

The Westword

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

WESTHILL

AND

PROUD

**Principal
Figluizzi's
final farewell**
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The Westword

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March 2017

Note from the Editors

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the fifth print edition of *The Westword*. We are incredibly proud of this issue and hope you can see the hard work we put into this month. We would also like to announce that *The Westword* is a proud recipient of the Silver Crown Award from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association for the 2015/16 school year!

To start off, the Editorial this issue discusses the search for a new principal, and what the interview process would consist of. Students have identified characteristics they would like to see in the new head of the school, who would oversee over 2,000 students.

In News, you can learn about the general strike 'A Day Without a

Woman,' as well as outstanding writers at Westhill.

In Viewpoint, take a look at the pros and cons regarding the graduation requirements.

Following Viewpoint, our Las Noticias section covers the 'Day Without Immigrants' protest.

Within Supplement, we discuss pets! We divulge into the Agriscience Program, and the benefits of pets, especially during finals season.

On the Feature pages, we highlight the esteemed career of Principal Figluizzi. Read about her career, experiences, and the search for a new principal.

In Scatterbrain, we feature fun things students can do during spring break.

In Sports, we examine the rou-

tine Baseball players experience to get ready for the upcoming season, and a piece on the girls Soccer team playing in the state playoffs.

On Online, read about new planets discovered by NASA, Finland's universal income system, and the crisis South Sudan currently faces.

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,
& Josh Eimbinder
Editor-in-chief, Print Executive Editor,
& Online 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

Congratulations to Mr. Wooley and Mrs. Khetan on their nomination to Teacher of the Year.

Corrections

The Westword would like to address that 2016 on the February front cover should have been 2017. On page 7, we put the incorrect symbol for freedom of religion. Lastly, on page 4 of news, Ms. Figluizzi has been at Westhill for 19 years, not 17 years.

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

Filling Figluizzi's shoes

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Principal Figluizzi announced her upcoming retirement for the end of the 2016-2017 school year. She has worked at Westhill for 19 years and the search for a competent replacement is underway. Students and faculty are voicing their opinions about what they are looking for in a new principal.

At a recent staff meeting, it was announced that Ms. Figluizzi will be retiring at the end of the 2016-17 school year. Though it has been a pleasure to see the positive influence Ms. Figluizzi has had on the Westhill community, students and faculty are preparing for the adjustments that come with a new principal. The new principal has not been determined yet, but Westhill will have high expectations after Ms. Figluizzi's impactful time as principal.

The road to becoming principal is a long one. According to the Board of Education (BOE), there are numerous qualifications needed to apply. The three most important are: a current Connecticut Certification for an Administrator, at least five years of teaching experience and three years of being an administrator. Those who meet these basic requirements, move on to be interviewed by two committees. The first interview is done by a committee composed of two teacher members, this may consist of a classroom teacher, guidance counselor, school psychologist, Dean of Students or any other position that is included in the teachers union, along with an undisclosed amount of members from the community. This com-

mittee makes a recommendation to the current Deputy Superintendent, Dr. Fernandes, and he can choose to listen to or ignore that recommendation. The applicants who become finalists are interviewed by another committee made up of five teacher members and an undisclosed number of community members. They

The bottom line:

Principal Figluizzi has done a great job and has set the school up for a great future, it is up to the board of education to select the appropriate applicant to take our school to the next level.

too make a recommendation, but ultimately it is up to the Deputy Superintendent to choose who is presented. The chosen candidate is then presented to the BOE and they vote on whether or not they approve. If they do not approve, the process is started again. If they do approve, this candidate becomes the new principal.

One of the main issues with the process is the lack of representation by students and staff of the school on the committees. Currently, only seven teachers would represent our school in the decision, out of 220 teachers, and 2,100 students we as a community will

be represented by whomever is either elected or applies to be part of either committee.

With no student slots available on the committee it is important that we as a community do voice our opinion. March 31 in the Purple PACT room (913A) any student who chooses to will be able to voice their opinion

about what traits the new principal should have to Dr. Falcone and Dean Pereira. This is a great opportunity for us as a student body to have an impact on the future of our school. *The Westword* highly recommends that all students who have suggestions voice them.

Some students have already voiced their opinions, Danny Sachs ('18) said the principal should be "Someone who already has experience with teaching and getting to know the students at Westhill." We as an editorial team believe the best way to be a strong leader is connecting with the people of the school, and

understanding their needs. With discipline being a major issue at all schools, it is necessary that the new principal is also fair and assertive when enforcing school policies. The principal must establish a basis for conduct and consequences, as they are crucial to learning and order in our school. "He/She needs to be responsible and take care of things in a good amount of time," said Zach Blomberg ('19).

Teachers have also been making suggestions, a recently the Westhill staff (teachers, paraeducators, security guards, custodians and many more) composed a letter informing the BOE and Deputy Superintendent what it is that they expect and would like to see from our future principal*. The five central issues outlined in their letter were: Changing population, class composition, discipline, school climate, and school culture. The letter also expressed the type of traits and qualifications they think the next principal should have. The five Qualities they want from our next principal are: a Spanish Speaker and Culture Champion, Experience with a Diverse Population, Experienced and Empathetic, Familiar with urban and secondary education and Trans-

parent, approachable and open to new ideas.

In a school as large and diverse as Westhill, we believe that it is essential that we have a principal who is accepting of all ethnicities, as well as compassionate and supportive towards the backgrounds of all the students. It is also imperative that we have a principal who is open to change. During Ms. Figluizzi's time as principal, Westhill faced many progressive changes, such as the creation of an All-Gender bathroom, a new attendance policy, and a new open-campus policy. Anneliese Ottinger ('19) said, "We need a young principal because there are so many issues now that there weren't previously and they need to know about them." Our next principal will hopefully have an open mind in creating positive changes for the Westhill community.

The Westword looks forward to working under the new principal whomever it may be. It is our hope that they can fill void left by Ms. Figluizzi and continue down the bright path she has paved for our school in order to take it to the next level.

**This faculty letter can be seen on The Westword's online site, www.thewestwordonline.com.*

MASCOT NEEDED!

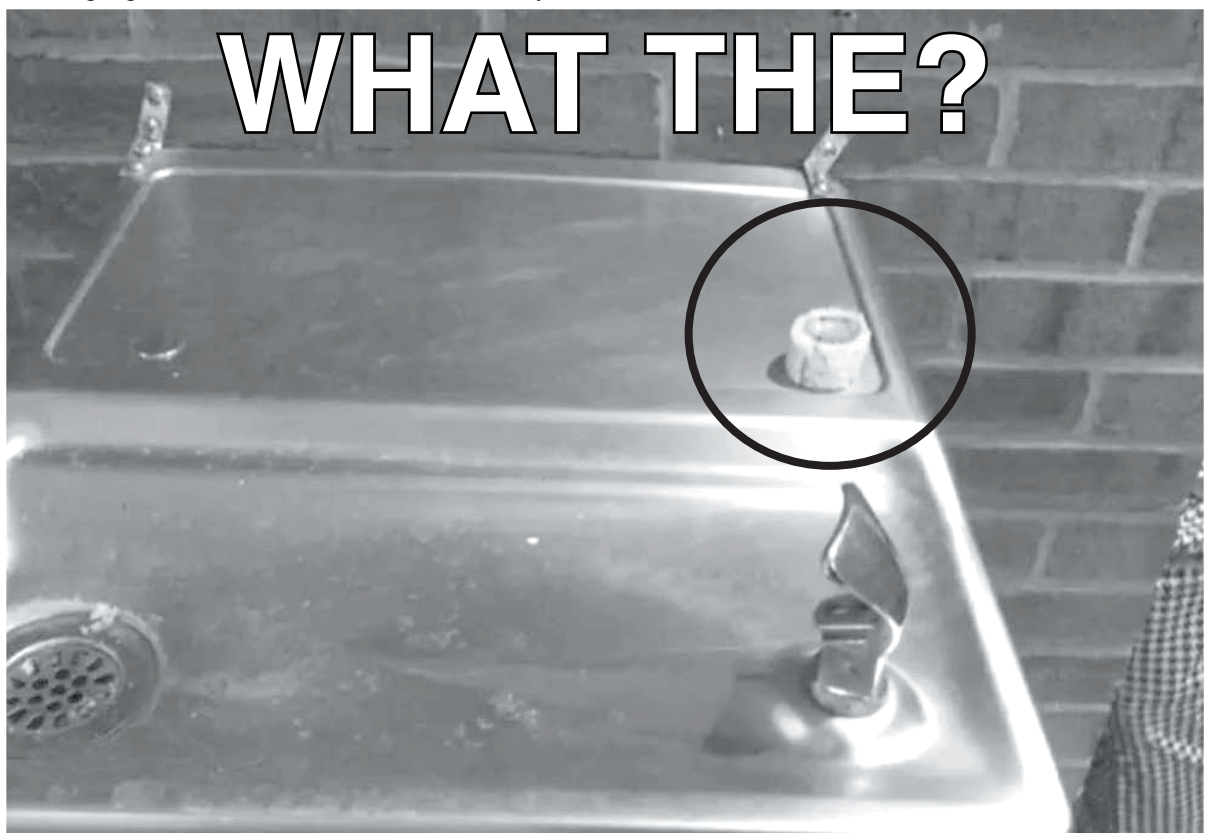
Westhill High School is in need of a
NEW MASCOT!



If so...

Contact Charlie Teeters at
203-969-5697

WHAT THE?



FISH OUTTA WATER An unidentified piece of sushi sits on top of a water fountain.

Juniors see the room where Hamilton happens

Maeve Ronan
Managing Editor

Since its premiere on the Broadway stage in January of 2015, *Hamilton* has become a smash hit musical that draws in sold-out audiences from all across the United States. Written by the young and energetic Broadway genius, Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Hamilton* combines contemporary pop culture and United States history to tell the story of the ten dollar Founding Father Alexander Hamilton.

Born as a poor orphan in the Caribbean, Hamilton worked his way up from poverty to greatness as George Washington's right hand man and the first Secretary of Treasury of the United States. Hamilton's combination of rap storytelling and beautifully complex characters are unlike anything Broadway has ever seen before. Due to its popularity, tickets are extremely expensive.

About a year ago, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History teamed up with the Rockefeller Foundation to create the Hamilton Education Program. Together, they sponsored a grant that would allow public school students in the New York area learning United States history to enter in a raffle for tickets to

see *Hamilton* at a reduced cost.

Along with seeing the show, the classes chosen to go incorporate *Hamilton* into their classroom studies, learning from a Student Performance and Study Guide created by the foundation. According to the Gilder Lehrman website, "The Hamilton Education Program is part of the Gilder Lehrman Institute's broader

nity for a year. When the grant was created for New York public schools, Walden reached out to Gilder Lehrman to see if they would expand the opportunity to

in February that Westhill would be able to participate in the raffle. sixty juniors would have the opportunity to participate in The Hamilton Education Program.

"I am a history buff. I cannot imagine why anyone would not love history. *Hamilton* is a perfect blend of contemporary pop culture and American history. This exemplifies why history and traditional subjects are important to any education,"

mission to improve the teaching and learning of American history."

Mrs. Walden, an English teacher at Westhill, heard about *Hamilton* from a colleague about two years ago. When it moved to Broadway, Walden was curious as to how the show would utilize community outreach to make the performance more accessible to students and the average American. Walden networked with the New York arts commu-

the greater New York area so that Westhill students would have a chance. Walden received the call

said Mrs. Walden, when asked why she wanted her students to be a part of this program.

All Westhill juniors were entered into the raffle. Once the 60 students were chosen, they began participating in workshops to learn this history behind Alexander Hamilton's story. In the guide given to teachers for the Education program, it states that "at the conclusion of the

project, students will have an extensive knowledge of the Founding Era in American history and a greater familiarity with reading and understanding primary sources. They will also be prepared to fully appreciate *Hamilton*, the musical."

Students who won the raffle are thrilled to be participating in this opportunity. "I am extremely excited to be given the opportunity to see this show. So far we have begun exploring Hamilton's life as well as those of his peers and the essential documents relating to this time period. I look forward to digging deeper and gaining insight on Hamilton's experiences, as well as the immense changes taking place in the United States at this time and the impact of their legacy on our lives today," said Lucy Hart ('18).

The Hamilton program is a unique approach to learning history that engages students and teachers, and takes a closer look at a Founding Father who is not as well known as Jefferson or Washington. It is thanks to Mrs. Walden that 60 Westhill juniors have the opportunity to see a revolutionary, Tony award-winning Broadway musical while taking a deeper look into the creation of its story.

The Untold Stories

Column by Noah Klein



This issue, I sat down with Derek Mora, an ELS senior from Ms. Reap's 3rd period English class. Mora moved to the United States from Ecuador and became a student at Westhill.

The Westword: What year did you come to the United States? Why did you come?

Derek Mora: I came here four years ago. I came here because of the economy and amount of opportunities. For example, companies in the U.S. are doing really well. In my country the government has very high taxes that they place on everything, which makes it hard to succeed.

TW: How do your living conditions in Stamford compare to

conditions in Ecuador?

DM: In Ecuador I lived with many different people; my grandparents, my aunt, my uncle, even sometimes my neighbors. Here, I live with my dad and my siblings.

TW: What would you say is the difference between school in Ecuador and Westhill?

DM: Westhill is much bigger, and a lot of the teachers are much nicer in the way that they treat students. Some teachers in Ecuador were very rude and do not really like the kids. We were also all forced to wear a uniform of all black. We all had to purchase the same clothes and dress exactly the same.

TW: Do you feel you are treated differently because you are an ESL student?

DM: I feel like there are many generalizations of ESL students because of the small minority of kids who take it as a joke. We are here in this country for better opportunities and to have a better life. Many kids do not pay attention or do crazy things in the hallway. Sometimes they make fun of people, but I follow my own path. My mom and dad raised me like that. I do not follow others, I think for myself.

TW: How do you feel about President Trump's views and policies regarding immigrants?

DM: I do not really think much about President Trump because for his views to change, we ourselves have to change. I disagree with the protests because President Trump

does not really care about that. It does not accomplish much.

TW: How does your hometown in Ecuador compare to Stamford?

DM: Here it is much easier to find work as opposed to my country. If you are not between the ages of 18 to 24 in Ecuador they will say that you are too old or too young. Even a simple job such as a street sweeper in Ecuador is very hard to get.

TW: What are your plans after high school?

DM: After high school, I am going to join the Marines and go to college. I want to become a mechanic and eventually build my own company in Ecuador. I want to be successful.

TW: What inspired you to join the Marines?

DM: I decided I wanted to join the Marines when I saw children dying on the news due to war. I know one person alone cannot do a lot, but when I saw this happening and the government not doing enough to save them, it made me very sad. If I save just one child, then I will be happy.

I would like to personally thank Derek for taking the time to speak with me. Derek is one of the students in the ELS program who is truly dedicated to his future and wants to become successful. It is important that we as a school do not make prejudgments on certain people. We wish Derek the best of luck in his service and cannot wait to hear what is in store next.

BRIEFS Trump reverses the bathroom bill

Feminism club takes Zine Fest

This is the first year that Westhill has had a Feminism Club, and they are already making moves to educate Westhill students on what it means to be a feminist. One of the club's most recent events was a trip to Zine Fest in New York City at Barnard College on March 5. Zines, the center of the event, are small handmade magazines and art works that are made by feminists and reflect their political views. Other handmade items are sold at the festival as well. Westhill's club went to experience the event and meet other people who shared their ideas. "It shows me that I am not alone in the battle for equal rights. Sometimes in high school, it is hard to speak up and share your opinion because of what other people may think, but knowing that there are communities out there that have people just like me really helps me feel free to stand up for myself," said president of the Feminism Club Sam Hamilton ('18).

Stamford celebrates St. Patrick's Day

Every year on March 17, people of all cultures partake in St. Patrick's Day, celebrating Irish culture by wearing green attire, dining on Irish cuisine, and partaking in festive parades and parties. Stamford holds a parade every year in early March to celebrate the holiday, bringing the community together. "It is a great parade, shows great Irish heritage and pride as many sport the color green. But it is a little too early to have it," said Trey Gorey ('17), who often attends the annual Stamford parade. St. Patrick's Day was not always meant to be a revelry holiday bedazzled with flocks of floats, shamrocks and green attire, but to commemorate the patron Saint Patrick who brought Christianity to Ireland. Initially known as his feast day, people would pay homage to his death as he built a foundation of Christian belief by building monasteries, churches, and schools. Regardless of the history, St. Patrick's Day brings together families with spirit and laughter.

Briefs by Mercedes Sabel & Efrain Gonzalez / News Editor & Staff Writer.

How the country is dealing with the president's new policy

James Hicks
Head Illustrator

On February 22, the Trump administration rescinded the Obama-era decision that school anti-discrimination protections included allowing transgender students to use the bathroom of the gender they identify as.

The Obama administration had issued a statement directing schools to let transgender students use whichever bathroom corresponded most with their gender identity. This letter, sent to the schools and colleges that receive federal funding, was justified with the administration's interpretation of Title IX, the federal law banning sex-based discrimination within public schools.

The reasoning behind

Trump's reversal of this policy was delivered via a joint letter from top civil rights officials within the Justice Department and the Education Department. They stated the directive was both improperly and arbitrarily created, going on to say that the decision acted "without due regard for the primary role of the states and local school districts in establishing educational policy."

In a statement issued by the White House, the decision was further rationalized. "As President Trump has clearly stated, he believes policy regarding transgender bathrooms should be decided at the state level. The joint decision made today by the Department of Justice and the Department of Education... paves the way for an open and inclusive process to take place at the local level with input from parents, students, teachers and administrators," said a spokesperson for the Trump administration.

Reactions to the statement made by the president have been mixed. Some say it is an important step in dividing the powers of the federal and local governments, and others are calling Trump's decision hateful and bigoted.

"To be honest, I do not believe it is going to do much since the North has always been pretty accepting, and Connecticut has had laws protecting transgender people for the last 5 years or so I believe," said Hayden Eaton ('17), a transgender student at Westhill. "If [Trump] were to pass a law like that, there is nothing that could really

be done to enforce it, because most of the time transgender people who are using the bathroom [of the gender they identify as] pass as [that gender]," said Eaton.

"Passing a law like that would endanger a lot of transgender people, cause more violence, and most likely cause a lot of backlash, not just from transgender people, but from the people who love them and all the people who support them," Eaton continued.

