are not challenging themselves or attempting to learn in a new way that could help them work better. Sometimes they may be stuck in a situation where they have to talk to the teacher about the issue they are having, or help them understand the way that they feel they learn better.

Instead of taking the easy way out of switching away from a teacher students do not want, which they will not be able to do as they age, they should communicate and solve the problem with the person without involving a third party.

When students get to college, the classes they take consist more so of the professor giving lectures and then them taking the time to apply themselves and learn the information on their own. "Lateral changes do not let you take matters into your own hands and handle things like a mature adult. In order for you to fully understand a topic you have to see all sides and points of view," said Adam Zacharewicz ('17).

If a student is having an issue with the way a teacher explains things, such as they are explaining information in a way that makes them even more confused, changing the teacher should not be the way to solve the issue. Instead, they should go home and make a greater effort to learn a way for them to best comprehend the information a professor teaches them, and then study it for the future.

Switching to a teacher who fits their comfort zone does not challenge students and help them progress for the future. Lateral changes may be an easy way out of a problem, but they do not allow students to have an opportunity to fix the issue for themselves like a mature adult.

The end of a controversial year

Ryan Murace
Media Manager

The year of 2016 was highlighted by a series of newsworthy events from the Stamford community and around the world. Unfortunately, we are unable to look back at many of these events with a smile. “I feel like the bad definitely outweighed the good this year,” said Kayla Baker (’18). This may very well be true as many events this year have lead people to believe that 2016 was indeed the worst year in history.

This past year saw a strand of celebrity deaths. This list includes singers David Bowie, Prince, Christina Grimmie, and Leonard Cohen, in addition to actors Alan Rickman and Stamford resident Gene Wilder. Boxer Muhammad Ali, writer Harper Lee, former FLOTUS Nancy Reagan, writer and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, and too many others joined the seemingly never end-

ing list of 2016 celebrity deaths.

According to Fox19 in Cincinnati, Hurricane Matthew was the deadliest storm of a powerful Atlantic hurricane season this year, as over a thousand lives were lost. Out of the 11 hurricanes during the season, Matthew was one of three hurricanes above a category three and one of five hurricanes to make landfall in the United States. Other natural disasters were not uncommon. According to *CNN*, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake hit Ecuador in April killing 663 people. Many tremors also occurred in Italy following a 6.2 magnitude quake that killed nearly 300 lives in August.

Sadly, those are only a few of the unintentional deaths. As reported by *USA Today*, over 150 people died every month from January to July when considering attacks with over 20 deaths. July was not even halfway over before the attacks in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Baghdad, Iraq, and Nice, Paris combined for over 400 deaths.

The United States even suffered its deadliest terrorist attack since September 11, 2001 and deadliest mass shooting overall after the shooting in Orlando, Florida on June 12 when 49 people were killed at the Pulse Night Club.

A number of world tragedies were also very prevalent throughout 2016. England left the European Union causing a series of economical concerns. The Syrian Civil War continued on, which lead to the ongoing conflict in Aleppo and the Syrian Refugee crisis, where an upwards 11 million refugees have been displaced since 2011, according to *BBC News*.

Many minorities continue to be mistreated in an unequal fashion as racism, sexism, religious discrimination, or homophobia failed to cease. Hate crimes, police brutality, and rape on college campuses did not go away either. “It has been a year of challenges,” said history teacher Mr. Mazza. It is true as 2016 was filled with

many unbearable hardships.

With all of that said, it is easy for many people to look at 2016 as subjectively the worst year in history. However, it is important to keep events and ideals in perspective. 2016 was not the worst year in history. It has been bad, but there have been worse years. Anyone in the years of the late 1340s could easily be a candidate for the worst year in history. According to the *History Channel*, the world was in the midst of the Bubonic Plague, which caused of approximately 20 million gruesome deaths; this death toll equaled about one third of the world’s population of the time.

Additionally, any of the years in World War II make a strong case as well. For instance, 1942 marked the start of the Holocaust, the mass murder of more than six million Jews in addition to other persecuted groups, such as homosexuals, gypsies, or disabled people, under the German regime led by Adolf Hitler. 1942

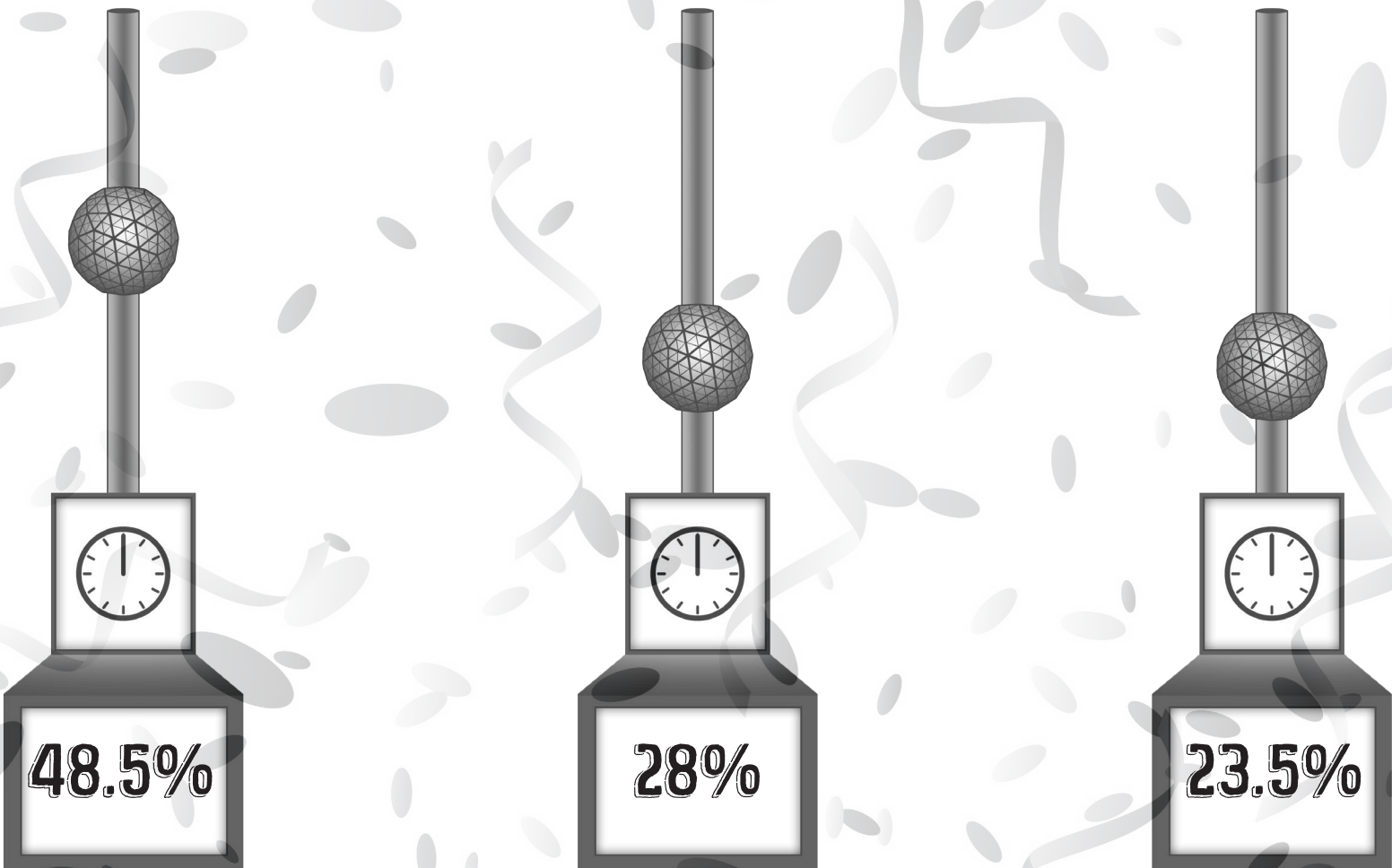
was also year of the deadliest battle of the entire WWII, The Battle of Stalingrad.

It is important to realize 2016 was not all bad. 2016 was the year that the Juno Spacecraft reached Jupiter’s orbit and sent back pictures after a five year journey to the gas planet. The global tiger population has grown to nearly 4,000 in the past year, as reported by the World Wildlife Fund. While diseases such as Cholera and Zika plagued the Americas, scientists made a breakthrough in the fight to end Lou Gehrig’s disease by finding a gene that is likely linked to a treatment. In addition, the Olympics, held in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, featured a refugee team for the first time in history.

None of this is to say that any of the good makes up for any of the bad. However, it is a mistake to say that 2016 was the worst year in history without considering any of the positive events that we got to enjoy.

WOULD YOU CONSIDER 2016 A GOOD OR BAD YEAR?

GOOD YEAR: IT’S COMPLICATED: BAD YEAR:



Considering a shorter school week

Bria Pettiford
Staff Writer

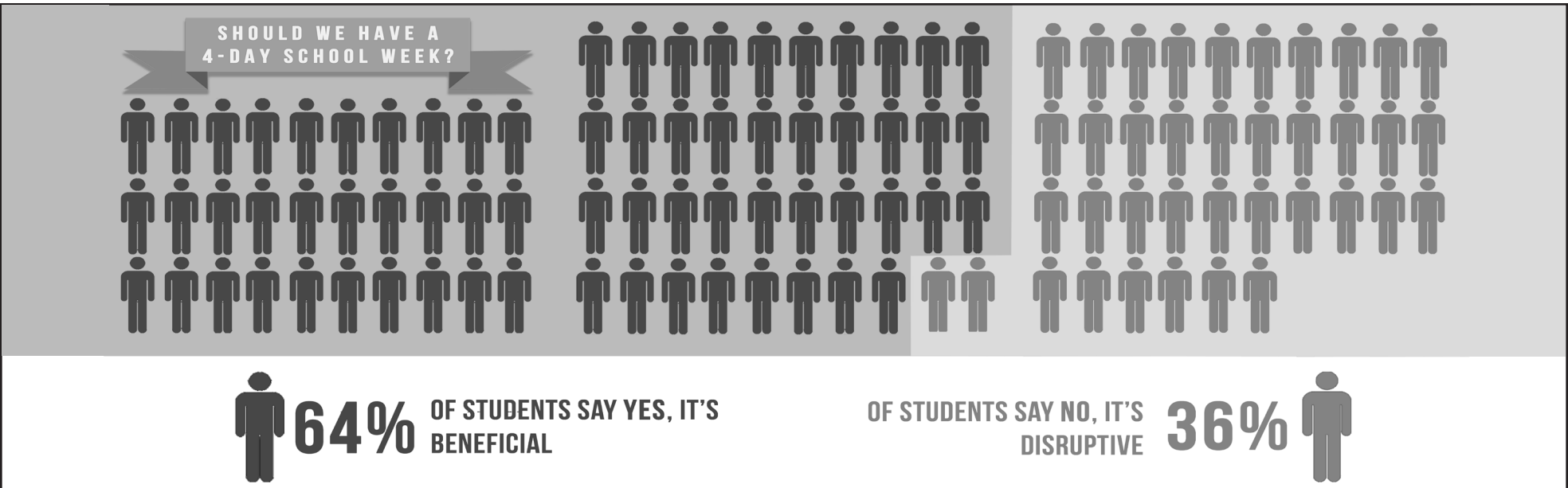
Many people believe shorter school weeks would be beneficial to a student's education and make life more manageable for students. On the other hand, arguments have surfaced claiming that a four day school week would lessen the amount of material teachers would be able to cover during the school year. A four-day school week could potentially improve grades by allowing students to get more

rest over the three day weekend. "I believe shorter school weeks will give students an extra day to study or complete major assignments. It also allows another day to sleep in," said Arianna Nguyen ('17). Teenagers need their sleep in order to be productive during school. The more sleep a student gets, the more work they can complete. Students can also use the extra time at homework on assignments in order to turn them in by the deadline allotted by teachers. "I believe that the key

to a successful and happy life is to work hard. So yes, I am in favor of holidays, weekends, vacations as an important way to keep our lives balanced," said English teacher Mr. Pinsince. However, having a shorter school week could alter the consistency of the school week. Students would have a harder time managing schoolwork or other activities. Some students work better while in a quiet environment in order to focus for long periods of time. In some cases students can only draw motiva-

tion from teachers and pressure to get their work done. When students are at home, they may be more easily distracted and not motivated to do their work. A shorter school week allows more time for a student to forget the material covered in the previous week. This would force teachers to repeat the lesson they had taught the week prior, possibly halting the progression in a student's efficient education. A shorter school week would help to prepare students for col-

lege as well. College scheduling is very different from that of scheduling in high school; classes only take place two or three times a week and no one is there to make sure students attend their classes. This new scheduling format would force students to be accountable for making sure the curriculum was clear to them, and would encourage them to study independently. Therefore, a four day week would teach students to utilize skills like time management, responsibility, and independence.



Graphic designed by **Sakshi Patel** / Creative Director.
Poll conducted out of 106 students by **Zainab Jafri** / Pollster.

'Tis the season for inclusion

Alex Fischer
Staff Writer

Having been raised in a multi-religious household, I have grown up celebrating both Christmas and Chanukkah each year when December rolls around. Both sides of my family gather on separate occasions for both Christmas and Chanukkah: one day with my dad's relatives, and one day with my mother's.

Although we have worked to create a balance between the two religions we practice, Christmas overtakes the season every year. Not only has this happened to my family, but to families across America. "We are all living in this country, and it is not supposed to be so focused on one religion," said Roni Moskowitz ('17). Over time, Americans have become increasingly more biased toward

Christmas and have clearly blown it out of proportion. In a survey conducted by the PEW Research Center: Religion and Public Life, nine-in-ten Americans say they celebrate Christmas, but only half of those in this category said they view it as a religious holiday. The others see this "celebration" as more of a cultural festivity. Although the original purpose and underlying intention of Christmas is to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, half of Americans who celebrate have lost sight of that. Christmas has oozed all over our society, being reflected on billboards, television advertisements, and even on our Starbucks cups. "Society makes a big deal about the presents and the tree and not much about the religious aspect, and then pays no attention to other holidays other religions celebrate," said

an anonymous student. Christmas may be losing its brand as a religious holiday, but it has transformed into something more cultural, rather than spiritual, and this may not necessarily be a bad thing. With that said, this holiday is now accepted, with little to no acknowledgement of other holidays celebrated in America, as well as around the world. Each year on the Friday following Thanksgiving, Americans everywhere camp out outside of department stores and malls to purchase presents on a reduced price in the spirit of Black Friday. This day has become some sort of unofficial holiday, and each year it becomes more of a competition. Black Friday has become the precursor to Christmas, and the terror and chaos associated with it reflects the exact opposite of the joy Christmas

is supposed to bring. However, the essence of Black Friday and Christmas as a whole have been brought into the limelight, attracting people everywhere to participate, even those not of Christian beliefs. Therefore, I believe that Christmas is too commercialized. Other holidays such as Chanukkah and Kwanza are subtly ignored by most of society, largely due our lack of knowledge about them. Our country lives by the principle that religion is a right of passage. Despite the glory associated with freedom of religion, it seems as though those of the Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist and other faiths are deprived of this public gratification. The fact that Christmas has stolen the spotlight is simply unacceptable, and we should make a better effort to learn more about religions other than our own.



DON'T SWEAT IT Students in Christmas and Chanukkah sweaters come together to show the inclusion of both celebrations during the holiday season.

Photo by **Devon Ostheimer** / Photographer.

Speaking out against rape culture

Regardless of gender, race, age, religion, or social standing, the threat of being raped is very real. Our society needs to take a larger stand against criminals who commit these violent acts, while also paying more attention to the needs of sexual assault victims.

In the United States alone, an average of 444,500 people are victims of sexual assault every year. Every two minutes, another citizen is sexually assaulted, according to the National Crime Victimization Survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice between 2010-2014.

And yet, rape remains the most underreported crime, with only 37 percent of victims coming forward to the police. This number is low, not because it is not a serious crime, but because of a lack of support provided by communities, campuses, and law enforcement. As more examples of victim blaming and failure to convict rapists come to light, the less likely a potential victim is to go to the police.

Being assaulted is never the fault of the victim, despite claims that a girl may be "asking for it" by drinking, wearing "provocative" clothing, or agreeing to go on a date with her assaulter. Some people may say that this mentality no longer exists because of how progressive we have become as a nation, but there are still women being told that their assault was less valid because of her sobriety or the length of her skirt. These excuses may be presented frequently because of the mentality that women are meant to be submissive and "boys will be boys." This generalization not only gives an excuse to the rapist, but it also tends to illegitimize the fact that men can be raped as well.

Men are also subject to rape. Because society believes men should be masculine and more powerful than women, many male victims of rape never come forward because they fear society will criticize their masculinity or disregard the abuse as a joke. Regardless of gender,

one thing is clear: sexual assault victims do not receive the support they need.

