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The Westword

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

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The Westword

2016-2017 Staff

February 2017

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Dear Readers,

Welcome back to the first issue of the year, as we get back to work from our brief hiatus!

We would like to personally extend a thank you to Ms. Figluizzi for all the support she has given *The Westword* in addition to the progress she was able to achieve in Westhill throughout her 17 years with us. We are sad to hear about her upcoming retirement in June, but we wish her all the best.

In addition, we would like to offer our condolences to Gregory Sacatos' family and friends. Sacatos will be greatly missed.

For starters, our Editorial this month delves into the complexity of 504 plans and how we can reach more people that may ben-

efit from it.

Flipping to News, you can read about a student walk out in protest over the recent appointment for Secretary of Education, Betsy Devos, along with an interview with Principal Figluizzi.

In Viewpoint, there is a feature on the presidential inauguration and the recently implemented open campus.

In Las Noticias, you can read about the immigration ban ordered by President Donald Trump.

In Supplement this issue, you can read a more in-depth overview of 504 plans.

In Limelight, take a look at the suggestions for binge worthy shows on Netflix. View Special Report this issue as they expose

the extent of animal cruelty across various platforms.

In Scatterbrain, you can find Hayley Smith as our From Runway to Hallway feature and Noah Cheruk as our Artist of the Month for Express.

Finally, in our Sports section, you can read about the impact of Wrestling on the body along with a fill-in March Madness bracket.

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

Ms. Figluizzi recently announced her retirement for the end of the 2016-17 school year at a faculty meeting.

Corrections

The Westword has no corrections from the December issue to address at this time.

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

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EDITORIAL

Shedding light on the 504 plan

The term 504 comes from Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which extended grants to establish civil rights for individuals with disabilities within the Departments of Health, Education, and Welfare. To learn more about 504s and how they come into play, flip to the Supplement section on page 17.

504 plans are legal guidelines for arrangements for students who have mental or physical challenges that could interfere with their performance in school. These plans can be extremely beneficial for some students who need accommodations in school in order to perform to their potential, even if the process of acquiring a 504 is not always so easy. A 504 plan is broken down into two basic categories based on a student's impairment, mental or physical.

Surprisingly, not all kids who need a 504 get one. There are multiple reasons why students who need a 504 have complications acquiring one. The process can be lengthy in certain situations and may cause parents to be absent from work for extended periods of time. It may also require frequent doctor's visits that may be hard to get on short term notice. In some cases, in order to get a 504 plan for mental health issues, the student's parent may have to pay for a psychiatrist and meet with the school, and or doctor. Some parents just can not afford to miss work or to dedicate the time and resources to such a lengthy process.

In addition, many students

are not aware that 504 plans exist. It is something that takes some due diligence to discover and put to use. Usually, students only find out about it when they are in need of accommodations or through the school referral process.

Students who are new arrivals or who come from households where English is a second language

The bottom line:

While 504s can be extremely helpful, not every student who needs one gets one due to various socioeconomic issues or lack of knowledge about them.

are also at a disadvantage. "Students who come from other countries are unaware about 504s and how it can assist them in their academics," said Thomas Agosto, a guidance counselor who helps the new arrivals. Agosto emphasizes the point that while 504s are great resources that can help all students who need them, the process is difficult to navigate for many of our families.

A mental 504 plan has a slightly more tedious processes and can be difficult to receive because, unfortu-

nately, evaluators need to make sure the person is not faking or exaggerating their disorder. One teacher even described parents pushing a 504 plan on kids who did not need it so that their test scores and grades would improve. However, it is important to realize that students utilizing 504 plans have qualified for them based upon the criteria set out

in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Despite benefits some students receive from a 504, some people view them as an unnecessary crutch. It is possible that the school is doing an injustice to the students by improperly preparing them for a workplace environment in which deadlines are crucial and excuses are not welcome.

After speaking with students, it is clear that some try their best to use it only when necessary, and act as like it is not there, while some

have discussed not choosing certain careers because of their 504 purpose. "Personally, that is always something I have been concerned about, because I know that some colleges do not have the same accommodations. As they get older, I have noticed that students use their 504 less and less. They have been able to manage without relying on it. I have never had a student take advantage of it recently. In life, you do not get accommodations, you get penalties," said English teacher Ms. Denninger.

While this may be true in some cases, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 specifically requires that work environments provide accommodations when necessary and prohibits any discrimination based on disabilities. Regardless, it is important that the school do not cradle students to the point where they cannot function in certain workplace scenarios. This crutch becomes a problem when a student becomes dependent on their 504 plan since there is not anything like a 504 plan that exists in the work force.

On the other spectrum, 504s

are necessary for some students to be able to thrive in school, which is what the school systems aim for. These accommodations, when used correctly and not overstepped are a helpful tool for students who may suffer from physical or mental health problems. The abuse of them, while it is a problem, is not something that a majority of students with a 504 plan do.

504 plans allow students to be comfortable and thrive in a school environment, something that may be hard for students with certain afflictions. They are fallback plans or safety mechanisms to make student's lives easier when dealing with their physical or mental health struggles. The process is sometimes in some cases harder than others which can be seen as a roadblock for many students who truly need these accommodations. This roadblock can deter many students from getting the help that they need. Although the process can be long and frustrating, the only solution that can properly serve Stamford's school system is to continue to thoroughly test students before giving any accommodations.

In memoriam **Gregory Dean Sacatos**



1948 - 2017

On February 18, Gregory Dean Sacatos peacefully passed away after a long battle of Parkinson's disease. Mr. Sacatos was an art teacher at Westhill, known by students, faculty, and friends as a passionate, loving, and beneficent person. He taught photography and enriched students with creativity. The Westword would like to offer our sincerest condolences to Mr. Sacatos' family and friends.

Principal Figluizzi announces farewell

Nathan Salm
Reporter

Principal Camille Figluizzi has been leading Westhill for almost two decades, but this February she announced that her tenure will come to a close at the end of the 2017 school year.

Figluizzi earned her bachelor's degree at Southern Connecticut State University as well as a masters degree at Fairfield University. She has worked in Stamford Public Schools for over 35 years. Figluizzi first worked as a teacher in Roxbury Elementary School and then as a principal at Toquam Magnet Elementary School before becoming principal at Westhill.

When Figluizzi first became principal at Westhill, the school lacked certain resources that we regard as normal today, like new desktop and laptop computers and Promethean boards in every classroom. There was no a new and modern freshman wing that eases the transition for freshman entering high school. There was no Agriscience program, which

is now highly regarded and attracts students throughout the district and beyond. There were no modern athletic facilities, like the newly turfed fields we have today. Figluizzi has guided the school through this transformation, making sure that Westhill does not fall behind and is always ahead of the curve.

After talking to teachers and students, about what comes to mind when they think of Figluizzi, many noted her leadership and passion for Westhill. "She has been a wonderful leader of the school. I look forward every day to seeing her and know that she will be greatly missed," said English teacher Mr. Denbaum.

Figluizzi got her masters degree in Learning Disabled Education, and she applies the effort and individual focus necessary for special education toward all the students and faculty at Westhill. Figluizzi wants to see every student fulfill their potential and is influential in all aspects of the school. "In all the interactions and meetings I have had with her, she

has always been friendly, helpful, and supportive. She will be truly missed by all," said Andy Putterman ('17), the senior class president. Not only does she value the students and faculty, she also makes time for parents, most notably during "Coffee With Camille," where she listens to parent's comments and opinions. "She has strong passion and is very helpful to everyone at Westhill," said Mrs. Makanji, who has been working at Westhill since Figluizzi started.

Figluizzi does not have much set in stone for her retirement, as she only recently announced her departure. However, she is open to continuing her involvement in education, just in a lesser role. She has also expressed interest in going back to special education. Leading Westhill is a consuming task, so Figluizzi is looking forward to doing things that she has not had much time to do. Students and teachers are predicting replacements for Ms. Figluizzi's role of principal. The school has not officially announced anything regarding this issue yet.



Photo by Ryan Murace / Media Manager

A NEW CHAPTER Ms. Figluizzi announces her retirement after working in the Stamford Public School District for more than 35 years.

The Westword sat down with Ms. Figluizzi to discuss her retirement announcement and her career in the Stamford Public Schools

Noah Klein
Ombudsman

After being a member of Westhill's staff since 1998, Principal Figluizzi has announced her retirement for the end of June. Her dedication and hard work as principal is something to be admired. Figluizzi has a rich background in education, and brought all of her experience to the Westhill community. Under Figluizzi's administration, Westhill's population has grown from 1,200 students to about 2,500 students. In The Westword's eyes, Ms. Figluizzi makes us truly Westhill and proud.

The Westword: When did you know you wanted to become an administrator?

Camille Figluizzi: It was never really a career goal for me. I was just asked to sit in for somebody about 25 years ago and I said, "wow this is really fun!" It was a different impact, so I just took it from there.

TW: What from your background in Special Education were you able to utilize in being an administrator?

CF: A special education teacher never gives up on her students, and every single child had his or her own individual plan. [It was] really about designing solutions, which is exactly what this job is all about. Every day is very different and you take what you know and what you have to design solutions to very different things.

TW: What was your first impression of Westhill?

CF: My first impression, such a long time ago, was just how wonderful it was to be around teenagers. [Westhill] was definitely very large. The irony is when I was a teacher at Roxbury, I would always drive by on the way home and I would ask myself how anyone works in a school so big. I was taken over by how big it was, but everything fell in its place.

TW: How do you want to be remembered at Westhill?

CF: I just hope the students remember me as [someone] that knew them, was there for them, and made decisions based on what was best for them. It is a very large school and I never wanted stu-

dents to feel anonymous. That has always been one of my goals and it still is moving forward.

TW: What is the most difficult part of your job?

CF: The most difficult part of my job is certainly having difficult conversations with students, parents and teachers. I certainly do not like it when a student gets hurt at school, and we know that can happen some days. Those are the things that make me feel bad.

TW: Out of all your days working at Westhill, does one day stick out in particular?

CF: One day we all went out to the stadium [after a student passed away] and all the kids were out there. We all released balloons. It was planned in one day. The way the student body came together amazed me [and] that is what continues to amaze me about this building. No matter what happens, we always come back together.

TW: What has changed most about the school itself?

CF: It is definitely much larger. If I were to take a walk later, I would find a nook or a cranny that maybe

I had never been down before since it is so big. But a building is a building. It is nothing extraordinary until you put the people in it.

TW: What has changed most about the student body?

CF: I think the student body is closer now in my mind. I think the student body is more diverse than years ago, much more open about who they are. Those are a few things that come to mind.

TW: What advice do you have for the next administrator?

CF: I think if I could tell that person anything, I would say you are getting an amazing gem. It is an amazing building, with amazing people, students and parents. To take the next great step, I would tell them to never give up and that their work is never done. When you close the door at night, you have to say I have done what I can do for today and tomorrow is another day.

TW: What traits should the next principal have?

CF: I think the new principal has to have a sense of humor, perseverance, love, love, and love for kids.

TW: How do you feel about say-

ing goodbye to Westhill?

CF: I have thought about it for about a year. It is very bittersweet, but I wish everyone could have the feeling I have that you are leaving a place that you love coming to everyday. It just makes me feel so blessed that I am not walking away counting days or saying I cannot wait to be gone. It is not like that at all.

TW: What are your plans for retirement after you leave?

CF: Not too much. I still want to do something with kids. I never wanted to go above the high school level since I never wanted to leave kids. As you know, I am a Special Education teacher by training so maybe something with that. I want to be able to do some of the things I could not do because being a principal is so busy.

TW: If you could describe your entire Stamford Public School experience in one word what would it be?

CF: Fulfilling. I have learned so much working here, at Westhill. It has been the most fulfilling thing in my whole life.

BRIEFS

Agriscience flower sale

On February 13 and 14, Westhill's Agriscience program held its annual flower sale. Students were able to purchase a single rose, a dozen roses, or succulents, with written notes and have it delivered to their significant others or friends. Flowers were bought in the Finch lobby and outside the cafeteria prior to and on Valentine's Day. The roses and plants were delivered on February 14. All the donations and profit were given to the Westhill Agriscience seniors toward any scholarship.

Students celebrate Black History Month

Black History month is an annual observation in the United States as well as other countries such as Canada and the United Kingdom. It is a celebration of the achievements and importance of African Americans throughout history. Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln were both born in February which is why February is the chosen month of observation. With Black History Month in full swing, Westhill has made its own contribution by displaying and familiarizing our community with the important and significant achievements of African Americans, while also showing the central role they have played throughout U.S history. Ms. Walden, an English teacher at Westhill, is the leader of this effort to educate students during Black History Month. Her proposal to create a gallery for Black History Month is something that is new to Westhill.

Briefs by **Amalia Skoparantz** &
Noella Fefe / Staff Writers.

DeVos protest postponed

Maddy Cohen
Print Executive Editor

The Westhill Feminism Club organized a walkout to take place during Connection Time on February 14 in protest of Betsy DeVos, the newly confirmed Secretary of Education. The walkout spurred other students from Stamford High School and the Academy of Information, Technology, and Engineering (AITE) to plan their own protests. Sophia Blanchard ('17) and Xavier Larino-Maymi ('17) at AITE organized a sit-in with the help of fellow students, while Jared Barrientos ('17) planned a walkout in the front of the Stamford High building.

All these protests were planned to occur around the same time. However, Ms. Figluizzi shut down the protest until further notice, a few days prior to the original date. In her eyes, Westhill students need to be educated on all sides of issue before they can

protest DeVos. "Kids can make intelligent decisions. It is fundamentally a good thing for kids to speak out against what upsets them, but we only want them to do that when they have all the facts," said Ms. Figluizzi.

Following the postponement of the DeVos protest at Westhill, other protests around Stamford were pushed back as well. "We [were] going to do a sit-in or 'teach-in' to advocate against [DeVos'] plans to move away from public schools," said Maura Byrne ('17) of AITE.

While Figluizzi feels that students should be well-informed, those who are involved in all three protests are more knowledgeable. "What we want to get across is that what is going on with the Department of Education is unprecedented and should not be normalized. It is easy for people to dismiss the DeVos nomination as 'just another presidential appointment,' but people on both ends of the politi-

cal spectrum agree that she is the least qualified appointee in Department of Education history. This is not the kind of thing that should go unnoticed, and we want to make sure that, at least in Westhill, it does not," said Marcos Pinto-Leite ('18), an event coordinator for the Feminism Club.

At Stamford High, students are just as informed. "I heard about what [Westhill was] doing and I just knew we had to join. We have tons of students here that are just as excited and passionate about the cause," said Barrientos. "Our principal, teachers, and faculty are fully behind it though."

Because the Stamford School System is made up of public schools, the nomination and confirmation of Betsy DeVos affects Stamford deeply. Students went to great lengths in order to prepare and organize their individual protests.

"I first created a group chat for the cause and added a bunch of the kids that I considered politically aware. We

ironed out the details of the protest, and spread the word via word of mouth. We also have a Facebook event page going on for it. Sophia [Blanchard] was the one that brought up [Westhill's] protest, so that planted the seed in my mind to work on it. At first everyone had their own ideas as to how we could do it, it was very scattered. Someone needed to take charge, so I did," said Larino-Maymi ('17).

Feminism Club has met with Ms. Figluizzi for a different date. "We are pushing for [February] 23," said Samantha Hamilton ('18), president of Westhill's Feminism Club. This change in dates will hopefully allow all three schools to partner up with other schools in Fairfield County for a united protest. "As of right now, the schools participating are Westhill, Stamford High, AITE, Ridgefield High School, Fairfield Warde, and Greenwich," said Hamilton. The new protest took place on February 23 in the Westhill courtyard.

Auto collisions caused by local wildlife

Charlotte Kriftcher
Reporter

Stamford is home to hundreds of animal species that, for the most part, coexist peacefully with the constantly moving and highly populated city of Stamford. However, North Stamford is facing a recurring problem of roadkill, and the local wildlife is facing an untimely fate.

According to *CNN*, approximately 1.5 million deer-related accidents are reported each year. Here in Connecticut, many Stamford residents, including Westhill students, admit to having hit wildlife with their cars. Because of its densely wooded landscape, the preferred habitat for deer, North Stamford in particular is a hub for roadkill. The most common animals killed in auto-accidents are deer, followed by raccoons, opossum, skunk,

and squirrel, who all fall into the next largest category. Roadkill can be spotted on an every day drive to work or school. Even animals such as snakes and birds face car collisions by wandering into the street at the wrong time.

Students and teachers at Westhill recalled some memories they have had of unfortunate run-ins with wildlife while driving. "My dad has hit deer on multiple occasions. Where I live, they come out of nowhere and sometimes run straight into your car, or at least right in front of it," said Amalia Skoparantz ('17). She, amongst other Stamford residents, noted that the number of animals they see daily is much larger in comparison to the number of animals they accidentally hit.

Most people are confused as to what they should do next after hitting an animal. New drivers or those who lack experience with car accidents are

at a loss for what to do after they hit an animal. In Connecticut, if one hits an animal and kills it, they are technically allowed to bring it home and eat it. Section 26-28 of Connecticut law states, "Any deer, moose or black bear seriously wounded as the result of a collision with a motor vehicle may, after inspection of such deer, moose or black bear by the local police authorities, state police or conservation officer and after issuance of a copy of a wildlife kill incident report, become the property of the operator of such vehicle."

Some feel uneasy about taking an animal's life and then eating it. "It is better to eat the animal then just leave it on the street. That way you know it died for a purpose," said Matt Masi ('17). There are other ways to deal with an auto collision with an animal, other than bringing it home. It is recommended that the vehicle operator

move their vehicle to the side of the road, call the police, and document the accident. Police say that any dead animals on roads should be reported, and "will be disposed of within 24-hours."

Car crashes involving wildlife not only hurt the animals around Stamford, they are a hazard to drivers. Many times, in attempt to avoid killing an animal, people swerve and end up causing car accidents and injuring themselves as well as other drivers or pedestrians nearby. Sometimes, the animals get away unscathed, having caused an accident by running into the street at the wrong time.

The issue of roadkill is a morally conflicting matter. Residents around wish to increase the safety of their roadways. Drivers must stay vigilant, they must be aware of the surrounding diverse wildlife that are living amongst them and do their best to avoid harm to themselves, as well as to the animals.



Graphic designed by **Sakshi Patel** / Creative Director.

Westhill hosts the CDA Festival

Amelia Daube
Feature Editor

Every year, students from all over Connecticut gather at a chosen high school to showcase their dramatic talents. The Connecticut Drama Association (CDA) hosts this festival at different high schools for a weekend in March. The festival will be taking place on March 10 and at Westhill. According to the CDA website, "The CDA is one of the oldest state secondary school theatre organizations in the country. Established in 1936, the CDA continues to offer students and teachers a wide variety of educational theatre experiences in which to grow and learn, share and enjoy."

The festival provides an environment for each school to put on a short play and go to different workshops to learn about light-

ing, costume design and other technical skills. They also offer acting and directing workshops for students and teachers. At the end of the festival, two schools are voted as the most outstanding and are invited to the New England Drama Festival.

"I have been doing CDA since I was a sophomore. It is a great opportunity for people all over Connecticut to share passions. You have the opportunity to watch other people's productions and see what they value in a show. It becomes less about the competition and more about the connections you make," said Rebecca Siegal ('17).

Westhill's production this year is "Booby Trap" by Ed Monk. It tells the story of an American soldier trapped sitting on top of a land mine. As he waits to see what is going to happen to him, scenes from his past, pres-

ent, and future unfold around him. The student actors involved in this year's production are Marcos Pinto-Leite ('18), Sydney Alexandra ('19), Audrey Molina ('19), Lucy Hart ('18), Inde Heuman ('18), and Mariah Young ('18). The student director this year is Angelo Sagnelli ('17). "CDA is what I look forward to doing each year for theatre. I have the most fun doing it because it is very student-driven and since they are smaller shows it's less stressful and more fun. The festival itself is one of my favorite things, just meeting other schools to see how they work and see their talent," said Sagnelli.

The show has to be 45 minutes or less with a 15 minute tech period. Plays that were performed in the prior years of the CDA State Festival or NEDF Regional Festival cannot be performed. Musicals are not allowed

and either a full-time faculty member or a full-time student at the participating school must direct the production.

"[Directing is] probably one of the most gratifying things I have done. When things go the way you imagined it is just so satisfying. But it is a little weird directing people I know and I guess hold an 'authority' position over people that you know and are friends with. It can be very difficult to do," said Sagnelli.

There are 24 awards a school can receive including Outstanding Production, awarded to the 1st and 2nd ranked schools and Theatrical Excellence, awarded to the schools ranking 3rd, 4th, and 5th. If students would like to see the shows, or volunteer at the festival, passes are available at the door on March 10 and 11 and an in-school performance date has yet to be assigned.

BRIEFS

Care for Pets Club

A new club at Westhill, Care For Pets focuses on raising awareness for abuse, health, and other issues that threaten pets. The aim is "to provide pets with the help and support they need in order to have a healthy lifestyle," said Allie Colorado ('18). Events and activities will include gathering donations of food and supplies for cats and dogs, raising awareness for abuse, collecting funds for pet surgeries, and keeping students informed on sources of aid for their pets. This club was founded by Jennifer Carias ('18), Valerie Neyra ('18), and Colorado. The three students came together based on their goal for all pets to live a happy, healthy, and safe life. This will be the goal of the club throughout the year. Meetings will be held in room 434, beginning on February 7, and continuing each Tuesday. This is definitely a club for all animal lovers out there. Students do not need to own a pet to be in the club. They bring their interest in animals, and their willingness to help.