While it is not clear as to where this debate will be headed over the coming years, it is certainly one that has grabbed the public eye. With an America that seems more polarized than ever, it seems as though everyone has their own opinion on how this issue should be handled.

Students compete in art contest

D'Angelo Howard
Staff Writer

From February 26 to March 16, the Stamford Art Association had its 44th Annual Student Show, which allows students to display their work in their gallery space. The Stamford Art Association is a non-profit organization whose members include painters, sculptors, printmakers, and photographers. The organization's mission is to provide a forum where emerging and professional artists can exhibit their work to the community and compete in juried shows.

The Association's townhouse gallery holds eight consecutive shows each year, six of which are juried exhibits, with prominent jurors from art schools, galleries, and institutions in New York and surrounding areas, including the Whitney Museum, Bruce Museum, and Museum of Modern Art. Seven of the exhibits include cash prizes for winners.

The Student Show was made of juniors and seniors from Fairfield, Greenwich, Stamford, Darien, New Canaan, Norwalk, Wilton, Weston, Westport, and Ridgefield. These students submitted artwork from five categories separated by medium: portfolio, painting, drawing, sculpture, and print.

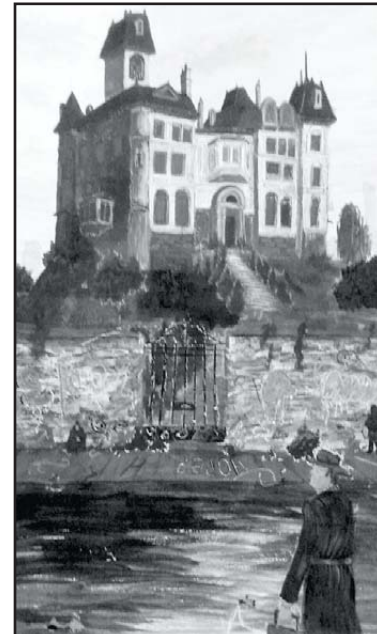
Students from all over Connecticut submitted their art to this competition that celebrates young artists. Among them are Westhill students Frantz Gabriel ('17) and Crysthel Larriviere ('17), who each won award at the Student Show. Frantz Gabriel was awarded with second place in painting at the art competition. Crysthel Larriviere was given a honorable mention in drawing. Michael Clark, Adam Zacharewicz, Rose Dorval, Meghna Sharma, and Eli Nova were selected by the fine arts teachers at Westhill to represent the school and participate in the art competition.

"After I won second place, I was actually surprised because when I entered, I did not think much of it. I just thought it was a competition where everyone gets a gift card or something," said Gabriel.

Gabriel felt confident in his artwork and entered the competition to improve his skills as an artist by learning from other people at the competition. Gabriel submitted art pieces that focused on a specific ideas. "My inspiration was part of my concentration in AP Studio Art, which revolves around Dante's

Inferno. My art focuses on the image of the city as well as traveling through the city. This is supposed to reflect the idea of an underworld or hell. That house in my artwork is supposed to be purgatory and everything around it is supposed to be chaos in the city," said Gabriel.

ART FROM THE HEART The piece of artwork pictured at top was created by Frantz Gabriel. This painting won second place in the Stamford Art Association Student Show. His inspiration for the piece came from the novel *Dante's Inferno*. The artwork pictured below is Crysthel Larriviere's drawing of her boyfriend that earned an honorable mention at the competition. ▶



Westhill women in technology

Hannah Nekritz
Reporter

Each year, the National Center for Women and Information Technology (NCWIT) recognizes young women in high school for accomplishments in computing. These young women may be recognized on a national or affiliate level. The award honors high school students who demonstrate an active interest in computing and technology. The awarded individuals are selected based on their academic history, as well as their leadership ability in the field of computing.

This year, two students from Westhill, Reshmi Ranjith ('18) and Rachel Lese ('17), were honored with the Connecticut Affiliate Award. "By chance, I took a half year course of intro to computer science. Since then, it has been the class I look forward to every day, and what I want to study in

college, and this award is helping me move forward in that path," said Lese, as she reflected on her interest in technology. This honor

connects young women to a network of peers and members of the NCWIT, giving students such as Lese and Ranjith access to a va-

riety of scholarships, internships, and professional work. It provides interested female students across the nation with the means to succeed in the world of technology, extending from their schooling, to their career and beyond.

The Aspirations in Computing campaign is well established nationally. It is supported by such institutions as Apple, AT&T, Microsoft, and Bank of America. The campaign also serves 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and U.S. military bases located overseas. The campaign is sponsored by the NCWIT, a non-profit establishment intended to increase the participation of women in the computing field. In order to promote their goal, the NCWIT has established a wide network of members to enact change to bring a wider percentage of women, no matter their race or ethnic background, into the field of technology.



WHO RUN THE WORLD? GIRLS Rachel Lese ('17) and Reshmi Ranjith ('18) are recognized for computing accomplishments.

A day without women

Dong Zhi Guo
Editor-in-Chief

Initiated by the Women's March organizers, the general strike known as "A Day Without a Woman" occurred intentionally side-by-side with International Women's Day on March 8, 2017. Stated on their website, the strike urged women and supporters to "act together for equity, justice, and the human rights of women and all gender-oppressed people, through a one-day demonstration of economic solidarity."

The ultimate goal of the strike was to demonstrate the contribution that women bring to the socio-economic system of any country. According to the Center for American Progress, paid working women contribute \$21 billion to the economy daily in terms of Gross Domestic Product.

"A Day Without a Woman was a great way to prove how essential women are in the work force. I was glad to be able to join in and take a stand with other women worldwide by wearing red," said Sydney Steinberg ('19), a member of the newly formed Westhill after school organization, The Feminism Club.

The Women's March website laid out three ways people could participate by encouraging wom-

en to take the day off from paid or unpaid labor, avoid shopping for one day, with exceptions of small, women-and-minority-owned businesses, and to wear the color red in unity. In addition, some took their beliefs to the streets to voice their opinion in protest.

Due to the unprecedented success of the Women's March that took place the day after the Presidential Inauguration, which drew millions of protesters around the globe together, organizers of the march believed this would be the next step in their ten step plan of activism for the first 100 days of Donald Trump's presidency.

"A Day Without A Woman was supposed to be a movement that brought women together to stand up for their rights and equality. Everyone who was able to participate did so on behalf of women everywhere," said Jacob Stockman ('17).

While most saw this strike as an empowering message delivered by women, others were critical towards the effectiveness of the day. "In my opinion, to take off work and school would be counterintuitive. When people are 'anti-women' it is more directed to women of color more than anything and most women of color are working two jobs to feed their families," said Tahera Shafi ('17).

Many students and staff members within the Westhill community could be seen wearing red on March 8 in solidarity with A Day Without a Woman, while others made the conscious decision not to attend school for the day.

Since the election of Trump,

the presence of political activism within young adults has only grown. Whether it be for the rights of immigrants, women, minorities, or the LGBTQIA+ community, those within the nation are feeling empowered to spread their message.



Photos by **Ewa Misiak** / Photographer.
Illustration by **Jonathan Russo** / Illustrator.

BRIEFS

Breaking tradition: fashion show is student-run

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) has run the Westhill Fashion Show for the past several years to raise money for the senior after prom event. This year, however, the PTO decided to discontinue the event. Students Rachel Fein ('17) and Nova Nahiyen ('18) were upset with this decision. Fein and Nahiyen decided to manage and organize the show along with the help of the Senior Student Council. Fein and Nahiyen managed to get Zemo Men's Store, Lord & Taylor, and A Step Ahead to provide clothing for the fashion show on short notice. "These stores are generously providing us with formal wear to be modeled by our seniors," says Fein. This gives seniors an opportunity to participate in this event for the last time. The money raised by the fashion show will contribute to lowering the cost of senior prom tickets. It will take place on March 30 at WHS.

Spoons is back

Spoons is the bane of some teachers' existence and a subject of intrigue to others. For just three dollars anyone can be entered into the ultimate test of survival. Once the game starts everyone has a target and everyone is a target. You can eliminate your target by touching them with a spoon, hence the name. Once you eliminate your target, you inherit theirs. The only way to avoid elimination is by participating in an immunity, a form of humility. You cannot be eliminated for as long as you are enacting the immunity of that particular day. In previous years immunities have included pool noodles, and keeping wet spaghetti in your pocket, but more recently has turned into wearing KFC buckets on one's head. The student body will have to wait and see just how far students will go to win the title of Spoons Champion.

Briefs by **Nicole Segal** / Staff Writer.



Good Month Bad Month

Column by
**Max Zussman &
Matthew Greenbaum**

Good Month For...

NFL Combine 40 Year Dash

The NFL Combine took place in early March as a way for college players to showcase their athletic ability and talent prior to the NFL Draft in April. The most anticipated event is the infamous 40 Yard dash, where a fast time can really boost a prospect's draft stock. This year, University of Washington wide receiver, John Ross, was able to break the previous record, set in 2008 by Chris Johnson, with a time of 4.22 seconds. Ross is hoping this impressive feat will push him into the first round of the NFL Draft.



3D Printers A San Francisco based 3-D printing company know as Apis Cor printed and built the first ever residential home this month. The company used a mobile 3D printer to print out the house's concrete walls, partitions, and building envelope. The house is about 400-square-feet, which is about the size of a standard hotel room. More impressively, the entire house was built in just 24 hours and cost just over ten thousand dollars for the complete construction.



Women's Hockey The United States Women's National Hockey team has recently decided to sit out during the International Ice Hockey Federation World Championship. They are boycotting the match because they want an increase in their wages. The members of the team feel that USA Hockey does not treat the women's league with the same respect as the men's team.

Bad Month For...

CIA WikiLeaks published a data trove known as "Vault 7" that appears to contain extensive documentation of secret Central Intelligence Agency spying operations and hacking tools. Though nothing has been confirmed, initial reactions reveal that most of the 8,761 leaked documents are in fact valid. The leak has the potential both to undermine the CIA's ability to carry out offensive intelligence gathering as well as to damage its international public perception. Many are outraged by the report as privacy is potentially being broken and hacked by an American agency.



French Conservative Party March has been a crazy month in France as the upcoming presidential election draws closer. The conservative presidential candidate, Francis Fillon, is facing charges after allegedly paying his wife for parliamentary work that might not have taken place. In other words, he is being charged for paying her with government funding for no apparent reason. This not only looks terrible for the candidate but also for the entire conservative party.



Ben Affleck On March 15, the actor shared that he has fully completed his treatment for alcoholism. Ben stated that he would like to be the best father he could be, alcohol free. He has been battling with a drinking problem for many years, seeking treatment in 2001. Affleck has taken many steps toward a healthy recovery, and will star in the new Batman movie.

Westhill students get it write

**Stefanie Ruiz &
Samantha Gallant**
Staff Writers

This years Hudson-to-Housatonic Scholastic Writing Competition awarded Briana Casino ('17), Luis Hernandez ('17), and Frantz Gabriel ('17) for their outstanding works of literature in poetry and personal essay/memoir.

The Hudson-to-Housatonic Scholastic Writing Competition is one that inspires teens to be creative in a way that may not be available to them in a school environment, helps students become comfortable with writing and to cultivate and continue their love of writing, and creates and sustain a community of young writers who share the same interests. This year, the program took a diverse group of students. "Earlier in the year, Scholastic Art Writing contacted me because they wanted to do a 10 week writing workshop on young people writing about grief, and I said that I would do the project so long as I could include all of my students, including my EL students, my

college prep students, and my AP students," said Mrs. Walden who ran the program with the help of Mrs. Begetis and Mr. Sandoval. "That was the best thing that we ever could have done because two of the students who won the writing prizes are speakers of other languages," said Mrs. Walden.

But the writing competition is not just the submission of a work of literature. Students participating in the program worked on their pieces for one long block period every week. The program even ca-

were submitted, 363 students received honorable mentions, one of which being Frantz Gabriel, 180 students received the Gold Key, including Briana Casino, and 262 Silver Keys were awarded to students, one of which being Luis Hernandez.

It seems as though this competition has made a positive impact on the Westhill community. It has given a diverse group of students the chance to express themselves through art and literature and perhaps has made them recognize a hidden talent and

"I got literally three different levels of students working on what it meant to lose something or someone. So they were able to connect on all levels"

tered lunch so that every writer could eat together. The Scholastic process was a unique collaborative experience. "I got literally three different levels of students working on what it meant to lose something or someone. So they were able to connect on all levels," said Mrs. Walden.

At the ceremony on March 5, out of the 1,920 works that

potential. Mrs. Walden believes that if anything, the program should be expanded and grown. "It would be nice if we could do this writing project all year long, to do a 10 week in the fall, and a 10 week in the spring. In other words, have the writing project be anchored here all year long and open it up to those students who want to do it," said Mrs. Walden.

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Graduation requirements: necessity or nuisance?

Nicole Segal
Staff Writer

From the moment students walk in the doors of school to the moment they leave, the words they probably hear most often are “get to class!” While going to class is a requirement, there are specific core classes that students need to pass in order to get a diploma at the end of these long four years. The core academic classes include math, science, english, and history. While some may say that students should not be required to complete these certain classes in order to receive their diploma, these classes give the students an advantage that may help them succeed in attending

college and further.

When students are obligated to take a class that does not seem interesting, they tend to only do the work to receive a good grade, or they do not do the work at all and zone out until the bell rings. However, these classes are put in place for a reason. The core math, science, english, and history classes are a student’s jumpstart in grabbing their attention on a certain English subject.

For example, civics is a mandatory course to take before students graduate. A student may not even know what civics is before they enter the class. This gives them the chance to learn about something they have not had the opportunity to

encounter before.

Even though it might be a little frustrating to have to take classes students have no interest in, school administration can make these courses a little more flexible. If one is in the Agriscience program or Academy of Finance, a guidance counselor can set up their schedule so that they are able to take those classes on top of the classes required to graduate. Students typically take civics as a sophomore. However, there are instances where a student can take it as a junior or senior when their schedule begins to open.

Having certain classes can be very beneficial to students for when they head off to col-

lege. If colleges want to see that students have completed certain courses, high schools have to align their curriculum with what colleges want. One of the main goals for high schools is to see their students graduate as well as attend college. “If colleges say they want to see three years of math, at least up to Algebra 2, we need to coincide with that. Whatever their requirements are, they become our requirements too,” said Mr. Stepkowski, a guidance counselor at Westhill.

Not only do having graduation requirements help students succeed and further the chance of getting into college, they push students to want to attend class and participate to get a fair

grade. “Having certain classes as graduation requirements can push students to work harder and try to succeed because they know they need that class to receive their diploma. Even though some of the classes may be annoying to take, you need to have a basic sense of knowledge in order to succeed,” said Allison Soto (’18).

The core classes may be some of the most important classes in order for students to succeed. They pave the way for students to be eligible to attend college and give the basic knowledge in order for students to thrive. High schools should set up their requirements based on what colleges are looking for in a potential student.



Bria Pettiford
Staff Writer

There has been an ongoing discussion about whether graduation requirements are helpful for students. Many people may believe the requirements are beneficial because it sets the same standard for all students. However, there are many downsides to this requirement for all students, which are very different in many ways.

The requirements impede students from taking the classes they actually want. The classes a student takes as they become upperclassmen should be based off of their interest. These interests

will reflect the major they decide to study in college. Even if the student may not attend college, the classes they take could be related to their field of work. “I think it is a good thing, it is making sure students are getting the right tools and education to further them and make the world a better place,” said Arianna Nguyen (’17).

In addition, it may be very difficult for students to meet these requirements. A student could be extremely hard-working, but it could be difficult for them to meet the requirements due to their own personal reasons. These students would be unable to graduate if they are unable to meet the requirements, which should be taken

into consideration.

There should be different standards set for various types of students. For example, a student who plans to major in English should have the four years of English required. Moreover, a student who wishes to pursue a science major should not have to meet that requirement. “It is a good thing. You can ensure that someone is actually doing their work. That way you have to actually work for your diploma, rather just maintaining it,” said Mackenzie Vargas (’17).

There has also been debate over why four years of English was required and only three years for the rest of the core classes.

However, some of these re-

quirements are not necessary for all students. For example, while students are currently required to take at least one art class, it may not be a necessity for some. Art classes may be beneficial to students that intend to pursue a career in that field, but not to others. Another class that is only beneficial to some is the two semester requirement for gym class. Gym class does not prepare a student for college. Therefore, these classes should be an elective and not mandatory for all students.

Also, some students may need accommodations. For many, English may not be their first language. Therefore, it would be difficult to reach the same requirements.

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

“I feel that everyone should be required to take the English, history, science, and math courses for graduation, maybe even gym. However, as far as art being a requirement, I disagree. Students should have an option on what their last requirement should be. If students would like to do something in the future that has a connection with art, then an art class would be suitable for them. But, for a student like me, who has a desire in a future that does not have anything to do with art, should be able to find another class as a requirement that is more suitable for their future career,” said Aja Mullins (’17).

Politics take the runway

Stefanie Ruiz
Staff Writer

The Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA) first introduced an act of defiance when they gave out buttons that donned the statement, “Fashion Stands With Planned Parenthood” to guests at many shows throughout the New York Fashion Week (NYFW). President Trump has made it known that during his presidency, he plans to defund Planned Parenthood.

Numerous designers during NYFW, held from February 9 to February 16, 2017, followed this same trail with a range of subtle remarks, such as the Creature’s of the

Wind’s show where they displayed shirts that stated “We Are All Human Beings,” to more blatant forms of protest against the president, such as in Public School’s show where they spoofed the “Make America Great Again” hats with a new catchphrase of “Make America New York.”

The use of protest in this year’s Fashion Week demonstrates the gravity of this era. We currently live in a time of extreme division, in which it seems impossible to genuinely agree on a number of topics, from immigration to terrorism. These disagreements begin to affect everyday relationships, to the point where people refuse to talk to others if they have differing politi-

cal views. The critical nature of the 2016 presidential election has begun to foment an environment of toxic disagreement, and this year’s Fashion Week highlighted that.

It is because of this that some people have disagreed with the idea of including political opinions in Fashion Week. However, Tommy Hilfiger’s fashion show was a perfect example of setting political differences aside to enjoy fashion. Hilfiger sent his models down the runway with white bandanas tied on their wrists as a symbol of unity, which stands out in the current era of division.