Rape can occur at any age, but statistics from The Rape Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) reveals that assault is three times as likely between ages 18 to 24, and four times as likely if you are a college student. While one in every five women, and one in every sixteen men are sexually assaulted during college, only 10 percent of those come forward and report to the police.

Rape is so common, in fact, that for every one robbery on a campus, two acts of sexual assault take place. A film titled, *The Hunting Ground*, captures first hand accounts of college students who were raped, and what life was like for them in the aftermath of their assault. Many women in the film sought the guidance of faculty members in their school, but were met with victim blaming and were advised not to contact law enforcement.

Campuses all over the country drive

their students away from contacting the police so that the school does not get a bad reputation. The universities that invest in these students then turn their backs on them, as they fear they will pose a threat to statistics and funding.

The burden of such a horrible encounter is enough to traumatize anybody, but the financial burden of rape is just as astounding. Each rape costs approximately \$151,423 per victim. "Annually, rape costs the U.S. more than any other crime (\$127 billion), followed by assault (\$93 billion), murder (\$71 billion), and drunk driving (\$61 billion)," according to The National Sexual Violence Resource Center. In some states, women are asked by hospitals to pay for their own rape kits. Rape kits collect physical evidence off of a victim's body after the crime is committed. Imagine filing a report for robbery and being sent a bill from the police for collecting evidence. These statistics speak for themselves. Survivors need more moral and financial support from the community.

We can combat rape by ending the culture that promotes assault in our school. Cat-calling and other unwanted comments need to stop immediately. Even if you do not have intentions on taking advantage of somebody, physically or emotionally, making comments that degrade others to an object behind closed doors is just as bad.

Earlier this year, the Feminism Club handed out flyers on how to combat rape culture, and then collected student opinions. "Rape culture is a serious issue in almost every setting. Silence and jokes about rape are both very damaging in their own ways. It is important that we start talking about rape in order to end shame and silence of victims and prevent future cases," said Lucy Hart ('18). If we continue to acknowledge that survivors of sexual assault should have more recognition for their struggles, we can allow them to live the lives they deserve.

— Sam Hamilton ('18)

WHAT DOES "RAPE CULTURE" ACTUALLY MEAN?

Every 2 minutes another American is sexually assaulted.

Girls are faced with skepticism...

"You were asking for it." "You should have covered up." "Boys will be boys."²



Rape is not viewed as a serious crime...
Only 3% of rapists spend a day in jail.³

A man's masculinity is questioned...

"Why could you not fight them off?" "Men can't be victims." "Grow a pair."



Victims are afraid to come forward...
Only 15.8 to 35% of victims come forward to the police.⁵

People don't believe the victims....

Students think up to 50% of charges are fabricated, when only 2 to 8% of rape reports may be false.⁶



When perpetrators with fame get leniency...
Athletes or artists are more likely to receive shorter sentences, if at all.⁷

(1) Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2010-2014 (2015).
(2) dallasnews.com/opinion/opinion/2016/06/08/men-dont-tolerate-boys-being-boys
(3) rainn.org/news/97-every-100-rapists-receive-no-punishment-rainn-analysis-s

(4) cnn.com/2013/10/09/living/chris-brown-female-on-male-rape/
(5) umd.edu/ocrsm/files/Why-Is-Sexual-Assault-Under-Reported.pdf
(6) nationalreview.com/corner/416536/how-common-are-false-rape-charges-really-jason-richwine
(7) cnn.com/2016/09/02/us/brock-turner-college-athletes-sentence/

DON'T GET RAPE

12|

LAS NOTICIAS

Qué hacer en las vacaciones de Navidad

Michael Hernández
Editor de Viewpoint

Las escuelas públicas de Stamford están fuera de sesión cada año a causa de las festividades, dando a los estudiantes aproximadamente siete días de vacaciones. Sin las responsabilidades de tareas o ensayos que consumen tiempo, los estudiantes tienen mucho tiempo a su disposición. Sin embargo, algunas personas se encuentran sin ninguna idea de cómo utilizar

un periodo de tiempo tan corto. Cual es la mejor manera de disfrutar las vacaciones?

Para empezar, es importante reconocer que la ciudad de Nueva York está solamente a una hora de viaje. La proximidad a uno de los centros cosmopolitanos más famosos del mundo ofrece a los estudiantes de Stamford un amplio rango de posibilidades y ubicaciones para explorar. Uno de los lugares más fotografiados es la plaza de Times Square, donde cada año

nuevo se celebra con conciertos en vivo y la descendencia de la famosa bola. En adición, la ciudad está repleta de restaurantes de prácticamente todos los países. Por ejemplo, el restaurante Bella Vita, que se encuentra en Times Square, vende a sus clientes comida Italiana auténtica y aun precio comprensible. La experiencia de la ciudad no está completa sin gustar de la comida internacional de lugares como la China, Europa y África.

El edificio Empire State

Building es una estructura gigantesca que es visible en varias partes de la ciudad y se encuentra en la quinta avenida. En el piso más alto, se les permite a los turistas salir a la cubierta; la ciudad entera es visible desde esta altura. A parte de las vistas inolvidables del Empire State Building, la quinta avenida también contiene una variedad de tiendas y restaurantes Americanos.

Una visita más educativa a Nueva York no puede excluir el

museo Americano de Historia Natural o el museo Metropolitano de Arte. El museo Americano de Historia Natural exhibe muchos artefactos de la antigüedad, incluyendo fósiles completos de dinosaurios. El museo Metropolitano de Arte acoge miles de pinturas de varios periodos de tiempo y estilos, clasificados según su categoría correspondiente. Los dos museos son accesibles por el tren subterráneo, y la admisión generalmente es de un precio asequible.

24/12
¡Empire State Building!

25/12
¡El Metro!

27/12
¡La Estatua de Libertad!

29/12
¡El museo de historia naturales!

31/12
¡Time Square!

1/2
El zoológico del parque Central

Diciembre 2016						
D	L	M	M	J	V	S
 27	 28	 29	 30	 1	 2	 3
 4	 5	 6	 7	 8	 9	 10
 11	 12	 13	 14	 15	 16	 17
 18	 19	 20	 21	 22	 23	 24
 25		 27		 29		 31
	 2					

La muerte histórica de Fidel Castro

Andrea Vega
Escritora del Personal

El líder histórico de la revolución cubana falleció el 25 de noviembre del 2016 a los 90 años de edad. Políticamente, es el símbolo del fin de una era, aunque eso no signifique que quepa esperar pronto cambios sustanciales en el sistema cubano. La muerte de Castro ocasionó una enorme sacudida emocional en Cuba, tanto para sus partidarios como para sus detractores, por el peso abrumador que ha tenido su figura en la vida cubana durante generaciones. Las primeras reacciones a la muerte han llegado desde el continente americano.

Desde Venezuela, el gran aliado en los últimos tiempos del Gobierno de La Habana, el presidente Nicolás Maduro, ha asegurado que tanto Castro como Hugo Chávez “dejaron abonado el camino de la liberación de nuestros pueblos”. El presidente mexicano, Enrique

Peña Nieto, ha calificado al mandatario fallecido de “referente emblemático del siglo XX”.

El presidente del Gobierno español, Mariano Rajoy, ha expresado sus condolencias a las autoridades cubanas por la muerte de “una figura de calado histórico”. En los Estados Unidos, ambas costas del Estrecho de Florida parecieron separarse como si sufrieran el efecto de unmovimiento tectónico. Sin embargo, el peso de sus opiniones resulta nulo en un contexto -como el cubano- que por estos días es dominado por el luto y recogimiento. Así lo han confirmado las principales personalidades del mundo y la cultura en la Isla, que en larga procesión han desfilado por el especial informativo que se mantiene durante buena parte del día en todos los canales de la televisión estatal.

En suma, todos han defendido una idea común: “Fidel fue el hombre que puso a Cuba en el mapa de este mundo”. “Sin él, no

podríamos escribir nuestra historia, o más bien, no tendríamos historia”, acotó en su turno de palabra Eduardo Torres Cuevas, el director de la Biblioteca Nacional. Tras un tímido pero constante proceso de acercamiento que se demoró años y solo ahora comenzaba a dar sus frutos, la muerte de Castro ha devuelto a las dos ramas de la nación cubana hasta las posiciones que mantenían hace ya décadas, cuando la influencia de la Guerra Fría cortaba de raíz los vínculos entre La Habana y sus ciudadanos asentados en los Estados Unidos.

Mientras en Florida miles celebraban estrepitosamente el fallecimiento del llamado Líder de la Revolución, en la Isla cuesta encontrar personas que se alegren por lo ocurrido, incluso entre quienes se declaran contrarios al proyecto político que fundara el ex guerrillero en enero 1959. Tras este hecho histórico, Cuba empezará una nueva época.



Fotos Courtesia de pixabay.com

El accidente de avión de los futbolistas en Brasil

Daniela Paredes
Escritora del Personal

Al final del mes pasado de noviembre, Brasil y el resto de América Latina lloraron la trágica muerte de los jugadores del equipo del Chapecoense. De acuerdo al New York Times, el avión traía aproximadamente a 81 pasajeros (incluyendo a miembros de la tripulación).

La desgracia ha dejado sin vida a 71 personas en total, entre los que se encontraban la mayoría de los miembros del equipo de fútbol, miembros de la tripulación, y destacados periodistas. De las docenas que estaban en la aeronave, solo seis han logrado sobrevivir la catástro-

fe: tres de los jugadores, dos miembros de la tripulación, y un periodista.

El avión se estrelló contra las famosas montañas de los Andes, en Colombia, cerca de la ciudad de Medellín. El equipo se encontraba en camino a uno de los concursos regionales más prestigiados en Lati-

noamérica del fútbol, la Copa Sudamericana. El Chapecoense de Brasil estaba por enfrentarse con el Atlético Nacional, el único equipo con el que contendía para el apreciado trofeo que ob-

tendrían los ganadores de la anticipada final.

Entre los sobrevivientes del infortunio que eran parte del equipo futbolero, se encuentran el jugador

Alan Ruschel, de 23 años, Jackson Ragnar Follmann, portero de 24 años

y Helio Hermito Zampier Neto, de 31 años. La auxiliar de vuelo Ximena Suarez, Erwin Tumiri, uno de los técnicos en la nave y el periodista Rafael Valmorbidia también lograron salir con vida. La mayoría se encontraban en estado estable al ser encontrados y fueron llevados al servicio de emergencias poco después del rescate.

Dos personas ya han sido

detenidas con cargos y sospechas relacionadas con el incidente, el cual ha dejado casi a una centena de personas muertas, y a un país devastado. Los sospechosos son padre e hijo Gustavo Vargas Villegas

y Gustavo Vargas Gamboa. Se les acusa de haber estado involucrados en la autorización de la licencia del avión Boliviano que transportaba al equipo de fútbol, y a aquellos que los acompañaban en lo que se esperaba ser un dichoso viaje. De acuerdo a la BBC, Vargas Villegas afirma que es inocente y que no autorizó las licencias de operación de las aeronaves. Su padre, Villegas Gamboa, insiste que los prosecutors son un ‘montón de mentirosos’.

El accidente aún está siendo investigado, y tanto Brasil como Latinoamérica y el resto del mundo siguen de luto por la impresionante catástrofe que ha causado dolor en los corazones de una nación esperanzada y miles de fanaticos y fanaticadel amado equipo de fútbol.

Fotos Courtesia de pixabay.com

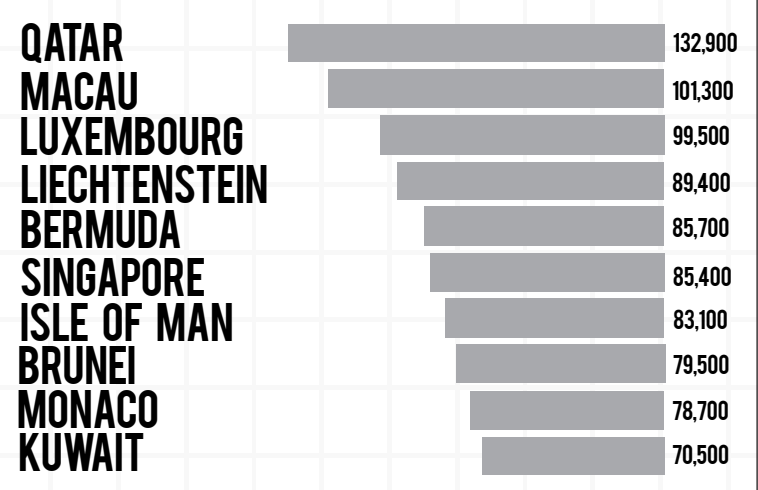


14|

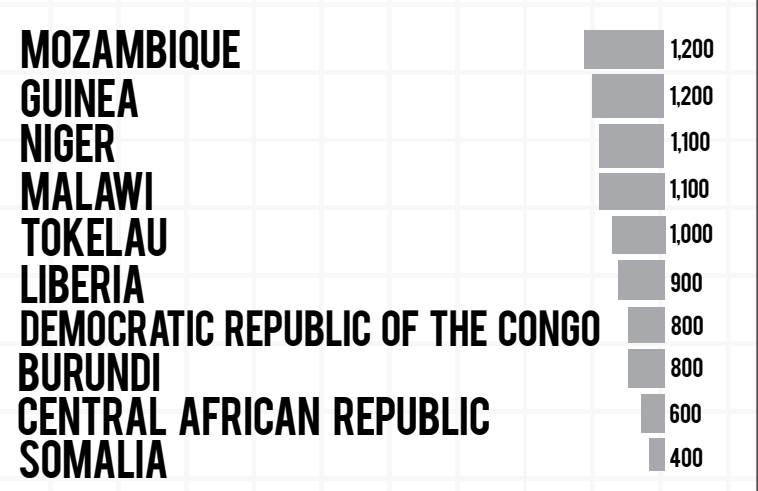
SPECIAL REPORT:

ECONOMIC SITUATIONS

HIGHEST GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT PER CAPITA (PPP) IN USD



LOWEST GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT PER CAPITA (PPP) IN USD



Data courtesy of [cia.gov](#).

Theresa Persico
Staff Writer

The world’s global economy is in its fifth year of secular stagnation. This is a prolonged period of economic annual growth of less than two to three percent. This means that developing countries have a looming labor shortage and skill deficiencies in their emerging markets. This could potentially increase the challenges of global economic prospects.

The International Monetary Fund has warned that persistent stagnation throughout the world could strengthen an anti-trade backlash in the United States and Europe. The attacks on globalization have risen since Britain exited the European Union, also known as Brexit, and the U.S. elected Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election.

“Markets fluctuate typically when individuals are unsure about future events. Given President-elect Trump has not been specific with his trade plans, it is understandable that trade flow has slowed down,” said Maanav Sunderaraman (’17). Until concrete action plans are announced, markets will continue to fluctuate.

Since the results of the 2016 presidential election the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) will no longer be pursued by the U.S., thus potentially killing the trade pact between the United States, Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam. These twelve countries account for two-fifths of

the world’s economy. According to the World Trade Organization, the TPP collapse is leading global trade to expand slower than the world gross domestic product (GDP) for the first time in 15 years. Asian exports are only set to grow 0.3 percent, which is far below its eight percent average of the past 20 years.

“With the national debt approaching almost 20 trillion, export and imbalance is a huge issue. If nothing is done in the upcoming administration to combat this massive debt, the U.S. will be in great danger,” said Jacob Stockman (’17). If Donald Trump keeps his promise to implement a tax on Chinese goods, the fallout could easily put the global trade into a straight decline.

Nevertheless, by increasing global production and consumption opportunities, international trade can promote economic growth and development globally. By trading with different countries, we can reduce global poverty, which in turn will help reduce child labor in developing countries. Another result will be improved working conditions. Additionally, it reduces cost of production in the developed countries, thus stimulating their spending and encouraging more trade. There is also evidence proving that the discrimination of women has decreased because of global trade competition.

The lack of a sufficient central bank, the rise in interest rates, and the cost of living in the Middle East has risen compared to industrialized countries. In 2015, the industrial rate was 0.35 percent in developed countries, while it was more than

6.2 percent in the Middle East and North Africa. The eurozone inflation has also risen due to stagnant worker wages and the hesitation from banks to give loans.

Due to recent surges in labor costs, high international shipping costs, and offshore production in places like China, many American jobs overseas are being brought back to the U.S. President-elect Trump’s main objectives in his campaign is to renegotiate trade agreements with China and others to keep jobs in the U.S. Most recently, President-elect Trump was able to persuade Carrier to keep manufacturing in Indiana as opposed to Mexico, saving thousands of jobs. General Electric (GE) has also recently moved their water heater production from China to Louisville, Kentucky. GE’s production move back into the United States has brought back nearly a thousand manufacturing and engineering jobs.

“I think companies moving their production back into the United States will help deal with consumer demand and put less stress on import and export taxes,” said Alexandra Jordan (’17). This will improve unemployment in the U.S. but could cause a rise in consumer prices and impact from our trade partners. As such, we will need to see this play through and assess the impact to the global economy.