Ceremony rewards AP student success

On February 7, Westhill held the annual AP Ceremony. The event recognizes students who took AP classes the year before and earned a passing score of a three or higher. In previous years, seniors who had graduated the year before were welcomed back to be honored along with current Westhill students. Students are awarded a \$50 Visa gift card for every exam that they pass. Ms. Figluizzi began the ceremony by stating that Westhill offers 32 different AP courses, making it one of the most competitive high schools in the nation. Ms. Figluizzi congratulated the students, and thanked parents for everything they do for their children. The money to reward the students was provided by a grant, which will run out after students are paid for their 2017 exams. This means that in the future Westhill students will be recognized for their effort in some other way.

Briefs by **Hannah Nekritz**
& **Mercedes Sabel** /
Reporter & News Editor.



Photos by **Ryan Murace** / Media Manager

Think Positive...

Column by Micayla Roth



This winter has brought glorious days of snow, fun, and hot chocolate. It is always relaxing to curl up with a book and a mug of just that. Hot food is a great way to warm up on a cold day.

Unfortunately, as of 2015, about 13% of American families are food insecure. Luckily, there are people like Chef Bruno Serato, a migrant from Italy who moved to Anaheim, California. He lived in Anaheim for many years, and eventually became a chef and owner of a restaurant. His mother came to visit him from Italy, and Serato brought her to the local Boys and Girls Club. She noticed that some of the children did not have food to eat for

dinner, and told her son that he must do something about it. The thought of cooking for a large group of kids was overwhelming for Serato at first, but eventually he caught on.

Serato served children his delicious pasta at his restaurant for free. He called his program Caterina's Club named after his mother, and over the course of a few years he ended up serving over a thousand children dinner per night. He realized how many people he was helping and how rewarding the experience was, and began to do it to help the kids, not just to follow his mother's orders.

Recently, Serato's restaurant

burned down in an unfortunate fire. Even without his facilities, he knew that he had to feed the children, and would not let them go hungry. So many neighbors were happy to help, and soon enough he was able to use a kitchen at a local event center. Serato continues to serve the children food there, so that they can get the meal they need. He treats them like friends, and knowing his restaurant will be rebuilt, he worries solely about them.

Serato's story struck me as unique because instead of this fire being another tragic event to add to the Nightly News, he continued his work to help others. His lack of a restaurant would not stop

him and his passion for the children, no matter how rough it was for him to keep up. He pushed through the hard times, not wanting to let his misfortune hurt the innocent kids.

Serato's optimism pulled him through, and he never gave up. He thought only of others instead of himself, even with his beloved restaurant in flames. He inspires people to turn a tragic event into something special, unlike others who might resign when something bad happens. Serato says he hopes that chefs across America will take on a similar project, so that all hungry kids can be fed. Serato's work shows how much he, and others, can think positive.



Good Month Bad Month

Column by
Max Zussman &
Matthew Greenbaum

Good Month For...

The Process After years of “tanking” and being the laughingstock of the NBA, the 76ers are showing promise as a young and exciting basketball team. What was known as “The Process” took years of continual losses in order to obtain high picks in the NBA draft and acquire young promising talent. Finally, the talented team appears to be coming together. Led by rookie star Joel Embiid, the 76ers now sit as one of, if not the most, promising teams and will be trying to make noise as they compete for a playoff spot.



Democracy Just a day after President Donald Trump was sworn into office, protests swept the nation and hit cities nation wide, including Stamford. An estimated 2.5 million Americans came out along with high-class celebrities to protest against the 45th President and fight for equality throughout the nation. The marches were a huge success and had almost double the expected turn out.



Dow Jones Stock Market The Dow Jones hit the landmark 20,000 points for the first time in history. This is largely due to President Donald Trump’s pro-growth policies which boosted the markets. After a series of orders from Trump, the average broke open. On January 6 it surged more than 10pc greater than in November and came to about 20,000.

Graphics courtesy of pixabay.com & commons.wikimedia.org.
Illustration by Frantz Gabriel / Illustrator.

Bad Month For...

Immigrants President Trump signed an executive order affecting immigration to America and the rights of refugees. This order prevents immigrants from Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia, and Yemen from entering America, even with legal visas. This ban was halted by Federal Judge Ann Donnelly who issued a freeze based on the fact that the ban was prejudice towards Muslims, and went against the establishment clause of the first amendment. The case is suspected go to the Supreme Court.



Freedom of Religion On January 29, a gunman open fired on a Mosque in Quebec City, killing six and wounding eight. It was the first time someone was killed in a mosque in Canadian history. This horrible attack once again added to the tension between Muslims and those from Western countries, this time an attack from an anti-Islamic citizen. The alleged shooter, Alexandre Bissonnette, is currently facing six counts of murder.



Mary Tyler Moore Fans On January 25, Mary Tyler Moore died at the age of 80 in Greenwich Hospital. The beloved actress will be greatly missed by many. She is known for starring in many ground breaking TV shows that emphasized feminism and independence. In the 1960s she had her big break with *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, and later in the 1970s she starred in the *Mary Tyler Moore Show*.

Examining fake news

f Search Facebook

Westhill Home

Sakshi Patel
Creative Director

Throughout the recent presidential election, there had been and still is an influx of fake news stories circulating around the web or social media, claiming that the content they are publishing is the truth. As a result, many individuals around the country, and even around the world for that matter, are deceived into believing pieces of fiction.

Fake news is more dangerous than people generally perceive it to be. Considering that the primary purpose of factual journalism is to inform, educate, and entertain people, fabricating stories could influence individuals to believe false information and even worse, take action for the wrong reasons. “I usually get my news from the news app on my phone and I also downloaded the New York Times news app,” said Brittany Ramos (’17) when asked when she gets her news. It is important to get information from reliable news sources.

The concept of fake news involves websites that intentionally publish fabricated news stories. Such stories gain popularity through social media when people share the story without realizing that it could be fake. Social media plays an important role when it comes to spreading news in general. Factual stories gain momentum when they are constantly shared throughout Facebook, reposted throughout Instagram, and retweeted all over Twitter. In result, people tend to believe that all the stories they read on their social media platform is automatically true; this is because there is no fact-checking procedure and no questioning that the article being read could be fake. “Yes, fake news is dangerous because it can influence what people think,” said Bennett Egret (’20).

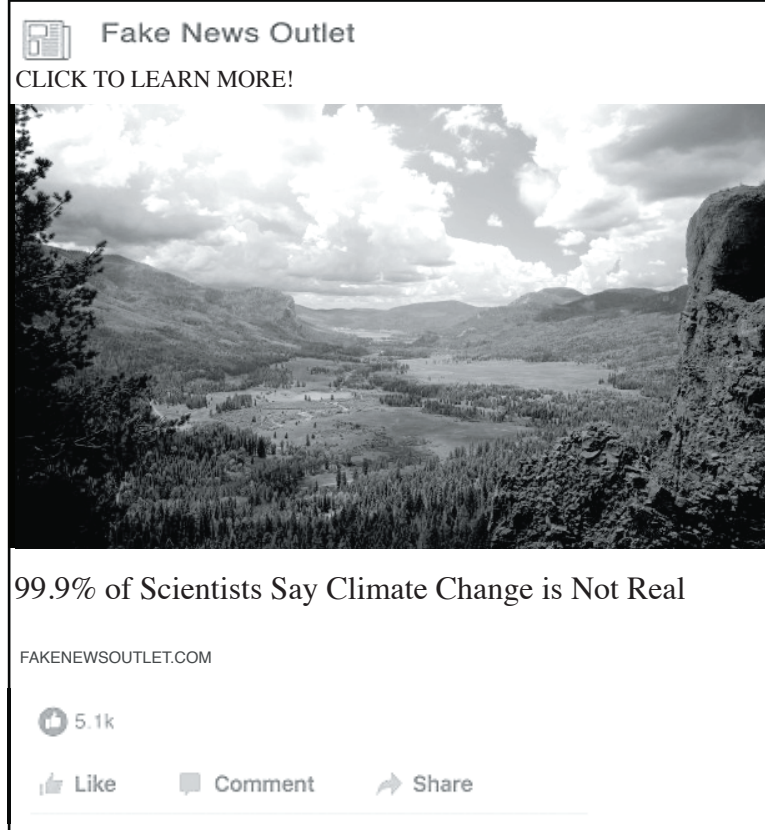
The concept of fake news was problematic during the presidential race. Due to the high discrepancy that existed

between the followers of the major presidential candidates, fake news stories seemed directed toward bashing the other candidate, in order to influence voters to make the “right” decision when deciding what candidate they should support. The easy accessibility to the fabricated articles on one’s social media feed made it easy for these fake news companies to deceive their readers and polarize voters.

Apart from the election, fake news has succeeded in outwitting individuals. For example, there have been stories ranging from “Pope Francis endorses Donald Trump” to “Police Find 19 White Fe-

pan humor. “It depends on the source. You can tell a source is unreliable through its content. Fake news is more exaggerated,” said Mandy Chery (’17) when asked if she was able to spot the difference between fake news and satire.

When reading a story on social media, or anywhere on the web for that matter, it is important to understand whether the story you are reading is potentially fake or simply news satire. One of the main differences between the two types of news are that true satire has an apparent humor feel that is clear to the reader, making it less likely to misinterpret the article as a hoax. On the other



male Bodies In Freezers With ‘Black Lives Matter’ Carved Into Skin.” Fake news is a heavy influencer on how an individual sees the rest of his or her society.

There is a great difference between fake news and satire. Fake news includes stories that are fabricated in order to intentionally cheat readers. Satire news, on the other hand, is a type of parody used through mainly online journalism, such as *The Onion* or *Faking News* which relies on irony and dead-

pan humor. “It depends on the source. You can tell a source is unreliable through its content. Fake news is more exaggerated,” said Mandy Chery (’17) when asked if she was able to spot the difference between fake news and satire.

Fake news stories have been circulating the web thanks to social media, and continue to fool more and more people everyday. It is important to ensure that the article one is reading is factual and coming from a reliable news source that can be credited. Fake news could influence individuals to believe untruthful information.

Graphic by **Sakshi Patel** / Creative Director.
Photo courtesy by publicdomainpictures.com.

Two events. One historical weekend

Friday, January 21: Trump's Presidential Inauguration at the National Mall

Gil Daniels

Contributor

Being able to attend a presidential inauguration at the age of eighteen is a beautiful gift given by the country we are all blessed to live in. Being able to take part and vote in a presidential election is another luxury given to us by our nation that unfortunately, millions do not take part in. To understand that we are all Americans with hopes, dreams, and bright futures ahead of us is to accept the new administration and the peaceful transition of power that comes with it.

I was able to witness this simple and yet intricate ceremony. Being surrounded by Sanders supporters, Clinton supporters, and Trump supporters all at once was eye opening. Roughly 250,000 to 600,000 people from all over the country flocked to Washington, D.C. to witness the historic event.

My family and I had been personal supporters of President Trump

since the first day he announced his bid for the White House. Growing up in the Connecticut bubble, it was a great thing to come together with fellow “deplorables” from all across the country. Families from California, Alabama, and Louisiana stepped into the light to show the nation that it is time for a different direction and a new path.

While there were protestors present, the masses did not notice even a trace of them during the ceremony thanks to the airtight efforts made by the military and police. The “deplorables” descended into the “Swamp” to take part in their candidates success and entrance into the Oval Office for the first time.

Former President Barack H. Obama was present and sitting adjacent to President Trump's podium as he gave his inaugural address. “I thought it was wonderful that past presidents from both parties, as well as [Secretary] Clinton, attended the inauguration, as it reflects both unity



INAUGURATION DAY The crowd listens to President Donald Trump's inauguration speech at the National Mall. Citizens came from all over the country to witness this event.

among our leaders and the peaceful transition of power in our country,” said Andy Putterman ('17).

President Trump gave a rousing inaugural address, where he again made the commitment that the power rests in the hands of the people. “We are transferring power back from

Washington, D.C. and giving it back to you—the people,” Trump said during his inaugural address. “[Trump's inaugural address] was like any other speech I have heard. President Trump is really holding true to what he said,” said Nick Smeriglio ('17), who acted as Trump for the Westhill Mock election.

The time has now come for all Americans, regardless of their skin color, sexual orientation, gender or ethnicity to come together and protect each other from foreign entities and unknown evils. Together we are strong. Together we can prosper. Together we will make America great again.

Saturday, January 22: Women's March on Washington and Sister Marches

Sophie Ciokajlo

Contributor

On January 21, the “Women's March on Washington” inspired individuals protesting in the name of Black Lives Matter, LGBTQ+ rights, women's rights, climate change, immigrant rights, and religious freedoms to come from across the country to march in the capital.

As the concept of the march grew, marches were created in additional locations. The result: an astounding amount of protests in all 50 U.S. states and all seven continents, with estimates around half a million people for the central march in D.C. alone.

While a common misconception is that this march was focused on women's rights issues, this is undeniably inaccurate. No one's focus was to alienate any one group or to only request rights for themselves, the collective goal was to gain equality and prosperity for everyone living in the US. “I am still so blown away... It was so organic... I was very impressed by the amount of men, especially in Stamford,”

said Westhill math teacher Catherine Manning about the unity and diversity of the Stamford march.

Another common misconception about the purpose of the march is that it was an “anti-Trump” rally. The fact is, in Trump's campaign we saw him mock the mentally disabled, shame Hispanic citizens referring to them as “rapists” and “bad hombres,” strike fear in Muslims when he threatened a national Muslim registry or an immigrant ban, offend a majority of people when he accepted a former Ku Klux Klan leader as a supporter, and leave the majority of the country shaking



STAMFORD STANDS UP On January 22, students joined in on one of the hundreds of worldwide sister marches. Stamford's Woman's March on Washington Boulevard near Trump tower, where approximately 5000 men and woman were in attendance.

ing in shock when he declared that sexual assault is simply “boys' locker room talk” and that women who have abortions deserve to be punished as criminals. The evidence is absolutely endless as to why Trump encourages discrimination, which is why millions of people felt compelled to protest. “Since the march I have seen our country rise to the occasion and stand up for everything they find important. It was about more than just women, it was about fighting for a common goal of equality and convincing people to stay politically active,” said Samantha Hamilton ('18), President of the Westhill Feminism Club.

The organizers of the women's march have created a unified group committed to fighting against inequality and injustice. The information for continued protest and political action is available at womensmarch.com.

My personal reasons for traveling all the way to D.C. are incredibly multifaceted. Part of me felt tremendous guilt for the election outcome. I had not volunteered like I could have



WESTHILL ON WASHINGTON On January 22, Ciokajlo was among some of the Westhill students who traveled to D.C. for the Woman's March on Washington where about half a million people were in attendance.

or that I was not old enough to cast my vote. The election was a wake up call to me that it is not enough to simply stay educated and know what you believe and why, but that it is imperative to volunteer and protest and contact your legislators. The march encouraged participation in many of its participants. “Being surrounded by like-minded people who were all fighting for what they believed in was inspiring and empowering,” said Kelly Bernatchez ('18), who attended the central march in D.C. “Attend-

ing the women's march made me realize that now is as critical a time as ever to be vigilant and active in our political system,” said Grace Savage ('18), who also attended the D.C. march. Included in the most fundamental ideas of our country are that we are all created equal and that we have a right to speak out when we are not. The Women's March grew out of feelings of inequality and those involved will fight until we have a president in office who values equality and liberties just as much as we do.

New open campus, new problems

Charlotte Kriftcher
Reporter

The start of second semester also came with the implementation of Westhill's new "limited open campus" policy, said to be a privilege for seniors who qualify. As with any new policy, the initial response to this was very controversial, with both benefits and drawbacks.

In the past, Westhill had a full open campus policy where students were able to come and go as they pleased, for the most part. The privilege started to be taken for granted and problems started to arise. Therefore, it was taken away, and the school became a completely closed campus. Now, the limited open campus policy is being reintroduced to Westhill, acting as a happy medium between the two most recent policies: the fully open and fully closed campuses.

Until recently, students and teachers were unclear on what this policy entailed. It has been clarified that seniors who have above a 2.0 GPA, under 10 unexcused absences, and do not have serious discipline infractions are allowed to obtain a "limited open campus" ID card. Students also need a parent to sign off on the contract.

The limited open campus policy allows students to come to school a period late when they have study hall first block, or to leave early when they have study hall last block. The rules of this new policy, as stated on the Westhill website, explicitly acknowledges that this open campus pass does not allow students to leave during long block, even if they have a study hall class.

The Academy of Information Technology and Engineering (AITE) already has an open campus policy granted as a senior privilege. But, unlike Westhill's limited open campus policy, AITE has implemented a full open campus policy. "The open campus allows me to come and go as I please, whether that is to go out and get lunch if I forgot it, go home during a free period to get some rest, or do some work on my own," said AITE student Max Kitay ('17). Many Westhill students believe that this policy is what should have been introduced at Westhill.

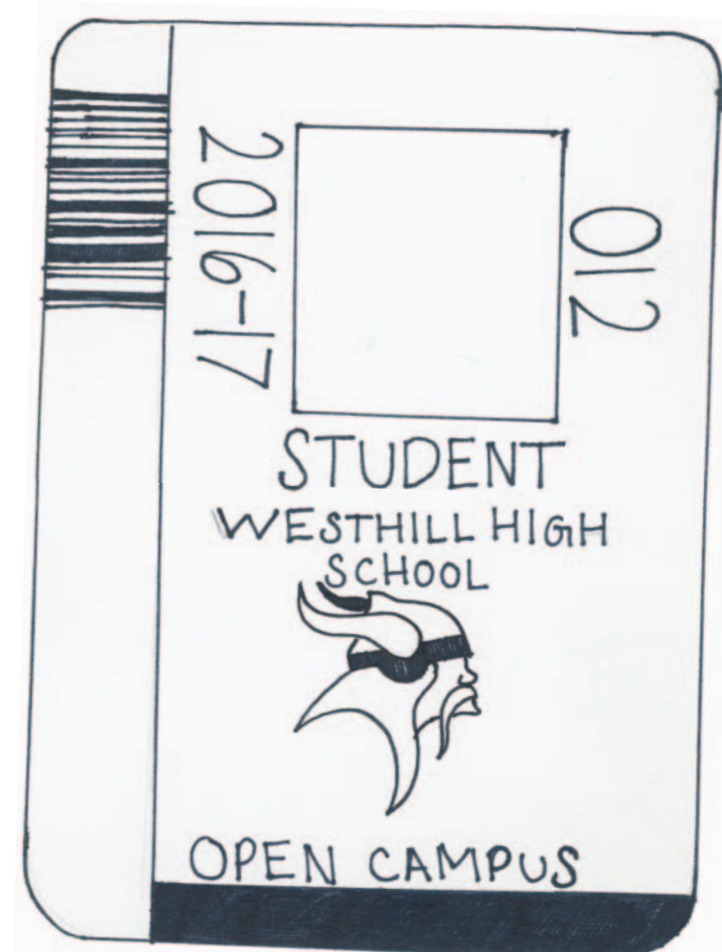
For now, Westhill's new limited open campus policy is here to stay. In the next few years, seniors potentially could be given more privileges, or have them taken away,

depending on how well this limited policy is listened to.

Students feel as they are not being granted the rights they should be. "Seniors should have the privilege to leave during long block. This new policy did not really change anything. It only [officially] documents what was already happening," said Will Hallet ('17). Many acknowledge that they can come late regardless of having this open campus pass, and that this new policy was not the change they were hoping to see. "I am not a senior, but when I have study hall first, I come in a period late regardless. The seniors do not really have much more freedom than anyone else does even with this new policy," said Christina Burgess ('18).

While there is disappointment towards the "limited" aspect of the open campus, some argue that it is a step in the right direction. "It is about time the school is giving seniors more independence and trusting them that they can make the right decisions. If they prove that they cannot make the right decisions, administration can always take the privileges away," said history teacher Mr. Petrone.

By taking the precaution of not transitioning to a complete



open campus, the administration is ensuring that students do not take advantage of the new policy. If students were allowed to leave in the middle of the day, there are no restrictions in place to enforce that the student return for their remaining periods. This could lead to a serious absence problem.

This policy is still new and all the kinks still need to be continuously worked out. As the semester goes on this year and the system continues to evolve, the concerns and benefits that this policy has as believed by teachers, students, and administration will also continue to change.

Illustration by **Alexis Marchetti** / Illustrator.

Schedule changes in the works

**Samantha Gallant
& Stefanie Ruiz**
Staff Writers

Rumors have been circulating that Westhill may be undergoing a possible schedule change. The proposed adjustment will be modeled after the schedule that the Academy of Information Technology and Engineering (AITE) follows. If this change were to take place, Stamford High School would also follow this possible new schedule.

AITE's website explains that their schedule is organized in an A/B rotation format, where each day consists of four class periods that are each 88 minutes long. This

means that there are eight classes in total that students are enrolled in, and four of the eight meets every other day.