Hilfiger used his platform as a famous fashion designer to make a

statement that fashion can be used to bring us together, not to further divide us. The campaign, entitled #TIEDTOGETHER, aims to promote unity in this time of negativity and division. The website explains their position: “This is not a political statement. It is a positive statement in support of humanity.” Rather than focusing on the negative aspects of our current political status, #TIEDTOGETHER attempts to refocus our attention on love and respect.

At Westhill, opinions regarding whether designers should include their political opinions in their shows are mixed. “Absolutely not. People are entitled to their own opinion and if they wanted

to watch a show on politics, then they should turn on the news,” said Christina Burgess (’18). On the other hand, some students do support designers incorporating politics into their work. “Fashion designers are artists and you should be able to express art however you want,” said Grace Savage (’18).

Despite tensions flaring due to recent political events, campaigns such as #TIEDTOGETHER aim to put forth a uniting front in order to solve the tensions that exist today. By using a highly publicized event such as fashion week to promote unity, fashion is further cemented as a driving force for civility and respect during tough times.



POLITICAL STATEMENT Karl Lagerfeld presented his 2015 spring-summer line by involving politics in fashion. This trend continued in this years New York Fashion Week with the #TIEDTOGETHER campaign. Photo courtesy of shanghaidaily.com.

The controversial use of racial slurs

Stephanie Zachariadis
Staff Writer

Anyone with a social media account knows that the Internet is an inherently toxic place. People frequently reap the benefits from Internet usage: easy communication with anyone in the world, a great wealth of knowledge available to us at all times, free platforms to share art and comedy, and of course, memes. However, the Internet offers a free environment for anyone who wants to spread hate. Frequently, this can be racially charged.

Recently, Idubbbz TV, a popular YouTuber with nearly four million subscribers, called out Tana Mongeau for flippantly throwing around the N-word in a hateful manner on her channel. Mongeau is another popular YouTuber with about 2.5 million

subscribers who considers herself a Black Lives Matter supporter. There is even video proof of Mongeau using the word multiple times, in which Mongeau recieved heavy backlash from her subscribers and other people.

After verbally bashing Idubbbz TV on Twitter for calling her out, she eventually deleted her tweets and issued a formal apology video for her flippant use of the N-word: “I never owned up and apologized fully to me saying the N-word. I really [need to] think about what I say before I say them because I have this huge platform. I need to be smarter about the things that I say and do.”

While the endeavor was viewed as a comedic situation by many, Idubbbz TV brought up an important topic at the end of his expose video: that many people throw around the N-word like it is nothing, while oth-

ers avoid it as if was the plague. Yet, those who avoid it might say a slur directed towards another racial group with no second thoughts. All slurs are rooted in deeply horrific historical context. This raises a controversial debate: either none of it is okay, or all of it is okay.

While reading classic novels such as *Huckleberry Finn* in English classes throughout America, an issue often presented to students prior to reading the novel is whether it is okay to read the N-word out loud from the book. Yet, when other racial slurs are written down in books that we read for English or other classes, there is no debate as to whether we should be able to say them or not.

If we regard people of all races equally as we should, then why do we not give everyone the same respect when it comes to their comfort? Either

we remove the power from all slurs and just read them plaintively, even ones that do not pertain to race, or we debate the ethical use of each one.

“Saying offensive things just to be offensive does not really seem to be worth anything. But, if it is what you actually believe, I guess someone should be allowed to say it, but not be a jerk about it. You have the right to say whatever you want, but people also have the right to call you out and tell you to shut up if they do not agree with what you think,” said Charlie Mahoney (’17).

At Westhill, many students do not feel comfortable using any slurs at all. Others throw them around with no filter. What most people do not realize, though, is that it is one thing to speak colloquially with friends, yet it is another to use abhorrent language with someone you just met. One

never knows what word could be extremely offensive to someone else. A great number of students assert that it is the context of the situation that matters, and not the actual word. “Focus on the argument itself, not how it is,” said Michael Abreu (’17).

While the intent of the speaker does matter, regardless of if the offending word is online or spoken in person or in a book, it does detract from the original argument. Using a slur, no matter what group it applies to, can still offend someone even if no harm was intended. Using a slur with someone whose views are unbeknownst is always an unwise idea if one does not wish to be offensive.

We all have to make both a personal and social decision: either we weaken the power of all slurs, or we debate the use of all of them. No group should be given preferential treatment.

Moderating politics in school

Amalia Skoprantzos

Staff Writer

Although politics have always been discussed at Westhill, after this year's presidential election, more students and teachers have become active and have shared their thoughts and opinions.

Overall, talking about politics can be risky in many situations. Certain subjects may come up that not every party agrees with. This does not mean students should not talk about these topics. They just have to be careful and respectful of other people's opinions.

"A great way to learn about politics is through discussion especially with people who disagree with you. People should want to be more informed about our society," said Ben Freedman ('17). It is important to talk about politics in a school setting, as the nation's government is an important subject every student should be educated about. However, students should be taught in a nonbiased environment.

Students should be able to learn about all political perspectives, and from there choose what to follow or believe in. By the time students graduate high school, many will be

18 or turning 18 soon. This is the age when citizens are eligible to register to vote. When a student is at this age, they hopefully should be well-educated on the country's government, how the voting process works and where they stand on current government policies, especially since students are required to take courses on American government as a graduation requirement.

If schools do not educate students in this area, the next generation of voters will be unaware and uninformed. However, the blame cannot just be on the school. Most political preferences are carried

from the home, and typically children and students will follow what their parents or other family member's political beliefs are. However, students need to be aware that what they learn at home is not always factual. It is unfair to come into school and say to a teacher or peer, "This is right because my parents or family said so."

Although some people may argue that even though it is the goal to educate, not persuade, it is hard to control students regardless. It is impossible to restrain what someone might say or how they will approach their stance. People should

not delve into specifics by bringing up strong views on topics like religion, abortion, or immigration. These viewpoints deserve to be heard as long as they do not attack anyone's personal beliefs. "I think that if kids can have a level-headed discussion with valid reasons and not a screaming match, then it should not be a problem," said Pete Burgess ('18). Immaturity levels always vary in a high school atmosphere, but one can only do so much. This does not mean students can never speak about it. It just means there must be precautions when doing so.

Pupil paparazzi records teachers

Chelsea Valdez

Staff Writer

Phones have changed the lives of almost every person drastically. It can be said that many people cannot live without them. With this in mind, it is evident that teenagers are considered to be the ones that have the most urge to be on their phones. This creates a conflict, especially in an academic school environment.

Almost everything, whether it is relevant or not, is either recorded or posted on social media. Most people's first instinct in a situation is, "I have to get this on camera" or "I have to put this on Snapchat." This becomes an issue when it involves the recording of other teachers during class.

Many students rely on their phones for practically everything. Taking this into consideration, students do not see an issue in taking pictures of the board with notes, or even recording what teachers are saying.

This being said, students should not be allowed to film teachers under certain circumstances. It creates many conflicts, and contradicts the rights teachers are granted, or anyone for that matter. It is an intrusion to the teacher's privacy.

Overall, many Westhill teachers believe that filming of any sort for any teacher, is an invasion of their privacy, and a lack of respect. It is not debatable that this is true, but what about those teachers who do offend students, or do treat certain students poorly? How can a student prove to administra-

tive staff that they are telling the truth and their teacher is in fact offensive? Would they be obligated to feel the need to film them even though it is illegal?

On October 14, 2016, a teacher from Norman, Oklahoma claimed that if you are white, you are racist. Yes, everyone is entitled to their own opinions, but this comment offended many, and generalizes an entire race.

A Norman North student recorded the lecture their teacher was having, discussing "how to heal the racial divide." The stereotype being presented to this claim was bound to affect the students. The student states that

she was shocked by what she was being taught by this teacher, causing her to pull out her phone, and start recording.

In the audio, one can clearly hear the teacher say, "To be white is to be racist, period." The student was offended the second she heard the teacher say this. "Half my family is Hispanic, so I just felt like, you know, him calling me racist just because I am white...I mean, where is your proof in that," Later on the recording, the teacher says, "Am I racist? And, I say yeah. I do not want to be. It is not like I choose to be racist, but do I do things because of the way I was raised? I felt like he was encouraging peo-

ple to kind of pick on people for being white," said the student.

The student had informed their parents of this. "Why is it okay to demonize one race to children that you are supposed to be teaching a curriculum to?" said the father.

This may have been the teacher's opinion, but it was not appropriate to introduce such a potentially offensive opinion to the class of high school students. So the real question is, is it okay to film teachers who make these remarks, or does it go against their privacy?

From my perspective, I believe phones overall come with many advantages, but more dis-

advantages. Students can abuse their power of using their phones to take inappropriate videos or pictures of teachers if they were given such "freedom."

Students should not be able to film or record their teachers, unless there is a valuable reason to. This can vary for many people, but if, for instance, a teacher is excessively portraying inappropriate behavior that no school administrator has taken note of, then I believe students can provide evidence of these incidents by recording. Any other reason to record faculty is not a significant reason. It does disrespect the privacy of teachers and causes many conflicts.

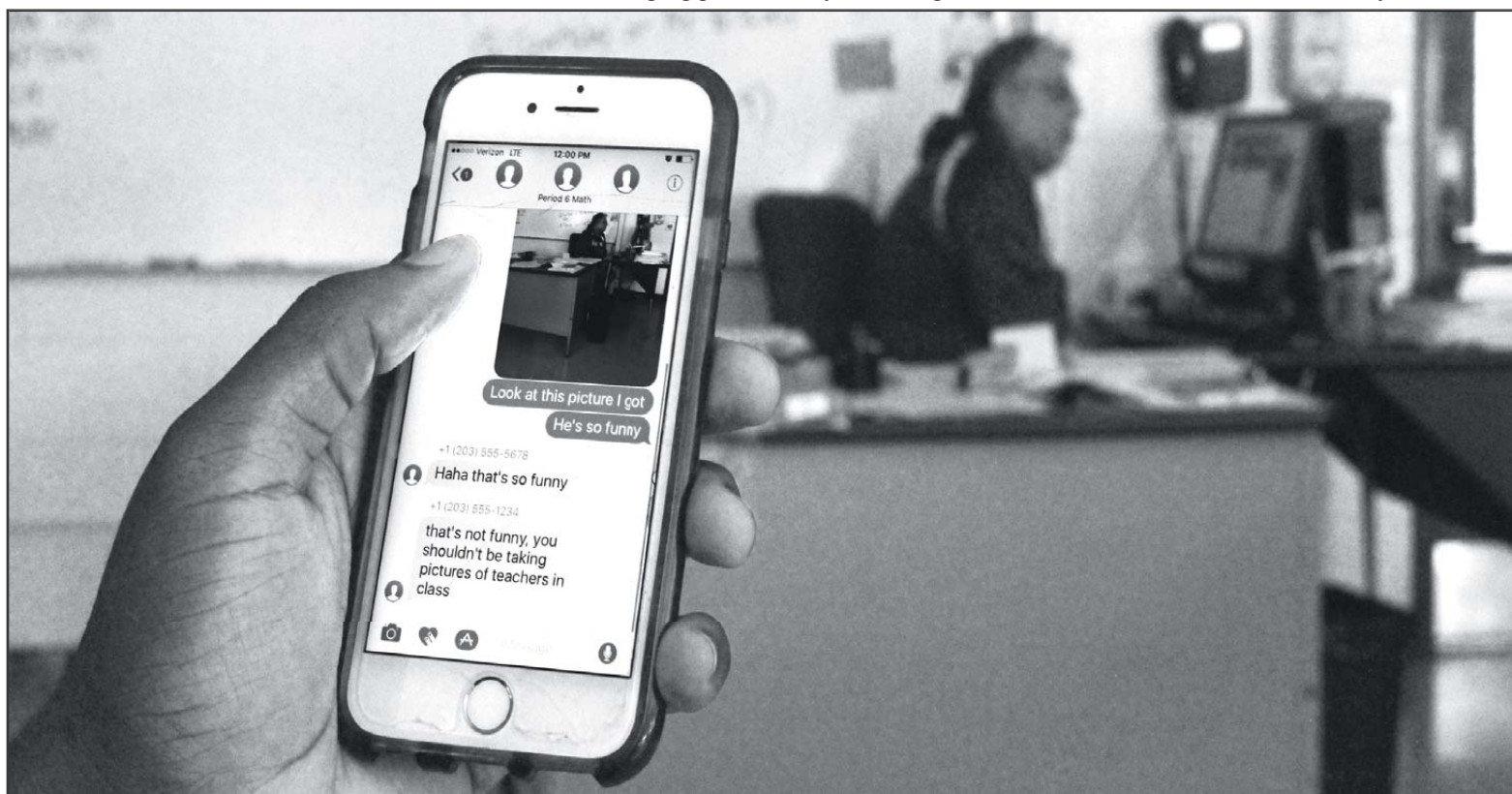


PHOTO OP Students filming teachers during class is considered a violation of privacy by some, but others disagree and take pictures of teachers in school.

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

Controversial religious talk in school

In the past month or so there have been multiple reports of a Westhill health teacher using worksheets with religious content for classes. The problem since has been reported to administration and handled by them. This does beg the question: does religion have a place in public schools?

The founders of our country saw that there is a need for separation between church and state, with public schools being a government-funded entity this applies to them as well. We are here to learn about science, math, history, all fact-based fields of study. Religion and politics are highly opinionated from every angle, which is why they are typically labeled as “inappropriate” in our health classes.

Other than being strictly opinionated and not being based strictly upon truth and

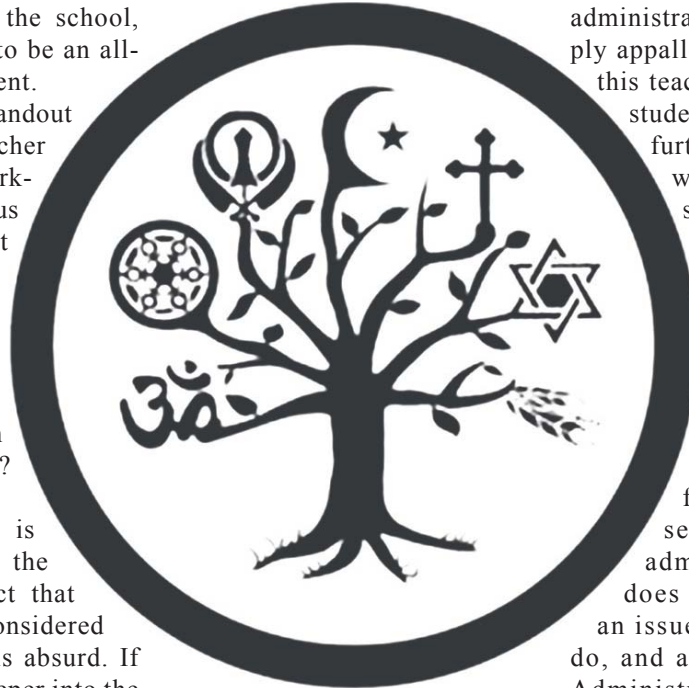
fact, another key issue with religion in public schools is that they exclude certain groups of students within the school, which is supposed to be an all-inclusive environment.

In a recent handout from a health teacher at Westhill, the worksheet stated: “Jesus says that you are not alone and that he is always with you.” What does this say to our students that are not “with Jesus”? Our Jewish students? Buddhists? Muslims? Atheists?

This statement is one of many from the worksheet. The fact that this teacher even considered using this content is absurd. If one were to look deeper into the specific wording of the phrase, does this mean that our non-

Christian students are alone in this world?

One can see how this be-



comes an issue. No one really looks into it that much, but in

the event that someone did, there would be quite the uproar. After this issue was brought to administration, they were simply appalled at the content that this teacher was assigning to students. Thankfully, after further investigation it was found that the issue does not ascend to beyond the singular teacher, and the problem will end with them.

If you ever see something like this in a classroom, make a copy for yourself and send it right over to administration, who does not want this to be an issue any more than you do, and are here to help out. Administration was also surprised to see that there was only one student that stood

against this adversity and spoke up for themselves and their fellow students.

You, the student community have voices of your own, be sure to make them heard for a better Westhill, a more fact-based school system, and for a better learning environment for our current and future students.

Many students, who wished to be kept anonymous, voiced their opinions on this topic. “I do not appreciate the integration of religion into education, we should teach facts as they are,” said one student. Another student added, “I thought it was inappropriate and it was not something that should be enforced on high school students. The questions were offensive and I felt uncomfortable answering them.”

— Jonathan Russo ('17)

Graphic designed by Sakshi Patel / Creative Director.

The effectiveness of walk-outs

Walkouts are a fundamental tool for anyone considering any sort of peaceful protest. It is not surprising that after Betsy DeVos was confirmed as President Trump’s Secretary of Education, many students held walkouts in protest. Among those students were students from both Stamford High and Westhill High School

To those that do not know, a walkout is defined by Merriam-Webster as “the action of leaving a meeting or organization as an expression of disapproval.” This is strange, however, due to the circumstances of the Westhill Walkout.

As a preface, I feel the need to state that I am strongly opposed to DeVos for a number of reasons. That being said, I do feel as though there are right ways and wrong ways to protest, and the walkout that occurred at Westhill falls into the latter category.

For starters, what were students protesting by walking out? DeVos, of course, but the protest changed nothing, as DeVos does not run the school. In fact, the administration assisted in planning and executing the

walkout. In essence, a walkout would have been effective to protest the school itself, but because the school was working with the students, this walkout was mostly inconsequential.

To put it simply, this would be the educational equivalent of customers boycotting a restaurant to oppose a law that the restaurant itself is opposed to.

On a more fundamental level, the protest itself seemed almost patronizing on behalf of the administration. Students were allowed to exit the building during Connection Time, a 25 minute class period that occurs intermittently, where students talk with one another. The students receive only a passing or failing grade. Students being absent from Connection Time in order to attend the walkout changed absolutely nothing.

It has been said that disruption is the hallmark of a successful protest, but in the case of Westhill’s walkout, nothing was disrupted. No valuable time was lost, no test was skipped, no lecturing missed. To the casual observer, it might have simply appeared that a smattering of students stood in a field while

a handful of people yelled into a megaphone during their free period: no meaningful disruption occurred. This does, of course, make sense; Why would the administration want to disrupt their own schedule? Unfortunately, this understandable unwillingness to detract from the day’s schedule does undermine the point of a walkout: to disrupt.