THE HISTORY OF CURRENCY EXCHANGE



THEN:
(2008)

ONE U.S. DOLLAR EQUALS...

NOW:
(DECEMBER 2016)

R\$1.83	(BRAZILIAN REAL)	R\$3.35
₽24.86	(RUSSIAN RUBLE)	₽ 60.80
₡ 2.14	(VENEZUELAN BOLIVAR FUERTE)	₡ 9.97
¥103.45	(JAPANESE YEN)	¥114.98
¥6.95	(CHINESE YUAN RENMINBI)	¥ 6.90
£0.54	(BRITISH POUND STERLING)	£0.79
\$1.20	(AUSTRALIAN DOLLAR)	\$1.33

Photos courtesy of [commons.wikimedia.com](#)

THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

BEST ECONOMY



THE UNITED STATES' economy is the largest economy in the world in terms of nominal gross domestic product (GDP). Even after the election of Donald Trump for president, the economic stability of the United States continues to expand at a moderate pace. Despite the challenges, the United States' economy remains the largest and most significant in the world. The economy is supported mainly from solid private consumption. It represents 24.5 percent of global output, and holds the title of producing big products for things such as aerospace, automobiles, and machinery. In addition, the economy also has a highly developed and technologically advanced services sector.



CHINA has the second largest economy in the world. It experienced astonishing growth in the last few decades. The country jumped from the ninth rank with GDP of 214 billion USD to the impressive second rank with GDP of 9.2 trillion USD. China experienced an increase of raw goods and services exports and has a large history of uninterrupted trade surpluses. The opening of the government's massive investment programs have prompted the country to be very successful in their manufacturing process. China's main goal is to prevent and resolve financial risk, and protect stability of the economy. The People's Bank of China's main goals and objectives are to guarantee domestic price stability, manage the rate of exchange, and promote the economic growth of the country.



JAPAN is the world's third largest economy. Recently, Japan's economy advanced 0.3 percent in three months starting in September of 2016. Their economy experienced a rapid growth of 1.3 percent in the third quarter of 2016. Japan's industrialized free market economy is also the fourth largest in the world. In October, Japan experienced a growth by 0.1 percent over the previous month which followed September's 0.6 percent increase. The Japanese economy regained expanded at the fastest global pace in exactly a year and a half. It is home to the largest automobile industry in the world. Japan's economy is well known for its efficiency and competitiveness, which has directly caused their economic growth. Some analysts predict that it will continue to grow and expand.

RUSSIA has been in a recession for close to two years. The country's GDP has declined with no growth expected, while the Reserve Fund (RRF), is also taking a toll. It has decreased from \$91.7 billion as of September 2014 down to \$32.2 billion two years later and is predicted to contract to just \$15 billion. One of the biggest reasons why Russia's economy is running at a deficit is due to drop in oil prices, considering over 40 percent of its revenue comes from oil and gas. Since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, the United States and countries from the European Union used economic sanctions against it. The ruble has also fallen to be worth almost only 50 percent of the U.S. dollar. This directly affects the people in terms of the standard of living and the cost of imports. In addition, Russia has increased spending for defense instead of education, healthcare, and other programs.

BRAZIL was considered Latin America's biggest economy at one point, and held the gold standard for both economic and social progress. However, those days are over and Brazil is dealing with economic trauma in the last 25 years. Brazil is dealing with a case known as the Petrobras scandal, considered the country's biggest corruption scandal, involves Brazil's energy giant Petrobras, as well as most of the senior politicians and the former President Dilma Rousseff. The investigation found that the company allegedly bribed politicians for contracts using their own profits. This company and politicians including Brazil's president from 2003 to 2010. Brazil's debt is reaching 70 percent of GDP so the government cannot focus on its more internal problems, especially the people.

VENEZUELA is currently the world's worst economy with the highest inflation rate of 68 percent, a negative growth rate of 17 percent. The country is suffering from its worst economic crisis in history. A few things that contribute to this outcome is political instability. The government is led by Nicolas Maduro who succeeded Hugo Chavez. The Venezuelan government is beginning to grow authoritarian under his power. There are food shortages across the country because the government is unable to import food, getting to the point where McDonald's in Venezuela even ran out of french fries. Just like Russia, Venezuela was heavily impacted by the low oil prices. As of now, a barrel of oil is half its original value a few months ago. The largest oil reserves in the world are in Venezuela, and Maduro has rushed to other OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) nations for funds. Venezuela's economy, similar to Russia's, is impacted by the rapid loss of value of their currency.



WORST ECONOMY

MISH MOSH MARKET ↓ PIZZA + MORE

1034 LONG RIDGE ROAD
STAMFORD, CT 06903
203-658-8877
FAX 203-658-8879

IT'S COLLEGE ESSAY SEASON!

UNIQUELY U.

helped me analyze
what makes me tick...

then showed me how
to transform it into
an awesome essay...

I found my narrative!
I wrote my future!

Plus UU was
there for me
around the clock.



UNIQUELY U.
COLLEGE ESSAY CONSULTANTS

**ESSAY/APPLICATION HELP
BY THE HOUR...OR
15 HR PACKAGE...
FREE CONSULTATION!
1.866.UUESSAY**

18th
IVY COVERED
YEAR!

uniquely u. college essay consultants

1.866.UUESSAY www.uuessay.com uniquelyu1@gmail.com



the
westword online
student voice of the westhill community

Your online source for Westhill's breaking news
Visit **thewestwordonline.org**

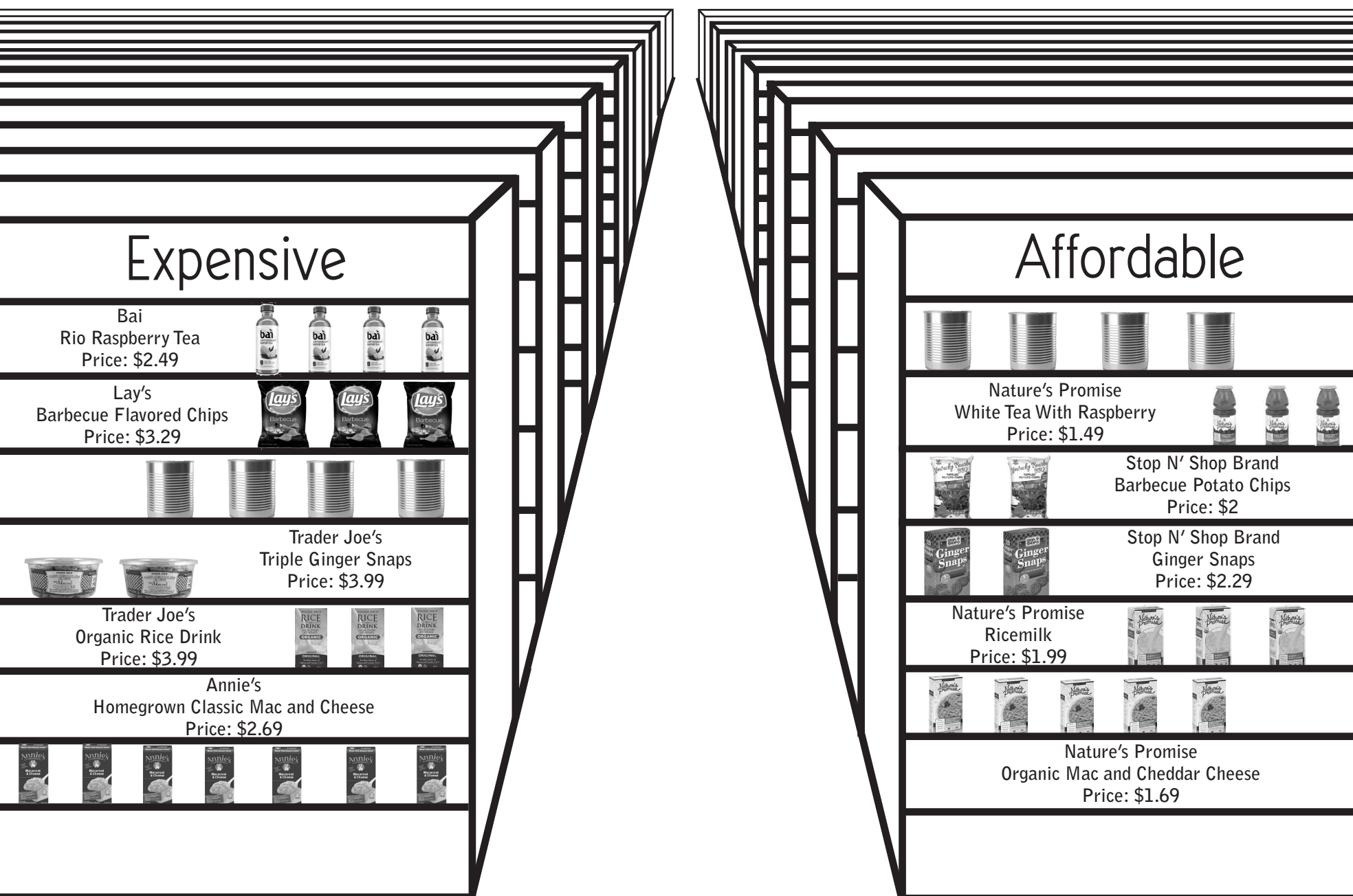
The Westword Supplement



THIS OR THAT

The taste test between...

Expensive & Affordable



AND the winners are...

Tea
Nature's Promise vs. Bai

Verdict: While providing the cheaper alternative, Nature's Promise had a richer, stronger taste.

Barbecue Chips
Stop N' Shop vs. Lay's

Verdict: Stop N' Shop's brand offers a better, naturally-flavored, and more accessible version of barbecue potato chips.

Mac and Cheese
Nature's Promise vs. Annie's

Verdict: Annie's Mac and Cheese is the tastier, healthier option of the two. However, Stop N' Shop's brand offers a significantly cheaper alternative that does not lose much on flavor.

Rice Milk
Nature's Promise vs. Trader Joe's

Verdict: Trader Joe's Rice Milk is better nutritionally and has a sweeter taste.

Ginger Snaps
Stop N' Shop vs. Trader Joe's

Verdict: Stop N' Shop's Ginger Snaps are not only healthier, they are a lot stronger in flavor and much more accessible in price.

Makeshift makeup dupes

Mascara

HIGHEND

Tarte: Light's Camera, Lashes!

Brand: Tarte

Price: \$21.00

Tarte's "Lights, Camera, Lashes!" Mascara is highly underrated. This 4-in-1 mascara lengthens, conditions, curls, and is used for volumizing. After using the mascara, lashes will feel as if nothing is even on them, making it a top pick for anyone that wears makeup.

DRUGSTORE

L'Oreal Telescopic

Brand: L'Oreal

Price: \$9.99

This mascara has a unique wand that combs through every lash while straightening, making it look like one is wearing false lashes, minus the false. "I love this mascara because it makes my lashes look long and luscious," said makeup guru Adriana DiSalvo ('17).

Eyeshadow

HIGHEND

Tartelette Amazonian Clay Matte Eyeshadow Palette

Brand: Tarte

Price: \$45.00

Ranging from matte neutral browns to hints of purple, this eyeshadow palette has almost all the colors one needs for the winter. This palette has been praised by numerous makeup wholesale stores such as Sephora and ULTA.

DRUGSTORE

e.l.f. Prism Eyeshadow

Brand: e.l.f.

Price: \$10.00

The intense color payoff and the affordability in its price makes the palette a great value. The palette comes in three color choices ranging from natural to vivid shades to match those in the tarte palette. In the palette sunset, two of the shades exactly match those in the Tartelette palette.

Eyebrows

HIGHEND

Anastasia Beverly Hills DipBrow Pomade

Brand: Anastasia Beverly Hills

Price: \$18.00

Anastasia Beverly Hills is a famous, if not the most famous makeup company that is known for its eyebrow product. This product is water-proof and keeps brows in place all day long! "I like the Anastasia DipBrow because it looks like you have eyebrows," said Samantha Ripegno ('17). Pick this up at a local Sephora for brows that are on fleek.

DRUGSTORE

Nyx Tame and Frame Tinted Brow Pomade

Brand: NYX

Price: \$6.99

This is a "dupe" or duplicate for Anastasia's DipBrow pomade. Its texture makes it easy to glide on eyebrows. It is smudge-proof and waterproof, which keeps brows intact all day. "Eyebrows have to be on fleek all the time!" said Imani Morgan ('17). This dupe is one that people should not pass on.

HIGHEND

Becca Shimmering Skin Perfector

Brand: Becca Cosmetics

Price: \$38.00

Becca Cosmetic's highlighters are extra creamy, pigmented, and cater to all skin tones. Signature picks such as champagne pop are loved for the subtle rose gold color as well as the shimmer. Others such as moonstone work for people with any undertone. It gives one's face just the right amount of glow to make this holiday season extra bright.

DRUGSTORE

e.l.f. Baked Highlighter

Brand: e.l.f.

Price: \$4.00

E.l.f. baked highlighter is as close to highend makeup one can get for under \$5.00 at any drugstore. It gives a dewy look to any skin tone with a subtle shimmer. The highlighter comes in two colors matching any skin tone. This highlighter is infused with Vitamin E, Jojoba, Sunflower, Apricot, and grape which keeps skin hydrated and illuminated!

Foundation

HIGHEND

Too Faced Born This Way

Brand: Too Faced

Price: \$39.00

Not only does this foundation give a radiant and natural finish to mimic one's skin, it is also flash-friendly which is especially important during the holidays to get all the family photos in. "I like anything that covers pimples!" said Alexis Marchetti ('18) on the longlasting foundation.

DRUGSTORE

L'Oreal Infallible

Brand: L'Oreal

Price: \$12.99

This foundation is highly acclaimed across drug stores. It is really light but manages to leave one's face comfortable and completely oil free. "My favorite drugstore foundation is L'Oreal Infallible because it makes your skin look flawless," said Samantha Ripegno ('17).

HIGHEND

Smashbox Matte Always On Liquid Lipsticks in Miss Conduct

Brand: Smashbox

Price: \$24.00

This Smashbox lipstick is lightweight and long-wearing. For a matte lipstick, it keeps lips moisturized and pigmented. "It went on smoothly and lasted for hours," said Hayley Liberatore ('17). This deep red is a perfect shade for the winter.

DRUGSTORE

Milani Color Statement Lipstick in Matte Cabinet

Brand: Milani

Price: \$5.99

Milani is known for having the most diverse range of colors in drugstores. This matte lipstick in Matte Cabinet is wonderful for the holidays; it keeps lips bright and moisturized. It also matches color perfectly with any other brand.

Lips

Break their necks without breaking the bank

Celebrities are usually seen as amazing fashion inspiration for the modern teenager. With the versatility of social media, one can look to different celebrities with ease for style ideas. The issue with this form of fashion has to do with the prices of the clothes that they wear, with most of them being outrageously priced. Down below are a couple of celebrity looks for less that are perfect for the winter season.



Gigi Hadid shows the versatility of the bomber jacket and how you can pull off an effortlessly nice and comfortable outfit. The main piece in the outfit is the bomber jackets that she is sporting, which is currently on trend. Gigi's jacket is from Alpha Industries and priced at \$140. However Forever 21 has a similar style for only \$27.90. As for her bottoms, Gigi is wearing gym leggings from Under Armour that are \$54.99. There are many retailers that sell gym leggings and Forever 21 has an affordable pair for \$19.90. To pull the outfit together, all you need are a pair of sneakers and a solid colored top.



Kanye West arguably was the most influential person in the fashion industry in 2016. His fashion line Yeezy is in its 3rd season. He has a monochromatic army type style. It is a style that has become very popular among teens and young adults. His main piece in this outfit is the army jacket from his season 3 collection and is priced at \$1250. As an alternative to this jacket, Forever 21 sells one for \$42.90. He was also wearing his \$350 work pants from his Yeezy season 3 collection. At H&M they sell similar cargo pants for \$34.99. Under his jacket he was wearing a dark beige shirt that can be mocked by the \$14.99 waffle-texture shirt sold by H&M. Kanye also is constantly wearing suede Timberlands that are \$160. ASOS sells dupes for \$68.



Kendall Jenner is known to always rock a casual outfit and this outfit is perfect for those school days where you want to be comfortable but you want to look put together. In this outfit, she is wearing the Saint Laurent Classic Motorcycle Jacket, which is \$5550 and the Unravel Oversized hoodie in Heather Grey, which is \$350. Lastly, her sleek black pants are by the Paige brand and retail for \$179. What makes this outfit so amazing is that it includes pieces that are already in your closet. H&M has an affordable grey hoodie for \$19.99 and Forever 21 has a replica of Kendall's leather jacket for \$34.90. As for the pants, American Eagle sells a standard black skinny for \$29.99.