Westhill's schedule is formatted in an A through G day rotation, where students are enrolled in seven classes total. Students attend six classes each day that are each approximately 50 minutes long, with the exception of the two hour long block that includes lunch. Westhill's schedule rotation is created so that six classes meet every day while one class is "dropped," does not meet, each day. Westhill has been following this scheduling format for four years.

Adopting this new schedule would create a drastic

change for those who have grown accustomed to the schedule that is in place at the moment. At Westhill, the opinions in regards to this change have been mixed. "I would have a love-hate feeling towards it. It would be nice to have four [classes] a day so loads of work from classes would be spaced out instead of hitting you all at once. However, the fact that we would be sitting in each class for 88 minutes is stressful, especially if it is a class you hate," said Allie Colorado ('18).

However, others are against the schedule change. "I do not think I would like [the schedule change] because I do my homework in a lot of

my other classes. Also, I like the rotation so I have a different long block every day," said Ryan Sklover ('20).

"I absolutely love our schedule because I have at least one day between classes, which allows two night [to complete] homework. It makes everything easier on my work load and also allows me a better social life," said AITE student Sophie Jacobson ('18) when asked on her opinion of the schedule that her school follows.

Ms. Figluizzi explains that she decided upon changing the schedule that Westhill follows because of how Westhill's current schedule restricts senior internship op-

portunities. Also, the schedule change was brought up during the discussion of moving towards an open campus. "[The administration] just formed an exploratory committee of volunteer teachers. I think there should be a couple of students on that committee. Mr. Rinaldi is actually in charge of that," said Figluizzi. The change will not be coming for the 2017-2018 school year, but Figluizzi says they are looking to implement it for the 2018-2019 school year.

While the feelings are varied about the schedule change, it seems as though it will be taking place sooner than later.

Letters to the Editor

Homecoming Unfairness

Dear editor,

I am a student at Westhill High School who has experienced issues with certain administrators at the homecoming dance. A collective number of students paid \$10 in advance to attend this event on November 23, 2016 with intentions of having a fun evening with their friends. However, some of those were turned away and left to stand outside in the cold. It is true that students had been informed by those running the dance that there would be an 8 p.m. cut-off time.

When stating my disposition on the cut-off time at school the following week, I was informed by an administrator the reasoning behind it. She stated that it was set in place in order to prevent students under the influence of any drugs or alcohol from gaining entry to the dance, prevent them from driving under the influence, or from fighting or causing issues was another reason. While the intentions on this cut-off time are good, the actual cut-off time is ineffective. There

are students who still got into the dance under the influence, and if they intended on fighting or causing mischief while inside, they could have easily done so. 8 p.m. does not stop anyone from getting drunk or high before a party; It just gives them incentive to do it earlier.

I, along with other students, do not agree with this ineffective cut-off time, and feel that it should no longer be a policy at Westhill events because this is a reoccurring situation every year. No student should be penalized for arriving a few minutes late. Everyone does not have the same situations. Some students may not have a car and have to depend on someone else to get them to the dance on time, therefore leaving the situation out of their control at that point. So, for any student to get dressed up, pay their money, and leave their house to support Westhill events, and to be turned away without a refund is absolutely absurd.

The way students and parents were treated at the door by Camille Figliuzzi, Carley Grant,

and Kate Tobin was completely unprofessional, distasteful, and unfair considering the fact that certain students and or alumni were allowed entry after 8 p.m. while others were turned away. They held no concern for the wellbeing of students at the door, sending them away unsure of whether they had a way to get back home or not. There was no decency to even allow them to wait in the gym until their transportation arrived.

Some students accepted the fact that they could not get in and requested a refund. Though upon that request they were spoken to disrespectfully by the aforementioned names, and refused their money back. At least two weeks went by before students received a refund. Furthermore, students had to chase these administrators down for their refund, and there are still some students who have not received one at all.

Situations such as these are what make me not want to be a part of, or support, this school's events. This has happened on too many accounts, and is unaccept-

able at this point. Hopefully a change is made.

Sincerely,
Trinity Wilson, '18

Soccer Team

Dear editor,

My name is Dylan Sparks and I play soccer here at Westhill High School. I am a second year varsity soccer player. I really liked your Q & A with my captain, Matt Dziemian.

But, I think if you would look into some of the other players on our team, into their backgrounds and where they come from, you will see the amount of diversity that just one group of kids from our school has. This is something really cool in my opinion because no other school in the FCIAC has a team like ours with our different playing styles and diversity.

The Westhill Boys Soccer Team has diversity from all over the world. We have a few kids who do not speak English as their first language because they are new to the United States, but they have still chosen to play with us. This sometimes helps us when playing against teams with no bilingual players.

However, it can also be a challenge for those of us who grew up and learned many different styles of playing and now have had to come together and integrate. There are trade-offs to our team's makeup, but our team is something special. This is because of the players on the team, and not because of how far we got or how we played, but because of the people playing alongside me.

Sincerely,
Dylan Sparks, '19

**Please submit letters to
Dong Zhi Guo's mailbox in
Room 224 or email them to
westwordwhs@gmail.com**

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Trump's immigration ban met with opposition

One student reflects on the effects of the newly issued executive order for an immigration ban. This ban affects immigrant coming into America from seven different Middle Eastern countries, and was immediately met with protests.

On January 27 President Trump issued an executive order that indefinitely blocks Syrian refugees from entering the U.S., preventing all refugee entrance for 120 days, and suspending immigrant admission for 90 days from seven Middle Eastern countries, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. As a result, students, visitors, American residents, green-card and visa holders were stopped at airports and denied entrance, and some were even deported. In response to the media which criticized the order for targeting Muslim-majority countries, President Trump has declared that this “is not a Muslim ban.”

The purpose of this order is to protect the country, especially from terrorism. The attacks of 9/11 were noted in the order, in hopes that this immigration ban will reduce the chances of more terrorism attacks occurring. However, this ban eludes reference to citizens from Saudi Arabia, in which 15 out of the 19 hijackers responsible for the September 11 attacks originated from. The Trump Organization had interest in building a hotel in Saudi Arabia, but those plans were canceled in December. Trump's foreign ties from his

business have raised conflicts of interest.

It is true that a lot of terrorists happen to be Muslims. But this order makes a public statement, and encourages the idea that all people from these countries are terrorists, which is not true. How can we live in a country that actively criticizes people based on origin? How can people live a life that feeds off of hate towards people that have done no harm to others? Nationality does not define someone. Diversity should not be fought against. While it may make no difference to many people, children and the world's future generations will have this idea that it is acceptable to discriminate based on ethnicity or nationality embedded into their developing minds. Children's minds are highly malleable, and are constantly learning how to act and think by using what they see and experience in the world as learning examples.

“The ban goes against core American values. Almost everyone in America, myself included, is here because their ancestors were allowed into the country as immigrants. To curb immigration so rashly and to enact a ban with so little vetting really is disheartening, especially

considering that many of these people banned from the country may be forced to stay in unsafe, war torn countries. There is no evidence that banning people from these seven nations will make us any safer. It is just a rash, xenophobic action that was rushed into effect, [and] a really sad, inhumane thing to do,” said Ben Freedman ('17).

Our country has made many progressive steps. However, this immigration ban feels like a step backward that undoes the effects of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, which worked to reunite families—overlooking skin color—and attracted people who could fill jobs with their skills and labor. This policy abolished the earlier immigration policy that worked against discrimination based on nation origin. However, in 2017, President Trump's executive order revises immigration policies to take nationality into account.

I respect President Trump's efforts to fight terrorism. I respect that he has stayed true to the promises he made during his campaign. But, I support the constitution that protects and values humans. The U.S. Code states that “no person shall receive any preference or priority or be discriminated



NO BAN A “No Muslim Ban” March was held on the Capitol in Washington, D.C. in response to Trump's immigration ban which targets countries with majority Muslim populations.

against in the issuance of an immigrant visa because of the person's race, sex, nationality, place of birth, or place of residence.” How do you tell American Muslim soldiers, who have fought in wars to protect America, that people from majority Islamic countries are being denied entrance into the very country that they are fighting for? That their relatives may be judged, dehumanized, and criticized for their existence? These American Muslim soldiers have been fighting terrorism for years. Yet this ban encourages society to judge people similar to them. Trump's order gives them a hateful image that they are not associated with, only put together by society because of similar origin.

No Americans have been killed by Syrian refugees in a terrorist attack in the United States, according to *The Atlantic*. “This ban is unnecessary and ultimately counterproductive in increasing America's safety. Rather, the attacks we see far too often stem from the use of firearms by American citizens, resulting in over 400,000 deaths in 2015 according to the U.S. State Department. This issue, while more prevalent and threatening to Americans, goes unaddressed because it has been made seemingly irrelevant throughout executive actions like this supposed ‘Muslim Ban,’” said Rachel Fein ('17).

According to Alex Nowrasteh, an immigration policy analyst employed at the Center for Global Liberty and Prosperity of Cato Institute in Washington D.C., “The annual chance of being murdered by somebody other than a foreign-born terrorist was 252.9 times greater than the chance of dying in a terrorist attack committed by a foreign-born terrorists.”

You do not get to choose where you are born, which culture you inherit, the religion of your family, or your family's wealth. These refugees did not choose their life. Syrian refugees did not ask to be born in the middle of a crisis. They are people just like us, but born elsewhere. Maybe in another lifetime, it could have been one of us. These refugees ask the United States for help, and that is what people should do.

In words of Holocaust survivor and novelist Elie Wiesel, “No human being is illegal.” And, in the words of civil rights activist Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.” Us Americans are so privileged to be born in a country with abundant resources and opportunity, and we can help other people by sharing this privilege.

—Courtney Xu ('17)



PROTESTING THE IMMIGRATION BAN On January 28, the day after Trump issued the executive order, people protested against the immigration ban in a sit-in at the SeaTac Airport in Seattle, WA by blocking arrival gates until 12 detainees who were held at SeaTac were released. Protests are held nationwide at other airports, such as JFK, and in the streets.

Lo positivo y negativo de trabajar durante el año escolar

Daniela Paredes

Escritora del Personal

Hoy en día, no es extraño que un adolescente mantenga un trabajo durante el año escolar, a la misma vez que maneje rigurosos cursos educativos, o incluso cursos a nivel universitario (o también conocidas como clases AP). A veces, el poder de equilibrar ambos puede ser muy difícil y demandante para algunos. Aunque hay quienes no tienen problema equilibrando el trabajo y la escuela.

Incluso esos estudiantes que no tienen problema con trabajar durante el año escolar, trabajan todos los días de la semana escolar, hay quienes no pueden con la presión y tienen que sacrificar el tiempo que le dedican a sus actividades escolares, o en ocasiones no tienen más opción que abandonar su trabajo. Sin embargo, es importante que cada alumno sepa qué decisión es mejor para

él o ella, de acuerdo a las clases y actividades que tiene, y si realmente es esencial el tener un trabajo o no.

Un censo publicado por los Estados Unidos hace algunos años, indicó que uno en cuatro adolescentes que están en la escuela secundaria o preparatoria tienen un trabajo. Esto suma un total de más de tres millones de jóvenes que tienen un trabajo ya sea de medio tiempo o de tiempo completo durante el año escolar. De acuerdo a esta información, también se calcula que sólo 1% de estos adolescentes trabajan tiempo completo.

En Westhill, una gran cantidad de estudiantes, en especial los que están en su último y penúltimo año, tienen al menos un trabajo de medio tiempo. De igual manera, la mayoría ven aspectos tanto positivos como negativos en tener un trabajo a la misma vez que estudiar. “Un aspecto positivo es el poder ahor-

rar dinero, sin embargo es difícil lidiar con la tarea después,” dice Jayanne Perkins (‘17), quien trabaja con niños pequeños algunos días a la semana durante las tardes. “En especial es difícil si tienes clases de AP, pero también es bueno obtener la experiencia laboral.” Jayanne cree que hay bastantes cosas positivas y negativas, pero hay que saber equilibrarlas a su manera.

Algunos estudiantes como Alexandra Jordan (‘17), pueden manejar un trabajo de cuatro días durante la semana escolar sin problema. “Creo que tener un trabajo es bueno y te enseña responsabilidad,” dice Alexandra, quien trabaja usualmente de las 2:30 a las 5:30 en las tardes semanales para después ir a casa hacer tareas.

“Durante el año escolar puede ser un poco más difícil dependiendo en la cantidad de tarea que tengo, pero en general no es complicado. Mis horas tampoco son

muchas,” continuo Alexandra explicando que aveces cuando tiene muchas tareas se pone un poco difícil, pero hay que saber como manejar el tiempo efectivamente.

Otros estudiantes, sin embargo, creen que el tener un trabajo dice mucho sobre la motivación de una persona, pero es importante saber si es la opción correcta. No todos pueden con la presión de la escuela y salir tarde del trabajo.

“Recientemente leí un artículo que decía que los estudiantes con trabajos después de la escuela usualmente presentan más motivación interior en otros aspectos de sus vidas, y creo que esto tiene mucho sentido porque tener un trabajo es una gran responsabilidad que le enseña a los estudiantes la importancia de saber manejar y organizar su tiempo,” dice Marley Sklover (‘17). “Sin embargo, también es importante no sobrecargarse con las responsabilidades de la

escuela, el trabajo, los amigos y la familia, y tomar tiempo para uno mismo. También creo que no existe el empleo perfecto, y que simplemente debes dar lo mejor de ti antes de poder alcanzar un puesto más alto,” continuó Marley, quien toma varias clases de AP y trabaja durante la mayor parte de la semana escolar.

No cabe duda que el tener un trabajo como adolescente tiene una interminable cantidad de aspectos buenos, e incluso malos. Pero es algo importante, y que los estudiantes deben de tomar en cuenta que siempre es necesario crear un equilibrio. Es importante dedicar tiempo y esfuerzo a ambos la escuela y el trabajo, pero tener ciertas prioridades, y saber tomar tiempo libre. Descansar y hacer espacio en actividades extracurriculares y de interés es muy importante, y seguro ayudará a aquellos que se encuentren bajo mucho estrés ya sea por el trabajo o la escuela.



STEPHANIE PATIÑO

Stephanie Patiño trabaja en el restaurante llamado Lucky's en el centro de Stamford. Ella es una anfitriona en el restaurante. Ella coje llamadas y sienta en una mesa a los clientes. Staphanie tiene que equilibrar este trabajo con los cursos de honores que tiene. Su historia es representativa de la mayoría de estudiantes hispanos en los Estados Unidos.



Fotos de Micheal Hernandez editor de Las Noticias.

DANIELA PAREDES

Daniela Paredes trabaja en la librería en el centro de Stamford. Ella trabaja dos días a la semana por cuarto horas. Daniela trabaja con niños y adolescentes que necesitan ayuda con la computadora en el departamento de Servicios de la Juventud. Ella tiene que equilibrar este trabajo con los cuatro cursos de nivel universitario que tiene.

El presidente Donald Trump trata de enforzar la deportación de los inmigrantes

Yuliana Hernández
Escritora del Personal

Las órdenes ejecutivas del Presidente Trump sobre la inmigración ilegal han suscitado un gran debate en todo el país. La decisión ejecutiva del presidente de promulgar las promesas de campaña está llegando a mayor término y enojando a una gran parte del país que considera sus órdenes tan perjudiciales para los millones de inmigrantes ilegales que residen en el país. Las órdenes ejecutivas forman parte de un plan más amplio para poner a los Estados Unidos primero y asegurar las fronteras y proteger la soberanía de todos en los Estados Unidos.

Algunas de las acciones propuestas en sus órdenes ejecutivas son iniciar inmediatamente la planificación del muro y la construcción en cuestión de meses. El presidente también planea aumentar la patrulla fronteriza y la fuerza de deportación, y finalizando la financiación a las jurisdicciones de las ciudades santuarias y poner fin al programa de refugiados hasta que se evalúe más información para examinar a los refugiados que ingresan a los Estados Unidos.

La forma en la que el presi-

dente redacta las ordenes ejecutivas nos muestra lo serio que esta tomando las acciones hacia los inmigrantes ya reflejada en su campaña, muchos inmigrantes están preocupados por el amplio lenguaje que lleva esta orden ejecutiva y lo que significa para muchos ilegales hacia su estatus en los Estados Unidos. Esto sin decir que los inmigrantes ilegales estarán en el ojo de todas las autoridades americanas incluso por el mas mínimo error que cometan, según el Presidente Donald Trump esta orden ejecutiva ya redactada explica lo siguiente:

“La orden dice que la prioridad será la eliminación de los inmigrantes deportables que “han sido condenados por cualquier delito, han sido acusados de cualquier delito penal, cuando no se ha resuelto su caso aun, han cometido actos que constituyen un delito penal imponible, han participado en el fraude o falsa interpretación intencional en relación con cualquier asunto oficial o solicitud ante una agencia gubernamental “dar falsa identificaciones en la búsqueda de empleo o falsa identificaciones hacia la ley estatal, gubernamental, o federal,” han abusado de cualquier programa

relacionado con recibir los beneficios públicos, están sujetos a una orden final de expulsión, pero que no han cumplido con su obligación legal de salir de los Estados Unidos, O en el juicio de un oficial de inmigración, de lo contrario representan un riesgo para la seguridad pública o la seguridad nacional.” Basado en la redacción de la orden ejecutiva, un delincuente podría incluir a alguien que es acusado - pero no condenado de un crimen.

Las últimas disposiciones, aparentemente, incluyen a cualquier persona. Por ejemplo, si un funcionario de inmigración siente que pone en peligro “la seguridad pública o la seguridad nacional”, incluso si esa persona no se enfrenta a cargos, dando amplia libertad a los oficiales.

Y el término “delito penal”, no está definido en la orden y podría incluir un amplio rango de cargos, incluyendo delitos presumiblemente menores.

Esta parte de la orden ejecutiva también es probable que se enfrente a los desafíos legales de las libertades civiles y los defensores de los derechos de los inmigrantes, que han argumentado desde hace mucho tiempo que el enfoque del gobierno para mane-

jar casos de inmigración viola el debido proceso de la ley.

En opiniones personales de algunos estudiantes de Westhill High School están de acuerdo con la orden ejecutiva de inmigración para las personas que tiene un record criminal sería lo correcto porque estas personas no están ayudando al país y sólo están causando daño a nuestra sociedad y a los ciudadanos americanos. Sería una injusticia para las personas que son buenas, honestas, trabajadoras, y que siempre están cumpliendo con la ley que el gobierno tente perjudicarlas. Estas personas hacen lo mejor para su comunidad y en particular para el gobierno, que recibe miles de millones de dólares ya que muchas de estas personas pagan sus impuestos anuales.

La gran ventaja que en este momento tienen los inmigrantes indocumentados es que las más de 200 ciudades santuario están en contra de las ordenes ejecutivas del presidente Donald Trump y aún estando conscientes que perderán muchos de sus fondos federales para el mantenimiento de las escuelas, las calles y los parques públicos entre otros. Tales ciudades se siguen reusando a darles información de sus habitantes

indocumentados a las autoridades federales, ya que ellos opinan que estas ciudades están velando por la seguridad de sus habitantes.

Nydia Velazquez, congresista de Nueva York, conversó con la prensa desde el aeropuerto de John F. Kennedy (JFK) donde varias personas provenientes de países afectados por la medida de prohibición ordenada por la administración se encuentran detenidas. Dejando en claro lo indignada que está hacia las ordenes ejecutivas que están “atentando contra nuestros valores” dijo después de unirse a las manifestaciones pacíficas que estuvieron presente en el aeropuerto JFK. En otras palabras Velazquez dejó en claro que el Presidente Donald Trump no está desvalorando a aquellas personas que hacen tanto por el país.

Estas acciones nos ponen a pensar hasta dónde va a llegar el Presidente Donald Trump para cumplir todas esas promesas que hizo en su campaña electoral “una América unida otra vez.” Y en mano de quién van a terminar estos inmigrantes indocumentados para finalmente poder realizar el llamado “sueño Americano.” Por lo cual todos en este país estamos acá hoy en día.

HISTORIAS DEL DÍA DE SAN VALENTÍN



“Me encontré con una chica en el lugar menos esperado: en un programa de la escuela durante el verano. Al principio pensé que ella era linda pero luego me di cuenta que ella tenía todas las cualidades que yo deseaba en una persona. No fue amor a primera vista, pero si fue amor después de muchas vistas...”—Anónimo

“Al principio estaba asustada porque los prejuicios de mis padres influenciaban mis pensamientos. Pero, a lo largo de los últimos meses me he dado cuenta que amo a esa chica... Y el hecho de que seamos dos chicas no cambia nada.”—Anónimo



Fotos Cortesía de pixabay.com

SPECIAL REPORT:

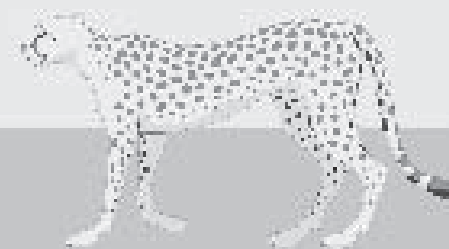
The different forms

WHAT IS ANIMAL CRUELTY?