“The purpose was unclear, and it was not very motivated. It has not seemed to do all that much,” said Charlie Mahoney ('17), who chose to not attend the walkout.

This echoes the opinions of many at the event, with a large portion of students stating they were simply there to get out of connection time, or get some fresh air. I was along this group of students.

All in all, the walkout had good intentions but inconsequential display. While it did show how little DeVos is accepted by members of the Westhill community, it ultimately changed nothing, and did not inconvenience anyone.

— James Hicks ('17)



WALK OUT WHS Feminism Club organizes a walk out in order to protest Betsy DeVos. Many students joined on the field with creative signs.

Photo by Dong Zhi Guo / Editor-in-Chief.

Un día sin inmigrantes en Stamford

Andrea Vega

Escritora del Personal

El 3 de Marzo los estudiantes hispanos de la escuela secundaria Westhill High School organizaron una manifestación a las afueras del Centro de la Gobernación de Stamford. El propósito de la protesta es mostrarle a los estudiantes que no deben de temer y que nuestra comunidad es vital para el sistema de educación de Stamford.

La manifestación fue un éxito, asistieron aproximadamente ochenta jóvenes inmigrantes, en su totalidad. También contaron con el apoyo de el abogado Felipe Berns, el alcalde de Stamford David Martin y varios medios de comunicación como News 12, Stamford Advocate y The Daily Voice. Otro punto importante de esta protesta fue el sig-

nificado del nombre: <<Un día sin estudiantes inmigrantes>>. El significado del nombre es demostrar que los estudiantes inmigrantes son muy importantes para Stamford, y que sin ellos habría un gran vacío en las escuelas. <<Creo que lo que tenemos en común es el sueño americano>>, dijo el alcalde de Stamford, David Martin, en la protesta que concentró a los jóvenes estudiantes, quienes a pesar del frío gritaban y saltaban frenéticamente en contra de las políticas anti-inmigrantes de Trump.

<<En los últimos 200 años y parece que más recientemente algunas personas quisieran atacar ese sueño y yo no estoy de acuerdo con eso>>, repuso el alcalde. El abogado de inmigración, Felipe Berns, se dirigió a los estudiantes y les brindó consejos sobre cómo interactuar con la policía y

cómo mantener actualizados los documentos importantes. <<La mejor manera de evitar la deportación, en el peor de los casos, es invocar su derecho a permanecer en silencio, ya que si los agentes de inmigración no saben de qué país eres, no pueden deportarte>>, finalizó Berns.

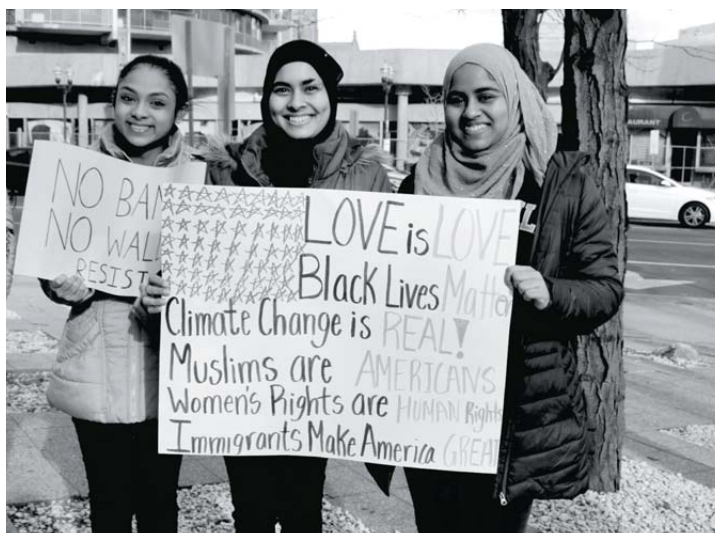
La estudiante de la escuela secundaria Westhill High School Daniela Paredes expresó que <<El evento fue una muestra de apoyo hacia la comunidad inmigrante de Stamford, estoy feliz de haber podido ser parte de ello. Ellos necesitan nuestro apoyo y una protesta pacífica es una gran manera de brindarlo>>. La estudiante se presentó con mucho orgullo de haber participado en la protesta. La estudiante de doceavo grado Naika Lázare declaró << Yo no creo que los inmigrantes deben de ser tratados diferen-

tes porque todos somos humanos. Sólo porque sean ilegales no significa que ellos son criminales>>. La estudiante expresó su apoyo a la comunidad inmigrante, y también expresó su decepción en las declaraciones del presidente Donald Trump. También opinó sobre la protesta <<Creo que la protesta fue una buena causa para todos los inmigrantes>>.

A la estudiante le impresionó cuán unida es la comunidad de inmigrantes. La estudiante del onceavo grado Kiara Gonzales declaró << Me parece injusto las políticas que el Presidente Donald Trump está aplicando hacia los inmigrantes, me parece algo denigrante de su persona y está incentivando a la discriminación como si fuera algo normal. No está bien que las personas sean discriminadas, esto no es un tema del cual no debería ser discutido, no debería ser un prob-

lema en esta época>>. La estudiante expresó su indignación hacia esta situación, la cual mucho de sus compañeros acertaron con ella. Muchos de los letreros creados por los jóvenes estudiantes expresaron sus sentimientos hacia esta situación como: <<Deja a las familias juntas, no a la deportación>>. Así como otros decían con orgullo <<Hijo/a de un inmigrante>>.

Más allá de la participación de los estudiantes, la protesta fue símbolo de la participación política de los estudiantes. Ya que la mayoría de los jóvenes son menores de edad, la manera más eficaz de participar en el proceso político es a través de las protestas y las manifestaciones. Las acciones de los participantes fueron pacíficas, subrayando la influencia que pueden tener las protestas y los movimientos- aún si son movimientos originados por estudiantes.



Protesta en acción Estudiantes de las escuelas Westhill, Stamford High y AITE hacen oír su voz por medio de sus carteles y por medio de discursos.

Fotos de **Allie Colorado**.

El nuevo plan sustituto del Obamacare

Yuliana Hernández
Escritora del Personal

El nombre oficial de <<ObamaCare>> es <<Ley de Protección a Pacientes y Cuidados de Salud Asequibles (Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act – PPACA)>>, o en corto, <<Ley de Cuidados de Salud Asequibles (Affordable Care Act – ACA)>>. ACA fue firmado por el Presidente Barack Obama como una ley para reformar la industria de los cuidados de la salud el 23 de marzo del 2010 y fue confirmada por el Supremo Tribunal de Justicia el 28 de junio del 2012.

El objetivo de ObamaCare es dar acceso a más americanos a seguros médicos de calidad, asequibles y reducir el crecimiento del gasto en servicios de salud en E.E.U.U. La ley de cuidados de Salud Asequibles extiende la asequibilidad, calidad y disponibilidad de los seguros médicos

cos públicos y privados mediante la protección de consumidor, regulaciones, subsidios, impuestos, intercambios de seguros y otras reformas.

Según, ObamaCare Facts 2016 – 2017 Affordable Care Act: En el 2015: 1 de cada 6 americanos obtuvieron un plan en el Mercado de Seguros médicos por \$100 o menos y el 87% de la gente que se decidió por un plan del Mercado seguros obtuvo asistencia financiera.

En 2016: 7 de cada 10 clientes regresaron al Mercado de Seguros y pudieron obtener un plan por menos de \$75 al mes, y 8 de cada 10 tuvieron uno plan por \$100 o menos. Para el 2017: ¡A pesar de los incrementos en las primas <<impuestos>>, 7 de cada 10 clientes del Mercado de Seguros aún podrán tener un plan por menos de \$75, y 8 de cada 10 por menos de \$100! Esto es debido, primeramente, a que los costos de asistencia es-

tán basados en el ingreso.

El republicano Paul Ryan, reelegido la semana pasada como presidente de la Cámara de Representantes, dijo que los republicanos estaban ahora en una <<misión de rescate>> para arreglar la masiva ley de salud. También dice que en EE.UU. se gasta más dinero que en cualquier otro lugar en salud y que se puede tener un plan de asistencia médica que funcione para todos. Basado en el plan republicano, los anteriores créditos fiscales basados en ingresos salariales serían reemplazados por créditos que irían aumentando.

Los subsidios estatales serían reemplazados por seguros de salud voluntarios, con créditos que se beneficiarían de cortes fiscales y oscilarían entre los 2.000 dólares, para los jóvenes, y los hasta 4.000 dólares, para los adultos mayores.

La iniciativa proporcionaría menos ayuda financiera a las per-

sonas de bajos ingresos. Además, quienes no obtengan un seguro médico, serían sancionados con un incremento de 30% en los costes, una medida para evitar la resistencia a adherirse al nuevo sistema. sin embargo, mantendría algunos elementos muy populares de Obamacare, como el que prohíbe a las aseguradoras rechazar a personas con enfermedades preexistentes o el que permite a los jóvenes conservar los planes de salud de sus padres hasta los veintiséis años.

Aunque algunas oposiciones republicanas como Rob Portman, de Ohio; Shelley Moore Capito, de Virginia Occidental; Cory Gardner, de Colorado, y Lisa Murkowski, de Alaska, rubricaron una carta diciendo que el borrador de la Cámara que habían revisado no protegía adecuadamente a los ciudadanos de sus estados. Y es que en los estados a los que representan, la ley de Obama había ampliado considerablemente el

acceso a Medicaid.

Asimismo, varios senadores ultraconservadores, como Mike Lee, de Utah; Rand Paul, de Kentucky; y Ted Cruz, de Texas, mostraron sus reservas sobre el texto presentado por sus colegas de la Cámara Baja, por lo que junto a los republicanos más moderados podrían obstaculizar el avance de la nueva ley en el Senado.

Al aprobar una resolución de presupuesto, principalmente por una disciplina de voto partidista. La votación quedó 227 – 198, a favor de la derogación de la ley. Ahora, los republicanos en el capitolio podrán utilizar el proceso conocido como <<reconciliación del presupuesto>> para dar marcha atrás a la mayor parte de la ley de atención en salud. Los líderes republicanos más importantes también han dicho que planean reemplazar el Obamacare por la misma vía, pero todavía están debatiendo los detalles de cómo lo harán.

El clasico mundial de beisbol

Guilmar Valle
Escritora del Personal

El clásico mundial de béisbol es un torneo internacional que es sancionado por la Conferencia Mundial de Béisbol y Softball, y fue creado por la Mayor Liga de Béisbol en el 2005. Previamente el béisbol fue jugado en los juegos olímpicos hasta el 2005. El deporte fue discontinuado y no será reintroducido hasta los próximos juegos olímpicos del 2020 en Tokio.

Una alternativa para la competición internacional ha encontrado hogar en el torneo del clásico mundial de béisbol, un evento que en contraste a la liga de béisbol de los Estados Unidos, invita la participación de múltiples naciones. El pensamiento convencional de la cultura popular hace creer al público que la comunidad hispana está solamente preocupada con el deporte del fútbol. Una investigación más profunda sobre la cultura latina revela que los gustos de los ciudadanos hispanos son más diversos de lo que normalmente se piensa.

Este año seis países de Latinoamérica asistirán al gran torneo, incluyendo Cuba, Colombia, la República Dominicana, México, Puerto Rico y Venezuela. Hasta el juego anterior (el juego del 2013) ningún país hispano ha ganado el torneo.

El campeón del 2006 y el 2009 ha sido Japón. Actualmente el campeón es nada menos que la República Dominicana. La república es un ejemplo representativo de las influencias caribeñas en la cultura latina. El aspecto más visible es el deporte del béisbol, un interés que se propaga en toda la isla.

Aquí en Westhill, los estudiantes están muy emocionados por el torneo, especialmente en la comunidad hispana, quienes sienten un gran orgullo de tener un país hispano como el campeón. Pero también hay tensiones entre los equipos ya que los estudiantes están muy segu-

ros sobre quién va a ganar.

Juan Jesús, quien está en su último año escolar, dice <<No hay ningún chance que Puerto Rico va a perder, es el mejor equipo>>. Juan Jesús es un poco nue-

primer juego, yo sabía que el béisbol era el deporte para mí>>.

La situación no es muy diferente cuando Ashley Cherries compartió su opinión sobre el posible ganador del juego. Cherries ha estado siguiendo el mundo del béisbol desde que era una niña. Sus padres son de Puerto Rico y de la República Dominicana y ella quiere que la República Dominicana gane de nuevo. Expresó este sentimiento diciendo <<yo quiero representar el país de mi mama>>.

Es muy claro que los estudiantes les gustan ver a sus países representados en algo grande, como un torneo, o los juegos olímpicos. El estudiante Fernando González también afirmó su posición en el asunto diciendo que desearía un <<partido bueno y con mucha competición>>.

Los estudiantes de Westhill como María Cruz también notaron la evidente presencia de participantes hispanos, un

fenómeno que no ha sido un atributo de este evento en épocas previas. <<Es bueno que los hispanos están jugando béisbol, porque están jugando nuevos deportes y están cambiando como la gente mira los hispanos, normalmente como una gente que sólo juega fútbol>> exclamó Cruz. Aún no se conocen las implicaciones que tendrá la incorporación de la comunidad hispana en un juego que ha sido históricamente un deporte apropiado por los países del mundo occidental.

Los países de latinoamérica no reconocen esta diferencia tan sutil que existe entre las diferentes etnicidades de los Estados Unidos de América. En una época de reformas sociales, las normas convencionales de la sociedad están siendo rotas a favor de la inclusión y la mezcla de culturas. La identidad de la cultura hispana por lo tanto no está siendo erradicada por ideas americanas, sino que la cultura hispana está evolucionando en una entidad más rica en diversidad.

Fotos Courtesia de pixabay.com



14 | SPECIAL REPORT:

A look into the history

Theresa Persico
Staff Writer

Our universe is vast and open to many possibilities, leading many scholars to explore the unknown. In recent times, technology has advanced and with those technological advancements, opportunities to learn about our universe have evolved.

While astronomers have always pondered the thought that there might be large amounts of water in outer space, it was not confirmed. In 2011, scientists discovered the largest and oldest mass of water in the universe. Huge water vapor clouds are located 12 billion light years away from Earth. Astronomers have estimated these clouds to have approximately 140 trillion times more water than all of Earth's oceans combined. The water vapor clouds surround a quasar, which is a super massive hole.

By 2015, they identified the quasar as the first quadruple quasar. It consists of four rare active black holes that are unusually close together. "If you find something theory says is very unlikely, you either have to conclude you got incredibly lucky, or that the theory is flawed," said Dr. Hennawi of the Max Planck Institute for Astronomy in Heidelberg, Germany. The chances of finding the quadruple quasar is one in 10 million.

However, signs of water have been seen before. Pictures taken on Mars show that rocks were gradually eroded water flows.

Scientists identified the water flow patterns as "splash." This means that the crater rocks settled in the surrounding water, allowing lighter material to pile up behind it, which is why the craters have frozen muddy slopes. Scientists have also concluded that there must have been multiple floods given the deep channels. An example of this is the

erosion marks on the Worcester Crater.

In addition, water has been found on the moon. Water was first found on the moon by a NASA-built instrument on India's Chandrayaan-1 probe. They found that the moon is cold enough to keep water frozen at the surface based on detections of hydrogen.

In addition, on October 9, 2009, NASA's LCROSS, or Lunar Crater Observing and Sensing Satellite, continued to search the moon and found that a thin film of water coats the surface of the soil in some areas. "Indeed, yes, we found water. We did not find just a little bit, we found a significant amount," said Anthony Colaprete, LCROSS project scientist and principal investigator from NASA's Ames Research Center at Moffett Field, California. The amount of water they found in their 20 meter crater when melted can potentially be used to drink or to extract hydrogen for rocket fuel.

However, water is not the only thing that scientists have found on their space travels. Astronomers have also found a few dwarf planets in our solar system. In 2007, a team of American astronomers found a planet covered in hot but solid water. It is officially known as Gilese 436 b. Even though, the planet's temperature reaches 439 degrees Celcius (712 Kelvin), its watery surface does not evaporate. Instead it creates a hot and high-pressured ice.

Scientists have also found that its mass makes up 70-90 Earths. Nevertheless, in 2014, astronomers found a complete opposite to "The Hell Planet." It is an extremely cold white dwarf planet that is the same size as Earth. While white dwarf planets are not uncommon, they are difficult to notice. White dwarf planets are extremely dense and packed with carbon and oxygen making them

burn at an extremely slow rate.

This is the reason scientists have estimated the planet to be as old as the Milky Way, which is about 13 billion years old. "This is cool once you think about [it]. There might be other dwarf planets in our solar system that we just have not been able to find, but have been there the whole time," said Monica Gonzalez ('17).

Despite the idea that foreign planets are uninhabitable, astronomers have proven this thought is wrong. Since the discovery of the first planet orbiting a sun-like star in 1995, scientists have found over 1,000 alien planets. More than half of these discoveries were made by NASA's Kepler Space telescope, which was launched in 2009 to determine how common Earth-like planets are in the Milky Way galaxy.

They have found six planets that are the most Earth-like. These planets are the Gliese 667Cc, the Kepler-22b, the Kepler-69c, the Kepler-62f, the Kepler-186f, and the Kepler-452b. "Finding a habitable zone planet comparable to Earth in size is a major step forward," said Elisa Quintana, research scientist at the SETI Institute at NASA's Ames Research Center in Moffett Field, California, and lead author of the paper published today in the *Journal Science*.

Finding Earth-like habitable planets is a dream for astronomers. NASA astronaut Scott Kelly thought his orange zinnias aboard the International Space Station were the first flowers to bloom in space, but they were not. In 2012, Don Petit grew different types of plants aboard a NASA station deemed a "personal biology experiment." Petit's sunflower was the first flower grown aboard the International Space Station.

A timeline of major discoveries in space

Aug. 5th, 2012
The Mars rover landed on Mars.

Aug. 30th, 1983
The first African American man was launched into space.

July 20th, 1969
The first man landed on the moon.