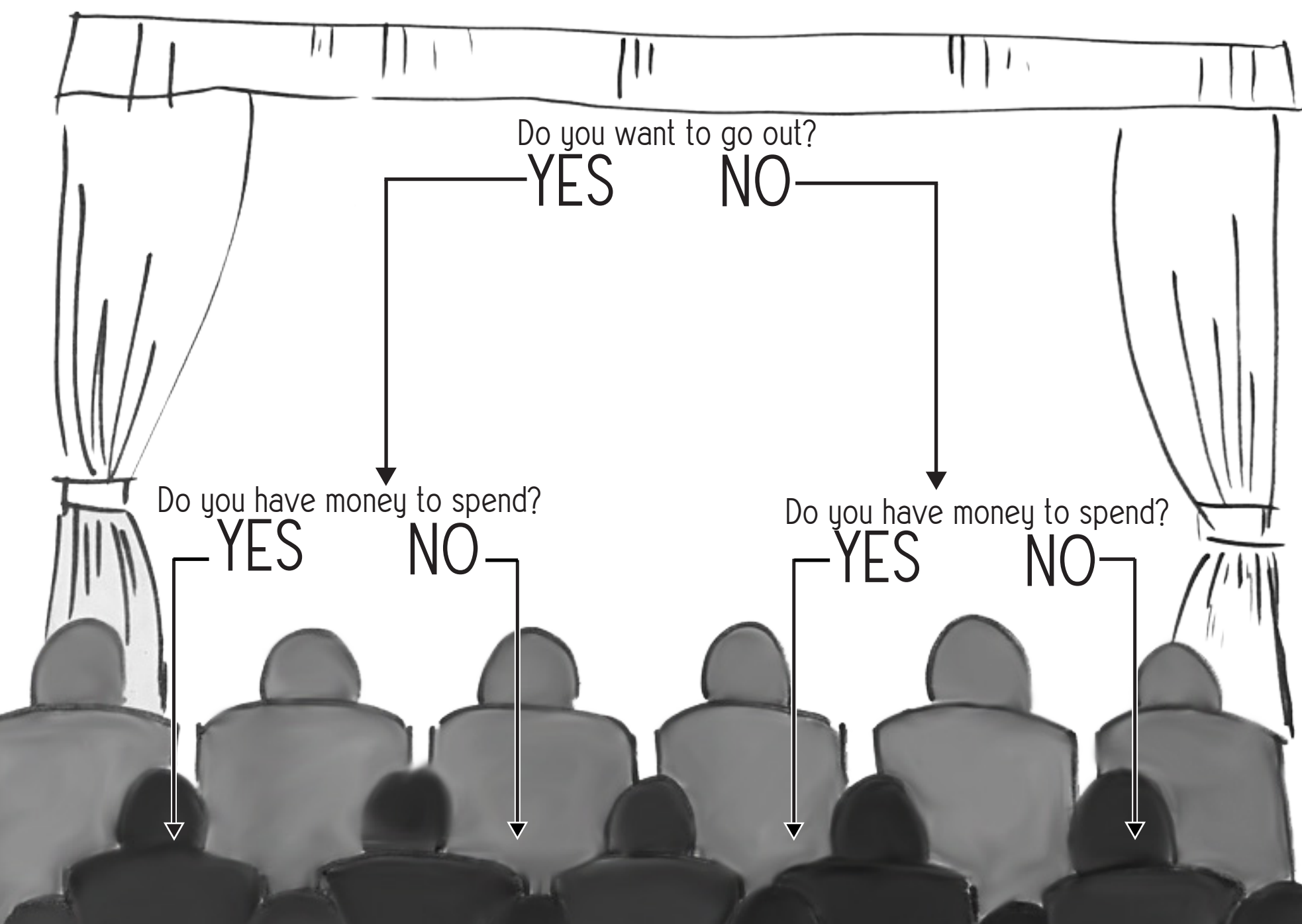


Jennifer Lawrence is most known for her easy-going personality, and her style reflects that. The most notable piece in her outfit is the Alexander Wang oversized denim jacket, retailed at \$450. She paired the denim jacket with the Alexander Wang wedge sandals which are \$495. She also wore a simple pair of medium washed jeans, a black V-neck, and a grey beanie. There is a surplus of denim jackets being sold, and ASOS has an oversized jacket for \$61. To make the outfit more school appropriate, you could swap the wedges for a pair of black high-top Converse for \$55.

NOW SHOWING

Affordable activities for the weekend

Featuring alternative forms of entertainment



Ice skating is a fun seasonal activity for anytime of the year. at Terry Connors. Public skating with rentals is \$10. Go with friends and see who can skate the fastest without falling over. If you are more in the mood for something warmer, hot yoga is a great way to exercise and spend time for \$21.

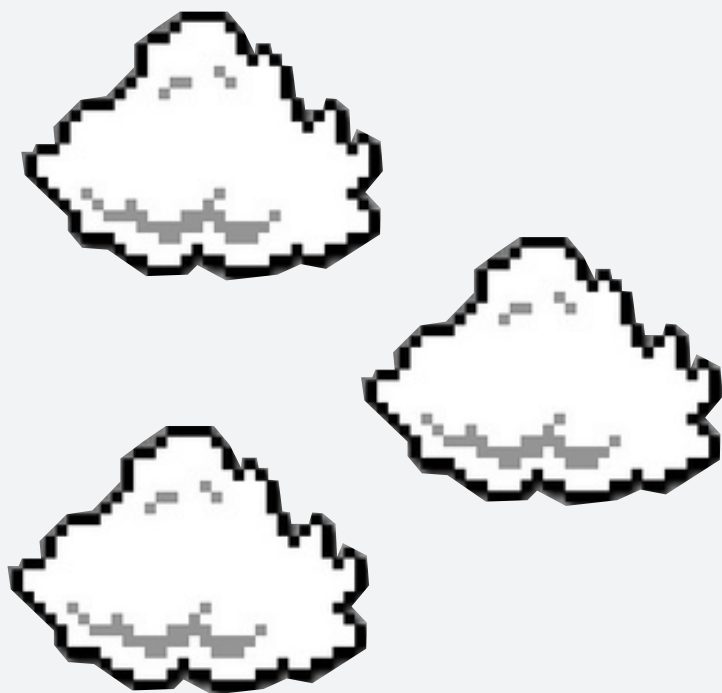
The Bartlett Arboretum is free to walk around. They allow pets as long as they are on leashes and there are beautiful trails to walk on all year round. If a stroll on the beach sounds appealing, there are many beaches around Stamford, such as West Beach and Cove Island Park.

Watch a movie. Netflix subscriptions are free for the first month and the most expensive subscription is \$11.99 a month. Alternatively going to a movie at the Avon will provide the movie theater experience. The Avon shows indie movies that regular theaters may not show. Student prices are \$9.

Baking cookies is always a fun thing to do when it seems as though there is nothing to do. It is free and super fun with the right playlist. If baking is not the right mood for the day, pull up a lyric video and sing along. Karaoke is much more fun than sitting around with friends scrolling through their Instagram feeds.

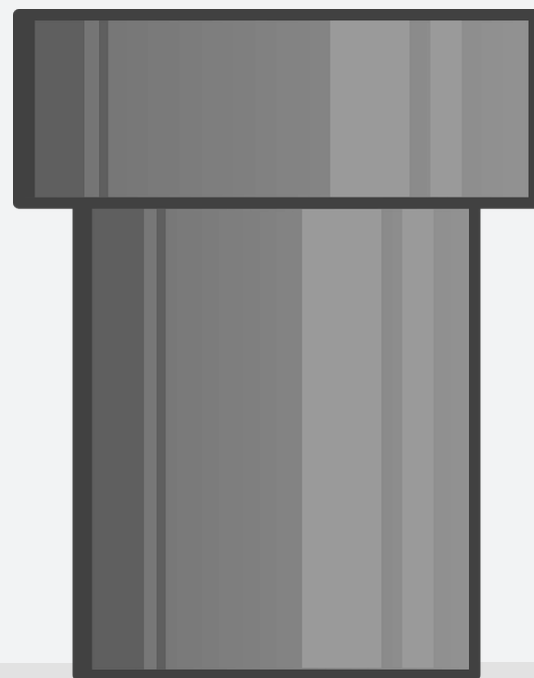
TECHNOLOGY : Alternatives to Games, Phones, and Laptops

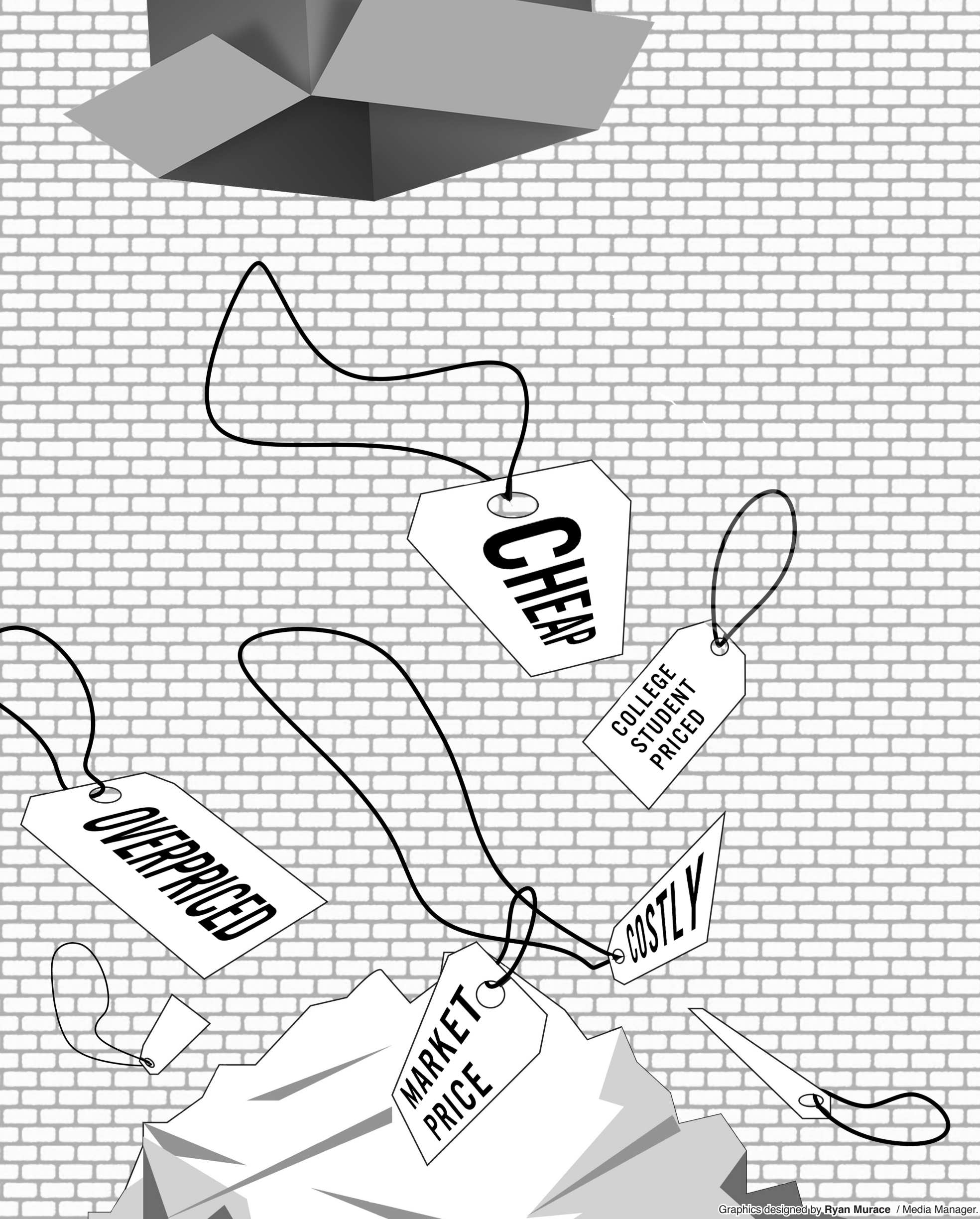
According to new research by the Entertainment Software Association (ESA), more than 150 million Americans play video games. These players can range in many ways, whether it be age, gender, ethnic background, or income. For teenagers especially, the debate is always whether to buy or rent video games. One of the most popular games, NBA 2k17, is about \$50-60 to buy. This of course means that a teen owns the game and can have it for as long as they want. Another option is to join a site like GameFly which allows subscribers to either pay \$9.50 a month for the ability to rent a game one at a time or pay \$13.50 a month for two games at a time. If they rent the game, they can have it for as long as they want it, but in order to receive either a second or third game the game needs to be sent back. That being said, someone who wants to play tons of video games and try them out will benefit more from a site like GameFly while the occasional video game player who would like to focus a lot of time on one game, such as Super Mario Bros., would benefit from buying the game. "It takes a lot of time to level up and what not, or to complete the games objectives," said Jack Malkiewicz ('17).



We all know that one kid in class who speaks into their phone trying to compose a text, or the student whose personal assistant will go off during a test and exposes them cheating. But which software is the best? Apple's Siri, Android's Google Now, or Windows 10's Cortana? This depends on what one is looking for. Siri has the most humor and personality of the three. "I'm sure its purpose is to be high functioning, but most people use it for a comical reason," said Gabriella Veseli ('18). Someone looking for a trustworthy, high-functioning assistant will benefit most from the Google Now. If one wants an assistant that is going to know them, their personal interests, and relationships the most, then Cortana is the way to go as it looks at the amount of times a user talk to certain people or amount of time you visit certain apps.

Everyone uses laptops, but with so many, it is important to understand which laptop is best for which task. "They can help you a lot with school projects, especially now a days," said Hudson Price ('18). Someone who believes that graphic design is the most important function for a laptop might want to look at the Lenovo Flex 4 Convertible Touch-Screen Notebook which has a great processor for graphic design and is not too pricey at \$751.23, which for a great graphic design laptop is not bad. For someone who mainly uses their laptop for Netflix binge sessions, the HP 15 will do the job with the highest resolution of laptops under \$500. Of course no one could go wrong with the good old MacBook Pro. In terms of homework, a student might want to look into the HP Pavilion x2. The Pavilion x2 will not only last long with a great battery life, but also uses Windows 10 which is user-friendly for those who are not as tech savvy and comes with booming speakers for those homework jam sessions.





Review: *The Nutcracker* waltzes on the Westhill stage

Jenny Gorski
Supplement Editor

The Nutcracker, a classic Christmas ballet, has been a favorite for decades. On December 18, the ballet company, A Contemporary Ballet, performed their own version of the show at Westhill.

The ballet attracted many families with much of the audience being under 10 years of age. Because of their audience, the ballet was adapted and shortened in order to accommodate the younger dancers and audience members. The show is usually three to four hours. However, A Contemporary Ballet's performance was about two hours.

The ballet was changed in other ways as well. Instead of mice haunting the main character, Clara's, dreams, it was spiders. The spider king, Jared Brown, moved in an insect-like, yet graceful manner across the stage. In the spider scenes, plastic wrap was utilized to create the effect of a spider web, a very clever use of the prop.

Dancers of all ages were included in the performance. The young girls who played the

candy canes, bees, and butterflies got a laugh and an "Aw," out of the audience. The choreographer of the show, Tamara Saari, even made an appearance in the beginning of the show and assisted the young dancers during the candy cane scene. Many high school students also performed in the show as well, including Westhill's Sophie Ciokajlo ('18).

"I've been in this production for the past seven years and danced the role of Young Clara in the show's first ever performance. I am so fortunate to be involved in a community of dancers who are incredibly supportive of each other. I have come to know many of the performers and directors personally and have learned so much from their guidance and expertise. We all work together to help every aspect of the production to be success, which makes it even more satisfying to be apart of. This production was what inspired me to pursue dance in a more serious way, which I will forever be grateful for," said Ciokajlo.

The choreography of the ballet was particularly interesting. The dancers used the floor space of the stage in creative

ways and in a fluid fashion. It was clear that each of the dancers, even the 5-year-olds, used real athleticism to complete each set. There was a lot of variety in the dance moves. Dancers would get up high with lifts and leaps, but would also incorporate intricate floor work. This range of movement helped to keep the audience engaged and interested.

The only complaints I have for the show are the price and the volume of the music. Tickets for adults were \$45 and for children, students, and seniors it was \$25. While I understand that the company must make enough money to keep the program running, these prices seemed unreasonable. The other aspect of the performance I disliked was the volume of the music. At many points of the ballet, the music was way too loud, to the point of hurting my ears. If they had just turned it down a little, it would have made for a more pleasant experience.

All in all, attending the ballet was a fun and entertaining weekend activity. I enjoyed doing something that I do not normally do and getting into the holiday spirit.



Photo courtesy of **Sophie Ciokajlo** / Contributor.
BELLES OF THE BALLET Youth and adult dancers joined together for this production of the *Nutcracker*, which featured Westhill junior Sophie Ciokajlo (bottom right).