Animal cruelty is when someone does not responsibly care for an animal or hurts an animal. The expansion of both the leather and fur industries due to the increase in the popularity of high-end brands, such as Michael Kors and Canada Goose, have led to more abuse than ever before. Along with animals suffering for the clothing industries, many are still used in laboratories for product testing, tortured in the process of dairy production, or in slaughterhouses, and are kept in conditions unfit for them to live in. More than 50 million animals are killed yearly for fashion purposes, and are placed into torturous conditions so that humans can wear animal skin and fur. Leather is not a by-product of the meat industry. Cows are thrown around, whipped, sometimes have hot chili rubbed into their eyes after collapsing due to exhaustion, and are ultimately slaughtered solely for their skins. Though many brands have identified as being “cruelty free,” there is still animal testing done in lab environments. In these laboratories, animals are kept in tight cages and put through painful procedures that sometimes cause them to experience seizures, get infected with diseases that they would never normally contract, or die in some cases. Due to the advancements in technology experiments animals have only intensified.

CLOTHING:

Clothing is essential for everyone in life, however, certain items of clothing are more harmful to animals than others. Fur, leather, and wool are the most common forms of animal cruelty that are present in the garment industry. In a world where fur vests and leather bags are trending on the runway, it is hard to remember what goes into making these fashion statements. In the process of making fur, leather, and wool, animals are electrocuted, gassed to death, skinned alive, and slaughtered. Along with the violent process that goes into creating clothing pieces, the animals are also selectively bred to create pure wool, which can lead to certain diseases. There are many alternatives to avoid animal cruelty in clothing, such as synthetic materials to make shoes or jackets, and cotton or linen. Overall, if more people took advantage of the alternatives to these clothing materials, less animals would be killed.



ZOOS:

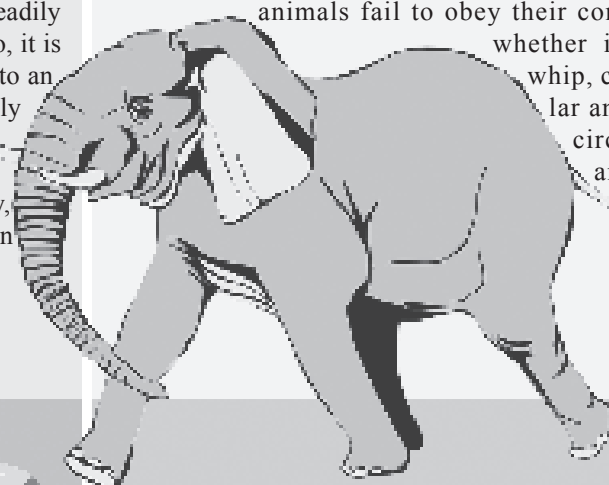
Going to the zoo has always been a common tradition for many families in America. Though it is a fun outing for the kids, many people consider zoos to be a form of animal cruelty. When seeing the animals in their display at the zoo, which mimic a real environment, people often do not realize how the artificial zoo environment can be detrimental for the wild animals. Animals are naturally meant to be outdoors, since natural resources such as fresh water, grass, trees, and open fields are readily available. By enclosing the animals in cages for people to watch them at the zoo, it is depriving the animals of being able to fully explore nature, and forcing them into an artificial environment. Though zookeepers do feed the animals and occasionally play with them, the animals are not truly living life at full capacity because they are forced to sit in an enclosed space everyday. Progressively,

this causes the animals to feel lonely, agitated, and depressed, which can lead to death for the animals.



CIRCUS:

Though going to the circus is a kid-friendly and exciting event, people are often too distracted by the entertainment to realize that the animals in circuses are treated unfairly. In reality, the animals do not voluntarily jump through hoops with fire, ride bicycles, and perform wild tricks. The trainers put the animals through harsh conditioning to have them obey tough commands. If the animals fail to obey their commands, they are usually punished whether it be through an electrical shock, whip, chains, or metal rod. The most popular animals used for entertainment at the circus are elephants, tigers, monkeys, and zebras. Forcing these animals to perform extreme tricks can be inhumane and in some extreme cases, it can even cause injury and mental illness.



ORGANIZATIONS AGAINST ANIMAL CRUELTY:

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

As the nation's largest organization for animal protection, they work on giving direct care and service to over 100,000 animals every year. They specialize in fighting major animal cruelties, such as animal fighting and puppy mills.

HUMANESOCIETY.ORG

PETSMART CHARITIES

These charities have a goal of reducing the number of homeless animals and preventing the births of unplanned litters. In order to do this, they grant \$240 million to more than 2,800 local animal welfare groups in the United States and Canada.

PETSMARTCHARITIES.ORG

CRUELTY FREE INTERNATIONAL (CFI)

CFI deals with the issues of animal testing and is the leading organization that works globally to end animal testing. For over 100 years, they have saved thousands of animals from a life of suffering in laboratories.

CRUELTYFREEINTERNATIONAL.ORG

of animal cruelty

FOOD:

Sixteen million people in the U.S. are now vegan or vegetarian, significantly more than previous years. Consumers' relatively new knowledge of the mistreatment of animals in the food industry undoubtedly plays a role in this drastic change. Most of our meat, milk, and eggs are products of industrial farms, which prioritize profit over the wellbeing of the animals. Factory farms raise 99 percent of farm animals in the U.S. for food and unlike what many people imagine, the conditions at the farms are unbearable. Livestock are crammed into filthy, windowless sheds where they do not even have space to turn around. Death by disease or infection is common, and the animals that are able to survive the dreadful trip to the slaughterhouse are killed in the foulest way. Frequently, the animals' throats are slit, and their bodies are submerged into boiling waters and hair-removal baths all while they are still alive. Terms including, "natural," "free-range," and "cage-free" create the illusion that animals are treated properly, when in reality most of the time these labels do not bear any effect

on animal welfare standards. Synthetic hormones and artificial preservatives are used to make animals grow faster and plumper, but can be detrimental to consumers.



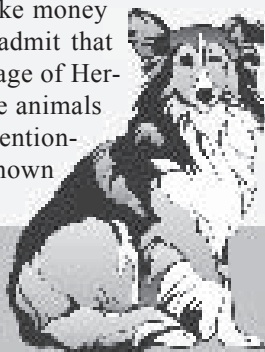
"Animals aren't like humans; they don't have the ability to tell people if they're being abused and in some cases, can't fight back. They put their trust in us to love and take care of them. If you wouldn't hurt another human being, you shouldn't even consider doing it to animal. People don't realize that animals feel most [of] the same emotions we do, and when they are put in abusive situations, it can have serious mental and emotional effects on them."

-Evie Wolpo ('19)



MOVIES:

On January 18, 2017, *TMZ* released a video clip just over a minute long, depicting a German Shepherd being man-handled and nearly drowning on the set of the upcoming film, *A Dog's Purpose*. The canine, Hercules, was playing the role of a police dog named Ellie, and needed to do a stunt scene in the water. The video clip revealed a man on set forcing anxious Hercules into a pool of churning warm water. Shortly after, the clip shows the dog struggling to swim and his head sinks under the water, sending the cast and crew into a frenzy. The abuse displayed in this video is particularly appalling, considering the film is about the love between a boy and his dog, and Universal Pictures used the movie to promote animal adoptions. Although the video was taken in November of 2015, it was not released until January 17, 2017, just a week before the movie's premiere. This questionable delay prompts theories that the video was a scam and was simply a way to make money or sabotage the film. The cast members did however admit that they made a mistake, which is undeniable with the footage of Hercules' head sinking underwater. This is not the first time animals have been harmed in the making of a film, whether intentionally or not, and viewers of the film would never have known if it were not for the leaked footage.



COSMETICS:

Although modern technology provides countless methods to assess the safety of cosmetic products, some organizations continue to test on live animals. Fervent animal support groups have campaigned against the inhumane practice, and now cosmetic testing is banned throughout the 28 countries of the European Union as well as a few other locations. However, animal testing is not banned in the U.S. Rather than using a rabbit's eye to measure how long a chemical takes to burn, scientists have the resources to conduct experiments on cornea-like 3D tissue structures produced from human cells and skin cultures. Laws require that cosmetics including skin cream, perfume, lipstick, nail polish, facial makeup, and shampoo are tested to somehow guarantee that humans are not harmed by the products. The animals being tested are mostly rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, rats and mice. Some of the most pitiless studies are skin and eye irritation tests and lethal dose tests where animals are forced to swallow large quantities to determine how much will result in death. Why do scientists continue to use this method? Familiarity and experience hinder change and progression in many outdated organizations, since animals have been used to test cosmetics in the past. Using live subjects is easier for companies because their products hit the markets sooner when their testing method is well-known and does not require investigation. Moreover, some scientists insist that completely new solutions need to be tested on live beings to ensure safety. Modern and well-informed companies have moved past these methods, but unfortunately, our furry friends are still being tortured for the products we use every day.



Briefs by **Caroline Boccuzzi, Alyssa Goldberg, & Paige Sottosanti** / Managing Editor, Reporter, & Staff Writer.

PEOPLE FOR THE ETHICAL TREATMENT OF ANIMALS (PETA)

This organization focuses on animal cruelty in the harshest areas, in the food industry, the clothing trade, the laboratories, and the entertainment industry. Along with this, PETA works against the cruelty of animals that are considered pests.

PETA.ORG

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF ANIMAL CRUELTY (ASPCA)

The ASPCA prioritizes the issues of animal cruelty and animal homelessness. It was the first humane society established in North America, and rescues over 12,000 animals per year.

ASPCA.ORG

BEST FRIENDS ANIMAL SOCIETY

This non-profit organization has a mission to get all pets adopted. In addition, they have initiatives against puppy mills and pitbull cruelty. They have an animal sanctuary that gives animals the chance to recover until they are ready to be adopted.

BESTFRIENDS.ORG

Graphics courtesy of **Sakshi Patel** / Creative Director.

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Stamford, CT 06902

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The Next Street Stamford

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Stamford, CT 06905

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The Westword Supplement

The 411 on
504s



504s Explained

Guilmar Valle
Reporter

Imagine a world where students with disabilities are not given the accommodations they need to succeed and thus fail high school. Luckily, this is not the case due to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which states that “no person shall be disqualified from participating in school, among other activities, due to their disability.” This act is where the term 504 Plan stems from.

So what exactly is a 504 plan? A 504 plan gives a child accommodations related to their disability and makes it so that they can participate in the general classroom. A 504 plan is different from an Individualized Education Pro-

gram, IEP for short, in that an IEP tracks the student’s academic progress, states the annual education goals, and states the accommodations the student will need, while a 504 only names the specific accommodations the student will need, and includes the name of the person who will be responsible for ensuring that the plan is implemented.

What are the accommodations that a student can receive under a 504 plan? Some of the many accommodations a student can receive are but not limited to; wheelchair accessibility, audio players, seat cushions, visual aids, extended time on tests and projects, and ability to see counselor without penalty, and go to the bathroom whenever necessary.

There are two kinds of

impairments that a student may have that would call for a 504, a physical one, or a mental one. Some of the physical impairments include cerebral palsy, spina bifida, diabetes, asthma, and certain allergies. Students with these impairments might receive one or more of the following permission to go to the bathroom as needed without penalty, an alternative to gym, a seat cushion to help relieve some pain, and/or an alternative to written assignments such as typing.

Mental impairments on the other hand might include but are not limited to; severe anxiety, severe depression, attention deficit disorder (ADD), dyslexia, and schizophrenia to name a few. Students with one or more of these conditions might re-

ceive accommodations such as, extended time on tests, quizzes and projects, ability to see a guidance counselor and psychologist as needed, visual aids, differently formatted assignments, and/or permission to leave class whenever necessary. With the plethora of accommodations available to a student in need, do they actually help?

The Westword recently interviewed a Westhill student, Brianna Gibson (’19) about how helpful the accommodations. “Really helpful! It is easier for me to understand what the questions are asking,” said Gibson is given a different formatted text with certain classes to better understand the questions. While some may argue that a 504 plan gives the student an unfair advan-

tage, this is not the case. “It is only fair for us to get accommodations so I pass and do not fail high school,” said Gibson. In other words, succeeding in school would be very difficult without a 504 plan, and would be unfair to the student with a disability.

Why should a student with dyslexia for example have to work twice as hard as a student without dyslexia just to understand the same material, let alone succeed in it. Students would not be able to shine as bright as they do without their 504. “My grades would drop as I would not understand what the questions are asking on tests and homework,” said Gibson. It is important that we recognize what 504s are and what they do for the better of our school community.

504 facts and figures

- The Section 504 Rehabilitation Act was established to protect people with disabilities.
- The act was one of the first U.S. federal civil rights laws that did this.
- To qualify for a 504, a student’s impairment or disability must limit one or more major life activity.
- The 504 can give accommodations to extracurricular activities in certain areas.
- The 504 will give students accommodations for most of their academic career, including higher education.
- Having a medical illness does not automatically qualify students for a 504 plan.
- As reported by 7,000 school districts out of the 13,506, 433,980 students have 504 plans.
- 52% of students with 504s have “hidden disabilities” meaning impairments that aren’t visible
- If an organization does not comply with the terms set by a 504 a complaint can be filed against them.
- There are regulations that must be met in order for an organization to truly accommodate 504s
- 504 codes prevent people with disabilities from being unfairly charged extra or refused housing.
- Section 504 is what requires buildings to have wheelchair accessibility.
- Students with 504s who are suspended for 10 days or more must have a meeting on their behalf to discuss if the behavior is related to their disability.
- All colleges, universities, etc. are required by law to recognize 504 plans.
- The Section 504 Act was passed in 1973.

Process of getting a 504

Nabilla Harahap
Reporter

The procedure for a student to obtain a section 504 plan varies depending on the school, but there is a general guideline that is followed across most school districts in the nation. It usually begins with any student with a disability who believes they need certain accommodations and services that are not provided in a normal classroom setting. Therefore, the process of obtaining a 504 requires a thorough evaluation to confirm the student's eligibility and legitimacy.

The first step is defining the student's disability. This could be made from parent, teacher, staff member, or doctor's suggestion. The parent do not need to be the first to express concern but they

should not wait for the school to take action or it will surely delay or eliminate the 504 acquisition process altogether.

A 504 request form needs to be filled out, each usually consists of sections for the parent or guardian and doctors to fill out. A description of the illness and its impact on the student is asked for, as well as the type of accommodations that are being requested. Upon this referral, the student is then further evaluated. This consists of information coming from a various sources. These may include teachers, parents and legal guardians, physicians, nurses, coaches, and other professionals within the community who can speak for the student.

The information provided varies from case to case depending on the type of medical condition it may be, as there are different cir-

cumstances for mental disabilities, such as depression or anxiety as opposed to physical disabilities.

The evaluation should also document and take into consideration other important information such as academic records, assessment data, and medical reports that are relevant to the disability that is being examine in its effect on a student's learning ability.

A 504 committee is then formed to evaluate the circumstances. This evaluation is conducted by a group consisting of people who know the child. These people either have previous knowledge or are made aware of the medical condition they are in, evaluation procedures, and other accommodation options. The parent has the full right to attend the 504 meetings and be a part of the committee,

however it is not mandatory.

The school can make a decision in their absence, and will still notify the student prior. The students have the ability to participate in 504 committee meetings. The evaluation utilizes assessment materials, tests, and other evaluation procedures that are tailored to consider the areas of educational needs. This all usually includes a review of school records, interviews with important adults surrounding the student, observations in both home and school environment, and the administration of educational and psychological conditions.

Whether one is eligible or not is determined at an evaluation meeting where the parents must attend. The result of the evaluation would be based on the material that was provided to determine an outcome,

whether or not an impairment was identified, and the disability's effects on the student's performance in school.

Afterwards, a written plan is developed. This consists of a description of the disability and any further steps to be taken to accommodate the student's learning capabilities that are deemed reasonable. Usually a 504 plan coordinator, which could be a guidance counselor or other advisor, is assigned to oversee how the plan is implemented. Section 504 plans are considered legal documents that the school is required to follow. However, in the case of the school not agreeing with the parent over the child's education, there are steps that can be taken to create a compromise between the parents and the school meeting all requests.

Facts About 504 Committees

The evaluation is conducted by people who know the child and his/her circumstances.

Parents can attend the committee meeting, but it is not mandatory.

School records are often reviewed in the process.

The committee evaluate the 504 cases

STEP 1

Define the disability

STEP 2

Request a 504 form

STEP 3

Fill out 504 form

STEP 4

Get evaluated by a 504 committee

STEP 5

Receive the results of the evaluation

STEP 6

Create a written plan to accommodate your 504 designated disability

Steps of 504 Plans

Breaking down 504 Plans

In order to be eligible for a 504 plan, a student must be a “qualified disabled person” and have an impairment, either physically or mentally, that affects their ability to learn or “limits a major life activity.” These impairments could be limitations in any aspect of a student’s life, from walking to hearing or seeing. A 504 is different than an Individualized Education Program (IEP) because an IEP qualifies a student to receive a different learning plan while a 504 changes the student’s normal learning plan to fit their individual needs. The goal of a 504 is for the student to get their education in a regular classroom with slight changes to meet their educational needs.

MENTAL

LEXIA

impairment that causes letters or numbers, making it difficult for students to read. Students with learning disabilities may need accommodations to help lessen the impact of their disability. These accommodations can include extra time on tests, district-level accommodations, or having extended time on district exams, or having a reader read aloud.



ADHD/ADD

ADHD and ADD are types of mental disabilities which affect your ability to focus. There are three types of ADHD: Inattentive, Hyperactive-Impulsive, and Combined. Depending on the severity, a student can get a 504 plan to help accommodate them. These accommodations can include the student being put closer to the teacher or farther away from windows or doors. Students may also be provided with tools to help organize work and subjects, or given more frequent, but significantly shorter, quizzes and tests.



ANXIETY

Mental illness can interfere with a student's ability to do school work or participate in extracurricular activities. Depending on the severity of their mental health condition, a student may need accommodations to give them the opportunity to complete projects, tests, quizzes, and assignments, as well as an excuse from school to go to their anxiety. Students may need a calmer place to go when they are feeling anxious.



PHYSICAL



PARALYSIS

Paralysis is the physical inability to move and sometimes affects certain limbs, typically caused by an injury. If their paralysis affects their ability to work, students can get a 504 plan to help accommodate them on projects and district exams. Students may need to be given extra time from class early or be given accommodations due to anxiety.

CONCUSSION

A concussion is a physical disability attributed with the symptoms of having trouble thinking, remembering, nausea, headaches, and much more. It is usually caused through injuries gained through sports. Students can get 504s if their concussion is causing issues with their learning. The benefits of a 504 plan include extended times on projects, tests, quizzes, and district exams, as well as excused absences.



LONG TERM

If a student sustains long-term physical or mental health issues, they can be given a 504 plan. This plan is designed to help students cope with absences, as well as accommodations for projects, tests, quizzes, and district exams. Students can also receive preferred seating and a pass for continuous visits to the nurse's office.

Accommodations in Stamford

Max Zussman
Reporter

The Stamford Public Schools System (SPS) does their best to make sure that students with a 504 plan are properly accommodated in their respective schools and are well supplied for a work or school environment. SPS has a dedicated website for customizing

plan, they can log onto IEPDirect.com through stamfordpublicschools.org, where they can manage their own accommodations for their specific 504 plan. Some accommodations include extended time on standardized tests, extended time on homework and projects and adjusted class schedules.

For different 504 plans, transportation accommodations

are also available if needed. 504 accommodation plans are available in all three Stamford public high schools, as well as most public schools throughout the country as part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination based upon disability. The goal of a 504 Accommodation Plan is to provide a student with a disability accommodations

educational programs and activities to the same extent as a student without a disability, so it is critical that these students are properly accommodated.

For Westhill students, proper accommodations are important in ensuring they are getting the best education they can get. “With my plan, I am able to have extended time on tests, quizzes, and homework if

or I am just having a bad day, it is nice to know that I have more time to finish whatever I am working on,” said one student who asked not to be identified, on the importance of her 504. Stamford Public Schools and other public schools throughout the country do their best to make sure that all students with a 504 are fully accommodated to the best of their ability.

Stamford Public Schools
888 Washington Blvd.
P.O.Box 9310
Stamford, CT 06904

SECTION 504 ACCOMMODATION PLAN 2016-2017

STUDENT INFORMATION			
Student: Jane Johnson	Date of Birth: 02/02/2000	Gender: Female	Local ID: 1020304
Address: 967 Fisher Lane	Age: 16:3	Instructional Language: English	State ID: 0987654321
Stamford, CT 06905	County: Fairfield	Interpreter Required: No	
Contacts: John & Jennifer Johnson, Parents	Home/Mobile #: H: (203) 867-5309	Work #: (203) 123-4567	Email:
School Year: 2016-2017	School: Westhill High School	Case Manager: O'Connor, Donald	Grade: 11
Plan Start: 06/01/2016	Plan End: 06/01/2017	Review Date: 06/01/2017	Reevaluation Due by:

MEETING INFORMATION	
Meeting Date: 06/01/2016	Reason: Annual Review
Participants: Seigel, Kenan Admin/Designee; John & Jennifer Johnson, Parent/Guardian; O'Connor, Donald Guidance	
Comments:	

DETERMINATION	
It has been determined that the student has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity.	
Identify the physical or mental impairment: Anxiety	
Identify the major life activity affected by this physical or mental impairment: Learning	
Describe how this impairment substantially limits a major life activity: Anxiety causes distractibility and requires accommodations in the classroom, specifically regarding assignments and testing environment.	