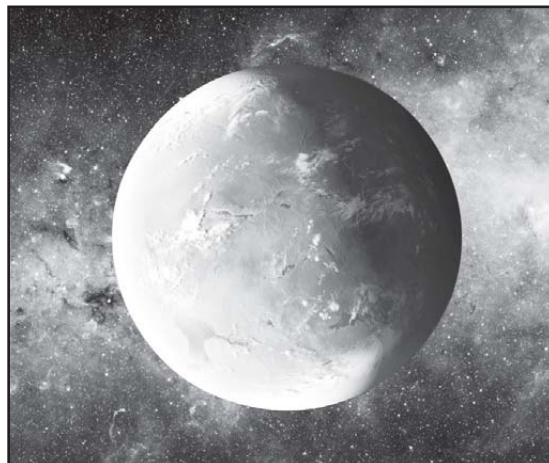
June 16th, 1963
The first woman was launched into space.

Aug. 14th, 1959
The first picture of Earth was recieved from space.

Oct. 5th, 1957
The world's first artificial satellite was launched.



A quasar is a black hole surrounded by a disc of gas.



Kepler-62f is a potential Earth-like planet not too far away from us.

of space accomplishments

Maddy Cohen
Print Executive Editor

A timeline of major
discoveries in Earth's orbit

Aug. 6th, 2014
NASA's probe, Rosetta, landed
on a comet.

Sept. 12th, 1992
The first African American wom-
an was launched into space.

April 10th, 1981
The first shuttle was launched
into space.

March 18th, 1965
The first spacewalk took place.

April 12th, 1961
The first man orbited the Earth.

Nov. 3rd, 1957
A dog was launched into
space for the first time.

Space orbit exploration began with the first satellite, Sputnik 1, launched by the Soviet Union on October 4, 1957 during the Cold War, a state of tension between the Soviet Union and the United States. About the size of a large helmet at 22.8 inches in diameter, Sputnik 1 orbited Earth in 98 minutes. The United States' satellite, the Explorer 1, led to the discovery of the Van Allen radiation belts. The belts contain an area of high energy trapped by Earth's magnetic field.

A month after Sputnik 1, Sputnik 2 was launched, carrying the first living being to be in space on board, a stray dog from the streets of Moscow named Laika. Laika was a precursor to other living beings in space. On April 12, 1961, the first successful human flight into space carried Russian Yuri Gagarin on Vostok 1. Gagarin orbited around the globe once, for about an hour and 48 minutes. Within a month, the United States sent Alan Shepard into space. In 1963, the first woman, Valentina Tereshkova of the Soviet Union was sent into space on the Vostok 6, orbiting Earth 48 times.

Luna 2, a Soviet Union space-

craft, became the first spacecraft to reach the Moon and the first man made craft to land on another planet or asteroid. In 1968, the United States sent Apollo 8 into orbit. The three-astronaut crew orbited the Moon once and returned to Earth. One year later, in 1969, Buzz Aldrin and Neil Armstrong landed Apollo 11 on the Moon and became the first humans on the Moon.

Space discoveries exploded with NASA's launch of the world's first large optical telescope, named the Hubble Telescope after Edwin Hubble, in 1990. Since then, the Hubble Telescope has made more than 1.3 million observations, according to NASA. The further the Hubble Telescope can see, the further in the past observers can see. With the telescope, scientists could pinpoint the age of the universe down to 13.7 billion years old.

The Hubble Telescope also led to many other discoveries. Dark matter makes up about 23 percent of the universe, and because of Hubble, scientists were able to map large scale maps of where dark matter exists. Hubble also revealed Nix and Hydra, Pluto's moons, as well as the mass of another planet which demoted Pluto and other planets to dwarf planets. Scientists shed

light on how the universe has evolved when Hubble discovered stars at the center of massive black holes.

In October of 2018, the James Webb Space Telescope will replace the Hubble Telescope. Its design will allow Webb to look deeper into space, with a mirror about six times larger in area. At around three months after its launch, Webb will be able to start its mission and scientists will be able to take the first images.

Space X, a private company owned by Elon Musk, made history with their spacecraft Dragon in December 2010 when they became the first privately developed spacecraft to re-enter from low-Earth orbit. Then in 2012, Dragon became the first private spacecraft to visit the International Space Station and under a \$1.6 billion contract with NASA, it makes multiple trips to the station to re-supply missions. In 2015, the Falcon 9 rocket became their first ground landing on Landing Zone 1, the first-ever orbital class rocket landing.

In future years, NASA hopes to use their technology to visit near-Earth asteroids and eventually for humans to walk on Mars. This will lead to a better understanding of the universe and our galaxy. It will also help scientists gain new knowledge.



Charles Duke from Apollo 16 on the moon landing site.



Sergei Krikalev, William Shepard, and Yuri Gidzenko were part of the first crew to operate on the ISS.

Graphic by **Sakshi Patel** / Creative Director.
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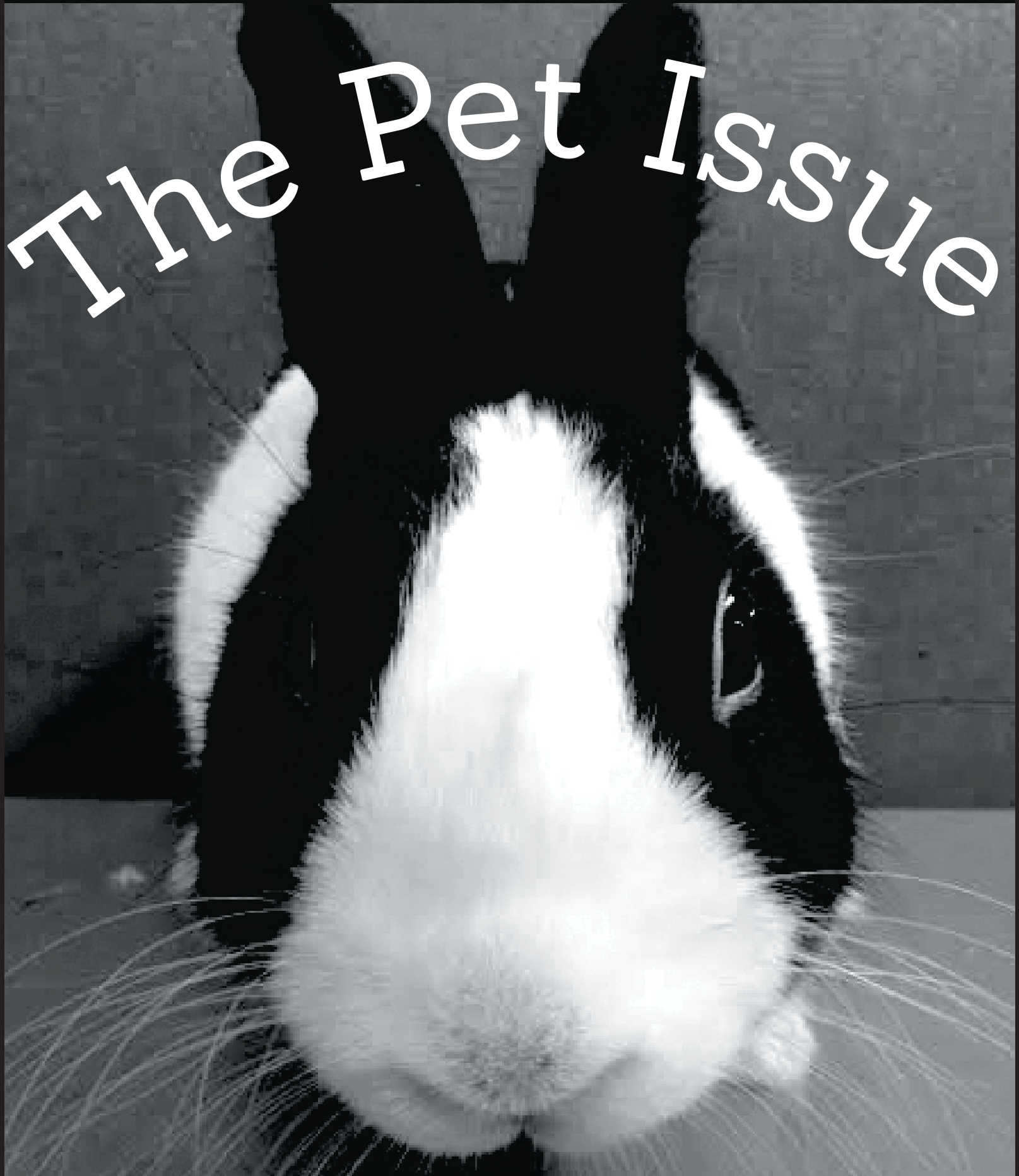
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The Westword
Supplement

The Pet Issue



The history of pets

Amelia Daube
Feature Editor

The first record of a domesticated animal as a pet was a dog's jawbone found in a cave in Iraq that dates back to 12,000 years ago. Some archeologists believe that dogs were actually first domesticated in East Asia, not Europe. The development of the relationship between man and dog has been beneficial for both species. Humans first started breeding dogs by killing dogs that were particularly aggressive. This left only the compassionate ones to breed and so on. These dogs kept the early settlements clean of human excrement and other types of waste. Humans were vulnerable to predators like wolves, and other wild animals, which the presence of tame dogs could chase away or warn by barking. One of the oldest pure breeds is the Greyhound. It was even mentioned in

the bible before the age of Jesus Christ. The greyhound played a very important role in running down hare and gazelle for food. They were also very popular as pets in Greece, which was documented by Assyrian artists.

Dogs began to be bred in Europe and Asia for hunting. They bred dogs specifically to detect, track, catch, and receive particular prey. Labrador retrievers were trained to catch fish in Newfoundland waters and beagles focused on foxes and rabbits. The retriever's primary role as a hunting dog was to find and return shot game to the hunter, which gave the breed its name. They can also be trained to follow hand, verbal, and whistle commands to find the prey. They are known to be extremely loyal and are one of the most popular dog breeds in America.

Surprisingly, there are more cats than dogs in the U.S. with 86 million owned cats compared to

78 million owned dogs. However, 39 percent of all American households own a dog compared to 33 percent of American households with cats. Scientists believe that cats have lived with people for more than 10,000 years. A study published in the research journal *Science* states that all domestic cats descended from a Middle Eastern wildcat, *Felis sylvestris*, which means "cat of the woods." Dogs were used to hunt, but cats were used as a sort of pest control. When people started storing grains and other foods, mice would invade the storage facilities. Cats would come in and eat the mice, leaving the actual food untouched. "We think what happened is that the cats sort of domesticated themselves," said Carlos Driscoll, one of the study authors, to the *Washington Post*.

Ancient Egypt is the most well known for their love of cats. The Egyptian goddess of love,

Bastet, has the head of the cat. If someone was convicted of killing a cat, they often received the death penalty as a punishment. The Egyptians even put as much care into burying a cat as they did a human. Archeologists found a cemetery in Beni-Hassan dedicated to cats. It contained over 300,000 cat mummies. Cats were also revered in Ancient Rome as a symbol of liberty. However, in Europe during the Middle Ages, cats became associated with witches and the devil. They were killed off by the thousands to "ward off evil." Ironically, the demise of cats brought the upsurge of rats that caused the plague.

One of the most important animals in the development of our civilization is the horse. Humans have had domesticated horses for about 6,000 years and since then have created more than 200 breeds. Archeologists have discovered that the Botai settlements in the Ak-

mola Province of Kazakhstan is where the earliest domestication of the horse took place. The use of horses quickly spread across Europe and Asia for transportation, agricultural work, and warfare. For instance, on the steppes of Ukraine, horses became a symbol of power. They were carved into tombs of kings and some graves contained polished stone maceheads shaped like horse heads.

Horseback riding became an Olympic sport in 1900 during the Summer Olympics in Paris, France. It disappeared until 1912, but has appeared at every Summer Olympic Games since. The current Olympic equestrian disciplines are Dressage, Eventing, and Jumping.

Over time, pets have evolved from hunters and helpers to cuddly companions. Pets have always been and always will be an important part of our lives.

Pets who made history



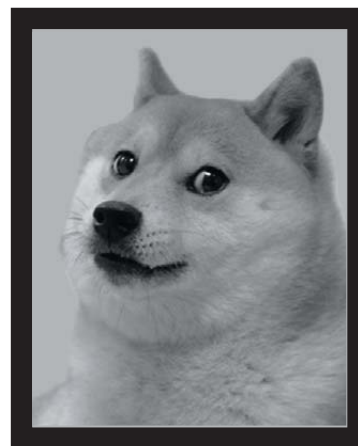
**Sunny
Obama**

Sunny was introduced to the public world on August 19, 2013 on Michelle Obama's Instagram account.



Lassie

According to *The Saturday Evening Post*, Pal, the original dog who played Lassie had "the most spectacular canine career in film history."



**Kabosu
(aka Doge)**

This famous pup resides in Japan with its owner, Atsuko Sato, a kindergarten teacher. Sato adopted Kabosu in 2008 from an animal shelter.



**Clifford the
Big Red Dog**

Norman Bridwell, the Clifford's illustrator, named the dog after his wife's imaginary friend she had when she was a child.

Cat lady or dog's best friend?

Daniela Paredes
Staff Writer

One of today's greatest conflicts in society is the contention between dogs and cats, and who is the better companion. Although some enjoy the company of both, many tend to have a preference or inclination toward one or the other. Both furry creatures can make fantastic companions, and both have pros and cons. But who is the "better" pet?

According to the ASPCA, approximately 70 million to 80 million dogs and 74 million to 96 million cats are owned in the United States. Here,

cats seem to be predominant in quantity. However, the percentage of households that own dogs is greater with around 37 to 47 percent of households owning dogs and 30 to 37 percent owning cats. An article by *Animal Planet* argues, nevertheless, that cats are far better than dogs. Among their reasons, they state that "cats smell better than dogs," due to their "self-grooming" nature and superb hygienics. Conversely, an article by the *Behavior Education Network* believes that dogs are often preferred because their "social organization and communicative behaviors are much more similar to ours than

are those of cats."

It is true that the matter is one that is subject to much debate. "[Cats are] much cuter. They do not need much providing for," said Nasrin Nasir ('20). Many agree that dogs can be quite the handful, and according to a report by the ASPCA, their maintenance is also indubitably more costly. It could cost one well over a hundred dollars more on an annual scale to care for a dog than for a cat, an amount that could easily add up over the years when considered from an economical point of view. This also requires more time and dedication in the process.

Other students affirm that

dogs are much more affectionate and easygoing when compared to cats. "I prefer dogs because they are so playful, cute, and caring," said Ahnecia Edouard ('20). As reported by *Cesar's Way* writer Jon Bastian, scientists have determined that there is a single, but not surprising, case between humans and dogs in which the interaction can lead to the simultaneous and mutual release of oxytocin the hormone that stimulates bonding — and that is the interaction between humans and dogs.

Dogs are often called "man's best friend," and with good reason. It is important to point out

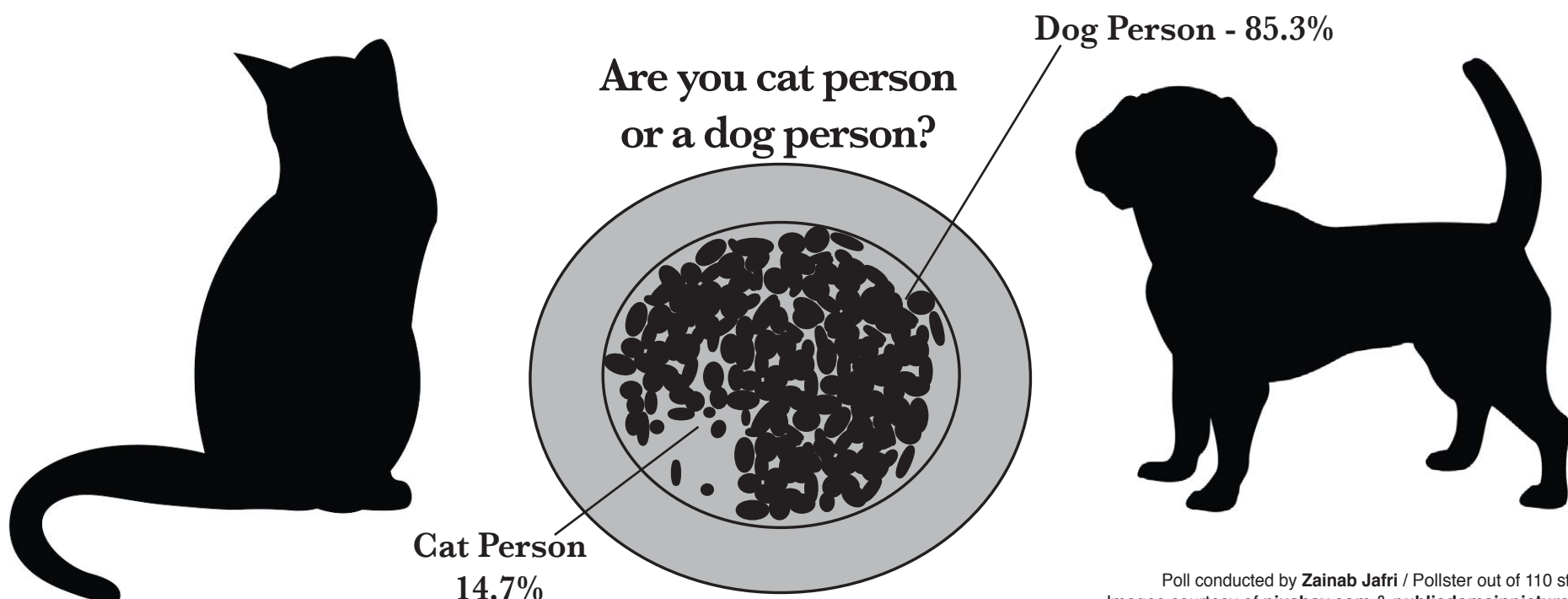
what training can do for a dog. For example, it can teach a canine how to protect their owner, his or her home, and alert those around them if their health is at stake. However, they also require daily bouts of exercise regardless of weather or other circumstances, and they often chew on a variety of indoor appliances and furniture. Cats, on the other hand, have a more independent, "detached" nature and are not always in need of such constant care. This allows people who go away a lot to have a companion. Nevertheless, just like dogs, they have a few cons the likes of which include clawing, shedding, and occasional vomiting.

CATS

- 70 percent of a cat's life is spent sleeping.
- A group of cats is called a clowder.
- Cats can not taste sweetness.
- The world's largest cat is just over four feet long.
- Abraham Lincoln kept four cats in the White House.
- Cats use their whiskers to determine which spaces they can fit through.
- Cat owners are 17 percent more likely to have a graduate degree.