Gil Daniels: Westhill's own rising star

**Kelsey Kopec &
Paige Sottosanti**
Staff Writers

Gil Daniels is a senior at Westhill High School whose dreams of becoming an actor are coming true. From taking part in commercials to music videos, Daniels has been slowly building an acting career. Daniels was recently featured in a small role on arguably one of the most popular television shows: Saturday Night Live.

The Westword: What shows have you been on?

Gil Daniels: I have had roles in *Madam Secretary* on CBS, Showtime Pilot, a music video, a Nintendo commercial, a Sports Center commercial, and most recently, *Saturday Night Live* (SNL).

TW: What did you do on SNL?

GD: I was cast as an extra to play a high school student in the opening scene. My role was

to sit in a desk, but it was still pretty exciting considering the popularity and wide viewership of SNL.

TW: What did you expect going into SNL?

GD: I expected that it was going to be hustle bustle and really energetic and fast paced - SNL is pretty much the best live television around so everyone is extremely professional.

TW: What about the filming of SNL took you by surprise?

GD: I was surprised at how the whole show is staged and shot in one big room instead of several studios.

TW: What celebrities did you see or speak to?

I met Pete Davidson, Kenan Thompson, Emma Stone, and saw Alec Baldwin because he was working in the same area.

TW: What would you like to do when you get older?

GD: I am not sure yet, but I definitely want to go to school in NYC for acting.

TW: How did you get cast on SNL?

GD: My agent sent out my headshot and resumé. SNL decided to cast me and pick me up for that episode.

TW: When did you decide you wanted to be an actor?

GD: I was seven years old when I decided I wanted to be an actor, after I was in a play as a clown who kept dropping his pants.

TW: What was your first acting role? Was it intimidating?

GD: My first acting role professionally was a PSA commercial that aired on ESPN for Hurricane Sandy. It was not super intimidating, but it was exciting.

TW: What is the biggest challenge with acting in your opinion?

GD: The biggest challenge with acting right now is staying focused and committed to the craft- because there is so much rejection in the business. It is hard to find work; 90 percent of actors are unemployed!

TW: What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses as



Photo courtesy of **Gil Daniels** / Contributor.
LIVE FROM NEW YORK Daniels is pictured above in the cold open of *Saturday Night Live* with cast members Pete Davidson and Aidy Bryant.

an actor?

GD: My greatest strength would be a good memory. I am able to read whole scripts and remember my lines and sometimes other characters. [A] weakness[is] my lack of constant training. There can always be more training going on.

TW: Who is your role model?

GD: One of my role model is

Philip Seymour Hoffman, who I also got to work with before he passed away.

TW: What was your favorite role you played?

GD: My favorite role was probably Preston Walsh from *Madam Secretary* on CBS. I was a bully for the secretary's son, and ended up getting my [butt] kicked in the end.

FIDM: Westhill's new fashion club

Naika Lazarre
Staff Writer

The newest hot spot in our school is probably still unknown to most students. It is not in the bustling hallways outside of the cafeterias in the 200s or a classroom fund raiser where students gather to buy candy, "napkins," or an empanada. It can be found in the basement of the Finch building, in the room 8, to be specific, where the Fashion Club meets every Monday after school.

The teacher and creative mind behind the Fashion Club is Mrs. Dilworth, a new photography teacher who joined our faculty this past September. She started the fashion club because we do not offer any fashion classes here. As a photography teacher, Mrs. Dilworth saw the need for an outlet for students to express their creative visions. Mrs. Dilworth has an extensive background in visual arts. She is a two-time Daytime Emmy award winner in the category of "Outstanding Achievement in Art

Direction/Set Decoration/Scenic Design," and two other nominations in that category to her credit. Students can rely on her expertise as an advisor as they bring their designs to life.

The club first met on November 7 and there were 18 students who attended the first meeting. Since that first meeting, membership has continued to rise as students are finding out about this unique opportunity. The fashion club is all about creativity and it is a great place where everybody can share their talents and be creative with themselves and have fun. A lot of student still do not know about the club but, even now, students can still join.

Students who are participating in the club are enthusiastic about their experiences. "It is very fun! It's different from other club in school," said Rootnara Laurore ('18). "Since I was a little girl, I've always been into fashion. When I heard about the club, I was beyond excited to join," Club President Deanna Crevecoeur ('18) said. Deanna's twin sister, Dani-

ella Crevecoeur is the secretary of the club and their older sister Lindsay Crevecoeur ('17) is also a member.

During the holiday season, the club is selling chokers, bracelets, necklaces, hairpins and other accessories that the students created outside of the cafeterias during the lunchwaves.

The kids make chokers, bracelet, necklaces, hairpin and more! The members sale them during lunch wave. "I love fashion, so this club is a great opportunity for me to share my talent with others," said Djesnie Glaude ('18), a club member and aspiring fashion designer.

Mrs. Dilworth said that the club applied for sponsorship by The Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandise (FIDM), a California institution and they are still waiting to hear back.

The Fashion Club has its own instagram page where they post everything about their club from pictures and to sketches and events. Follow them at @whs.fdimfashionclub.



Photos by **Rebecca Alter** / Photographer.
Ryan Murace / Media Manager.

FASHION CLUB: Students meet in Room 8 to prepare for their upcycled jewelry sale during the lunch waves.

Holiday traditions of Westhill teachers

Amalia Skoparantzos
Staff Writer

Every year around the holidays, family and friends gather around together to celebrate their traditions. Many Westhill teachers shared what their traditions are and how they celebrate them.

Spanish teacher Mrs. Alvarez, shared her Colombian traditions. Her family celebrates La Novena, a celebration of nine nights leading up to December 24. They gather around to pray, sing and eat with one another. When it is the actual night of the 24, her entire family dresses up while her sister sings for the family.

On New Year's Eve, there are many rituals and symbolic events that Colombians follow. There is the potato game, where there are three potatoes underneath a bed. One is completely peeled, one half peeled and the other not peeled at all. The game involves reaching under the bed for a potato. If you choose the one that is completely peeled, you will be broke for the year. If you grab the one that is not peeled, you will have riches for the year and for the half peeled, you will have a decent amount of money.

On New Year's night, Colombians also make these life-sized dolls out of cardboard, newspaper and other materials and light it one fire. It symbolizes getting rid of the

bad things of the old year and ready to bring in the new. Mrs. Alvarez is excited to bring in this holiday season with her newborn daughter Sara Sophia in hope of continuing the traditions as she grows.

Mr. Franchina, another Spanish teacher, shared his Italian traditions. His family gathers on Christmas Eve for a big dinner which consists of only fish. They sit around, drink, eat and enjoys the company of the people he loves. When it comes to New Year's Eve his family hosts a party every year. Around 11:15 p.m., Mr. Franchina and his guests head over to his neighbor's house where there are drinks, and hor d'oeuvres with a bonfire and a big firework show in his backyard. After the 15 minute show, they head back to his house to watch the ball drop on television and pop a big bottle of champagne and continue bringing in the new year with his guests.

Mrs. Walden an English teacher, shared her yearly tradition of attending church services and spending time with her family and friends. Specifically, on New Year's Eve she will go caroling and see an Alvin Ailey performance in New York.

As for history teacher Mrs. Begetis, she celebrates Christmas by attending traditional Greek services at the local church and singing in the choir with her mother and aunt.

Afterwards, the family goes to her parents house to bring in the holiday together. On New Year's Day she also participates in the Greek tradition of cutting the vasilopita, which is sweet bread that holds a wrapped metal coin hidden somewhere inside. When each piece is cut, it is dedicated to the father, son, holy spirit, and then other family members. Whoever has the coin in their slice will have good luck that year.

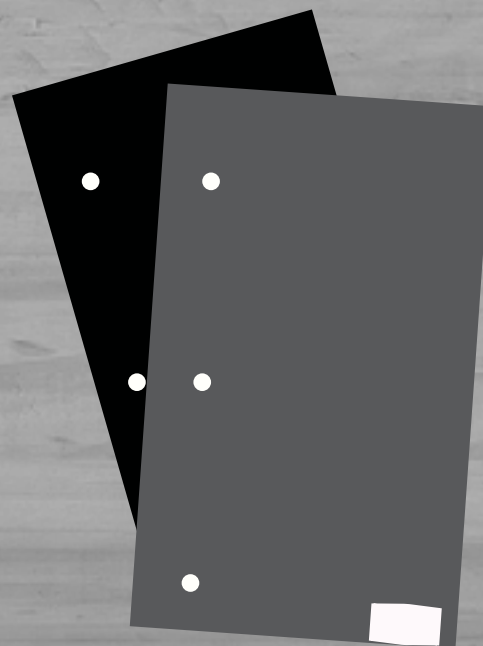
Gym teacher Mr. Kurtz, similar to Mrs. Walden, takes a trip on Christmas Eve to New York City to see a performance that is currently ongoing. After a nice day trip, they return back home for a big meal. For the Jewish community. This time of year is not the most important in their religion. Holidays like Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah are more prominent, so when it comes to Chanukah there is not too big of a celebration.

Mrs. Konrad, Art Department Head, discussed what she and her family does during this time of year. Since her children are older, she does not do the traditional eight gifts a night, she gets them one or two important gifts. On Christmas Day, they all continue their day as normal and prepare to bring in the New Year with more family and friends. No matter the holiday or religion they practice, teachers will celebrate alongside their family and friends.



Illustrations by **Frantz Gabriel** / Illustrator.

STUDENT STUDYING TIPS FOR MIDTERMS



Graphic designed by **Amelia Daube** // Feature Editor.
Photos by **pixabay.com**

Isabella Fiore
Staff Writer

Studying can be really challenging when taking seven classes. With midterms coming up classes can become extremely overwhelming, and it is easy to feel stressed by all of the new material. Whether it is a long list of vocabulary words, a group of elaborate concepts, or a specific formula for math class, there are many study tips from Westhill's own students. It is all about coming up with a method that fits best for students.

The first step to studying efficiently is making sure that students understand the material. Otherwise, it will not make sense to them. Application of material is a large component of most exams. If students do not understand what they are studying, staying after with teachers for extra help, asking friends who already get it, or getting a tutor will help. Once a student understands a topic and can apply it, they will remember it better for a big test.

Once the topic or concept is understood, students can move on to the different study methods. "For me, an effective

way of studying is writing down the information I need to learn multiple times. Repetition helps me to remember material better because I am constantly seeing the same term or concept coming up. The more I see it, the more it sticks with me," said Samantha Gallant ('17). The idea of repetition as a study method is one of the most common, and can be utilized in many different forms.

"One way of developing a skill is to make it a stored routine in the students system. To make this happen, the most important first step is to bring the skill to a conscious level where the student is deliberately thinking," said the Professional Learning Board. This essentially means that practice makes perfect. The more an idea is revisited and looked at, the more it will become a part of the student's thinking system, and will be ready to be retrieved during test time.

Spaced repetition is a type of repetition that is considered to be one of the most effective methods of studying. This involves breaking up information into small chunks and reviewing them consistently over a long period of time such as every day for 30 minutes or every

other day for an hour.

Instead of trying to memorize an entire chapter or unit for a big test, section it off. This method is less stressful and far more effective than cramming, as students are not trying to shove a large amount of information in one night.

Another form of repetition is to create flashcards. A student can put together a set of index cards with either a vocabulary term on one side and the definition on the other, or a photo or concept on one side with the meaning on the other. This method is effective both individually and with others, as students can study the flashcards by quizzing themselves, or have others quiz them. The beauty of this method is that students can create a physical pile of the words or concepts that they need to work on, or start from scratch when they want to keep studying.

"Flashcards are probably the method I use most frequently, especially for my Advanced Placement Art History class. It takes literally no time or effort to make them, and I can use them whenever. I can also keep them for a big test later, like midterms, finals or an AP exam and look back through

the flashcards. It is super helpful for me, and other people can help by quizzing you, which I also find effective, because you are kind of being put on the spot—just like a test," said Emma Graziano ('17).

Resources such as the website Khan Academy are really effective and useful as a study tool, and it has been encouraged by the Westhill teacher community. The website offers a ton of information specific to both regular and Advanced Placement classes, as well as SAT and ACT prep, where you can take versions of the tests online. Students can read about concepts, look at photographs and diagrams, or take practice quizzes online to strengthen their skills in different classes. Many teachers even pull test questions off of Khan Academy. However, Khan Academy is not the only helpful tool out there—websites like mathisfun.com and coolmath.com can dissect some of the most impossible math problems out there, from geometry to calculus to trigonometry.

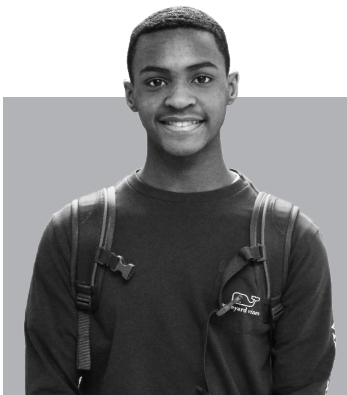
"I do not think there is one specific most efficient method or 'best' [study method]. I think there are multiple methods, such as making flashcards,

reviewing quizzes, and tests from that chapter or reading the book for your class. By using different methods you can also figure out what works best for you as a student and a learner," said Ms. Poyser. It is crucial that students are comfortable with their study method, and can ensure its effectiveness.

Simple tips such as making sure students are focused—for example, turning off their phone or putting it on 'Do Not Disturb' and sticking it in a drawer somewhere they cannot see or touch it—is one of the best ways to keep themselves on task. Fatigue is also a major impediment when trying to study. To get focused, take a quick 25 minute or less nap or exercise by running up and down a staircase. Studying right before bed, just as students are getting tired is effective, because their brain strengthens new memories during sleep and overall increases the chances of remembering the material better when they wake up.

At the end of the day, coming up with a method and routine that works and fits into their schedule will allow students to work hard without causing stress.

New year, new goals



Sydney McDonald
Freshman



Lily Gubernick
Sophomore

Charlotte Kriftcher
Reporter

With every new year comes a new list of resolutions that one may, or may not, stick to. Typically, people resolve to “work out more, get better grades or save money,” in the new year. The best way to ensure that one sticks to their resolutions is by giving themselves guidelines on how to fulfill them; this way, one knows what they want to achieve, and they have already given themselves a way to do so. Whether one wants to get better at a sport, improve their grades, or change an aspect of their personal life, the new year is the perfect time to start. Setting goals and planning out how to obtain them are the perfect ways to make a positive change in one’s life and make sure 2017 is the best year yet.

Sydney McDonald (’20) does not limit his resolutions to focusing on one class. “I would

like to get all A’s in all my classes for the next two quarters,” said McDonald. This long-term and wide-scoped resolution will help McDonald, and students like him, stay on top of all their classes and not allow any of their grades to suffer.

For many students, a common New Year’s resolution is to improve their grades. Some, like Lily Gubernick (’19), focus themselves on a certain class, and set a certain grade that they would like to obtain. “I really want to maintain at least a B average in chemistry,” said Gubernick. Her suggestions for maintaining a certain grade is to “see a tutor when you think you have to and study for your tests more in advance. If you know there is one class you are struggling in the most, you should try to focus more on that class.”

Having a more specific goal is often easier to stick to. “Make sure [you are] doing everything

[you] can, whether it is staying after school with a teacher or spending some extra time studying,” said Mackenzie Vargas (’17). Vargas has other priorities in mind when writing her list of resolutions. “I want to become more independent and not depend on others to take care of my responsibilities.” Vargas’ ultimate resolution is to save up enough money to buy herself her own car. “I will do this by getting my own job, so I can start paying for my own things.” Finding a job is a great resolution for students looking to become more independent and start making their own money.

However, certainly not all New Year’s resolutions are school-driven; they can be about sports, family, or lifestyle. “I want to get better at my sports and to prepare for the upcoming seasons so I can help my team win games,” said Dominic Echeverria (’18), like many student-athletes.



Dominic Echeverria
Junior



Mackenzie Vargas
Senior

Photos by **Ryan Murace** / Media Manager.

72 Hours: Vegan Lifestyle

Column by Courtney Xu



72 hours is a social experiment, exploring comfort zones and doing something different just for a change. For 72 hours, I will do something I normally do not do, and document it.

For 72 hours this month, I was a vegan. After 72 hours of a few cravings, complaints, stomach growls, and many bursts of frustration, I was introduced to a glimpse of a life without meat, and food products that in any way harm animals.

The first thing that I learned about this new lifestyle was that being vegan does not mean going on a diet to lose weight or choosing exquisite foods from the most expensive and healthiest isle of Whole Foods. Rather, those who are vegan choose to do so in order to live a more humane and organic lifestyle. Vegans do not eat fish, meat, or poultry, and do not use any other animal products and by-

products such as eggs, dairy, honey, fur, wool, and soaps. While vegetarians may eat eggs or drink milk, vegans do not because such cows and chickens are eventually killed and sold for meat once they are too old. Cows and chickens are also killed for not producing enough milk or eggs, as are baby chicks.

The resources needed to care for such animals often results in deforestation, habitat loss, and species extinction. Plant-based diets require only one third of the land needed to support meat and dairy diets.