ACCOMMODATIONS AND SUPPORTS	
Tests/Quizzes/Assessments	Description
Extra Time-Tests/Projects/Written Work	- Extended Time: on District, State, National, and Classroom assessments. Extended time on large projects. Alternate setting for tests Allow breaks to see school counselor without penalty for time missed
Shortened Tasks	- Up to two tests per day.
Environment	Description
Frequent movement breaks	- Allow breaks to see school counselor without penalty for time missed
Flexible choice for crowded places	- Student is allowed to leave class 5 minutes early without penalty.
Instructional Strategies	Description
Support Memory and Transfer	- Chunking assignments as needed
Access to class notes	- Provide student with copy of class notes whenever necessary.
Visuals to Support Instruction	- Provide student with directions in writing.
Other	Description
Meet with Support Staff	- Check-ins bi-weekly with school counselor
Voluntary Participation	- Student will raise hand when she feels comfortable being called on.

504s in effect

Students tell their stories of how 504s have affected their learning at Westhill. From physical disabilities to mental impairments, *The Westword* talked to four students about 504s.

Alyssa Goldberg & Guilmar Valle

Reporters

At Westhill, many students with disabilities are given personalized 504 plans to give them an equal opportunity to do as well in school as any other student. With 504s, students are given different accommodations specific to their disability, such as being given extra time on tests or being given permission to leave class when necessary. *The Westword* sat down with three Westhill students to ask them about their own 504s.

***The Westword:* What is your disability?**

Amanda Friedman ('18): I have high functioning autism and general anxiety disorder.

Georgia Colegrave ('19): I am dyslexic.

Laura Carrol ('18): I have a physical 504 plan for post concussion syndrome (PCS).

Brianna Gibson ('19): I have dyslexia, and I also have a hard time learning as fast as everyone else.

***TW:* How long have you had this disability?**

AF: I was diagnosed as autistic when I was five and with anxiety when I was fourteen.

GC: I have been dyslexic since I was born, but it was only diagnosed when I was about ten.

LC: The last major concussion I had was about a year ago, and I have had PCS since.

BG: Since first grade.

***TW:* What accommodations are you offered?**

AF: I am offered time and a half on all assignments, excused absences due to anything related to my anxiety, and can leave class whenever I need to.

GC: I get extended time on tests, quizzes and projects. If I need, I get tests or quizzes orally, or have them printed in a larger print.

LC: The main accommodations I get is extended time on tests and work, [due to] the concussions. But, I also have the 504 for other things such as ADHD, test anxiety, [and] other disabilities, which gives me accommodations like modified tests or alternative testing areas.

BG: I get a little bit extra help on tests, as well as extra time on them, and with certain classes they change the test around so the wording is a little easier for me to understand.

***TW:* How do you feel it affects your learning?**

AF: My learning is more affected by my anxiety than by my autism. Basically, due to my anxiety, there are times that I am unable to focus because I am so worried about something. Sometimes this is school related and other times it is not, but both affect my learning just the same.

GC: It makes it harder for me to process what I am learning in class, especially in math and history, so I always have to work harder to make sure I understand what the teacher is saying.

LC: It has affected my learning a lot, especially in the months following the latest concussion. For at least four to six months I would get headaches constantly, and by second period I would tend to get very dizzy. My head would be in a lot of pain. It would hurt my eyes trying to read things, and using a computer was hard for a while. I could only concentrate for very short periods of time. At the beginning I could barely focus for twenty minutes straight. It still affects learning today, along with my testing as well.

BG: I do not know. I was still in first grade and I did not understand what it was until fourth grade. That is when I really started to understand what dyslexia was and what I had.



***TW:* How do these accommodations help you? Do you find them effective?**

AF: These help me feel more comfortable by lessening my anxiety, therefore allowing me to focus better in class. It is just nice knowing I can feel anxious and I will not be penalized for it.

GC: Yes, without these accommodations it would be even harder to achieve the grades I have.

LC: The accommodations help [by taking] off a lot of stress. However, this only helps to a certain extent as it depends on the teacher, certain teachers can tend to be more supportive and helpful than others on tests and work, [due to] the concussions. But, I also have the 504 for other things such as ADHD, test anxiety, [and] other disabilities, which gives me accommodations like modified tests or alternative testing areas.

BG: [They are] really helpful! It is easier for me to understand what the questions are asking.



WESTHILL STUDENTS MARCH FOR WOMEN-D.C.

Melanie & Jenny Gorski
News & Supplement Editors

On Saturday, January 21, the Gorski family was four of the 500,000 protesters gathered in Washington D.C. People of different races, religions, sexual-orientations, and genders came together to stand up for a wide array of issues including women's rights, LGBT rights, reproductive rights, immigration rights, education reform, and police brutality.

The day began at 6:30 a.m. We knew there would be traffic due to the large influx of people trying to get into the city, but we could not have imagined the crowds that formed at the Greenbelt train station just outside of Baltimore, Maryland. We were shocked to find thousands of people wearing pussyhats, which are hand knit hats with cat ears, waiting to buy train tickets that would take them into Washington D.C. The line wrapped across the parking lot and around the bend to accommodate the masses of peo-

ple. "I have been working here for 13 years, and we have never seen a crowd like this," said one Metro worker stationed outside to regulate the line.

After waiting in line for about two hours, we had gotten to know our neighbors pretty well. In front of us was a nurse from Boston who held a sign which reads, "If you believe men and women are equal, then YOU are a feminist." Behind us was a mother and daughter. The daughter recently graduated from the University of Connecticut and got a job working for the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities. She remarked that she and her co-workers are afraid of losing funds, and in turn, their jobs, as a result of the new administration. Present in the crowd was a sense of camaraderie, which stemmed from common values and the unwavering emphasis on equality.

Once we bought our Metro cards and boarded the train it took another two hours to reach D.C. The journey took a total of

four hours, whereas on a normal day it takes the average commuter under an hour to reach D.C.

While riding the escalator up from the train platform to the street, more and more pussy hats and uplifting signs came into view. The four of us attempted to work our way through the crowd to reach the rally that was being held between 3rd and 4th Street on Independence Avenue. Among those that spoke at the rally were Gloria Steinem, Michael Moore, Scarlett Johansson, and America Ferrera.

The organization which planned the march was originally expecting 200,000 people to attend, never imagining that half a million would join in. The well-planned structure of the march was easily overwhelmed by the other 300,000 people that were not accounted for. Marchers started branching off down the streets near the National Mall to start their own marches. The sheer amount of human bodies was overwhelming. If one looked to their left or right, they saw a fellow march-

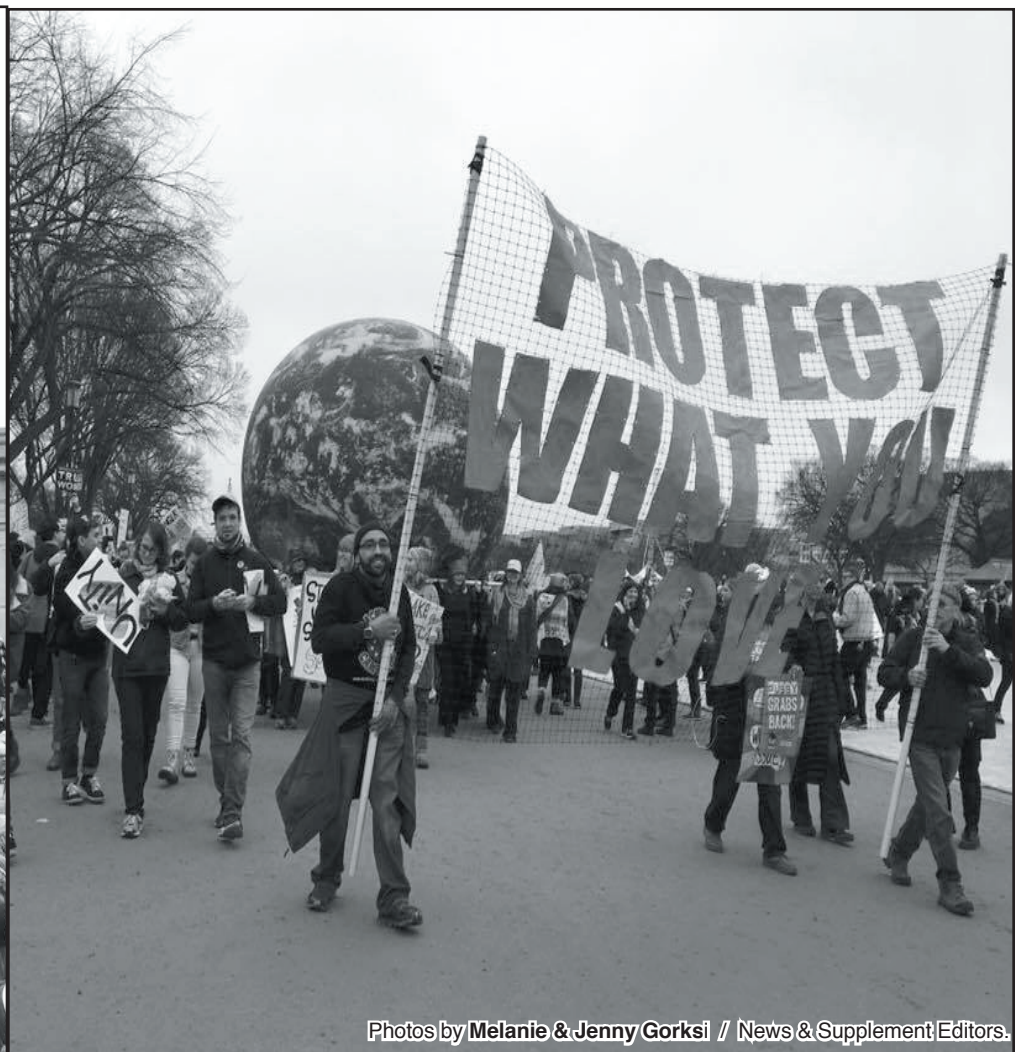
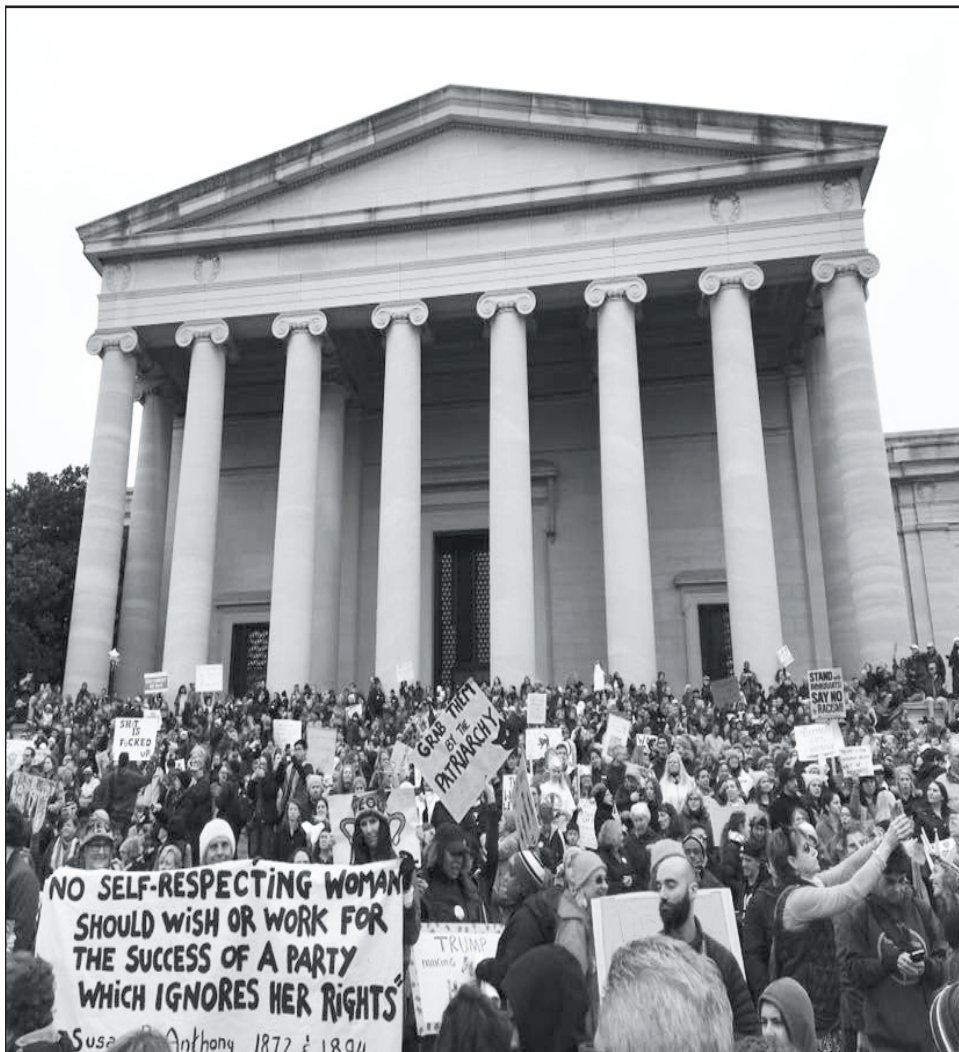
er standing beside them. If one looked up, they saw protesters dangling from trees, hanging off of pedestrian crossway signs, or sitting on top of trucks parked on the side of the road. If one looked down one saw young children holding their mothers' hands and dogs being carted in strollers; there were people everywhere, every which way one looked. As a collective group we chanted, "We will not go away, welcome to your first day" in unison as a warning to the incoming presidential administration.

Another topic which buzzed around the crowd was the proposal of a temporary ban against Muslims and a Muslim registry. In response to this issue, the crowd yelled, "Say it loud, say it clear, Muslims are welcome here." As my fellow marchers repeated the saying louder and louder, to the left, a woman wrapped in a hijab, held hands with her two young sons as a tear rolled down her face and a smile spread across her face.

On our way home from the march, we knew we had wit-

nessed a historic demonstration of love and inclusion, and we were proud to have been there in support. What we were not aware of was the expansion of this march all across the globe. When we made it back to our hotel room and turned on the news, we learned that nearly five million people all over the world marched in the same hats that we wore and repeated the same sayings we had chanted. We were informed that marches took place not only in Washington D.C. and Los Angeles, but in Alabama and Mississippi. It spread all the way to Australia, Nairobi, Mexico, France, Malawi, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Japan, and Antarctica. According to the Women's March website there were 673 marches all over the world.

Whether your political beliefs sway towards the right or the left, it is amazing how many people, of all different backgrounds and origins, were compelled to protest for human rights that day.



Photos by Melanie & Jenny Gorski / News & Supplement Editors.

WOMEN'S MARCH-NEW YORK CITY

Maeve Ronan
Managing Editor

On January 21, 2017, the streets of New York City were much more busy than usual. Women and men alike flooded the streets, pouring out of Grand Central, Penn Station, the subways, or apartment buildings if they were native New Yorkers. Pink pussyhats bobbed up and down as the crowd made its way toward Hammarckjold Plaza on 2nd Avenue.

Almost all were carrying signs with slogans that preached love, acceptance, and equality. This crowd gathered together for the peaceful Women's March on New York City in the wake of President Trump's inauguration. Although the organization who planned the Women's March on New York were only expecting 100,000 marchers to participate, over 500,000 men and women joined in the streets to stand up for what they believe in exercise their right of free speech.

The Stamford train station was crowded the morning of the March. As marchers boarded express trains to Grand Central, others were getting off to join in the

smaller but still significant Stamford rally in Mill River Park. Many carried signs with clever slogans, such as "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun-damental Rights," or "Men of Quality Do Not Fear Equality."

The 10 a.m. train was packed by the time it pulled into Stamford station, with standing room only for commuters. Passengers who were traveling to the march chatted amongst themselves, and one could pick up pieces of conversation about Trump's policies, what or who they were marching for, or getting to know others sitting next to them who were marching as well. The atmosphere was one of camaraderie and excitement.

The crowds only grew as marchers entered Grand Central Terminal. The high-arched ceilings reverberated the echoes of marchers, who were already holding their signs high above their heads to begin the protest. The marchers exited Grand Central and began walking toward Hammarckjold Plaza. However, those who arrived in the early afternoon were not even able to make it that far, as the number of marchers and the flow of those who already started the march overwhelmed the streets.



Photos by Maeve Ronan/
Managing Editor

As marchers shouted "move down 42nd," the crowd turned around and began making its way toward 5th Avenue. The marchers completely took over the sidewalks and the road; cars and buses were unable to move as people swarmed around them and those who tried to go against the tide of marchers became lost.

Walking towards 5th, the streets were vibrating with the sounds of chants such as "Hey Hey, Ho Ho, Donald Trump has got to go," "No wall, No ban," "Her body, Her choice," and "Say it loud and say it clear, immigrants are welcome here." It was empowering to see thousands of men and women of all races, genders, sexual orientation, and religions to join together in protest in perhaps one of the greatest cities in the world, not to mention Trump's hometown.

5th Avenue was grid locked by noon. So many people were entering from all sides of 5th Avenue that the march turned to a slow crawl. It took two and a half hours to get from the corner of 42nd and 5th to Trump Tower about eight blocks down.

Along the way complete

strangers were talking to one another, united in the fact that they opposed Trump's presidency and were afraid for the future of America in the wake of his promises to dismantle Obamacare, build a wall between Mexico and the United States, make birth control less accessible, and bar immigrants and refugees from entering the U.S., some of which he has already attempted to fulfill and pass through Congress.

Despite the overwhelming size, the march was peaceful and successful, patrolled by the NYPD who were happy to talk to the marchers on 5th Avenue. Participating was truly empowering for those who felt as if they had no voice during the election.

This historic march was not contained to the United States. Marches in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Canada were documented, making the Women's March the largest peaceful protest in global history. Although President Trump continues to follow through with his controversial policies, he cannot ignore the voices of over 3 million women and men who marched for what they believe in.

The Reel Review: The Space Between Us

Column by Ashley Shapiro



The Space Between Us, which premiered on February 3rd, is a new movie about a young man named Gardner Elliot, who is born on Mars to a irresponsible astronaut. At sixteen years old, he has had very little interaction with people, but through digital communication he connects with a teenager named Tulsa.

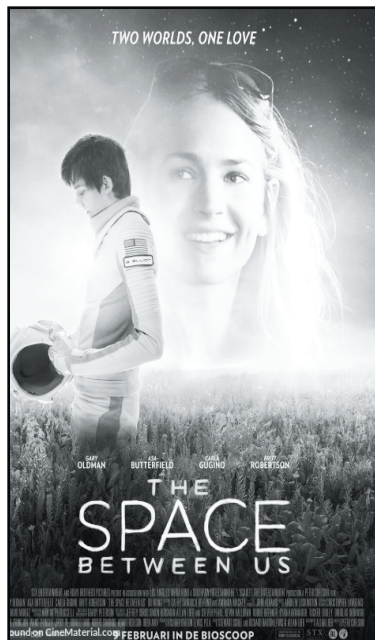
Gardner's dream is to visit Earth one day and meet Tulsa in person but his body is not accustomed to handle earth's gravitational pull. He convinces the astronauts to allow him to visit Earth and refuses to stay in quarantine. The movie then follows his foster mother's race against time to save Gardner.

The plot of the movie was interesting and in theory a good idea but poorly executed. Asa Butterfield played Gardner Elliot, looks significantly younger than

his love interest, Tulsa, played by Britt Robertson. Although Gardner is supposed to be socially inexperienced, Tulsa seems physically older. During many romantic scenes, the fact that the actors have an eight year age gap made it uncomfortable to watch.

Although Asa Butterfield was wildly successful in the film *Hugo*, which was awarded with several nominations for Golden Globes and Academy Awards this film did not maximize his acting abilities. Tulsa is played by Britt Robertson, who has been a nominee for a Young Artist Award and has appeared as a guest on many television shows. In *The Space Between Us*, her character Tulsa is one dimensional and predictable. This is not the fault of the actress but of the movie and writing.

The film follows a classic but overused plot of forbidden love and rebellion. The twist is that it



takes place on two different planets. The characters are classic in an annoying and fake way that makes it hard for the audience to connect with them. Gardner is a stereotypical awkward teenager

while Tulsa follows the stigma of a hardened foster kid.

As the movie follows the couple's journey, it illustrates irresponsible behavior and shows the adults in the movie acting as bad role models and making poor decisions. The movie came out a little more than a month after another space romance movie, *Passengers*. Having the two space romance movies premiere around the same time did not help how this movie was received overall by the audience.

Throughout the movie, the audience was bombarded with new and often absurd technology. In nearly every scene, the plot introduces another "problem solving" device. This leads the audience to believe that this movie must take place in the distant future.

Even so, the constant introduction to new technology is confusing and distracting from

the story line. Futuristic movies can be very entertaining, but only if the special effects and props are well done. This movie lacked good backgrounds and scenery, which are essential when filming an outer space scene.

The Space Between Us, while cheesy has a interesting plot while execution clearly lacked finesse. Every important plot point felt forced and spoon-fed to the audience. The traits and motives of characters were spelled out in a predictable way. Characters seemed to make statements as if audience couldn't pick up obvious things on their own.

Rotten Tomatoes, a respected source for movie ratings, gave it a 17 percent rating which matches the quality and entertainment value of the film. Save your money and treat yourself to an extra large popcorn minus the film.