DOGS

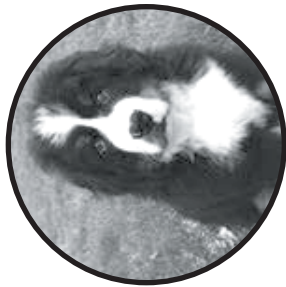
- Dogs have wet noses because it helps them absorb chemicals from scents.
- A dog's sense of smell is 10,000 times stronger than a humans.
- Labradors are the most popular breed in the U.S.
- Dogs have at least 18 muscles in each ear.
- Dogs can hear four times the distance of a human.
- Dogs can recognize more than 150 words.
- Dogs do not only see in black and white, they can also see blue and yellow.



Poll conducted by **Zainab Jafri** / Pollster out of 110 students.
Images courtesy of **pixabay.com** & **publicdomainpictures.com**.

Petstagrams on the rise

Recently, Instagrams centered around one’s pets have become more and more popular. Westhill students, adopting the trend, have started their own Petstagrams with adorable pictures and creative captions to go with. On the left, Mary Troy (’17) introduces her dog Rory, who claims to be the “official party pup and frat hound,” as stated in her Instagram biography. Next, Caitlin Cooney (’17) shows off her Mountain dog, Bear. Bear has received quite the fandom with a whooping 3,385 followers! Representing the cat-lovers is Ben Freedman (’17) and his 4 cats named Poppy, Kimba, Taffy, and Coco. The last is Lizzie Ruffles (’17) and her dog Spice. In her Instagram biography, Spice describes herself as a “lil chweenie gal livin it up in CT.”



@bear.the.bmd

“My family has always been in love with the Bernese Mountain dog breed. They are so family friendly so we finally decided to get one last spring. We all fell in love with [Bear] the second we saw him! He loves people and is really good at giving paw for a treat. We made the Instagram to capture his cutest moments and show his progression from puppy to dog.” - Caitlin Cooney (’17)

was 11 and she
s count on her to
even though she
(’17)



Model on the gram



Warm enough to
play outside!!



Best part of snow days:
not being able to leave
your house



#tongueouttuesday
and
big smiles for this
blizzard!!



Modeling the snow in
the snow



I tried swimming for the
first time and LOVED it



Doing last minute
summer work is draining



I had such a great party
with my favorite people...
and this great cookie



Just got hired as uber
driver!! Rate me 5 stars



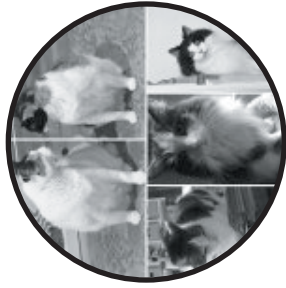
Happy Halloween
everybody!!



Not too happy about my
new accessory for the
next week



Lacrosse games are
my prime!! Soaking up
some sun and getting



@freedmanfelines

“Poppy is the star, he is a real people person. Kimba pretty much follows my mom around. She likes basking in the sun and is very small but luxurious looking. Then we have two cats who are sisters, Taffy and Coco. Taffy has slight OCD so she cleans herself whenever anyone pets her. Coco is very obese but super cute and soft and likes to chew on the tops of pineapples.” - Ben Freedman (’17)



The thirst is real
ft. Poppy



Cuz we are sistas, we
stand together



#art



ALL FIVE!



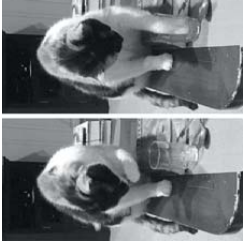
Three musCATeers



Poppy wishes you a
prosperous New Years



When Poppy finds out
it's time for pie. Happy
Thanksgiving!



Why you can't leave
water out at the
Freedman house. #taffy



Lazy Sunday (or if you're
Coco, everyday)

@the

“We rescued Spice
was love at first sight
combination of a sea
stuffed animals that
she would always
We created her Ins
brighten someone



when you hear some
surprising news



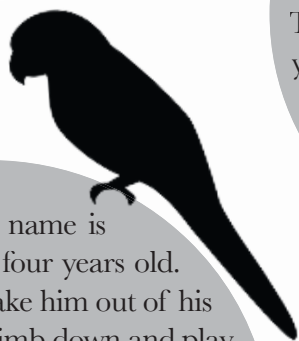
just hangin out



fleek

Peculiar pets

When you hear someone talk about their pet, your mind usually thinks of the common house pets, such as dogs or cats. When people say they own chickens, birds, or horses, it can come as a bit of a shock. Because these animals are less common amongst American households, most people do not know about the process of taking care of these types of animals. *The Westword* spoke to a few students that own unusual pets and what the care-taking process is like.



"My bird's name is Nico, and he is four years old. 'Usually I like to take him out of his cage so that he can climb down and play around. He also squeaks so it does sound like he is singing sometimes. For maintenance purposes, I will usually just change his water and change his food which is a seed mix. If he wants a snack I will give him an almond to eat.'"

- Sophie Caceres ('17)

"My chick-en's name is Belle, which means beautiful in French. She is a Delaware chicken, which are critically endangered at the moment and we got her when she was three days old. Taking care of chickens is not very hard, you just have to give them a safe place so that the other animals do not get to them. They also need fresh water, food, and of course love."

-Kiley Watson ('17)



"[My horses] live outside with a run-in shed that they choose to go in and out of, I usually brush and bathe them to keep them clean and I feed them hay and grain. Gambler is 21 years old and Earl is 15."

-Simone Kenny ('17)



Images courtesy of pixabay.com.
Briefs by **Hannah Nadelson** / Reporter.

Teacher's pets

Malibu



Owner: Ms. Jeffries
Breed: Black lab
Age: 5.5 years old

"Malibu is the most loyal and loving dog. Her favorite thing to do is to come to school to hang out with students or run in the mud!"

Jack



Owner: Ms. Jeffries
Breed: Toy Fox Terrier mix
Age: 8 years old

"Jack is 10 pounds of bark! His favorite activity is begging for food from students!"

Belle and Scout



Owners: Ms. Tobin and Mr. Pereira
Breed: American Staffordshire Terrier/ Border Collie/ Greyhound/ Wolf mix and Treeing Walker Coonhound/ American Staffordshire Terrier mix
Age: 1 and 10 years old

"Belle peers quizzically at the camera while Scout yawns, because nothing his little sister does is worthy of note. Nothing."

Photos contributed by **Ms. Jeffries** & **Ms. Tobin**.



Agriscience animals in action

Guilmar Valle

Reporter

When someone thinks of the Agriscience program, they tend to think of taking care of dogs, having fun with cute animals, and taking in its majestic coy fish pond. While that may be partially true, there is actually a lot of thought and effort that goes into taking care of the animals, and in turn, the program. The Agriscience program was kind enough to let *The Westword* see the program and the work they do first hand.

The first stop was the small animal room. As it was lunch time, most of the cages were being cleaned by the students. In the small animal room there is everything from rabbits, guinea pigs and mice, to snakes and birds. With the vast amount of smaller animals kept in the building, one could not help but wonder how they all get taken care of. Ms. Campbell, an Agriscience teacher, informed us that “[The animals] are checked on every single day, and that the kids clean the animals and their cages twice a week,” said Ms. Campbell. Some of the daily routines include cleaning out the animals’ cages and replacing their bedding and food when necessary. When students have a school break or go on summer vacation, some students from the program volunteer to bring the animals to their home to be taken care of. In fact, the animals have even been adopted by students on a few occasions.

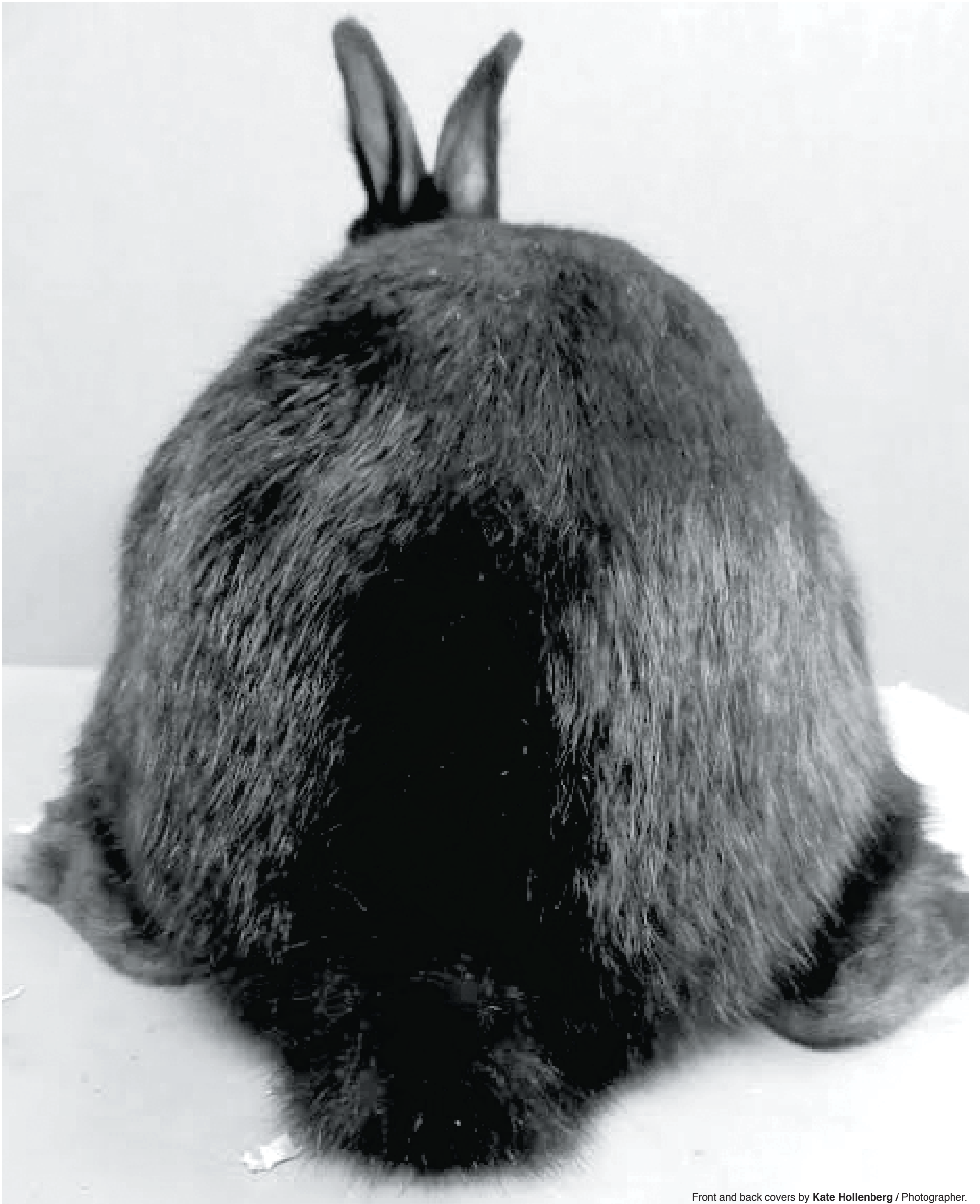
In the marine lab, there was a large variety of fish in the tanks, such as the

Damselfish, Tomato Clowns, Pajama Fish, Gobies, and Clown Fish. Some fish, such as Goliath Tigerfish, Vampire Tetra, and Snakehead Fish can be very territorial, and can bite, kill, and eat other fish, so these fish are kept apart. Taking care of all of the different kinds of fish appeared to be a very difficult challenge. Most of the aforementioned fish are very delicate and need to be kept in very specific conditions in regards to temperature, pH level, salinity, and even the light they are exposed to. Without taking great care in keeping these factors consistent, the fish may die off.

If a dog is ever seen on the Westhill campus during school hours, it is most likely that they are part of the well-known program at Agriscience program called Doggie Day Care. According to Mrs. Cascio, an Agriscience office administrator, there are around 15 to 20 dogs currently in Doggie Day Care. As one can imagine, there are a lot of dogs present at Doggie Day Care, so how does the Agriscience program take care of them all? “We walk the dogs, groom them, and take care of them just like a regular dog care service,” said Karla Servin (’19). True to its name, Doggie Day Care is just like a regular dog day care service, but what does the behind the scenes work like? Cleaning takes place on Tuesdays. The cages are wiped out, the water is refilled, laundry is done, the floors are swept, and the tubs get disinfected.

All in all, the Agriscience program has a loving passion for all of its animals, from fish, mice, dogs, and everything in between.





Front and back covers by **Kate Hollenberg** / Photographer.

Farewell Figluizzi

Lexi Bocuzzi
Reporter

Ms. Camille Figluizzi, beloved principal of Westhill, will be retiring at the end of this year. June will mark the end of her 19 year term as head of the Westhill community. As her long career comes to a close, we take the time to reminisce about her time here.

Although each of the teachers and students have a unique relationship with Ms. Figluizzi, there seems to be one unanimous agreement; she is a great person and principal. She has not only impacted the school in such a positive way, but she has also created a very beneficial environment conducive for learning at the school. According to the teachers at Westhill, Ms. Figluizzi is a very good boss because of the respect that she has for her employees in every area of their work. "She is a great boss because she is an advocate for her staff. Ms. Figluizzi acknowledges her teachers as experts in their field, and works with us and for us to

ensure our expertise is recognized and respected," said English teacher Mrs. Guerrero. She is also very supportive of the Westhill community, and works tirelessly to help everyone have the best learning and working environment possible.

Ms. Figluizzi has also had a significant positive impact on the school as a whole. She headed quite a few initiatives and many technology related programs. The implementation of student WiFi in particular has had an enormous effect on how students learn, as they can now use it to aid in research and online communication among themselves and with their teachers. Ms. Figluizzi also supported the implementation of many new clubs and teams during her time here including the Westhill Feminism Club and Best Buddies. She has also played a huge role in making

the school a more inclusive place through her support of the "All- Gender Restrooms" and helping the school host the first Rainbow Ball in support of the LGBTQ community. Some senior students who were on the School Governance Council really enjoyed the Freshmen Parent's Night with her in August.

She is always willing to help make each student's high school experience the best possible, and allow them to reach their highest potential. "She offered to let the school fund Cooking for Charity Club, which was huge. Before that we had to fund it from our own pockets which was getting hard since ingredients and

supplies are really expensive," said Nicole Somerstein ('17). Her charity is one of the things that staff and students will all miss most about her. "Her morning announcements, birthday shout-outs and school spirit make the school and its environment special," said Spanish teacher Mr. Diaz.

Ms. Figluizzi also has a very positive and personal relationship with teachers and students. "We relate well to each other. We are about the same age, our kids are about the same age. We 'get' each other as not only professionals but as people," said math teacher Ms. Manning. Having a principal and boss who you can be friends with not only makes working easier, but also makes it more fun.

Figluizzi makes sure to interact individually with each of her students. "She really cares about the students. Westhill is a huge environment but she really makes an effort to get to know everybody by name and make

them feel appreciated here," said Somerstein.

Students and teachers alike also have many fond memories of Ms. Figluizzi's time here at Westhill. These include the many events and school fundraisers she was a part of, and least well known, but arguably most important, the small thoughtful and fun moments that they shared with her. "I told her I was pregnant with both of my daughters. She was genuinely excited for me and always checked in to make sure I was doing well," said Mrs. Guerrero about her favorite memory with Ms. Figluizzi.

Ms. Figluizzi has set some very high expectations amongst students and teachers for the new incoming principal. They are looking for someone who will be supportive and appreciative of the staff and students, while also being an excellent leader. The teacher's are hoping that the new principal can help continue the environmental changes of increased discipline, more cleanliness, and better relationships between students and teachers.



WESTHILL THROUGHOUT

Ms. Figluizzi has been the principal of Westhill High School since 1998. Since then there have been numerous additions to the school. All of these additions have been made under her authority, and brought new and positive things to the school.

2003



Our Agriscience program is continuously growing. This program and building are able to reach out-of-district students who wish to attend Westhill and pursue a career in multiple aspects of agriscience or animal studies. Students have the opportunity to work in environments that have the proper work space and tools to help them achieve their goals.

2006



Westhill received the beneficial grant 'Project Opening Door' in 2006. This grant led to other recognitions for Westhill, the most recent being that we continue to qualify as a school that administers the most AP exams in Connecticut. Westhill is also recognized as a school that has non-traditional AP test takers. This means that students who take CP classes also take a range of Honors and AP classes. Westhill has won an award for being amongst the most rigorous high schools in the state of Connecticut in the years Figluizzi has been here.

2004



Before there was a front field for soccer, lacrosse, and field hockey, there was a large area of grass. Having a stadium built there with bleachers encouraged more fans to come support our teams. The girl's softball team are able to have their own field space for practice. Last year, they were able to purchase a fence for their outfield. The team has made their way to multiple championships and currently hold the most titles for the school.

2007



The additions of the Freshman building and gym have been great improvements. In the new buildings there is both air conditioning and heating, as well as updated science labs and more lockers. It has become a great space for the freshmen class to adapt to the new high school experience. The Freshman gym has been a great addition, by adding new offices for the Athletic and Health Department head, more locker rooms and a gym for wrestling, gymnastics, volleyball, basketball, and daily gym classes. It provides more room and is easier for multiple events to happen at once.

FIGLUIZZI FUN FACTS:
(PROVIDED BY MS. OBAS)

1. HER ALTER EGO WOULD BE JLO.
2. SHE COMES FROM A FAMILY
OF ALL GIRLS.

3. SHE IS A RUNNER.
4. SHE HAS TWO KIDS WHO
WENT TO WESTHILL.

FIGLUIZZI YEARS

In addition to new buildings and renovations, Ms. Figluizzi has been the principal of Westhill High School for many memorial highlights as well. From a movie being filmed at Westhill to new technology installed, she has been a strong, consistent leader for the school.

2009



In 2009, Director Wes Craven and Rogue Media Pictures filmed scenes for the movie *My Soul To Take* at Westhill. Wes Craven is best known for his work on *The Nightmare on Elm Street* franchise, the *Scream* franchise and on *The Hills Have Eyes*. *My Soul To Take* is a supernatural horror film and was released on October 8, 2010.

2015



In February 2015, Westhill and Stamford High received a combined 34 carts of new Google Chromebooks for the schools. Westhill received 15 individually. The District Technology Upgrade To Support Transition To New Standard Grant, gave Westhill and Stamford High \$351,400 to invest in the Chromebooks. The purpose of the grant was to provide financial support to districts for changes and upgrades that allowed them to meet the new standard for education.