First, I had to buy new products to use. I removed my nail polish because the brand Essie did not qualify as cruelty-free. Suitable alternatives include e.l.f., Deborah Lippmann, Ciaté, and Wet n’ Wild. Many makeup brands also test on animals, such as Lancome, YSL, Dior, MAC, Benefit, Clinique, the Sephora Brand, L’Oreal, Maybelline,

Revlon, and Neutrogena. I replaced these with cruelty-free makeup brands such as Too Faced, Kat Von D, Becca, Josie Maran, Urban Decay, NARS, and BareMinerals.

I replaced my Dove and Pantene soap, shampoo, and conditioner with a vegan shampoo, conditioner, and bar soap from LUSH. LUSH’s Rehab Shampoo, Veganese Conditioner, and Baked Alaska Soap were all vegan and did their jobs rather well.

Luckily, none of my clothes were either made out of fur or were from brands that used fur. So I did not have to replace any of my clothing.

The largest obstacle I faced was with food. Surprisingly, I stuck to my vegan promise for the entire 72 hours. On the first day, I was craving my normal-diet foods. My groceries ended being about twice as expensive as my normal diet’s produce. I

accidentally picked up some ingredients that I learned only after purchasing that were not vegan, such as organic Greek yogurt, chocolate chip cookies, and Honey Almond Granola, which I later replaced with Kind’s Vanilla Blueberry Clusters granola.

For breakfast and lunch, I stuck to either fruit salads, granola, bagels, or salads. For dinner, I did not branch out too much from carbs and pastas. The first night, I copied a recipe from a vegan website for Garlic Pasta and Roasted Tomatoes.

The second night, I cooked Italian orzo spinach soup from the same website. The third night I ate out and the waitress gave me vegan suggestions. I ended up eating the soup special, a tomato based soup with beans, carrots, cauliflower, and brown rice, which I highly recommend.

My experiment this month was self-fulfilling. By the third

day, my cravings were tamed and I definitely got better at controlling myself. However, I would not recommend anyone deciding one day that they want to be vegan and suddenly start the diet. If I did not have the motivation to write this article, along with some friends who told me to stick with it, I definitely would have broken my diet. However, it was satisfying to know that I may have saved a chicken’s life, or any other animal harmed in the process of making my usual diet.

I do appreciate what vegans do for our earth. I cannot say that I have the strength to cut meat and animal-related foods or products out of my life entirely, but this experiment has paved the way for me to try. I am now starting to try to become more environmentally-friendly, whether it be eating less meat or buying cruelty-free products.

Yahdon Isreal brings #LiterarySwag to Westhill

Liz Yamron
Supplement Editor

If someone were to look at Yahdon Israel, they would see a stylish millennial from Bed Stuy, New York, who loves hip-hop. What they would not see is that Israel is the creator of #LiterarySwag, a social media movement that is encouraging millennials and teenagers of generation Z to read by attaching it to pop culture trends that spark a conversation. Israel believes people do not read because they do not feel they can have conversations with others about books. By posting pictures with the #LiterarySwag to social media platforms such as Instagram and Twitter, Israel is opening up the conversation of books to people. The Westword got a chance to sit down with Israel and ask him a few questions about his platform.

The Westword: What got #LiterarySwag started?

Yahdon Israel: I would write for these different literary magazines and I would post links to them on Facebook. Eventually, I realized there was more that I had to do than just post links on people's walls. That was the very beginning of this. #LiterarySwag actually came about by accident. I was sitting on the A-train in New York

and I saw a teenager get on. He was a cool-looking kid reading *To Kill a Mockingbird* and I took a picture of him. It never dawned on me that this would be the answer to my problem and this was how I would be able to get people to appreciate and value reading. The more I started taking pictures of people reading, the more positive of a response I saw. I became aware of how under served people who read are. Not just the writers, but the readers are some of the most under served people out there. No one tries to make the reading community more comfortable or feel less alienated. My question to myself was how do I make reading and writing something cool and something that people care about. #LiterarySwag became my answer. I just want people to think about reading in a different way. It opens up the conversation about reading, creating a less alienating feeling for people in the reading and writing communities.

TW: You are so passionate about making literature something that can be viewed as "cool." Where did this passion come from?

YI: It stemmed a lot from my parents, my mother especially. She always instilled in me that being intelligent was something that was positive. She wanted me to understand

that being smart was what you wanted to be and it was a long term investment. As I got older, I learned to appreciate the value of what I was doing and I realized that it taught me how to think differently. I felt like with a lot of other things there is this push toward making you feel like you have to do something in a certain amount of time. My mom wanted me to think bigger. She wanted me to have a career and passion that would keep me sustained my whole life and this is why she wanted me to use my brain more than my body.

TW: What is the whole point of #LiterarySwag? What are you trying to do?

YI: I am on a mission to make books as cool as any other art form that makes people feel like they are a part of something bigger than themselves. I believe that if anything is to have any value, this generation has to believe in it. My idea of literature is that it could be the biggest thing since music, writers could be as cool as rock stars and people who read and write can feel a sense in the world that they are appreciated for what they love.

TW: So are you are aiming to make writing and reading the new music of this generation?

YI: Yeah; I want to make it cool to read so people do not feel like they have to hide the

passion they have for literature. No one has to hide their love of sports or their love of music, but a lot of people do have to hide their love of not just reading but also writing. I am trying to remove that stigma and make reading something to embrace and be proud of.

TW: What is one effect #LiterarySwag had on people?

YI: People have started to connect with it on their own terms. I am seeing people that I do not know using the hashtag. I have seen people post pictures of their outfits with books. I have seen people I do not know post pictures of others reading. Followers will inbox me and ask for book suggestions. The direct connection that followers have with this is blowing my mind. They started coming to it organically, which is what I wanted.

TW: Have you gotten any negative feedback?

YI: The most negative thing I have [seen] is people not caring. They do not even value reading and writing enough to talk about it. I feel like the more this trend grows, there will be more negative feedback. If there is anything I do see, it is that people think #LiterarySwag is going to "ruin" literature. People are saying it is diminishing literature because people are not reading the books they are just taking

pictures with them, but to me, these are people that no one ever thought would be holding a book, so just getting it into their hands is a start. My idea is that if I can get books in people's hands, then maybe they will open them.

TW: You said in one of your presentations that it is about opening up for conversation. What would you say is the biggest part about opening up the conversation?

YI: The biggest aspect of the conversation is making people feel like they could be a part of it. It is about making people feel like they can come into the conversation no matter who they are. You bring to it what you want. A lot of people have their own preconceived notions that people can only fit a certain group if they look or act a certain way. I want to be surprised. I want to see someone unexpected reading a book. I want to see someone who I would not think of as "swaggy" looking cool. When I see someone post a different type of picture I think "Yo that's dope" because I would not have ever thought to do something like that. It ends up becoming a cultural jam-balaya where you get different books, you get different styles and it all creates this diversity in the community.



Photos by **Ryan Murace** // Media Manager

MAKING READING COOL AGAIN Yahdon Israel spoke at Westhill on December 8 and 9. All English classes were escorted to the auditorium to hear Israel present. He showed his Instagram page to the students with multiple photos captioned with the hashtag "Literary Swag." Israel discussed his inspiration for this social media movement and why he loves reading and writing.

Holiday movies for the season

The Santa Clause (1994)

Spawning two sequels, and full of classic Yuletide delight for the whole family, *The Santa Clause* is a Christmas comedy classic in the likes of Jon Favreau's *Elf*. *The Santa Clause* follows the life of average joe divorcee and businessman Scott Calvin, played by Tim Allen, who takes on the job of St. Nick against his own will. Replete with memorable performances and 90s nostalgia, it is a film to watch if you are a fan of modern holiday classics.

Rating: 3.5/5

Home Alone (1990)

Anyone who had a childhood in the 90s will remember young, mischievous Kevin McCallister from *Home Alone*, one of the most remembered comedy-classics of its day. Produced by prolific director of the time John Hughes, *Home Alone* was dubbed "a family comedy without the family." It has become one of the most popular Christmas-themed films of all-time, and will provide lots of laughs and twists for everyone in the family.

Rating: 4/5

The Polar Express (2004)

Based on the story by Chris Van Allsburg, Robert Zemeckis's groundbreaking Christmas adventure follows the story of a young boy who travels on a train on Christmas Eve, and finds himself arriving to a magical place. The little boy, who is on the verge of losing the Christmas faith, journeys to the North Pole to meet Santa. The first all-digital capture film offers visual entertainment and cheering festive spirit for all.

Rating: 4/5

Elf (2003)

Nothing says Christmas like sitting down with the whole family while watching Will Ferrell play our favorite self-proclaimed, syrup-loving elf. Perhaps the most recently released film to be one of the 'Christmas Classics' on ABC's lineup for this month's movies, *Elf* is a fun, enjoyable Christmas comedy that offers PG delight for everyone. It is a must-see for lovers of the holiday and comedy genres.

Rating: 4.5/5

Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas (2000)

The first of a wave of Dr. Seuss books to be adapted into full-length motion pictures, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* stars Jim Carrey in a memorable role as Christmas' greatest adversary: The Grinch. With a heartfelt lesson to offer and countless laughable moments, a trip to Whoville this Christmas is a must for all those who want to reflect on why we truly celebrate possibly what is the biggest holiday of the year.

Rating: 3/5

For trailers and more, visit www.thewestwordonline.com.

Briefs by **Daniela Paredes** / Staff Writer.
Photos courtesy of **clipart & hoomrun.com**.

Record review of the month



Coloring Book by Chance the Rapper by Paige Savitt



Chance the Rapper is a solo artist who has been on the rise since 2013 when he dropped his second mixtape *Acid Rap*. He is known for his outstanding gospel vocals in the rap community. Chance is also a part of The Social Experiment, a group that is composed of him and Donnie Trumpet. On May 12, 2016 Chance released his third mixtape, *Coloring Book*. The album is a lot different from his first two mixtapes. Chance shifts from rapping about suspension and acid, to becoming clean. This mixtape is extremely good, and features a number of great artists. Donnie Trumpet helped produce the album allowing it to be the success it has become.

Coloring Book was called "one of the strongest rap albums released this year" by Pitchfork Media Inc. It is an upbeat gospel rap album that hit the Billboard 200 just on streams.

The mixtape consists of 14 original songs, only three in which he sings solo. As a solo artist, Chance is an exceptional vocalist, but when he collaborates with others, his music becomes very unique. He features artists such as Kanye West, 2 Chainz, Justin Bieber, Future, and many more throughout the mixtape.

In a number of the songs, the audience can hear the gospel-sounding choir in the background, which would be the Chicago Children's Choir. Chance grew up in Chicago, so the choir is significant in his music. He bases a lot of his songs on gospel sounding music and god, which he incorporates perfectly into his music.

Coloring Book is funny because of its irony. Chance bases most of the songs on gospel music and religion but it is a rap album. It is extremely different from any other rap mixtape,

in the best way possible.

In September of 2016, Chance the Rapper appeared on the line up for The Meadows, a new music festival in Queens, New York. The first song on the mixtape, "All We Got" Kanye West & Chicago Children's Choir" is an amazing opening song. He sings about how music is the only thing that makes sense, and even when you have nothing, you still have music. "I get my word from the sermon / I do not talk to the serpent / that's the holistic discernment."

The second verse starts to incorporate the biblical connections in the song. Other songs like this on the mixtape include his most listened to song on Spotify, "No Problem" Lil Wayne & 2 Chainz. This is the second song on his mixtape, and is about problems with labels he has had in the past, and a warning for people who might have a problem with this

mixtape. He also alludes to the presence of god, "Sacrificin' everything I feel like Jesus Carter."

One song that really stuck out on the mixtape was "Angels" Saba, which is the eighth song on the mixtape. This song is really important because Saba is also from Chicago, so the two work extremely well together to sing about being from Chicago. "There's too many young angels on the southside / Got us scared to let our grandmommamas outside." The entire song is about the southside of Chicago, where Chance and Saba grew up; a very dangerous area of Chicago where the homicide rate is high. When they go home, they both work to make the south side of Chicago a better place to live.

The mixtape ends with "Blessings" featuring Anderson Paak, BJ the Chicago Kid, and Ty

Dolla \$ign. This song is a perfect closing because Chance is stating how thankful he is for his career. Instead of rapping, Chance speaks his lyrics, in a very poetic way, and then the chorus pours in with the collaboration of multiple artists. This song sticks out from the rest of *Coloring Book* because of the lack of rapping, but it remains one of the best collaborations on the mixtape.

Whether it be gospel music, all the way to rap music, Chance the Rapper manages to bring all of it into *Coloring Book*. If you enjoyed any of Chance's prior music, you are most likely going to love *Coloring Book*. If you are not a huge fan of rap, check out the mixtape, because you might find yourself enjoying it. I would rate *Coloring Book* a four out of five, a must listen to.

A GUIDE TO THE PERFECT SNOW DAY

Movie Marathon

Spend the day tucked under the covers or wrapped up in a warm blanket and binge watch some of your favorite movies. Whether they are holiday movies, old time favorites, or new releases, keep them coming and only take breaks for necessities (like snacks). Make Netflix your new best friend and watch your favorite shows! There is no shame in going through at least one whole season of a show.

Read a Good Book

Teenagers often get too caught up in the school year, reading textbooks, doing homework, and studying to remember that reading is a hobby, and can be very enjoyable when you find the right book. Sit next to the fire and read a book with no educational purpose, just for entertainment.

Color

We often think coloring books are just for little kids to pass time and keep busy. However, adult coloring books are becoming increasingly popular these days. Go to your local crafts store and pick up a coloring book with intricate designs and spend some time coloring! It can be very soothing and definitely helps to relieve stress while reminding you of cherished childhood memories.

Day in The Kitchen

Nothing is sweeter than a baking day while trapped inside, away from the frigid temperatures. Whether it be cookies, brownies, cake, or a holiday treat, eat your baked good with a decadent cup of hot chocolate. If you are looking for something more savory than sweet, cook a comforting meal. A warm soup or creamy pasta would be particularly good to go with the frosty weather.

Snow Activities

A fresh coating of snow is one of the prettiest sights, but it is even more exciting to play in the snow. Whether it be a snowball fight, sledging, building an igloo, ice skating, or simply laying in the snow, pretend that you are in elementary school again and enjoy. No matter how old you are, a little while in the snow can never get old.

Spa Day

Take a break from the busy week and indulge in an at-home spa day. One of the best ways to do this is taking a warm bubble bath. Light a candle, put on music, and soak in the bubbles to take away the chill from the weather. You could also pamper yourself by using a facial mask, cooling your eyes with cucumbers, and doing a manicure or pedicure. Take those extra luxurious steps to treat your body.

Follow #whssnowday on 

Brief by **Caroline Boccuzzi** / Managing Editor.



The Hungry Vikings

Column by Jake Dardis, Ryan Hart, & Naresh Kumanduri

The Cheesecake Factory:

Price: ★★☆☆☆

Service: ★★☆☆☆

Food: ★★★★★

The three Vikings decided to have their monthly reunion on a chilly Thursday night in December, expecting to have a quiet evening for themselves to reminisce on the past month. Little to their knowledge, our three Norsemen walked into one of the most crowded restaurants that they had been to yet, with a wait of 30 minutes for a table. The anticipation had built itself up for Stamford's newest restaurant, The Cheesecake Factory.

Upon sitting, our first Viking was greeted with an elaborate menu, spanning almost 10 pages. Making a choice was difficult, but thankfully he was given time by the waiting staff to properly look through the menu. He began with a Coca-Cola, and settled on the

spaghetti carbonara. Upon a short wait, our Viking received a massive portion of pasta that was fit for two Norsemen. His stomach roared in challenge and he immediately set into his meal, all the while upholding hearty conversation with his fellow Vikings. Despite his best attempts, our Viking had to settle on taking some pasta home, and was now battling a severe food coma in the booth. Our Viking was left satisfied with the food from Cheesecake Factory.

The second Viking, of greater stature and appetite, walked in and fixated his eyes on the rows of cheesecakes that lay in front of him. Before he selected one, he ordered his dinner: buffalo blasters and a macaroni and cheeseburger.

The buffalo blasters were scarfed down by the Viking and his smaller friends, and the burger was partially eaten, but was taken home. This led to the moment of truth: cheesecake selection time. After deep contemplation, the Viking selected the Reese's peanut butter cheesecake. This Viking was not only satisfied with his food from The Cheesecake Factory, but was also content with the free drink refills.