WOMEN'S MARCH-STAMFORD

Noah Klein
Ombudsman

"Justice takes work" was one of the many quotes to take away from the Women's March in downtown Stamford. On Saturday, January 21, an estimated 5,000 people took a stand for women's rights and equality for all people. The march came a day after President Trump's inauguration and was largely based on the rights and equality of women. Several Westhill community members were in attendance, including parents, teachers, administrators, and many students. Lily Gubernick ('19) stood watching speakers preach their message of equality with her family as she discussed how great it is that everyone has come together. "I think it is really great that everyone has come together to stand up for what they believe in," said Gubernick.

The march was filled with people of many different age groups from small children in carriages to the elderly. Many looked to set an example for their children and try to make the world a better place for them. "I want my daughter to grow up in a world that is fair for everyone," said Allison

Terry, parent of a Westhill student as she watched Washington Boulevard, one of the most used streets in Stamford get closed off.

The march was originally scheduled to start at the UConn Stamford campus, with a projected 800 participants, it was moved to Mill River Park as the attendance grew. Mrs. Manning was one of the many in attendance marching for LGBTQ rights, when asked how she thought Westhill dealt with the result of the election, she brought up the point that the school community did not have a real conversation, and that no announcements or statements were made by the school as a whole.

Dr. O'Brien brought up the idea that the march is great, but also described how it was sad that it had come to this point. O'Brien brought up the point that President Trump's inauguration, to some people, is two steps backward in a country that has progressed so far. It is difficult to bear that it has come to 5,000 people protesting and reminding the president of equality and rights for everyone.

Mrs. Khetan and her family walked with Manning and O'Brien. "It is empowering that everyone is here marching... it is

incredible," said Khetan.

The march was a melting pot filled with different cultures, genders, ages, races, and religions. Aisha Memon, a 13 year old student from Norwalk had one of the most touching stories from the march as she described why she was on stage, and her experience. "What scares me the most is that kids in my school think it is OK to say things because they have heard the president say them on TV," said Memon. "When President Trump disrespects women, it gives permission for boys in my class to disrespect me and my friends. When Trump says he wants to ban Muslim immigrants, it gives permission for kids to call me a terrorist."

Although, this day came after Trump's inauguration, many were not there to protest the inauguration, but to stand up for rights. "[I am] not protesting Trump, but protecting women's rights," said Nicole Somerstein ('17). Bailee Esposito ('19), Melanie Montalvo ('19), and their friends all walked together for women's rights, and equality.

Overall, the march was an incredible success, and the Wes-

thill community did an amazing job coming out to support the cause they believe in. The protesters and anyone who feels

the need to support this cause, is encouraged to contact their district representative to discuss their views.



Photo courtesy of **Maddy Cohen** / Print Executive Editor.

72 Hours: Pajama day everyday

Column by Courtney Xu



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

This month I spent 72 hours in my pajamas and without makeup. Usually, I prepare attractive outfits and put on a full face makeup to school. However, for 72 hours I will be doing the complete opposite.

I rolled out of bed, threw on a few extra layers, washed my face, brushed my teeth, then headed out for school.

On the first day I wore a groutfit and moccasins. Following that day I wore a quarterzip sweater and birkenstocks. And finally, on my third day I wore a sweatshirt, cardigan, flannel, leggings, and moccasins.

Simply put, I felt free, comfortable, relaxed, and was not as tired during the day, because I was able to sleep in for the amount of time I would have spent putting outfits together or putting on makeup. Because my mind was already used to waking up earlier, it forced me to wake up a little after 6 a.m. Although 20 extra minutes does not seem like a lot, being able to fall back asleep and rest was a great start to the morning. It put me in a much better mood for the rest of the day.

It is amazing how much sleep can affect your day. I did not realize it, but without that extra boost I realized how cranky and negative I was. I was never in the mood to be around people, and all I thought about was going home

and sleeping. Having a little extra sleep made me much more positive, energetic, and less horrible to be around. Being in a better mood also helped me get through a long day of school, homework, and other responsibilities.

At first, I was self-conscious. I felt that people would look at me differently, or not even recognize me. But these things never matter as much as we tend to think they do. No one cared that I was wearing pajamas or came to school bare-faced. Other people's opinions do not matter because as long as you feel comfortable in yourself, it should not matter what anybody else believes.

My wardrobe was also limited. Not wanting to wear a bra eliminated any tank tops or fitted clothing possibilities,

especially with the weather getting increasingly colder.

Despite any problems I originally had, it only got better. It was easier to focus during the day without worrying about my makeup wearing off in my eyes or smudging across my face. I could rub my eyes or scratch my face without worry, which was such a nice relief in such a stressful and tense environment where I had to have long spans of intense mental activities.

Not wearing a bra throughout the day also relieved the feeling of having an underwire poking at my chest every minute, which in addition to my sweatshirts and sweatpants, made me feel less constricted by tight clothing and put me in that "at-home" mood. I was always comfortable enough to

fall asleep.

By the end of the 72 hours, I was very content with how I spent the time. It is comforting to know that any day if I needed to face the day and the world looking or feeling my worst, it would be okay, and never as bad as I think it will be.

For all you people who already do this on a daily basis, which makes up a rather large portion of our school population already, it is great that you have enough confidence to not care what other people think. For anyone like me, I recommend you try bracing the world in your natural state. Thoughts we think other people have about us are never as bad as we think they are, and do not matter nearly as much.

STUDENT MUSICAL ARTISTS AT WESTHILL

ANDY PUTTERMAN

Alana Silva
Staff Writer

Westhill is home to many talented students. In our school we have many musicians, artists and dancers. In this article, we talk to Andrew Putterman and Shayla Hernandez about their talents, their future and their music

The Westword: Who inspired you to start making music for the public?

Andy Putterman: No one in particular inspired me to start making my own music. Rather, I wanted to challenge myself and take my passion for singing to the next level by writing and creating my own songs.

TW: When did you realize making music was something you wanted to do?

AP: I have been singing my entire life, but it was not until a few

years ago that I decided I wanted to make original music.

TW: What type of music do you like to sing and why?

AP: I love to sing all types of music, but I particularly enjoy singing Rhythm & Blues (R&B)/Soul and country music because these genres contain an abundance of soul and originality.

TW: What artists or celebrities would you like to be compared to?

AP: I would not want to be compared to any other artist because I think every artist is unique in their own way. However, I definitely admire and consistently listen to Justin Timberlake, Maroon 5, and Jason Aldean.

TW: Are your academics affected when making and releasing music?

AP: As long as you properly manage your time and prioritize your responsibilities, then I think you can successfully balance academics and a passion or hobby.

TW: Where do you see your work taking you?

AP: I do not see, nor did I ever intend, my work taking me somewhere in the music industry. I created my own music because I wanted to share my passion with family, friends, and the world.

TW: Do you enjoy collaboration work or would you prefer to release music of only your own?

AP: I definitely enjoy collaborative work, whether it is singing with a friend, a choir, or performing at a talent show with my friend Tyler Lasicki.

TW: What are your plans for after graduation?

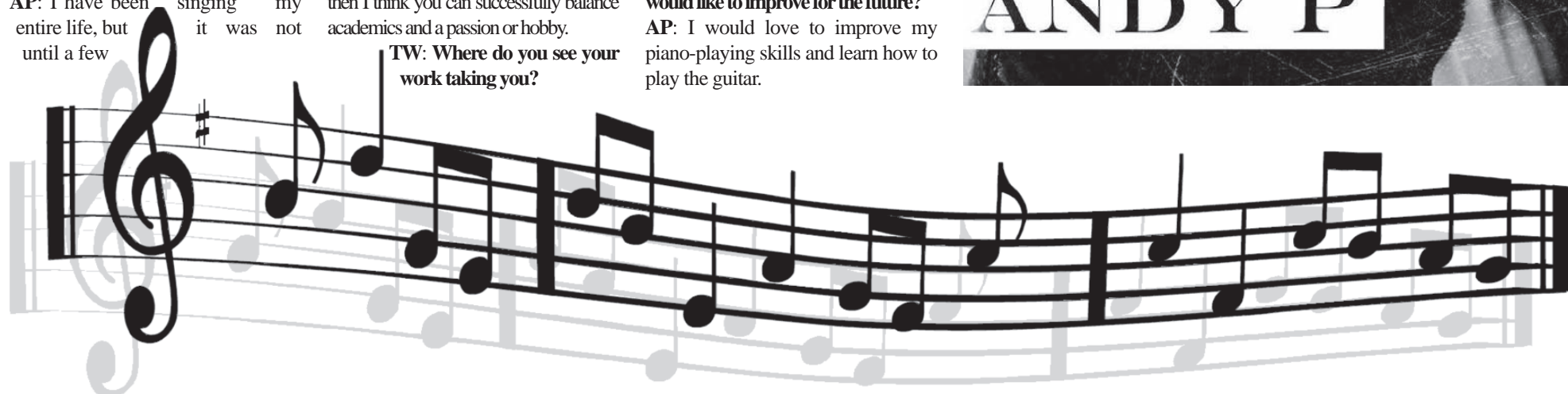
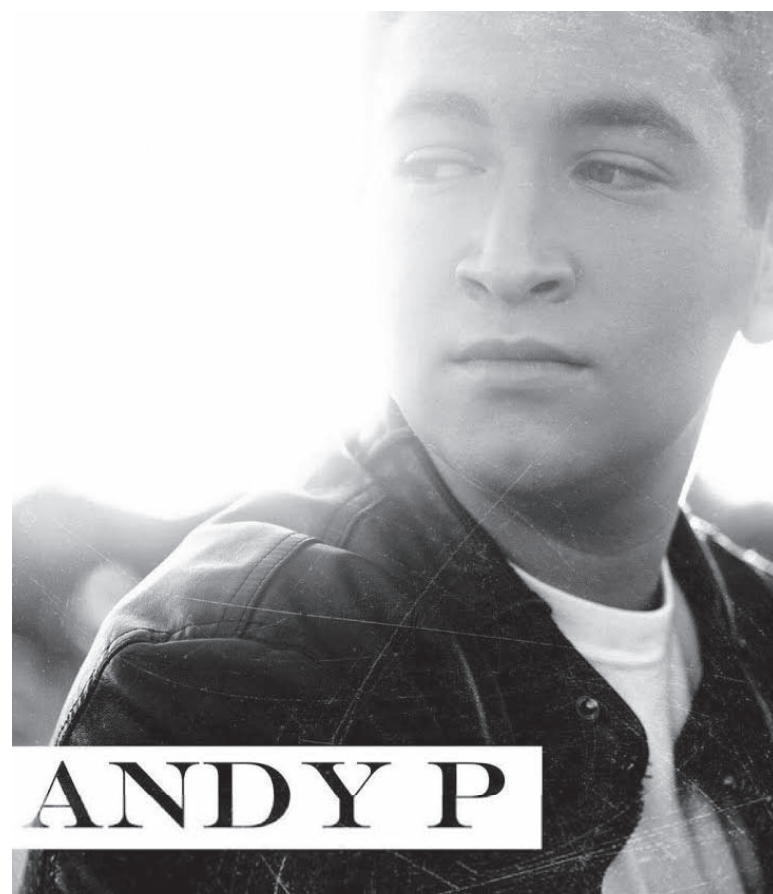
AP: After high school, I plan to go to college and study political science. However, I will definitely join an a capella group in college and continue to sing and perform as much as I can after college.

TW: Do you share real life experiences and lessons in your music?

AP: As I say to everyone who asks me this question, "It is classified."

TW: Are there any weaknesses you would like to improve for the future?

AP: I would love to improve my piano-playing skills and learn how to play the guitar.



The Westword: Who inspired you to start making music for the public?

Shayla Hernandez: It was something I have wanted to do for a while. I have had this image of me putting out music since I was 12 [years old]. I have always looked up to artists such as Mariah Carey, Celine Dion, Ne-Yo, and Alicia Keys. I enjoyed their craft so much that I wanted to create my own.

TW: When did you realize making music was something you wanted to do?

SH: I always wrote songs but I never thought they were any good to be honest. Then again, I have been told that as a creator you will never be fully satisfied with your work. I guess I realized when I was around 13 or 14 [years old] that I actually wanted to release my own stuff. This was around the time I co-wrote a song with a producer I met in New York and really liked it.

TW: What type of music do you like to sing and why?

SH: I love all kinds of music. I adore anything from Spanish music, Rap, Jazz, Country, and Pop; you name it. I lean

SHAYLA HERNANDEZ

more towards R&B/Soul just because I grew up listening to it and it is my favorite.

TW: What other artists or celebrities would you like to be compared to?

SH: I think it would be cool to be compared to Selena Quintanilla. She had a father who was her manager, she struggled with speaking Spanish in the beginning of her career, and she was proud to be a Mexican American.

TW: Do academics get affected while making and releasing music?

SH: Sometimes. When I am in the mood to write, nothing can really stop me. I get in the zone or something. But, I try to not let it affect my grades too much.

TW: Where do you see your work taking you?

SH: [I am] not really sure where my work will take me. I guess that is the exciting part. I do want to write songs not just for myself but for other artists as well. Also, I am interested in possibly working at a record label. The possibilities are endless!

TW: Do you enjoy collaboration work or would you prefer to release music of only your own?

SH: For now I am going to release my own stuff for a bit just to work on perfecting my work. But, in the future I am down to collaborate.

TW: What are your plans for after graduating?

SH: I want to go to music school to major in music business and minor in song writing.

TW: Do you share real life experiences and lessons in your music?

SH: All the time. It is the only way I can write. I feel like it makes the music more real if I write about past experiences.

TW: Are there any weaknesses you would like to improve for the future?

SH: I want to improve my writing and build more confidence when I perform. Also, I would like to experiment with different kinds of genres of music on my own so I can create something different.

PARODY VIDEOS GONE VIRAL

Batman Begins

The two-minute skit released in 2014 featured an ensemble cast that included Chris Hemsworth, Meryl Streep, Tom Hanks, and Liam Hemsworth. It was part of a series of clips that were intended to spoof and adapt ‘popular YouTube videos into big-budget Hollywood movies by *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* The movie trailer parodied *Batman Begins* and claimed it was directed by Christopher Nolan himself, who directed the most recent *Batman* trilogy featuring Christian Bale. The video spoofed the viral successes of the “Charlie Bit My Finger” videos. “I thought it was corny. I could not even finish watching the video,” said Danielle Grant (’17). The original “Charlie Bit My Finger” video went viral back in 2008 and proved to be one of the first internet video clips to achieve worldwide fame. Today the clip, which lasts a mere 56 seconds, has a whopping 846.1 million views and is considered the number one video on YouTube within the non-commercial and non-music video categories. As for its counterpart, A-list celeb parody, perhaps not the same can be said. Although originally released as part of Jimmy Kimmel’s late night television show, which is popularly known for its film parodies starring big name celebrities, the video has a sheer two million views, nothing comparable to the likes of its original source material.



The Fault in Our Stars 2: The Ebola in Our Everything

**SATURDAY
NIGHT
LIVE**

SNL has been mastering the parody game ever since its epic arrival to the NBC network in 1975, 42 years ago. It has been an outlet for satirizing everything ranging from current news events to parodying through their infamous skits countless films, movies, songs, and television shows symbolic of American popular culture. Most recently they have been satirizing President Donald Trump, having begun to do so very early into the election with the help of Alec Baldwin, the show’s most recurring host of all-time. In 2014, shortly after the release of the box office teen hit *The Fault in Our Stars*, *SNL* took it into their own hands to spoof not only the film itself, but the issue of Ebola that was rattling the nation and the world as the first cases of the virus began to arouse fear of a worldwide pandemic. The skit starred Sarah Silverman and Taran Killam as the star-crossed teens. However, reviews of the clip were mixed. Students at Westhill who have seen the video felt ambivalent about it as well. “I thought the video was entertaining but very poorly directed. It was really dumb and had no meaning,” said Cameron Morson (’19), who found it amusing at first, but felt it “dragged on” too much. Nevertheless, knowing *SNL* and the nature of their skits, the video’s campy humor a sive and over-the-top scenes were tailored to purposefully meet their excessive humoristic standards.

The Notebook 2

For a skit on his show this past November, Conan O’Brien did an unconventional parody and pseudo-sequel to *The Notebook*, titled *The Notebook 2*. It starred comedy king Ryan Reynolds as Noah Calhoun, and Conan himself as Noah’s perpetual love Allie Hamilton. In one of the most celebrated romantic film scenes of all-time, Conan and Ryan reenacted the passionate ‘kiss in the rain’ between the two long-lost lovers after a much anticipated reunion that finally occurred years after their last encounter. Before airing the clip, Reynolds comically deemed the clip to be in promotion of his ‘new’ movie, in which he starred alongside ‘Conan McAdams.’ The video finalizes with a surprise, unforeseen, and impressively long and passionate exchange of rain-soaked kisses between the two, which caused the video to go viral and receive considerable media coverage. “It was strangely funny. I really was not expecting that kiss at the end though,” said Asli Foster (’17). Before shooting the skit, Reynolds and O’Brien joked around and watched the original scene as they prepared themselves for an interesting encounter. The reenactment was successfully created by pouring hose water over the two men, and placing them in what appeared to be a bushy area behind the celebrity dressing rooms situated outside of where O’Brien’s late night show is filmed.

CONAN

50 Shades of Blue

**FUNNY
&
DIE**

A few years before the blockbuster release of the cinematic adaptation of *Fifty Shades of Grey*, *Funny or Die* released an a version of their own in what they pictured would be the most idyllic and funniest scenario for the best-selling novel series. The parody starred Selena Gomez as a young, naive, and overzealous girl who falls in love instantly when she meets her contracted painter, ‘Carl Blue,’ played by comedian and actor Nick Kroll. Carl Blue is not much more than the average joe, and has nothing much to offer, nor is he aware of the girl’s growing feelings for him. The narration is romantic and melodramatic spoofing the book and what seemed to be for many an accurate and hilariously exaggerated depiction of the relationship between characters Anastasia Steele and Christian Grey. For the clip, actor Nick Kroll was put through a series of unpleasing scenarios as Selena Gomez enchantedly watched, both of which were meant to heighten the comedic effect of the scenes. “I liked it. It was actually funny. I think the girl must have been legally blind. She thought he was so attractive! They really made it even funnier,” said Djesnie Glaude (’18). The skit, done in the style of *Saturday Night Live*, remains a favorite among *Funny or Die*, Selena Gomez, and even *Fifty Shades of Grey* fans to this day.

Go to thewestwordonline.com to see the videos.

Binge worthy shows on Netflix

HOUSE of CARDS

House of Cards is one of the first Netflix Original Series to go viral, after *Orange Is the New Black*. This show is one of many to take on an undercover look at a common topic, the United States government. Kevin Spacey stars as Frank Underwood. Bill Clinton even said, “the D.C. drama is a lot closer to fact than fiction.” *House of Cards* gives viewers a different insight into politics. There is a darker side that the average person does not get to see. Kevin Spacey kills his role as Frank Underwood, and provides a glimpse into the pressure and corruption within government. “The only complaint I have is that at some parts it can get slow. It is one of those shows that borderline between entertainment and education. A definite must watch for Political Science majors. I would say *House of Cards* is a 7/10 overall show,” said Tyler Lasicki (’17).

STRANGER THINGS

Stranger Things is one of Netflix’s more recent releases. This show differs from their past shows, as most are fiction that are or could be based on true events. This science fiction thriller consists of all the alluring factors that Netflix’s other shows had, such as a thematic music score and clean cinematography. A group of young boys, in addition to a sheriff, work together to find their missing friend, Will. Will has been taken by a monster, illustrated with amazing animation, into an alternate world that mirrors their own. This show has been a favorite of many students. “*Stranger Things* is a great show. The writing is fantastic, and the casting could not have been executed any better. *Stranger Things* did an amazing job of capturing the essence of the 80s. They turned a simple storyline into a soon-to-be science fiction classic. Solid 8/10 from me,” said Nicholas Smeriglio (’17).

NARCOS

Narcos is a historical account of the life of Pablo Escobar, Colombia’s most famous drug dealer. Between the hypnotic theme song, foreign language, and beautiful setting in Colombia, viewers became instantly entranced with this show from its release. Students and teachers have been buzzing since the very beginning. “*Narcos* is one of the more expensive productions by Netflix. It gives you the point of view of both sides: Pablo Escobar, and the DEA officer. I feel like you are so immersed in the psyche of Pablo. It is one of those shows where you almost feel bad for the ‘villain’ once he is killed, because he is such a powerful character who you see a more tender side to. For the first time you see Pablo as a man with feelings, aspirations, anger, and a heart. I would rate this show a 10/10,” said Ian Ostheimer (’17).

ORANGE is the new BLACK

Orange Is The New Black (OITNB) is a classic, being a successful first release for Netflix’s Original Series. Taking place in a women’s prison, an abundance of strong female characters create scenes of conflict and comedy. This show examines women in prisons, displaying a less criminal side to women who have been imprisoned. Netflix has a common theme to analyze the lives of people who are frowned upon in society, from drug dealers to white collar criminals, and shed light on the fact that they are still human. That is also what makes the shows so appealing as well as interesting. “*OITNB* is one of those shows that provide educational information while being pretty interesting at the same time,” said Alyssa Goldberg (’17).