In 2014, Westhill was recognized as the 1549th out of 21,000 schools from all fifty states by the U.S. News' list of Best High Schools. Westhill was awarded a silver medal which means Westhill has very high test scores but low college readiness. Only 10.9 percent of schools are rated as Silver. It was also ranked as 35th in the state of Connecticut out of 193. The AP® participation rate at Westhill High School is 44 percent, which is higher than most other schools within the state.

2014



The Connecticut Drama association has been a big part of Westhill Theatre since the school opened in 1972. In 2016, Westhill's production of *The Twilight Zone: The Shelter*, was awarded as one of the two most outstanding schools in the festival. As a result, the show proceeded to the New England Drama Festival and presented their play for all of New England.

2016

5. SHE LOVES THE COLOR PINK.
6. SHE IS ORIGINALLY FROM THE BRONX.

7. SHE LOVES SENSIBLE SHOES.
8. AS A BOSS, SHE KNOWS HOW TO TAKE A JOKE.

STUDENT AND TEACHER MEMORIES OF MS. FIGLUZZI

My favorite memory of Ms. Figluizzi was her presence at the soccer games. Everytime she was there, she had a smile on her face and she applauded our performance, even if we lost.

- Franke Dente ('17)



If you ever need to talk to Ms. Figluizzi, she always welcomes you. She welcomes you with open arms and snacks!

- Anneliese Ottinger ('19)



My favorite memory is when Ms. Figluizzi showed up to the parking lot as my friends and I were decorating our cars and parking spots for the first day of school.

- Paige Sottosanti ('17)



My favorite memory of Ms. Figluizzi is how open and happy she was to have conversations with me. It is comforting to know she is willing to get to know all of her students.

- Carissa Larruiz ('19)



My favorite memory of Ms. Figluizzi is her school spirit. She goes to most of the sports games to cheer on Westhill. It is reassuring knowing she makes time to support her school.

- Blake Newcomer ('17)

I do not have a memory per say but I can say this about her, whenever I needed something or needed someone she was always there for me. She has been an extremely supportive principal and I do not know what I would have done without her! I have learned a lot from her and I am very proud to have taught at Westhill under her leadership.

- Ms. Tintle



About eight years ago, Ms. Figluizzi and I started the teacher assistant program. At the time I only had one student, Margo Teeters. Margo, Ms. Figluizzi, and I tried to change the typical jobs of teaching assistant into being in class tutors. Ms. Figluizzi encouraged me to write a grant and it went through. It is nice to have a supportive boss.

- Mr. Weintraub



Briefs by **Kelsey Kopec** / Staff Writer.
Photos by **Ryan Murace** / Media Manager.

72 Hours: Without school

Column by Courtney Xu



For 72 hours this month, I stepped away from the classroom. While it did not happen on purpose, it was a memorable experience for me because I have not been absent this year.

On Tuesday, March 14, a snowstorm caused a school cancellation and on Wednesday and Thursday I was away on a field trip for *The Westword*, so I was not present in school for most of the week.

On the snow day, I was able to catch up on sleep, but I was not as productive as I would have been on a school day.

As a student who takes school seriously, I was nervous that I would miss important

lessons. I thought that when I returned from the trip, I would be spending the weekend and the start of the following week catching up on the work that I had missed. After all, I had missed 14 hours of school.

As a second semester senior who has already committed to a college next year, my purpose for coming to school is not to get good grades, but really to learn more about things that interest me, develop my inquisitiveness, and to inspire independent thinking. I also completed most of my graduation requirements in my previous 3 years of high school, so this year I was lucky enough to be able

to take classes that, for the most part genuinely interested me. In other words, I do not dread school as much as the stereotypical teenager does, so I was just a bit uncomfortable with missing more than 1 day of school. I felt as if I would be at a disadvantage to my fellow peers who were able to gain the full benefits from every lesson.

There was not a point where school completely left my mind on the trip, especially because my Powerschool app continuously notified me of teachers marking me absent.

On Friday, my first school day back after the trip, I was surprised to find out that I did not miss as much as I had

anticipated. In some of the classes where I was slightly ahead from doing classwork at home, I found myself either on the same pace as my classmates, or fallen behind. I did have to do extra work over the weekend to make up for some of the work I missed, but not as much as I was worried about. However, even though I felt as though I did not miss much, I will never be able to know how much information I did not acquire as a result of missing school.

At the end of my 72 hours, I thought my experiment was worth my time, because while I would not go out of my way to miss school again, I always

wondered how detrimental missing school would be, and now my question has been answered. Of course, my results would probably have been different if, for example, I took classes that I was not the most passionate about and therefore was more eager about missing. It may have also been helpful that the snow day pushed many lesson plans back; if I had missed school days where the plan for the week had been followed, I may have missed much more work. For anyone in my position, I recommend only missing school if you believe the field trip or days off are really worth your time.

Rolling out the red carpet

Two students review Academy award-winning movies of 2017

On February 26, 2017, the 89th Academy Awards aired. Some highlights include Damien Chazelle breaking the record for youngest person to win the Best Director award, Michael J. Fox appearing from the famed "DeLorean time machine" to present an award with Seth Rogen, Sunny Pawar, the child actor from the movie *Lion*, and Jimmy Kimmel reenacting a scene from *The Lion King*, and, most notably, *La La Land* getting mistakenly called on stage for the Best Picture award. Overall, the Academy Awards were memorable to say the least, thanks to all of the amazing films and talented people who were recognized. Since the nominations were announced, it has been our mission to watch every movie in the best picture category and many of the performances in other categories. Below are reviews of the winners in the categories we feel well-versed in.

Best Adapted Screenplay: *Moonlight*, Barry Jenkins

Moonlight was originally a play written by Tarell McCraney titled, *In the Moonlight Black Boys Look Blue*.

It was highly autobiographical, as Tarell McCraney grew up in Liberty City, Miami, with a mother who was addicted to crack while dealing with the fact that he was gay. In turn, parallels can be drawn between McCraney and Chiron, the main character in the film. The director, Barry Jenkins, adapted the play into a movie. The play was also personal to Jenkins who was also raised by a crack-addicted mother in Liberty City. This film makes Jenkins the third black person to win an Oscar for an adapted screenplay.



Best Original Screenplay: *Manchester by the Sea*

Manchester by the Sea was written and directed by Kenneth Lonergan. Much to my surprise, the story is more expansive than what the trailer lets on. The screenplay is profound and does not follow any clichés of movies where a parent dies. The script is heavily dependent on character development rather than action and major plot points, which makes the movie a bit slow and probably not for everyone. However, the screenplay is a good representation of what family means and how ordinary people overcome extraordinary tragedy.



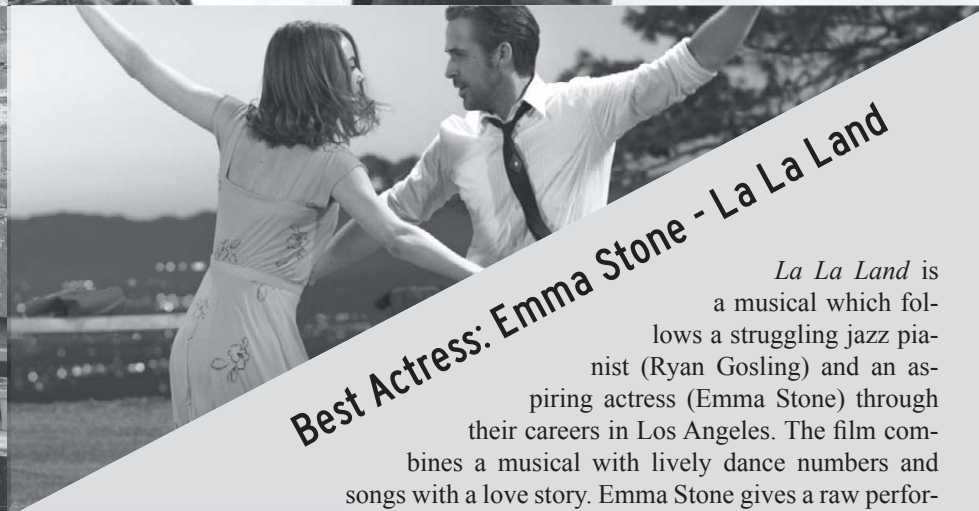
Best Supporting Actress: *Viola Davis - Fences*

Viola Davis became a household name after her role in *The Help*. Audiences will be captivated with her work in *Fences*, a project that was originally a play written by August Wilson. The movie revolves around a 1950s household in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania belonging to garbage man Troy Maxson (Denzel Washington) and his wife, Rose Maxson (Viola Davis). Troy is a man who feels he missed out on glory as a baseball player, as he was too old to play in the major leagues when they started admitting black players. Throughout the movie, Rose maintains her role as a strong woman keeping the family together, even through Troy's struggles. Davis gives one of her best performances, so convincing that one forgets actress and becomes truly immersed in the story.



Best Actress: *Emma Stone - La La Land*

La La Land is a musical which follows a struggling jazz pianist (Ryan Gosling) and an aspiring actress (Emma Stone) through their careers in Los Angeles. The film combines a musical with lively dance numbers and songs with a love story. Emma Stone gives a raw performance, showing the vulnerability and insecurity that the entertainment business instills in inexperienced actors. She also performs several dance sequences and songs with a seemingly effortless quality. Ryan Gosling also gives an impressive performance as a very talented jazz musician, who holds his own as a dancer and singer next to Stone. The film is visually stunning, from elaborate sets to the beautiful Los Angeles skyline.



To view these movie trailers, go to thewestwordonline.com.
Photos courtesy of vox.com, huffingtonpost.com, avclub.com & la.curbed.com.

Briefs by [Melanie Gorski](#) & [Jenny Gorski](#) / News & Supplement Editors.

LION REVIEWS ROAR WITH APPROVAL

Sakshi Patel
Creative Director

Lion, directed by Garth Davis, is a biographical film depicting the true story of a young boy named Saroo Brierley, who is separated from his family in India during a time before social media or Google. Saroo (pronounced “Sheru” in Hindi, meaning “Lion”) and his older brother, Guddu, try to make ends meet by scavenging whatever goods they could find in order to sustain their impoverished lives in rural India.

One thing led to another and Saroo accidentally ends up alone on a train to Calcutta, where he was required to face many problems on his own. Twenty years

later, after being adopted by an Australian family, Saroo set out on a journey to find his real birth mother and family with the help of Google Earth.

Davis captures the true feelings of distress and fear that the actual Saroo must have felt through his minimal-dialogue filming style. The audience is able to understand Saroo’s vulnerability as a six-year-old that is lost in a country of nearly 1.5 billion people, unable to read or write because of his impoverished roots. Young Saroo faced many conflicts and predators but appears to triumph and escape using his sense of charisma and wit.

The movie progresses with time as young Saroo, now 26 years old, played by Dev Pa-

tel, who has been adopted by an Australian couple, John and Sue Brierley, played by David Wenham and Nicole Kidman. The couple add to their family when they adopt another boy from India named Mantosh, who suffers from mental health problems. Older Saroo decides to take a class in Hotel Management in Melbourne where he falls in love with a fellow classmate, Lucy.

However, Saroo’s thoughts begin to flood with memories of his young life and he decides to find his real family using the newly developed technology, Google Earth. Davis’s ability to cast individuals with a sense of professionalism and charisma adds to the film, making it more realistic for the audience. Sunny

Parwar, who played young Saroo, is new to acting, and this is his first film. He was cast not knowing any English whatsoever. However, through the help of a translator and time with the director, he was able to encapsulate the true emotions of a young boy that was just separated from his family. Parwar’s role as young Saroo definitely makes the audience fall in love with him and his character even more.

Dev Patel received an Academy Award nomination for his performance in this film. He was able to epitomize the situation that the real Saroo Brierley must have been in by spending eight months preparing for the role. He did so by going all around India, visiting orphanages and the

real people from the film. All the commitment that the characters put into the film was worth it, as it received an Academy Award nomination for Best Picture.

The film will make you laugh at Saroo’s charm and cry at the fact that a mother-son bond was broken. The entire movie was built on the idea of whether Saroo will ever find his family again, which is what kept the audience on edge and kept them wanting more. This is a film that touched on the importance of how thousands of children go missing in India every year, and some of them are not as lucky as Saroo Brierley. Ultimately, Garth Davis was able to raise awareness for this growing problem through his production of the film.

DEV PATEL

ROONEY MARA

NICOLE KIDMAN

DAVID WENHAM

PRIYANKA BOSE



AS

SAROO BRIERLEY

AS

LUCY

AS

SUE BRIERLEY

AS

JOHN BRIERLEY

AS

KAMLA

Photos courtesy of movies.ndtv.com, variety.com, zimbio.com & vervemagazine.in.

Record review of the month



Starboy by The Weeknd

by Paige Savitt



Canadian artist Abel Tesfaye, otherwise known as The Weeknd, released his third studio album, *Starboy*, on November 25, 2016. *Starboy* is similar to his last album, *Beauty Behind the Madness*. The album has 18 songs each one different from the other.

The Weeknd started off on YouTube in 2011, releasing a couple of singles. Tesfaye had a rough childhood, suffering from drug and alcohol addictions in high school and through college. His stage name, The Weeknd, stems from one weekend when Tesfaye and his cousin left and never came home. Eventually he was signed to Republic Records, and then his own record company, XO.

Beauty Behind the Madness was The Weeknd’s second album and became his first number one

album in the United States. This was The Weeknd’s perfect introduction to the world of pop, embracing love, and a luxurious lifestyle, he has earned himself a permanent spot on the charts. I find this album to be fairly similar to *Starboy*, but that is not in any way negative. *Beauty Behind the Madness* is a perfect album with some hit tracks, and *Starboy* followed the same pattern.

Starboy however is unique by the fact that he features Daft Punk, a French electronic-dance group, on two of the hit tracks. “Starboy” was the first song released from the album, the title track, and it hit the charts immediately. It was something different from The Weeknd. Because of the addition of Daft Punk, it created a new sound for his fans. The Weeknd also features Lana

Del Rey, Kendrick Lamar, and Future on songs throughout the album. With the exception of Kendrick Lamar, each featured artist appears in two songs.

Fourteen of the eighteen tracks are about The Weeknd’s devotion to a woman, while the remaining four (“Starboy,” “Reminder,” “Sidewalks,” and “Ordinary Life”) are scattered randomly throughout the album. “Sidewalks” is one of the better songs on the album, especially because of the message behind it. “Sidewalks saved my life,” is part of the chorus, referencing the fact that Abel and Kendrick had tough childhoods, and had to get themselves off the streets. This track is about the journey from a less ideal lifestyle to fame and fortune. “Homeless to Forbes list,” is not one that you

would hear on the radio, which is good because this way it will stay unique and not overplayed.

“I Feel it Coming” is the last song on the album, which was inspired by house and 80s pop. It is one of the best songs on the album, also featuring Daft Punk, and adding a very different sound to mainstream pop music. I am extremely happy that he put this track at the end, because it ends the album so perfectly.

Another great track on the album is “A Lonely Night.” It has a cool electronic, soft, pop sound. This song is The Weeknd apologizing to a girl about the fact that she would believe they are anything more than a one night stand. “Baby girl I loved you on a lonely night, oh / it was the only time,” This song sounds extremely similar to

Michael Jackson’s music, who many people have compared The Weeknd to before.

Starboy is The Weeknd’s longest project, and so far his best. The Weeknd is unique because he does not necessarily write music for those who are in love, rather for those who are too afraid to be in love. “You’ve been scared of love and what it did to you.” Due to this new release, The Weeknd will be on tour, and headlining several music festivals this year. He will be at Firefly in Delaware, and Bonnaroo in Tennessee. I would not consider myself a fan of pop music, but The Weeknd definitely serves as an exception. I would rate *Starboy* a 4 out of 5. If you enjoyed any album by The Weeknd, I highly suggest seeing him live, and taking a listen to the entirety of *Starboy*.

SCATTERBRAIN

Spring into April break

Feeling bored? Check out these fun ways to spend your spring break.

Spring break is a well deserved break for both high school and college students. It is the last major break before the stressful time of finals. This makes spring break a crucial part of the year where students can unwind, so the stress of finals take over their life. Take a look at these ideas for things to do while you take your time off.



See friends: What most people look forward to when they think of spring break is hanging out with their friends and going out at night. What is great about spring break is that everyday is a Saturday, the best day of the week. Some fun activities are going to the movies, the mall, and sports games.

Sleep in: Everyone knows school starts too early and most kids are up late finishing work, so it is safe to say many students may be sleep deprived. Sleeping late is a great way to re-fresh and enjoy break and allows students to be ready for when school comes back.



Get a job: A week may not sound like a long time to have a job, for but for high school students, it is great to have a part time job. Many camps are open during the week for elementary school students, so there are many camp counselor positions open at Chelsea Piers, the Italian Center, and the JCC.

Sports: Most spring sports teams in high school do not get time off. Athletes will have practices most days, and possibly games. School sports do not get breaks, it is a grind until the season is over. Practices may even be longer than usual because there is no school, so students are prepared to have longer workouts.



Vacation: Going on vacation can be a wonderful way to get away from everything. Many people enjoy going down south to sit on the beach and relax. Skiing up north is always a great and exciting option for people who are looking for some thrills. If a major trip is not possible, try to go on a day trip somewhere, such as Cove Beach, New York City, or Six Flags.

Images courtesy of pixabay.com.
Briefs by **Michael Grafstein** / Staff Writer.



The Hungry Vikings

Column by Jake Dardis, Naresh Kumanduri & Ryan Hart

Shake Shack:

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

The three Vikings arrived in Darien after a long journey from Stamford to try the newly opened tavern, Shake Shack. After a journey in the dead of winter, our Vikings were eager to try the burgers that many raved about.

Our first Viking hobbled into the restaurant with his stomach roaring in excitement for the burger. Despite the excitement, he had to wait in a lengthy line, as many other Norsemen had the same idea to get burgers that day. Upon finally reaching the cashier, our Viking ordered a Smokeshack Burger, a Dr. Pepper and cheese fries, and

then took a seat with his fellow men. When his buzzer finally went off, his kind friend went to get his food, as he was recently wounded and could not retrieve his own things. The burger had a good amount of spice, as it had peppers to add to the flavor, but was also complimented by the bacon. The warm atmosphere of the place really made the whole meal enjoyable and our Viking would definitely return.