On the days preceding the meal, our third Viking's mouth continuously watered in wake of eating at a restaurant named after his most loved desert. The Viking, yet again, arrived late to the meal. He was delighted to find his fellow Norsemen already seated in a cozy booth, and as he sat

down, he prepared himself for a feast like back home. As the waiter arrived, the Viking decided on a comfort-food classic: an eggplant parmesan. This hefty dish came with an unexpected side of pesto pasta. He too was unable to finish off his plate. The Viking chowed down, but was left unsatisfied. The eggplant was firm with a tangy sauce on top. It was nothing like his mother's delectable classic. Although his main course was not what he had expected, his most anticipated event came: the cheesecake. He knew off the top of his head he would order the classic plain cheesecake with strawberry sauce on top, his favorite. The Viking devoured this, leaving the plate clean. This

was the richest cheesecake he had ever had, more velvety than the fresh milk of a Nordic mountain goat. The sauce added the perfect amount of sweetness to the desert. As he closed his eyes, scarfing down the cake, our third Viking was entranced in state of culinary delight.

Despite being on the pricey side, The Cheesecake Factory is the perfect place to get a decent meal within the comfortable presence of friends, and our three Vikings will definitely be coming back on a later date. With that, our three Vikings went their separate ways into the chilly December night, with expectations of meeting up again in the cold Norse winds of the coming New Year.

A hippo's lips is two feet wide. A cloud can weigh more than a million pounds. A male ostrich can roar like a lion.

FROM RUNWAY TO HALLWAY: TRINITY WILSON

Two words I would use to describe my style are unique and bold. I love to set myself apart from others and try new looks to keep it exciting. Style is one of the best ways to get noticed and be memorable. Keeping my appearance up-to-date is important because I like to make a good first impression wherever I go. When shopping at local stores, I like to shop at Forever 21 and H&M. I like to keep certain stores to myself to maintain my individuality. The city is one of the best places to shop hands down. There is so much variety, with better prices, and it is not likely to walk down the hall and see someone with the same shirt as you.



There are not any specific celebrity figures who inspire me when it comes to fashion. I admire their style, but I usually tend to stick to my own. If anyone is inspiring when it comes to style it would have to be my mother who has been dressing me since I can remember, and showering me with some of the trendiest clothes out there. Whether the clothes were from a popular name brand or not, she still always put my outfits together nicely. An everyday outfit for me consists of comfortable but stylish clothes that compliment my physique, and include eye catching colors. Some days I do not have the energy to put together something as dressy, so I keep it simple with dark colors such as black which go with anything, and a simple solid top, or a nice jacket. Even if I feel bummy, I do not always necessarily want it to show. It always feels better to look good.

Photos by **Devon Ostheimer** / Photographer.

TO DO NEXT MONTH: JANUARY

1

Crepes Day

Look online for the most appealing crepe recipe and give it a shot, try new things for a new year.

3

Word Nerd Day

Pull out a book or word search and start looking! Take a break from the real world for once.

11

Clean Off Your Desk Day

Desks get cluttered all the time, which can easily distract you. So go ahead, and clear off your desk!

13

Popcorn Day

Make some popcorn and hot chocolate, grab some friends, start the fire place, and watch a movie or two.

27

Chocolate Cake Day

Grab some chocolate cake mix from the store and your favorite flavored frosting and bake a cake.

23

Puzzle Day

Pull out a puzzle watch some TV and with some snacks, and see how many puzzles you can put together.

31

Backwards Day

Know anyone who knows the alphabet backwards? If so, today's their day! See how you can turn your day around!

Photo credits from pixabay.com.

Your nose can remember 50,000 different scents. Goldfish do not have stomachs. Caterpillars have about four thousand muscles.



Be careful, you don't want to say...

“I'm in the Wrong Driving School”

Don't be fooled by the “Driving School Factory” or Part-Time operators, who have brought the fast-food mentality to driver education in Stamford.

Since 2005, **High Ridge Driving School** has offered the Greater Stamford area a locally owned and operated driving school that's focused on the individual needs of Stamford students, not fixated on monopolizing the state. **As a result, we've taught more Stamford teens to drive than all of the other driving schools... combined!** And even though they appear to be determined to bring the driving school factory approach to Stamford, it just doesn't seem to be appealing.

Even though some companies do not agree, when it comes to driver education, just like shoes, **one size doesn't fit everyone.** We believe every student deserves the focus, care, and concern that comes from an organization run by local businesspeople who are actively engaged with their instructors, students, parents and community. Please see the chart below to learn more about one of the most important decisions you will ever make...

DRIVER EDUCATION.

THE HIGH RIDGE DRIVING SCHOOL ADVANTAGE

	OTHER DRIVING SCHOOL OPTIONS	HIGH RIDGE DRIVING SCHOOL
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, 7-days a week in the summer, 5-days a week during the school year.
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	As of this mailing, NO OTHER driving school offers DMV License Testing in Stamford!	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.
Locally Owned	No.	Yes, one owner lives in Stamford, the other lives nearby. Ownership or G.M. on-site 80+ hours a week.

We think you'll agree that the advantage of

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

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

Keep this ad for your
FREE BOOK
to help you pass the



Permit test.
A \$10 Value FREE,

No Expiration, when you enroll in High Ridge Driving School

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.



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

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

EXPRESS



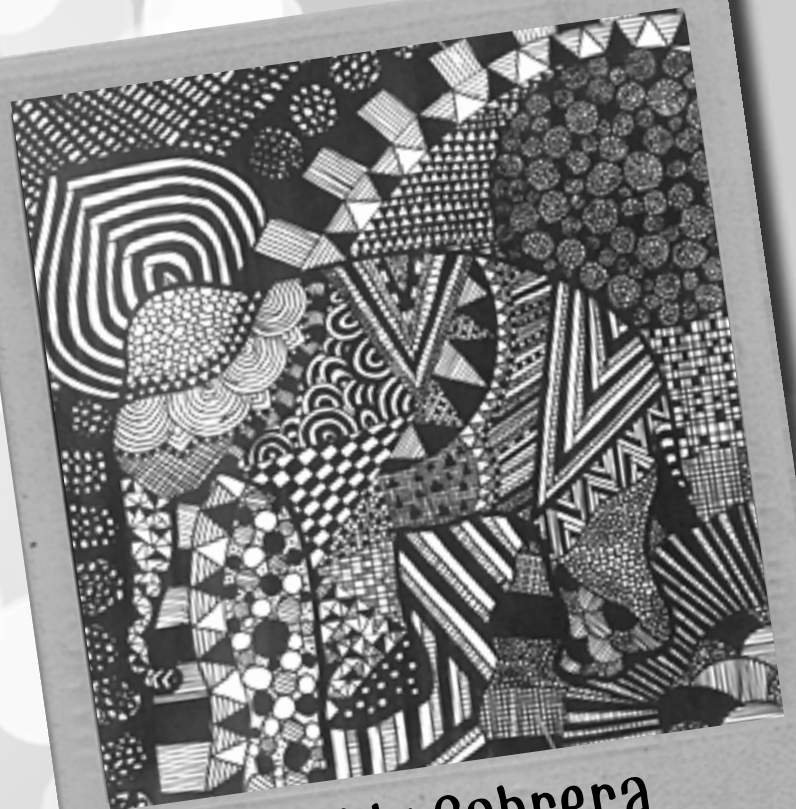
Adam Zacharewicz
Class of 2017



Julia Frederick
Class of 2018



Rose Dorval
Class of 2017



Heidy Cabrera
Class of 2018

Artist of the Month

CRYSTHEL LARRIVIERE

Senior Crysthel Larriviere sat down with The Westword to speak about the influence art has had on her life, and where she sees her art going in the future.

The Westword: How did you become interested in art?

Crysthel Larriviere: I would not say “how” I became interested in art. My mom told me ever since I was a baby I would draw all the time. Growing up, I would watch a lot of YouTube videos and read about drawing techniques. Every allowance I would have or every chance I would be with my parents at a store, I would pick out some art supplies and a drawing technique book. I’d say it’s something I was born being interested in.

TW: How would you describe your style?

CL: I love realistic art, which means I like making my art look accurate. Not like Picasso with his abstract paint strokes, more like a less intelligent amateur Leonardo da Vinci with a dash of surrealism.

TW: What has influenced your style?

CL: Well I have always liked making shiny hair; anyone can identify my artwork by just simply looking at the hair, I would say that is my best feature in making art. Artists such as Heather Rooney, Mark Crilley, and Leonardo da Vinci have given me inspiration in developing my own style.

TW: What medium do you like to work in?

CL: I enjoy working with various types of mediums. I have experimented from paint and watercolor to charcoal and China marker. My favorite would have to be watercolor and charcoal. Not necessarily together in a single piece of artwork, but I have used them quite often. Regular pencil is also my best friend. I found a way to push in values, lights, and darks with practice. I have also been dabbling in PhotoShop lately because I just started taking computer graphics and it’s been difficult since I have yet to master it. It has been coming along.

TW: Did you teach yourself art?

CL: Before I took AP Studio Art, I was self-taught. YouTube was usually my go-to in developing techniques but other than that I never went to a specific art school where I’m taught. I usually just draw what’s in mind, or whatever gives me inspiration. I’ll take my own pictures and add my own twist of surrealism.

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

CL: The only thing I have to say is that if you have always enjoyed art and feel like it is a passion that just fills you with interest and joy, do not let other people push you down in what you want to do. Some people in my life, including family members, have not been supportive of my dream because they think that you will end up a starving artist and that academic-based careers would work out better. Do not listen to that. Do what you love and keep going until you get there. That is what I am trying to do for myself.

TW: What are some goals you have for your art?

CL: I just want to get to the point where I see myself in 10 years well-accomplished and say “I actually made it and I can not believe I have turned out successful.” I hope to get my point across to people and that others see what I am passionate about. I do not necessarily have to be a famous artist, but I want to know that I’ll have some career based off my art even if I have to work hard to get there.

TW: If you could be featured in any museum in the world, what museum would it be?

CL: To be featured in the Louvre Art Museum would be fantastic! It is one of the most famous and visited museums in the world, and a huge tourist attraction. However, there is not much modern art and it is very advanced compared to my artwork.



How to balance school and sports

Nabilla Harahap

Staff Writer

The Westword: What sport do you play?

Courtney Xu : I play volleyball and used to play basketball my freshman and sophomore year.

Rishabh Tandon: I play on the school's varsity tennis team during the Spring. I try to play in at least three tournaments per month. I recently aged out of the 16 and under division being ranked 25th in New England for singles and 22nd for doubles.

Nicole Somerstein: I play volleyball for Westhill!

Jordan Goins: I am the captain of the Westhill wrestling team.

TW: What other activities are you involved in inside and outside of school?

CX: I am involved in FBLA which I have to complete duties for everyday, junior achievement which is once a week, and a column for *The Westword* which I work on about once a week.

RT: I am on the math team, science team, student government, FBLA, and National Honors Society. Math team, FBLA, and student government meet on Thursdays and the science team meets on weekends. Outside of school, I teach tennis to elementary school children.

NS: I am the Co-President of Cooking for Charity Club and



Photo by Ewa Misiak // Photographer.

the Treasurer of FBLA. Cooking for Charity is only once a month but it requires a lot of planning, and FBLA is an everyday thing because I work in the school store between periods and have to manage the money we get from it. Being in NHS and SNHS also requires a lot of time to commit to volunteering. I also do some small other things like School Governance Council, but that is not a big time commitment and is not too stressful.

JG: I am part of the mentor program for elementary school students. I am also a part of a youth church program outside of school, and I teach swim lessons and lifeguard as well.

TW: What is a normal day like for you during the season?

CX: A normal day on-season is

practice until 5:30 p.m., getting home around 6:00 p.m., taking a shower, eating dinner, and then rushing to finish all my homework and keeping myself away from distractions. Right after, I prepare for the next day, whether it be for a game or anything else, and go to sleep around 11:00 p.m. depending on how much homework I have. If I have a game, then I do not get home until 7:00 p.m. or 8:00 p.m. usually. On game days, I try and get most of my homework done in school, on the bus, or during the JV games.

RT: After school, I go home and try to finish as much homework I can until 3:50 p.m. At 4:00 p.m., practice starts at Westhill's sub-par tennis courts. Practice runs until 7:00 p.m. I get home, shower and eat

dinner. By that time, it is about 8:30 p.m. I usually squeeze in another hour of homework and then go to sleep. I wake up at 4:00 p.m. to finish up any left over homework and study for my tests. It is pretty hectic!

NS: After school, if it is a practice day, we go straight to the gym and set up the nets. After we set everything up, we jump right into conditioning which we do every day. We end that at around 3:15 p.m. and then start our actual practice until around 5:30 p.m. After that, I go home, shower and complete my homework.

TW: How do you balance school work with after school activities?

RT: I always prioritize my academics before my athletics. If I have to miss practice one day because I have a big test the next, I do not hesitate to do so. I am a student before an athlete.

NS: Balancing my academics and sports is always pretty tough during the season. I usually try to get everything done in advance, so I do projects as soon as they are assigned and do homework as soon as I possibly can get it done. My best method is to get one thing done at a time, and usually that ends up working well for me.

JG: I balance my academics and activities very easily. When I am not partaking in one of my activities, I am getting my school work done every single chance

I get. There comes a time where you start to take advantage of all the free time you can get.

TW: What is your way of managing stress when you have a busy schedule?

CX: To manage stress, I catch up on any sleep that I missed over the weekend. It is a rewarding feeling when I get things done because it is just a goal of mine to do well in school while keeping myself busy outside the classroom. It is self-fulfilling which is motivating and helps manage my stress. It also helps to manage my stress by rewarding myself so I will plan to do fun things for after the season ends.

RT: Water! Drinking lots of water helps me calm me down and focus.

NS: My best method to managing stress is just to tackle it head-on. Whatever school work is stressing me out the most is what I do first, and then I do the rest in the order of importance. I give myself a lot of breaks to just go on my phone and relax so I do not get too overwhelmed, and that really helps me not be insanely stressed out all the time.

JG: My way of managing stress is just keep myself busy and my mind off of things. When I am busy and constantly doing something, I do not even have time to stop and think about how stressed out I am.

Yoga poses to help chill out over the winter season

Balancing school, sports, and other extracurricular activities can get stressful.

In order to help deal with the stress, here are a few yoga poses proven to help get out of a study rut.

For more ways to de-stress during the winter season, visit thewestwordonline.com.



Warrior I Pose



Tree Pose



Warrior III Pose



Lotus Pose

westhill ice hockey line-up



Photos contributed by Kiley Watson / Videographer.

PUCK IT UP Casey Watson ('17) and Haley Blau ('17) (top) are this year's captains for Girl's Ice Hockey and Nick Rich ('17) (bottom) is the captain for Boy's Ice Hockey. All three are looking forward to a great season.

Lexi Boccuzzi & Cooper Healy
Reporter & Contributor

Westhill is very enthusiastic for the upcoming hockey season. Both girls and boys alike are looking forward to a winter full of pucks, sticks, and ice rinks. However, no one is anticipating this season more than the captains of the Westhill girls and boys teams. They are really ecstatic about the prospects for this year's team and new players, and think that this season will be a success. When asked what they were looking forward to for this year, it seemed as though the captains expected nothing short of greatness.

Captains of the Boy's Ice Hockey team, Nick Rich ('17) and John Nilsen ('17), have mutual high hopes for the coming season. After last year's great run, with the team winning state championships, they are also expecting to do very well this year. "Coming from winning the state championship, I expect us to carry that

momentum forward into this season. Take it game by game and eventually another deep playoff run," said Rich.

Rich's goal for the team is to focus on one game at a time and hopefully make another deep playoff run. He takes his role as a leader seriously. It is his job to keep the team focused while continuing to keep their heads in the present, not looking ahead. As the assistant captain last year, Nick has the experience needed for a good leader. He will lead on and off the ice, showing his teammates just how committed he is to the team.

With these expectations in mind the captains are looking forward to training hard in order to reach their goals. "[The team must] stay positive and always be prepared to work harder," said Rich. He hopes to help the team return to its previous form of glory. They are also very proud of the group they have put together this year. The captains feel as though this year's team is one filled with strong,

talented players who will lead them to victory. Rich and Nilsen are also excited about the new freshmen who have joined the lineup; they believe that they will greatly contribute to the team's success.

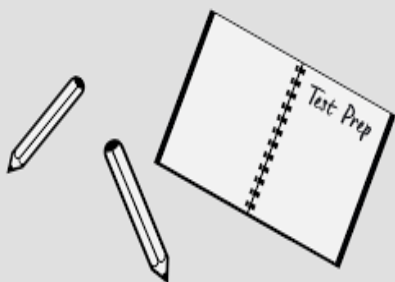
The captains of the Girl's Ice Hockey team Haley Blau ('17) and Casey Watson ('17) are also looking forward to this upcoming season. They are especially eager to play against their close rivals: Greenwich, New Canaan, and Ridgefield. Although they have had a small set back, the captains think that the team will make it through. "I think we are going to do well. We lost our goalie to prep school which was tough, but we are ready to bounce back," said Blau.

The senior members are delighted to welcome the new additions to the group, especially the freshmen. "The new team is great! We are getting really close and the girls are super nice," said Blau. Overall, both teams are definitely looking forward to the upcoming hockey season.

NEED A MATH TUTOR?