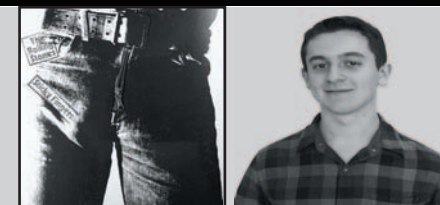
Briefs by Janet Manina / Supplement Editor.
Photos courtesy [wikicommons.com](https://commons.wikimedia.org/), [Flickr & pt.ign.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/ptign/).

Record review of the month



Sticky Fingers by The Rolling Stones

by Zach Radin



Sticky Fingers is the 11th studio album released by the Rolling Stones and walks on the edge of where the optimism of the sixties was met with the nihilism of the seventies. It is also the first album to be released by their own record label, Rolling Stones Records.

Sticky Fingers is also noteworthy for containing the first appearance of the famous tongue and lips logo, the first full length album to feature guitarist Mick Taylor, the first album released after member Bryan Jones’ death, and the first album after the band’s show in Altamont, California where a fan was stabbed to death in front of the stage. This act marked the end of the love and peace era.

The content of the cover, designed by Andy Warhol, juxtaposes

the content of the music. Lyrically, *Sticky Fingers* turns away from male dominance and leans more to show different sides of human vulnerability. The original vinyl release featured a real working zipper that inadvertently caused damage to the record itself.

Sticky Fingers was recorded over the course of two years and includes fan favorites as well as some of their most recognizable songs like “Brown Sugar” and “Wild Horses.” Guitarist Keith Richards was absent during many recording sessions, which left lead singer Mick Jagger and lead guitarist Mick Taylor to thrive in collaboration in songs like “Sway” and “Moonlight Mile.”

The album went triple platinum, selling three million copies,

almost immediately upon release.

Keith Richards open G tuned rhythm guitar rips through several tracks on *Sticky Fingers*, but no more than its lead single, “Brown Sugar,” arguably the most morally vacant song to ever top the Billboard Charts.

After possibly the most underappreciated Rolling Stones song ever, “Sway,” *Sticky Fingers* moves into “Wild Horses,” a fan favorite and maybe their best ballad. It features electric, acoustic and 12-string acoustic guitar and reached Number 28 on the Billboard chart as the second single from the album.

A highlight from *Sticky Fingers* is the Latin inspired jam at the end of “Can’t You Hear Me Knocking?” Intended to fade out after

Jagger ran out of lyrics, the band decided to keep playing which means the jam was all improvised.

Sticky Fingers was where the band started using horns more seriously, especially on songs like “Bitch” and “I Got the Blues,” the former of which manages to reference Ivan Pavlov’s dog experiment and pull it off, with the line. “When you call my name I salivate like a Pavlov dog.”

After passing through the heartbreaking “I Got the Blues” and the haunting “Sister Morphine,” Jagger does his best tongue-in-cheek country impression in the very revealing “Dead Flowers.”

Sticky Fingers wraps up with “Moonlight Mile,” a song written in an all night session between

Jagger and Taylor. Lyrically, the song is a glimpse into the weariness and loneliness of Jagger’s life, trying to keep up appearances as a sex, drugs, and rock and roll star.

Ultimately, *Sticky Fingers* moves through several genres and influences while having its own grit, giving the album a distinct sound. *Sticky Fingers* shows why the Rolling Stones are cemented as one of the all time great bands and very deserving of the title “Greatest Rock Band in the World” in 1971.

If you like *Sticky Fingers*, you might also enjoy their other albums from that period such as the Stones’ *Beggars Banquet*, *Let it Bleed*, *Exile on Main St.*, and *Goats Head Soup*.

SCATTERBRAIN

FROM RUNWAY TO HALLWAY:

HAYLEY SMITH

31

I would describe my style as girly, unique, and edgy. I find that most days my clothes have some sort of girly aspect, but I like to add something edgy to it, like a jacket or jewelry. I prefer to dress in clothes I like and not worry about what others think, as opposed to attempting to look like everyone else. I find that my closet is a compilation of clothes from many different stores. A few of my favorites are Tobi, Pacsun, and Brandy Melville. I like Brandy because you can buy a lot of your basics there. Tobi is my favorite online store, because it has a lot of great deals, and their clothing is very unique. I also like Pacsun, as it has many great finds. I find that my closet is a compilation of clothes from many different stores. On school days, my go-to outfit is fairly simple, such as a pair of jeans, a nice top, and a cute pair of boots. It is hard to put together a really nice outfit when you have to wake up so early for school, but simple outfits like that can easily be played up with jewelry. I do not really get my style inspiration from anyone in particular, I [just] buy what catches my eye. Sometimes I will get my inspiration from other girls around school or in public, but mostly my style is based upon my individual interests. My favorite accessory would have to be shoes, because they completely make or break an outfit. Any plain outfit can instantly become much better once you add a nice pair of shoes. As Marilyn Monroe once said, "Give a girl the right shoes and she can conquer the world."



Photos by Emily Savitt /Photo Manager.



The Hungry Vikings

Column by Naresh Kumanduri, Jake Dardis, & Ryan Hart

Price: ★★★★★
Service: ★★★★★
Food: ★★★★★

Our three Vikings arrived in Harbor Point in the midst of one of the windiest days 2017 had brought so far, yet remained determined to reach their destination: the new eatery Boothbay Lobster Company. As the sky continued to open up, dumping rain upon them, they entered the comfortable restaurant and settled in for the much awaited meal.

Our first Viking arrived to the eatery under dire circumstances, having been crippled in a recent battle for the Vikings of Westhill. Upon crutching his way in, he relaxed into a comfortable table with his two other Norsemen, and immediately began scouring the menu, with his eyes being drawn to the lobster roll right away, a

speciality at this establishment. Of the three Vikings, this one was the only one who could handle any sort of heat, so he decided to order the spicy lobster roll with an accompaniment of the classic french fries. Our Viking's stomach growled in anticipation as the roll was being made, with the conversation recounting the last month keeping the Viking going until the food came out.

Upon arrival, our Viking was excited to see a hot dog bun packed to the brim with glorious lobster, and an extra generous serving of fries. He immediately tore into it, leaving no scraps behind. The roll had a nice kick to it, which complimented the great flavor of the fresh lobster. This left the Viking absolutely

satisfied with the wonderful meal he just consumed. After throwing in the white flag of peace, his napkin, our Viking was left thinking that this was definitely a place he would want to come back to.

The second Viking walked into the restaurant intent on feasting on warm lobster coated with butter and that is exactly what he got. He ordered the Maine Lobster Roll which was pure lobster with warm butter and a side of the specialty tater tots, and it came in good time and tasted like the lobster the Viking enjoyed catching back in Scandinavia with his friends. He thanked the waiter for catching him such a tasty shellfish and walked out fully satisfied, recommending it to any other Vi-

king in Stamford with a craving for a good lobster roll.

Our third Viking's mouth watered as he entered, remembering the last time he came across a truly delicious lobster roll along the stormy seashore of Maine, when he first arrived on the New Land. The boats, barrels, and buoys scattered across the room had the Viking reminisce over his past working on ports and vessels. He could not wait any longer to order. Of course, he had to go with the classic roll, but his hunger would not settle for just that, so he ordered macaroni and cheese on the side. When it came, the Viking was more than delighted at the colossus of lobster meat packed into a warm roll. Unlike most that he has gotten in the area,

this roll actually had enough fresh meat to satisfy this Norseman's seafood craving. As a side, the Mac and cheese served its purpose well, delivering a tasty and cheesy compliment to the meal with generous proportion. The third Viking was sure he would return to Boothbay anytime he craved lobster.

After the wonderful meal, our three Vikings stepped back into the whipping wind and brisk January air that lay outside of the doors, and made their way back slowly to the cars. At this point, our crippled Viking had his neck snapped upon realizing that he left his keys in the restaurant, but his fellow Norsemen had his back and retrieved them, showing what it means to be the Hungry Vikings.

You burn more calories sleeping than you do watching television. You cannot snore and dream at the same time. Cherophobia is the fear of fun.

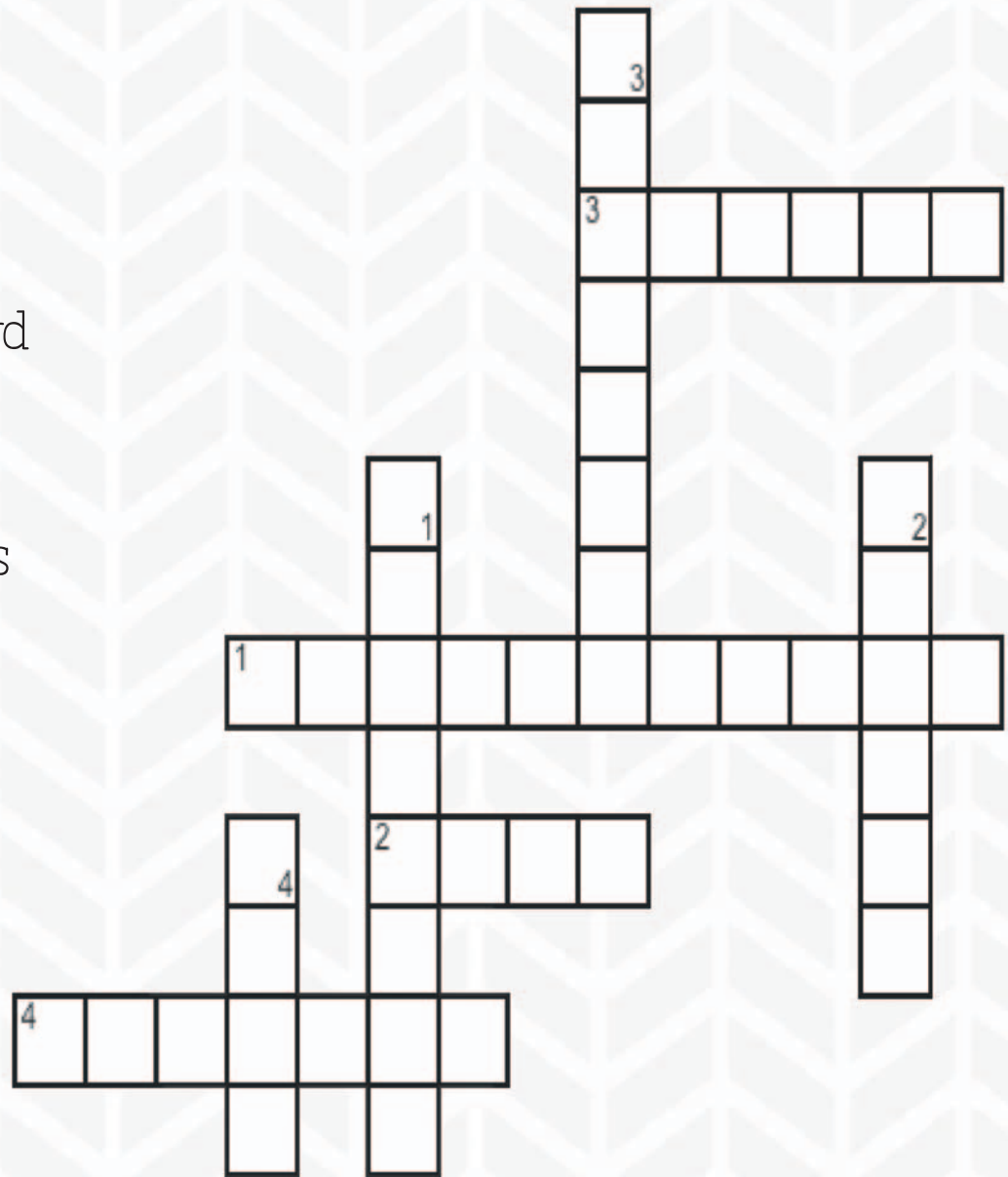
How Well Do You Know Westhill?

Across

1. The most enthusiastic guidance counselor
2. Everyone's favorite security guard
3. Agriscience has this daycare almost every Tuesday
4. A class required for all four years of high school

Down

1. The place where all students escape during long block
2. Westhill's mascot
3. The freshmen class advisor
4. A club that raises mental health awareness



Check out the answers at thewestwordonline.com.

Puzzle by **Caroline Boccuzzi & Maddy Cohen** / Managing Editor & Print Executive Editor.

To Do Next Month: March

3rd

Day of Unplugging

Our generation is known as being attached to our electronics, so unplug today and enjoy life!

6th

Oreo Cookie Day

Regardless of how you eat them, they still taste delicious. Head to the store and buy a pack of Oreos.

12th

Plant a Flower Day

It is finally getting warm, so take this opportunity to go out and plant a flower.

14th

Pi Day

Pi has brought us many mathematical achievements over the years, so celebrate pi today!

17th

St. Patrick's Day

Every year people all over the world gather and have large parties celebrating St. Patrick.

20th

Ravioli Day

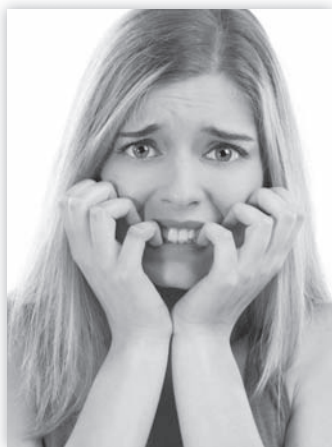
There are many types of pasta, but ravioli could be the best. On this day, enjoy some ravioli for lunch.

23rd

Puppy Day

What's not to like about puppies? They are soft, cuddly, and energetic. So, go out to the park and pet some puppies!

10% of the world's population is left handed. It is physically impossible for pigs to look up into the sky. Coconut water can be used as blood plasma.



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!



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

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.

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

EXPRESS



TRINITY HURD ('20)



GISELLE ESTEVEZ ('20)



MICHAEL TOMPKINS ('18)



SAMANTHA RIPEGNO ('17)



ALEXIS MARCHETTI ('18)

ARTIST OF THE MONTH

NOAH CHERUK

Junior Noah Cheruk sat down with The Westword to discuss goals he has for his art along with how his passion for digital art and other mediums emerged. As a self-taught artist, Cheruk advises others to practice to achieve their goals.

The Westword: How did you become interested in art?

Noah Cheruk: I have been drawing for as long as I can remember. When I cried as a toddler and my mom could not find a solution, she would give me paper and a crayon. This would usually calm me down. There was not really a time when I was not interested in art. I have always drawn, but I think watching a lot of cartoons and going to Disney World quite a few times throughout my childhood have had a big influence on the way I viewed art.

TW: How would you describe your style?

NC: I would describe my art as clean, bright, and often simplistic. When I make pieces of art, I try my best to make them visually appealing.

TW: What has influenced your style?

NC: Some influences of mine include a lot of the early 2000s Disney cartoons (*House of Mouse* was a big one), as well as classic cartoons around the era of *Felix the Cat*, *Oswald the Lucky Rabbit*, and *Popeye*. Additionally, more recent cartoons are really making names for themselves, and I am keeping up with a lot of them. I am influenced heavily by shows such as *Gravity Falls*, *Steven Universe*, and *Rick and Morty*.

TW: What medium do you like to work in?

NC: I have worked traditionally on paper for years, but quite a few years ago, I received a Wacom tablet as a gift, and since then I have created digital art. I have actually recently upgraded to a digital screen tablet a year ago, which allows me to draw with a stylus directly on the screen. So digital and traditional drawing are my most practiced mediums. I mostly make illustrations with inked lines and simple coloring, but from time to time, I will paint something.

TW: Did you teach yourself art?

NC: I guess I would consider myself a self taught artist. I do not think about it too often, but I was never taught the fundamentals of drawing, I just sort of, well, drew. I made a hobby growing up of doodling in notebooks, and drawing cartoon characters I liked. And eventually, I just knew what I was doing. I have always been “that kid in class who could draw,” but not because I was specifically taught how, I just found joy in drawing, and practiced a lot. Even though it is said very often, the only way to get better is to practice.

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

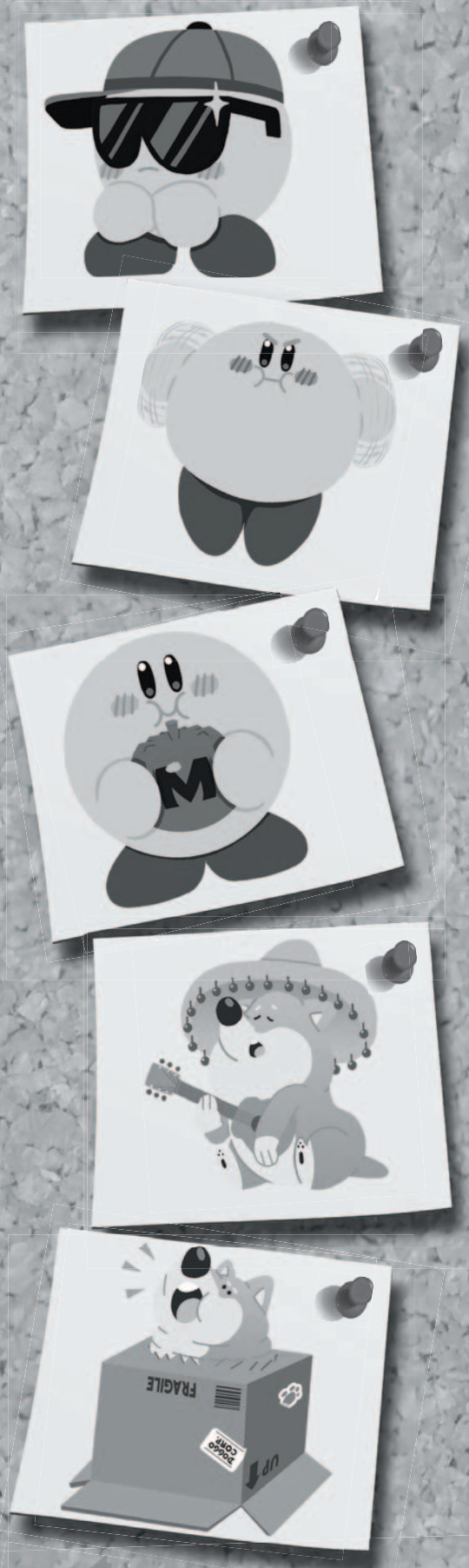
NC: A simple way to put it is just to stick to it. If you enjoy it, do it. Do it often. Do you have free time on a Saturday evening, but wanna play video games or something? Don't. Just draw. If you truly enjoy it, you will not regret it, and you will actually be glad you made that decision. Make an effort to draw often, at least once every one to two. You will always think that your art is not as good as it could be, and you are definitely right, everyone can get better, but just take that as a reason to want to improve, and not as something holding you back. Do not let it hurt you. You are your own worst critic. All in all, if you love it, do not let anything stop you from doing it!

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

NC: I hope to someday make a career out of what I do, possibly as an animator or as a storyboard artist in the future. I also plan on starting a web comic in the near future.

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

NC: This is a something I do not think I have ever thought about, and that is probably because as long as people can see my work and enjoy it, I do not really have a preference. Any museum would be great! If I would have to choose one I would probably say that I would like to see some of my future work in one of those little exhibits in studios showing the process behind a cartoon or a film.



SPORTS

Athletes prepare for FCIACs

Nabilla Harahap
Reporter

This season athletes are working hard to prepare themselves for the remainder of the winter season. The boys varsity basketball, ice hockey, and swim and dive team, as well as the girl's varsity basketball team, are preparing for their FCIAC tournaments. With the intensity of these single-elimination tournaments, the teams need to work and train hard to prepare them the upcoming games, especially now when it is at the peak of the season.

Barring this season, their

best performance is expected. "We have a lot of pasta parties to come together as a team. We make sure that we are disciplined. We stay on the ice after practice to work on our shots. Both on and off the ice, we try to get as much work done as possible and we work out together," said John Nelson ('17), assistant captain of the hockey team.

For an athlete, preparing for important games means to practice for like it is one. They use practice as if it were the "real thing" so that when the time comes, they are more ready than ever. It is important to remain dedicated, and self motivated

because, without any self discipline, players could not be able to play their absolute best.

Aside from working hard individually, the team has to work hard to stay together. If the team is not collectively able to show any teamwork, then the overall result in the end is affected. The players usually spend a significant amount of time with their teammates during the season, so it is only natural that they work together.

Before every varsity girls' basketball game, the team does their usual warm ups, "We huddle up, and we put our hands in. One of the captains say 'Hill on three, together on six' and

we break the huddle with that chant," said Jessica Rubin ('17). "We learn about the style of play of our opponents so that we are prepared what for they will do in the game and build up our confidence in both our team and individual skills." Teamwork skills are just as important as an individual's ability and it really helps to strategize based on the opponent's playing style.