IF YOU NEED HELP WITH:

- AP CALCULUS (AB & BC)
- PRE-CALCULUS
- ALGEBRA 1 & 2
- PRE-ALGEBRA
- GEOMETRY
- COLLEGE MATH
- ACT/SAT TEST PREP
- SAT MATH SUBJECT TEST (1 & 2)
- ISEE
- SSAT



I offer
online skype sessions,
library groups,
one on one sessions

CONTACT

EMAIL: STAMFORDMATHTUTOR@HOTMAIL.COM

OR MANJU_KHATRI@HOTMAIL.COM

PHONE: 203-391-4161

Serving Stamford for over 40 years

WESTOVER Pizzeria

FREE
LOCAL
DELIVERY
(min \$20 order)

PIZZAS, PASTA, CALZONES, SALADS AND ITALIAN ENTREES,
SPECIALTY PIZZAS AND SUBS/WEDGES

Catering for all occasions



203-569-6090

234 Stillwater Ave. · Stamford

HOURS: Sun.-Thurs. 10:30am-10:30pm
Fri. & Sat. 10:30am-11pm



Order online at: www.westoverpizzeria.com

Owens owns the field

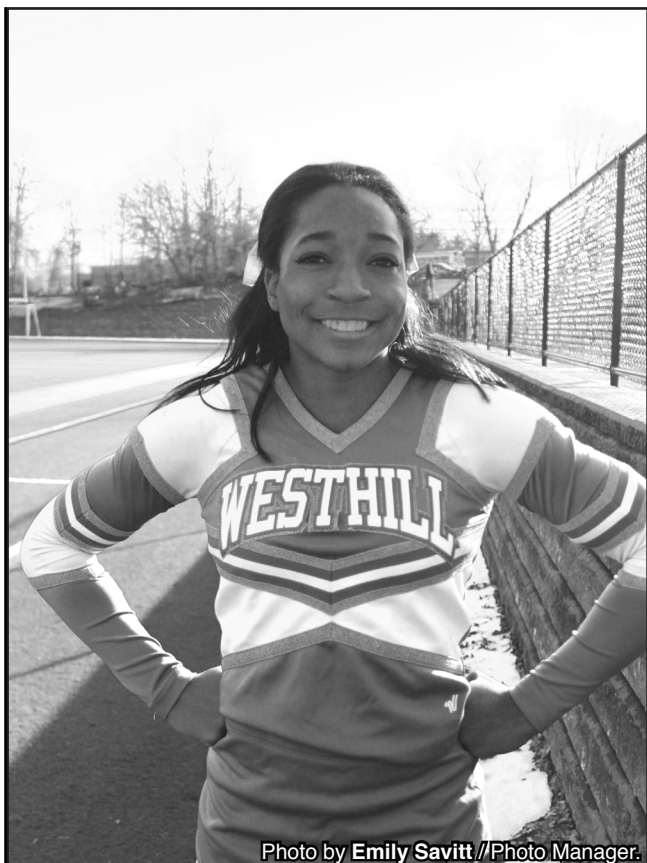


Photo by Emily Savitt // Photo Manager.

PASSION Owens has loved to being a cheerleader since 7th grade and ever since then she has loved to cheer for her home team, and hopes to cheer in college as well next year.

Max Zussman
Reporter

Tatyana Owens, one of Westhill's most stand out cheerleaders agreed to talk to The Westword about her experiences during her four years cheering career for Westhill.

The Westword: How old were you when you first began cheering?

Tatyana Owens: I was eight-years-old when I first started cheerleading.

TW: Was there a certain age time when you really got into cheer and realized you wanted to make cheering a big part of your life?

TO: In the beginning, it was just something different to do. I did not realize my love for cheerleading until the 7th grade when I made the varsity cheerleading team at my middle school. This is when I realized how much fun cheerleading was.

I started learning more and more skills at every practice. I then realized that I was in love with cheerleading and I never wanted to stop.

TW: How many years did you cheer for Westhill?

TO: Four years. I am so sad it is coming to an end but I have had an incredible time while on the team. I would not trade the experience for the world!

TW: How was your experience as a captain and leader on the team?

TO: My experience as captain this year has been amazing. I love all the girls on the team. We all have a really great connection.

TW: What responsibilities did you have as a captain?

TO: I have to make sure our girls are staying in shape, remaining on task with school work, and being a big sister to all of the girls which is the best part of all!

TW: After four years of Wes-

thill cheer, what were your emotions like during the final homecoming game?

TO: At the homecoming game, I was upset because football season had come to an end. I have cheered for Westhill for three homecoming games before this one so for that to be the last one, my emotions were running high. The game was really so much fun. I was very happy that our football team won and the girls did an amazing job cheering them on. It was a great way to wrap up the season. I wish I could go back!

TW: Any plans to continue to cheer in college or in the future?

TO: Yes! I hope to become a cheerleader in college. After that, I want to become a coach for a high school cheerleading team like mine. Cheerleading has always been a passion of mine and I hope to continue with it through my life.

Yaghoubian gets ready for the season

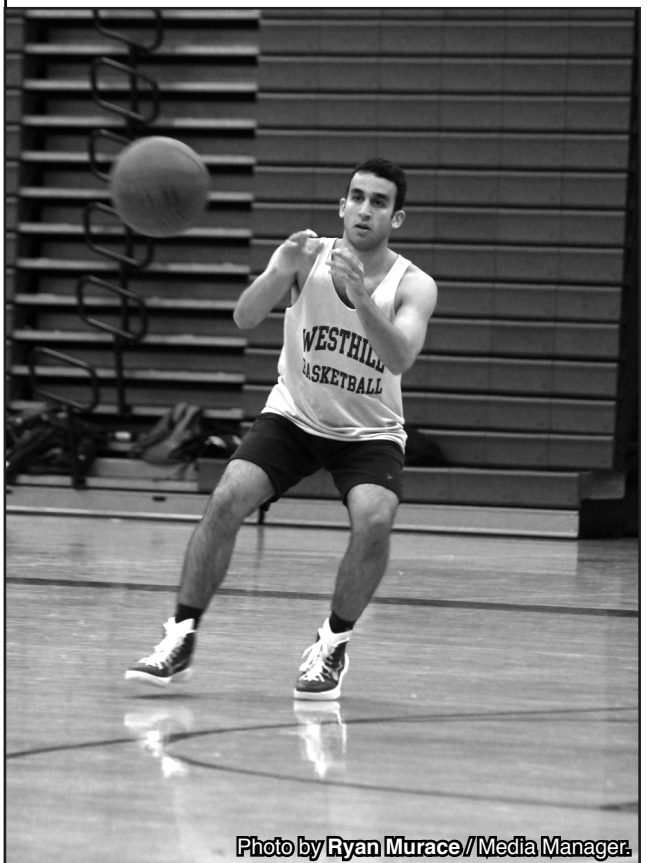


Photo by Ryan Murace // Media Manager.

BALLING Jared Yaghoubian started off as a young boy playing basketball for his local JCC team, where now he is working his way up in the high school level to be the best player he can be.

Nathan Salm
Reporter

Senior Jared Yaghoubian, a very hard-worker who can separate himself from others in the FCIAC because he has a very intense work ethic that can possibly take him to the top of his game.

The Westword: How long have you been playing basketball?

Jared Yaghoubian: I started when I was seven or eight, playing for the JCC Travel Team.

TW: How have you been training for the upcoming season?

JY: I have been lifting weights for at least an hour a day, five days a week and I usually practice in the gym for three hours a day.

TW: What strengths do you bring to the team?

JY: My biggest strength is my shooting. I can also get to the foul line and I am a solid defender.

TW: What separates you from other good high school shooters?

JY: I think my work ethic definitely separates me, as well as my confidence. If I miss a shot, I do not let it get in my head and I keep shooting and attacking.

TW: What are your plans for playing basketball in college?

JY: I might try to walk on somewhere or play club basketball.

TW: What are your goals for this year?

JY: I want the team to win as many games as we can and reach our full potential and get another FCIAC championship.

TW: What are the keys to the team's success?

JY: We have to play together, as one unit, and trust each other no matter the opponent or score.

TW: What do you love so much about basketball?

JY: I love being on the court and making friendships with

the people I play with. There is an indescribable rush and excitement that goes through you when you are playing well and it is a great feeling.

TW: What lessons have you learned from basketball?

JY: I have learned to pay more attention to detail because it can be the difference in games. If the team is down three with five seconds left and about to shoot, make sure both feet are behind the three-point line and not grazing the line. I have also learned to be more open-minded to things and take and implement constructive criticism.

TW: What do you have to improve on this year?

JY: I have to work on moving without ball and finding open space on the court where I can get my shot off. I also want to play stronger defense because with defense I can help the team even if I am not shooting well.

Liberatore spikes towards success

Caroline Boccuzzi

Managing Editor

In the 2016 girl's Varsity Volleyball season, Hayley Liberatore ('17) swept the court, leaving a lasting impact on the Westhill volleyball community. This past season was her best yet, with her highest amount of accomplishments to date. This year her awards include the Val Dickinson Memorial Volleyball Award, making All FCIAC Third Team, and the High School Star of the Day, which was featured in the *Stamford Advocate*.

Liberatore started playing volleyball in the fall of her freshman year, with minimal experience. However, over her years at Westhill, she has improved greatly by playing various positions on the court. Her positions included middle hitter and right side hitter. It was in her most recent season that she dominated the position of middle hitter. Liberatore's best games were against Trumbull, where she had 6 blocks, 3 aces,

and 7 kills as well as the Darien against Westhill game where she had 13 kills, 3 blocks, and 4 aces. Along with her highlights on the court, Liberatore carried the position of team captain, and showed her leadership skills by influencing younger teammates, and responsibilities of the team as a whole.

"Hayley has the most positive attitude, she never gives up and always tries the best that she can. She was a huge leader, especially for the younger kids to show what we are trying to build here at Westhill Volleyball. She was a positive role model for them," said Westhill Varsity Volleyball coach Marianna Capomolla. "Today there are few on the team that hit harder or hustle more than Hayley Liberatore."

Outside of Westhill, Liberatore works on her techniques and conditioning for the game in club volleyball at Chelsea Piers in Stamford. In this league, she plays in regional tournaments which help to strengthen her skills for West-

hill volleyball. Volleyball has not just been a sport for Hayley, it has taught her life lessons as well and become a part of who she is. Volleyball has taught her positivity, and has made her realize that life is not always about winning, but also about the effort players put forth. "Every challenge I have faced on the court has given me the motivation to overcome any obstacle life may throw at me because of the persistence volleyball has instilled within me," said Liberatore.

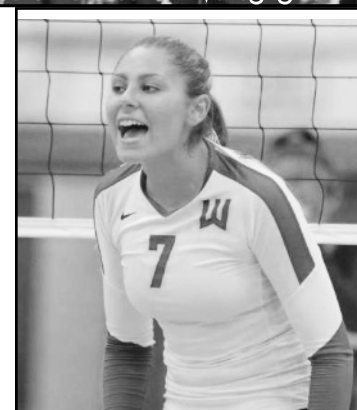
Liberatore does not have any set plans to play volleyball in college, however, she is looking into some Division 3 schools, or may consider playing at the club or intramural level. Her accomplishments all within her last season have made it a special way to leave an impact on Westhill volleyball. Liberatore said her inspiration for reaching these accomplishments has always been her father, as he constantly motivates her to play at her best ability. "Although there are no words to



Photos contributed by Caroline Boccuzzi/Managing Editor

BALL UP Liberatore playing her last game as a Westhill Viking Volleyball player against Norwalk High School girls Varsity Volleyball team.

describe how much I am going to miss playing on my home court again, I know I will forever be apart of the Westhill Volleyball Team and I am looking forward to coming back and witnessing the great future of Westhill Volleyball," said Liberatore.



JANUARY SPORTS CALENDAR

Week 1 (1-7)

DATE: 3

EVENT: Varsity Boys Basketball
OPPONENT: Bridgeport Central
LOCATION: Home
TIME: 7:00 P.M.

DATE: 4

EVENT: Varsity Girls Gymnastics
OPPONENT: Staples. New Canaan
LOCATION: Home
TIME: 5:30 P.M.

DATE: 9

EVENT: Varsity Boys Swim+Dive
OPPONENT: Staples
LOCATION: Staples
TIME: 4:00 P.M.

Week 2 (8-14)

DATE: 10

EVENT: Girls Varsity Basketball
OPPONENT: Norwalk
LOCATION: Home
TIME: 5:30 P.M.

DATE: 11

EVENT: Varsity Wrestling
OPPONENT: Danbury
LOCATION: Home
TIME: 5:00 P.M.

DATE: 14

EVENT: Varsity Boys Ice Hockey
OPPONENT: South Windsor
LOCATION: Home
TIME: 2:00 P.M.

Week 3 (15-21)

DATE: 20

EVENT: Varsity Boys Basketball
OPPONENT: Trinity Catholic
LOCATION: Away
TIME: 7:00 P.M.

DATE: 20

EVENT: Varsity Girls Basketball
OPPONENT: Trinity Catholic
LOCATION: Home
TIME: 5:30 P.M.

DATE: 21

EVENT: Varsity Boys Ice Hockey
OPPONENT: Darien
LOCATION: Terry Connors
TIME: 5:20 P.M.

Week 4 (22-28)

DATE: 24

EVENT: Varsity Girls Gymnastics
OPPONENT: Darien + New Canaan
LOCATION: Home
TIME: 5:30 P.M.

DATE: 25

EVENT: Varsity Wrestling
OPPONENT: Norwalk
LOCATION: Home
TIME: 4:00 P.M.

DATE: 27

EVENT: Varsity Boys Swim+Dive
OPPONENT: Darien
LOCATION: Home
TIME: 4:00 P.M.

Viking Sports

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

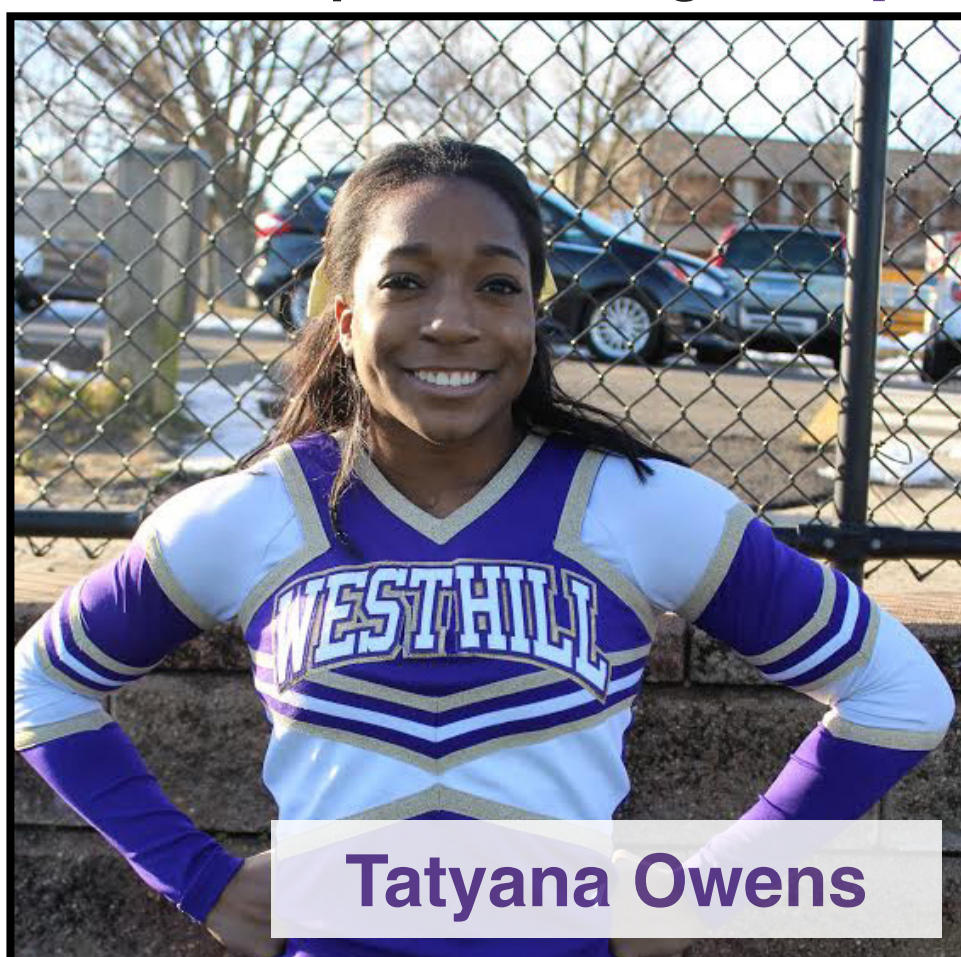


SWS Girl's Ice Hockey captains share their season predictions

Athletes of the Month *p38* / Westhill's athletes share their tips for balancing school *p36*



Jared Yaghoubian



Tatyana Owens