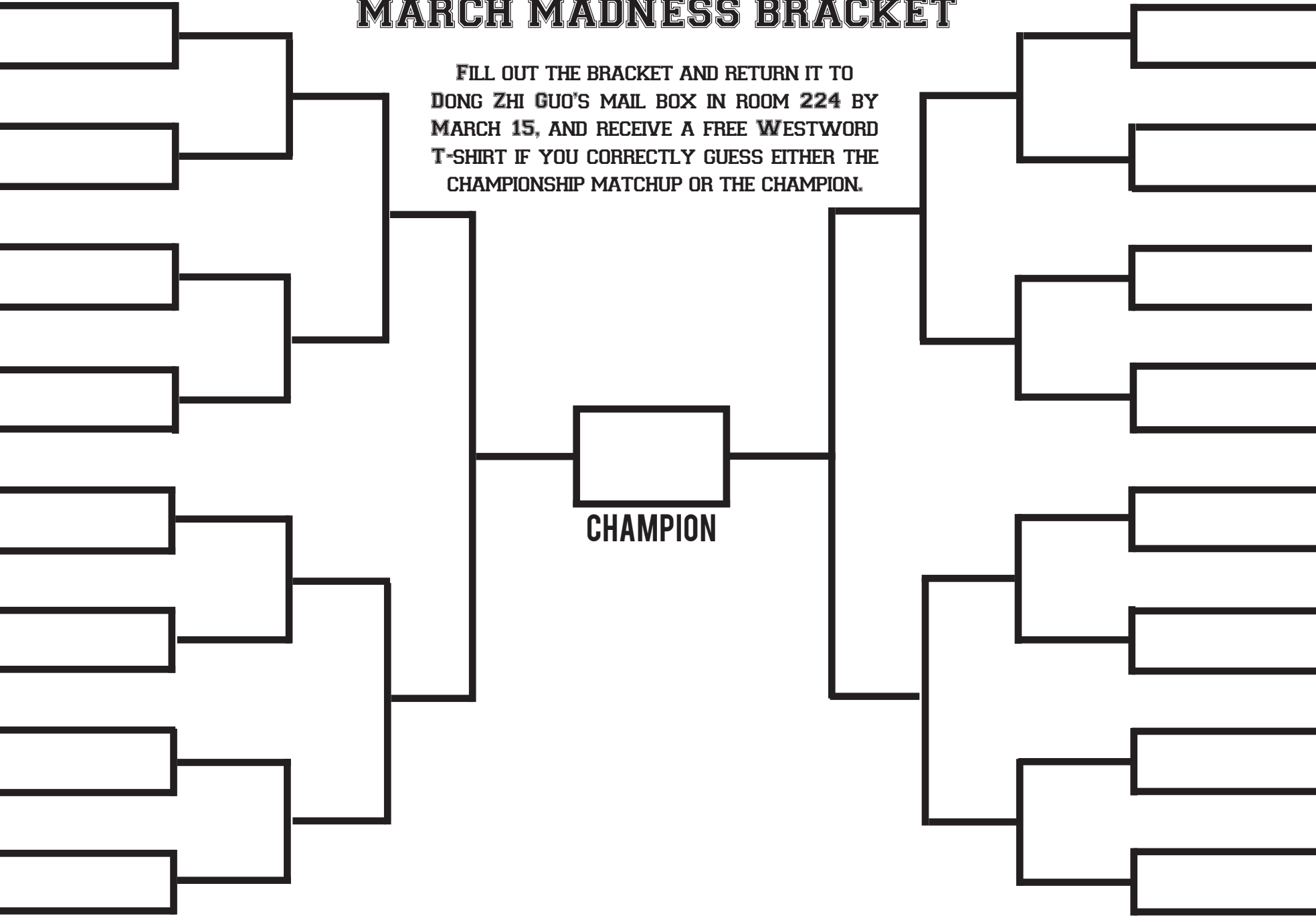
All of this does not just apply to only FCIAC championships. Even teams who do not qualify must exercise these skills. "Our team [routine] before every game is we circle up, clap, cheer,

and take turns dancing in the middle. This really helps us get relaxed while also pumping us up before each game. This lets us start each one on a positive note. Individually, I take a nap before every game and then after I make sure to get in the gym early to shoot around," said Tyler Lasicki ('17). Practice definitely makes perfect, but it is also really important to have fun and enjoy as a team. Before important tournaments, it is normal to be nervous but the players can relax, and stay positive in order to play a good game.



MARCH MADNESS BRACKET

FILL OUT THE BRACKET AND RETURN IT TO
DONG ZHI GUO'S MAIL BOX IN ROOM 224 BY
MARCH 15, AND RECEIVE A FREE WESTWORD
T-SHIRT IF YOU CORRECTLY GUESS EITHER THE
CHAMPIONSHIP MATCHUP OR THE CHAMPION.



Wrestling's effect on the body

Theresa Persico
Staff Writer

Wrestling is a sport practiced in high schools and professional venues. Like any other sport, wrestling can have both a positive and negative effect on the body. The benefits of wrestling outrank the negative effects. In the March 2003 issue of the British Journal of Sports Medicine, they found that high school boys ended a 90 minute wrestling session with more disease fighting cells than at the beginning of practice.

Wrestling also helps keep the body in shape. "Anybody who has wrestled knows that even if you are down, as long as you are not pinned, you're still up," said Mr. Pereira, Dean of Students and coach to the wrestling team. Mr. Pereira teaches wrestlers aerobic and anaerobic physical fitness to keep wrestlers physically toned.

Since there are weight classes in wrestling, it is imperative that wrestlers eat healthy and drink plenty of water throughout the day to properly manage their weight. There are also nega-

tive effects of wrestling. The most common of these injuries are strains and sprains, although there have been some concussions. "Injuries inspire the kids on our team to come back stronger mentally and physically. Said Jordan Goins ('17) a captain on Westhill's Wrestling Varsity team.

Sprains and strains usually occur because the wrestlers are taught to attack the legs and body, which have a lot more fat. Concussions are rare because wrestlers normally do not receive hits to the head. Below are two wrestlers who have

been interviewed about how wrestling effects their body.

The Westword: Have you received any injuries this year during wrestling?

Christian Bier: I have not received any injuries this year during wrestling.

Francesca Rubino-Chuckas: Nothing really. A few bruises and a slight neck strain.

TW: How have those injuries impacted your performance?

CB: By not having injuries this season it has motivated me to keep perfecting my technique so that I can eliminate factors that would affect my chances of getting injured.

FRC: It positively impacted me to keep pushing through, even though bumps may be in the road.

TW: How has wrestling positively impacted your body?

CB: Wrestling helps me to keep my stamina up.

FRC: It's positively impacted my body by making it more toned. I am more muscular in my legs and arms. I am also more healthier. I lost roughly 35 lbs from wrestling and dieting.

TW: How do you keep your body in shape for wrestling?

CB: I stay in shape by practicing with my partner 100 percent.

FRC: I keep my body in shape for wrestling by training and

dieting. Other than wrestling, I am also the catcher for a few baseball teams, so I get tons of hard work in at those practices and games, as well.

TW: How does the team keep in shape for competitions?

CB: We keep our stamina up by practicing everyday besides Sunday.

FRC: The team helps me to go past my limits and to challenge myself. Before I started wrestling, I thought I was only able to do about 25 push-ups and sit ups, but I learned when I push myself, I could get far past my expectations.

TW: How would you say the wrestling season has gone?

CB: The wrestling season has been great. We have a lot of talent, which will help this team reach its goal of having one of the best season's in Westhill wrestling history.

FRC: Wrestling this season was great. My teammates were very nice and helpful. The training was hard and something I have needed for a while. It was so fun that I was sad I had to stop early to start playing my other sports.

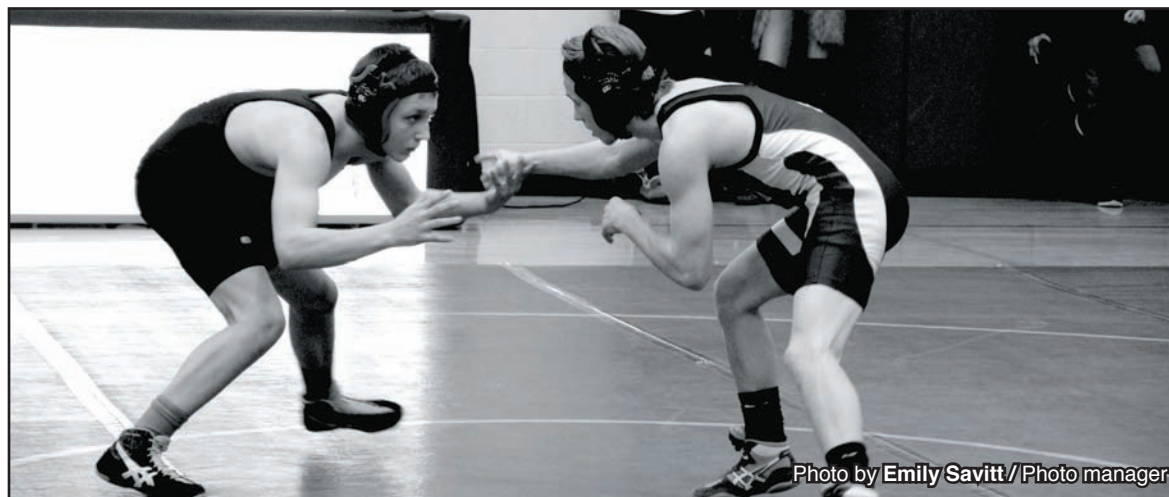
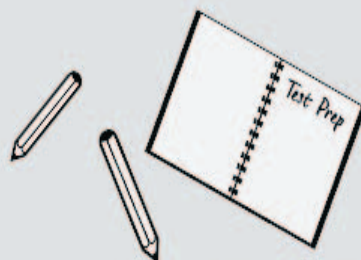


Photo by Emily Savitt / Photo manager

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Grant running circles around the competition



Photo by Yaciana Taveras // Las Noticias Editor.

KEEPING ON TRACK Grant has loved to run ever since middle school. Every offseason, Grant trains herself to be better next season so she can perform at the very top.

Alex Fischer
Staff Writer

Dicoda Grant is a very competitive track runner and a very hard worker in the offseason where she pushes to condition herself to be the best runner she could be.

The Westword: How long have you been running competitively?

Dicoda Grant: I have been running competitively since the spring of my freshman year. I tried to run cross country in middle school but I was not really a fan of running long distances, so that did not really work out.

TW: How do you train in the offseason?

DG: Sometimes, I go to the park or to a track and work out. During the offseason I would like to do more to prepare for track but I can not do that all by myself. When I get the chance I go running with friends and they also help me keep running.

TW: What are some of

your strengths?

DG: Among other things, I am able to push myself beyond what I can handle and keep going even when I want to give up.

TW: How about your weakness?

DG: Thinking about my defeats and letting the past experiences bother me.

TW: What are your goals for this year?

DG: This year, I want to make it to the state open and New England for outdoor track, I also want to be one of the best runners in the state. I have been working hard every year I have been in high school, to be the best in the division in my senior year. I just want to make myself proud because I love running!

TW: What do you love most about running track?

DG: I love the fact that when I am running, I do not have to think about anything but getting to the finish line. I am able to just clear my head. My favorite event is the 200

meter because every year I get to push myself and the time I receive whenever I run.

TW: What are some of your achievements?

DG: I do have a couple achievements, last year I was awarded MVP for both indoor and outdoor track. I also won first place in track and field at the Westhill vs. Stamford High track meet last year and I hope to do that again.

TW: What is your favorite event and why?

DG: The 200 [meter] because every year I get to push myself and the time I receive whenever I run.

TW: Is there someone on the team who you look up to? Why?

DG: There is one person that I look up to, and that is Kimberly Holly. She is one of the most dedicated people I know. She is always on time and she tries her best in every event she competes in.

Compolattaro defending the home ground

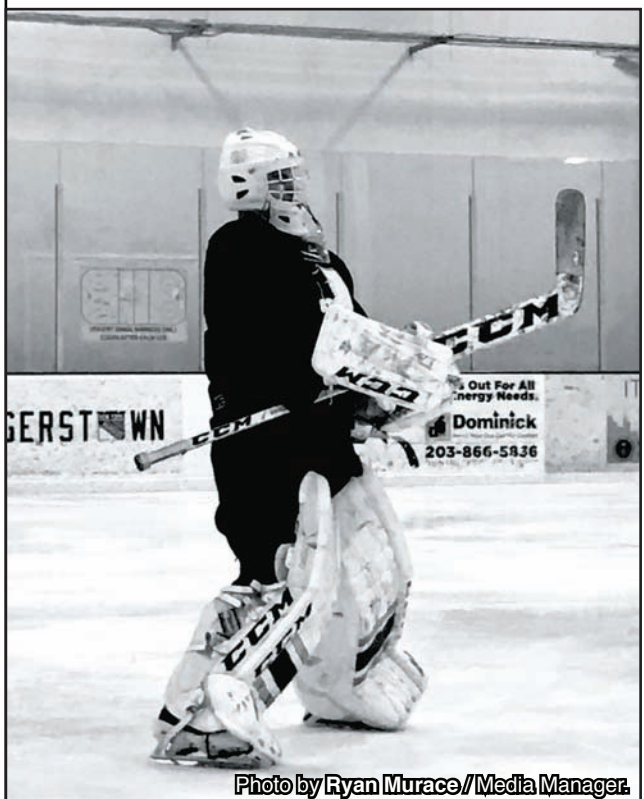


Photo by Ryan Murace // Media Manager.

SKATING TO SUCCESS Compolattaro has always had a love for hockey since he was young. Chris does not have any plans to play for his college hockey team rather he will just play for the local club team.

Max Zussman
Reporter

Christian Compolattaro is Westhill/Stamford's varsity hockey goalie. He went All-State the previous two years. The Westword sat down with him to discuss his experience throughout his hockey career.

The Westword: When did you first start playing hockey?

Chris Compolattaro: I learned to skate when I was three and started playing youth hockey when I was five.

TW: Was there a certain age when you really started to get into hockey and realized you wanted to make it a part of your life?

CC: I have always loved hockey and I knew I wanted to make it a big part of my life. As I continued to play and progress, I realized it

was something I wanted to take seriously.

TW: Have you been playing for the team for all four years? How long have you been starting the starting goalie over the years?

CC: I have been playing for the team since freshman year and became starting goalie halfway through my freshman year.

TW: How has your experience been as a senior and leader on the team?

CC: It has been great. It feels good to finally be one of the "big guys" on the team. The captains and I have been doing our best to be proper role models for the underclassmen and prepare them for the years to come.

TW: What is it like to have Stamford High School students as teammates, con-

sidering the two school have a huge rivalry?

CC: We blend well. We have all known and played with each other throughout youth hockey, so the mix was not bad.

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

CC: I am most likely just going to play club hockey at whatever college I go to.

TW: Heading into this season as defending state champions, what has it been like to try and earn back to back titles?

CC: We had a rough start to the season but now we have finally started winning. We definitely have a lot of pressure on us and playing in division 2 has been a challenge but I think we have the potential to make it back to Yale.

Gymnastics team under new leadership

Alyssa Goldberg
Reporter

Over the past few years, the gymnastics team has made many changes. Last year, the team's former coach, Jim DeCarlo, retired after more than 45 years as a coach for various gymnastic teams, many of those years spent coaching Westhill. This year, the team has been lead by Stacey Olsen, along with returning assistant coaches, Jessica Prince and Jessica Wolfgruber. The gymnasts feel as though the group was positively impacted from the change in authority.

"Without a doubt we have gained a lot more structure than we had in previous years," said team manager Adrian Corbo ('17). The team practices at Chelsea Piers three times a week, instead of spending all five of their weekly practices at Westhill. "At Chelsea Piers, we have resources available to us that we do not have at Westhill, which allows us to work on things that we would not be able to do elsewhere," said Corbo.

With this opportunity, the

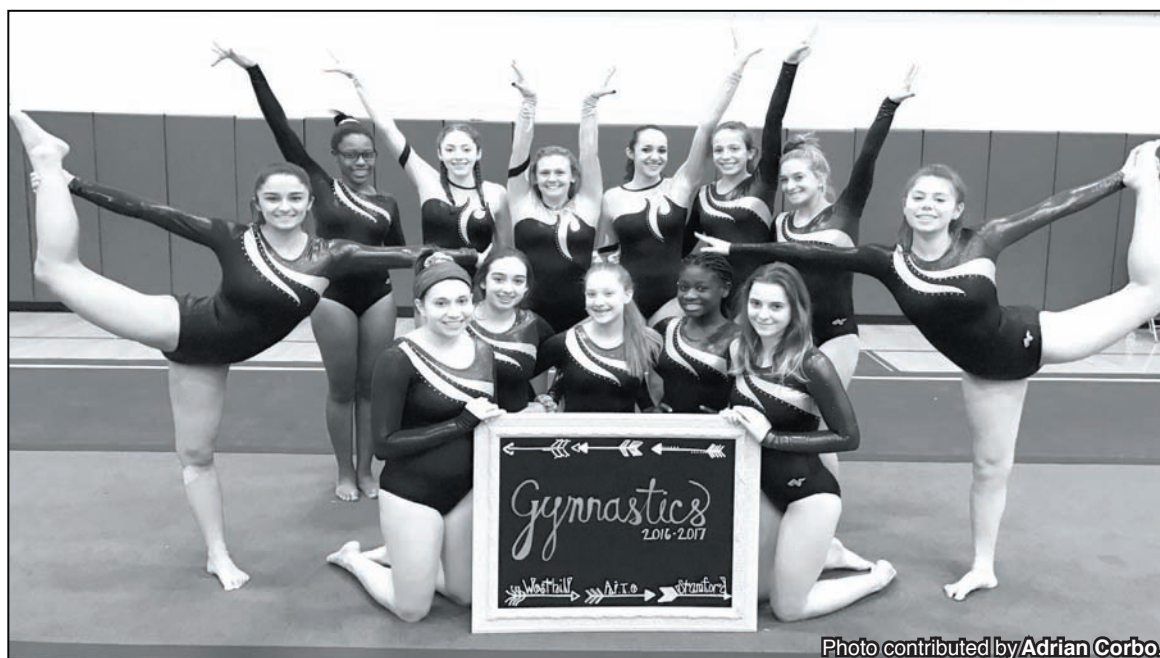


Photo contributed by Adrian Corbo.

gymnasts have seen lots of improvement on their skill sets. The new head coach, Coach Olsen, has prior experience as a judge in gymnastics competitions, and is therefore able to advise the girls on the team as well as give proper advice on what to do at meets. The guidance from Coach Olsen has helped increase the team's scores substantially. For most of their time on the team, the girls

have known Prince, and according to Corbo, she has been able to "connect with the girls in a special way." This familiarity allows the girls to stay comfortable and connected despite all the changes around them, helping to sustain their strong team spirit and teammate relationships.

The newest of the coaches, Wolfgruber, has been wonderful in supporting the team and always maintaining a positive out-

look on situations. "[Jessica] always tells the girls that they can do [anything], and that they should not look down on themselves. She does not take no for an answer, often making girls do things that they would normally be afraid of doing. But, by forcing them to do what they fear, she is breaking them out of their shell and making them more skilled," said Corbo. There are gymnasts from multiple schools

currently on the team, including nine from Westhill, two from Stamford High, and two from Academy of Information and Technology. "I think that having different schools on the same team is a great way for us to meet new people outside of Westhill," said Samantha Page ('19).

Since the girls come together from all the Stamford high schools, it gives them all an opportunity to bond with people they typically would not interact with otherwise. "We all get along, but like any other team, occasionally have our differences. We are extremely supportive of each other, as when one of us is competing, we cheer them on and give them support. Being from different school environments does not really impact our relationship with one another," said Corbo.

With the new improvements and alterations made to the gymnastics team, the girls have been able to advance their skills, perform better at events, and bond closer together as a team.

MARCH SPORTS CALENDAR

Week 1 (5-11)

DATE: 6

EVENT: Varsity Girls Basketball
OPPONENT: Stamford High
LOCATION: Home
TIME: 6:00 PM.

DATE: 7

EVENT: Varsity Wrestling
OPPONENT: NE Championship
LOCATION: Away
TIME: TBA

DATE: 10

EVENT: Varsity Boys Ice Hockey
OPPONENT: New Fairfield
LOCATION: Away
TIME: 7:30 PM.

Week 2 (12-18)

DATE: 12

EVENT: Varsity Boys Swim+Dive
OPPONENT: State LL Meet
LOCATION: Away
TIME: 4:30 PM.

DATE: 18

EVENT: Boys Varsity Ice Hockey
OPPONENT: New Canaan
LOCATION: Away
TIME: TBA

DATE: 18

EVENT: Boys Basketball
OPPONENT: Hillhouse
LOCATION: Away
TIME: TBA

Week 3 (19-25)

DATE: 21

EVENT: Varsity Softball
OPPONENT: Stamford High
LOCATION: Away
TIME: 3:45 PM.

DATE: 25

EVENT: Boys Varsity Lacrosse
OPPONENT: Jamboree
LOCATION: Home
TIME: 10:00 AM.

DATE: 25

EVENT: Varsity Softball
OPPONENT: Darien
LOCATION: Away
TIME: 10:30 PM.

Week 4 (26-31)

DATE: 28

EVENT: Varsity Girls Lacrosse
OPPONENT: Stratford
LOCATION: Home
TIME: 4:00 PM.

DATE: 28

EVENT: Varsity Softball
OPPONENT: Notre Dame-Fairfield
LOCATION: Home
TIME: 3:45 PM.

DATE: 30

EVENT: JV Girls Lacrosse
OPPONENT: Foran
LOCATION: Home
TIME: 5:30 PM.

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Westhill's boy's basketball team celebrates senior night

Athletes of the Month [p.38](#) / Westhill's wrestling team on injuries [p.36](#)



Christian Compolattaro



Dicoda Grant