The second Viking strolled into the restaurant with his heart set on meat, and the double cheeseburger with shack-sauce delivered. The food was

served promptly, and although the server got his simple Nordic name wrong, he appreciated the fast service. The burger was top class, and the fries were unique, cut with ripples like the waves of the seas once conquered by our Vikings. To top it off, the milkshake was thick and filling. The Viking left with a full stomach and a desire to come back.

As the third Viking entered the shack, he was reminded of an American past time. The only other occasion when he had eaten this food was at Citi Field, the home of the soon-to-be World Series Champions.

He could not wait to order the Shake Shack specialty, a Shack-burger with fries and a vanilla shake. While anticipating the meal, our Viking arrived with a fellow Norseman visiting from the homeland. This was not the only surprise visit, however. This would be the Viking's first meal after his long slumber due to a tragic arrow to the knee during battle. As the Vikings caught up with each other and their recent raids and plunders, they were alerted that their meals were ready via a buzz, technology that dumbfounded the simple Vikings. They all rushed up to retrieve their

meals, except of course, for the recently wounded soldier, portraying a weakness frowned upon in the Viking community. The first bite into the burger stunned the third Viking. This greasy delicacy's tender patty, buttery bun, and heavenly sauce melted in his mouth, leaving him dismayed when he realized he had finished it so quickly. To finish the meal, our Viking downed the fries, dipping them in the milkshake, of course, and left the shack drowsy, prepared to enter a food coma.

After filling their bellies, the three Vikings departed back to their homes in Stamford, with

The Spanish national anthem has no words. If you keep a goldfish in a dark room, it will turn pale. Russia did not consider beer an alcohol until 2011.

FROM RUNWAY TO HALLWAY: SOPHII WALTON

My style inspiration definitely comes from just walking the streets of Manhattan and mixing that with "Cali swag." If you have ever been to New York City, there are so many beautiful people with different styles, which inspires me to throw many things together. By "Cali swag," I mean I follow many people from California and they have a unique, relaxed look to their style which I love.

My favorite places to shop are definitely Brandy Melville, Urban Outfitters, Pacsun, or thrift shops. One of my favorite thrift shops would be Buffalo Exchange. You would be amazed to see how many interesting pieces people do not want that you can turn into yours. I normally rip up my own jeans and other pieces of clothing. I strongly feel that my style is like "chill" mixed with hippie vibes. My style is a good mix of masculinity and femininity. Overall it is comfortable and not too much.



I admire celebrities that have unique style too. For example, I feel like I can relate to A\$AP Rocky's style in many ways because of where we come from and what we were brought up around. His style is the reason I go to the men's section to shop. I also admire Rihanna. She pulls off absolutely any look with the right kind of tone and jewelry. That is what I normally do. It is very easy to fall into the trends of others. So I love high knee boots, off the shoulder shirts, and ripped jeans. I always say "ripped jeans are a girl's best friend." Another huge thing for me is oversized jackets.

Usually when I am in school, I do not always "go all out." I have my days of sweatpants and L.L. Bean slippers. Other days I definitely come to school with a simple look. I feel the "Cali" look is more for the spring and summer which is soon approaching. I look at fashion and see it as a form of art. Many people get judged for being different but it is really the best thing to be original. To be able to express yourself through clothing and know that it is what you like and not everyone else is really special.

Photos contributed by **Sophie Walton**.

TO DO NEXT MONTH : APRIL

1st
April Fool's Day

Pull a fast one on your family members and friends today. Try a friendly, but not too crazy, practical joke.

12th
Grilled Cheese Day

Make a classic comfort food, grilled cheese for lunch or dinner today. Try and change it up too!

10th
National Siblings Day

Even though you and your siblings do not always get along, there are so many reasons to love them.

17th
Patriot's Day

Spend this day learning about the brave men and women who died to keep us safe.

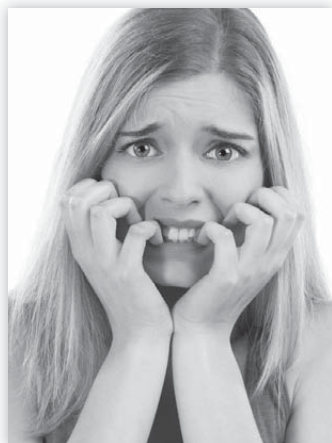
11th
National Pet Day

Pets are special to everyone who owns one. They bring joy to so many families so give them an extra treat today!

22nd
Earth Day

Try to do something to preserve our planet, like making a recycled craft for a friend or family member.

There is an opera house on the U.S.-Canada border that is in both countries. The katzenklavier was a musical instrument made out of cats.



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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...

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Driving Hours	We know of students from other driving schools that have needed to go to other towns to finish their driving hours. Some schools do not even offer in-car sessions on a regular basis!	We drive 7-days a week, all year long. You're assigned an instructor who's dedicated to providing you with the best driver education experience possible. Plus, we pick-up and drop off ANYWHERE locally.
Off-site Testing at the School	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.

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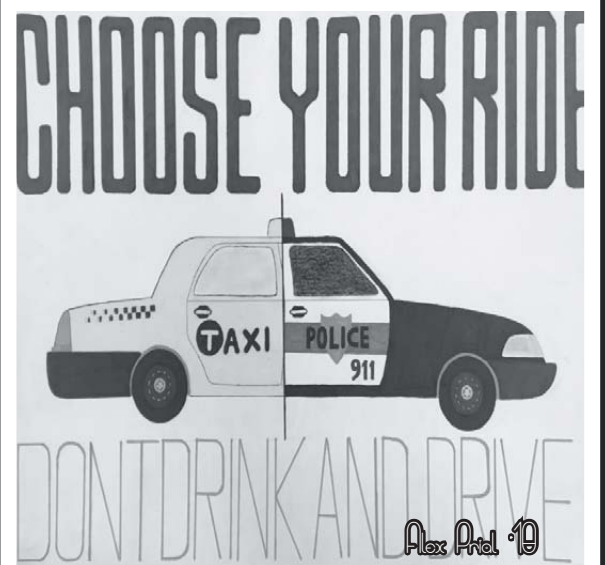
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EXPRESS



Uta Losynska '19



Phebe Whitworth '19



Amanda Friedman '19

Artist of the Month

Senior Michael Clark sat down with The Westword to discuss his passion for photography. Drawing inspiration from the world around him, Clark emphasizes self-expression in not just photography, but also many other mediums of art.

The Westword: How did you become interested in art?

Michael Clark: One of the main reasons I became interested in art is from the fashion scene. I just loved it. From there, I began to love photography, music and other art forms. Other than fashion, I think just a love for an individual's creativity and person's voice really drew me toward it.

TW: How would you describe your style?

MC: I do not really have a specific style, but I would say that my pictures are eerie, where it seems as if something is wrong with them. Think of it like this: not worldly, but definitely not "normal."

TW: What has influenced your style?

MC: Definitely skate and punk culture, but again, my style is always evolving based on my current mood or whatever I am enjoying looking or listening to at the time. Really, I do anything that I think looks good or that I enjoy doing or seeing.

TW: What medium do you like to work in?

MC: My medium of choice is photography.

TW: Did you teach yourself art?

MC: Yes, almost everything I do is self-taught. With the exception of some tips I have learned about the basics and technicalities of photography, everything is self-taught. Art is an expression of self, as well as aesthetics, so it can not necessarily be "taught."

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

MC: It sounds corny, but just be yourself. Other than having basic skills in order to get your ideas out there, art is an expression of self, so just do you.

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

MC: A goal for me is for people to get where I am coming from. I do not care if anyone likes my work, as long as they understand what I am doing, and that I am expressing myself and doing things that I love. Everyone likes attention and recognition, so I would be lying if I said I did not want that. Aesthetics are also important, even if it is an expression of self. I like to look at something that is pleasing.

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

MC: I do not think I would love to be in a museum. I like the idea of my work being framed or hung up in someone's house. I also like the idea of having a collection of my work in a book owned by someone. I am very interested in things like that, books and being in someone's house. I like when pieces work with each other, whether it be furniture, colors, and pure aesthetics. I do not know, I just love things that are pleasing to my eye and ears, whatever that may be, and I do not think I would get the same feeling if my work was in a museum.



Michael Clark

Where the puck does that come from?

JOHN NILSEN



Bear Kill er JoNils

Origin? I kind of brought [JoNils] upon myself. That is just because my first name is John and my last name is Nilsen so JoNils. It is easy to say and it is my Instagram name. The second one came from Nick Smigs, before the Jambo. He just put in the Purple Pack post and said 'Bear Killer' was my name and that has not stuck as much but people still use it.

Meaning? Bear Killer means I am kind of aggressive. I am one of the only kids on my team that really hits people. And JoNils, only people that really know me call me it. [Bear Killer] is cool in a way, because it is original.

Any funny stories? No not really, just the Jambo one. It was kind of a surprise that [Nick] used it because I had never heard it before and he just likes to call me Bear Killer. It is kind of weird. It is kind of sticking on, but people do not really call me that to my face.

NICK RICH



THE NICK RICH SHOW

Origin? It came about last year halfway through the season. My coach came into the locker room after a period and decided to start yelling at us about how we were not playing well, and we were playing selfish, so he told me that it was not the 'Nick Rich Show.' So that was where it caught on and the teams been calling me that ever since.

Meaning? To me it does not really mean much. The team likes it. To make fun of it, they call me 'The Show' sometimes. But it does not mean much, we all have our own little nicknames."

Any funny stories? After we won the state championship, we all got team jackets and we all put our nicknames on it and when coach saw 'The Nick Rich Show' on my jacket, he found it pretty funny.

CHRIS COMPOLATTARO



BRICK WALL

Origin? I am the goalie and nothing gets by me. It started last year during Jambo. I think Jacob Karell started it.

Meaning? It is just kind of cool. We all have a nickname and I am happy people think that I am that good, I guess.

Any funny stories? The only thing I can think of is that we all got our state championship jackets and we all got our nicknames on them. So that was kind of funny.

NICK SMERIGLIO



THE MILKMAN

Origin? I made it up myself when I was about 9 years old, I think. I made a Xbox profile at my friend Garrett Waldner's house. It made its revival, its big comeback, junior year on the hockey team. I started calling myself that again and it caught on somehow.

Meaning? There are a lot of meanings behind it. I used to bring chocolate milk to school every morning. Another thing is that the milkman always delivers; you know he can not let you down. Milkmen have also been known to be lady-killers, as well. I think it is cool. I am surprised it caught on mostly. I made it up myself. I did not think people would actually start using it.

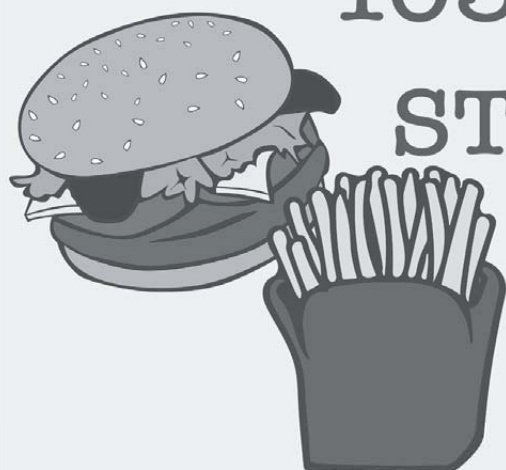
Any funny stories? One time I poured milk on my head because, what was the deal? Everett posted on our Instagram account, if we win Ruden Report team of the week by more than 30 votes, I will pour milk on my head. We did not win by 30 votes. We won though, so I poured milk on my head. Like a gallon. I drank a lot of it. It felt super awkward. It was in the shower... We left it on the bench to keep it cold in the ice rink and the coaches were like 'What the **** is this milk for?'

MISH MOSH

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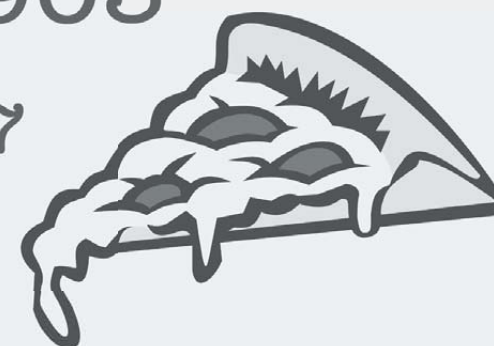
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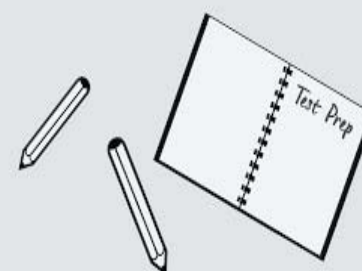


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Emma Jelliffe plays lax to the max



STICK WITH IT Jelliffe is always further improving herself when it comes to playing lacrosse. She works hard on and off the field, and hopes to keep playing lacrosse after graduation.

Marley Sklover
Reporter

Emma Jelliffe has been playing lacrosse ever since 7th grade and since then she has been working on her game to get better each and every day. Jelliffe's season has very strong hopes on to making it to states.

The Westword: When did you start playing lacrosse?

Emma Jelliffe: I started playing lacrosse in the seventh grade for the Stamford Youth Lacrosse Association.

TW: What is one of your proudest moments while playing lacrosse?

EJ: One of my proudest moments was at the end of season banquet last spring when I was awarded the Most Valuable Player award. I had no idea that I was going to be named MVP, so I was shocked and extremely happy. I also take a lot of pride in being a captain for this season, I am excited to be able to lead our team.

TW: What other sports do you play besides lacrosse?

EJ: I play field hockey in the fall, and then during the winter I

do various lacrosse clinics with teammates as well as our lacrosse conditioning. I try to run with my teammates as well, since we do a lot of that during the season.

TW: What is a huge underlying factor of the season?

EJ: I would say that nutrition is a huge factor in athletic performance. You need good nutrition in order to have energy and perform well. I have a good breakfast every morning, and try to make sure all of my meals have good protein. Of course, our team pasta parties also help keep the team eating well.

TW: How do you feel now that your experience in high school lacrosse is coming to an end?

EJ: After four years of playing lacrosse at Westhill it is sad that it has to come to an end, but I am excited for this season, especially being able to play alongside some of my best friends. I am lucky to have been a part of this team.

TW: Do you plan to continue playing lacrosse in college?

EJ: I hope to continue to play lacrosse in college in some form. Most likely I will try to play club lacrosse or intramural if it is of-

fered, depending on what school I go to and how good their program is I might even try to walk on to show my talent.

TW: What are your goals as captain this season?

EJ: As a captain I hope to see our team be the first Westhill Girls Lacrosse team to make it to states. We only need to win six games to qualify for states, and we have at least six winnable games on our schedule this year. I also hope to see the girls have fun with it. We have an amazing team this year.

TW: Do you idolize any athletes that are viewed as role models for your success?

EJ: My older brothers are all athletes and they have been role models that have shaped me into the athlete I am today. Competing with them to try to match their level when I was little definitely had an impact on who I am as an athlete.

TW: Who is your biggest rivalry that you hope to defeat this season?

EJ: Stamford High is definitely our biggest rivalry, as with most Westhill sports. They have beaten us the past couple of years so this year we are out for revenge!

Appel vaults to victory

Max Zussman
Reporter

Josh Appel is a dedicated pole vaulter, looking to improve upon himself and help lead Westhill's indoor and outdoor track teams. Josh is hoping to make nationals this year with a strong showing in his event for spring track. The Westword sat down with him to discuss his experience throughout his track career.

The Westword: So what events do you compete in?

Josh Appel: My main event is pole vault but I also competed in long jump freshman year

TW: So what were some of your goals this year, on a personal level, as well as a high competitor?

JA: My goal for indoor was to get back to the same height as last year which I surpassed to get a new personal record. I have always looked up to vaulters who had a Nationals bag, so for outdoor track, I would like to see if I

can make it all the way to nationals in the future.

TW: How have you been working and training to achieve your outdoor goal?

JA: For the whole entire winter I have been going to the Danbury Sports Dome twice a week for practice.

TW: What do you do to maintain your endurance after the season is over?

JA: Year round I do tricking, similar to parkour, and I am in the gym at least 3 times a week to train for pole vaulting and for Spartan races.

TW: What exactly are the Spartan races?

JA: They are obstacle course races. The ones that I do are usually 13 to 15 miles long with [around] 60 long obstacles, such as a spear throw, barbed wire crawl, carrying heavy objects for long distances, balance obstacles, etc. They are designed to test your teamwork skills and mental durability.

TW: When did you first start pole vaulting?

JA: Freshman year in the spring.

TW: Was it difficult starting off this season?

JA: It is not that it is difficult. You start out and do your best and you do not go that high but the more you practice, the better you get and the higher you go.

TW: Do you plan on continuing pole vaulting and/or tricking post-high school?

JA: It depends on how high I get at the end of senior year.

TW: What is your current personal record that you are hoping to break in the spring? What was it like when you surpassed your old record in the indoor season?

JA: My current best is 13 feet and I hope to get somewhere around 15 feet by the end of the season. When I got my new personal record it was really relieving because I had been doing it in practice for weeks but for a while, I could not get it in a meet.



JUMPING TOWARDS BIGGER AND BETTER THINGS Josh Appel is looking to improve upon himself and has many goals for the future. Josh hopes to lead Westhill to the nationals showing off his skill.

Girls basketball dribble their way to states

Nabilla Harahap
Reporter

The Girls Varsity basketball team has seen a huge improvement recently. This year was a great year as they were able to advance to the state tournament. As they were not able to make it to states the last two years, but they were able to this year. The season was very challenging, but the girls remained optimistic throughout.

The girls worked really hard to get to where they are despite all of the pressure. They prepared for each game by learning about the playing style of the opposing team and made sure they were always ready give it their best.

The team has made major strides in not only skill, but also by preparing mentally. A lot of the success is due to being able to build up the confidence as individuals, as well as being able to work collectively as a team.

"There was a huge improvement in the team's mindset from the beginning of the season due to how we all started to mesh better with each other and got along more. The closer we

got as friends, the better our skills started to come together. Our skills never improved much throughout the season, it was mostly our mentality and focus that improved, which was the key factor in winning games. We made sure we were physically and mentally prepared for states by working hard in each practice and viewing our roles as individuals. We set small goals every day which helped us get to the bigger goal - making states. Making states this year was huge because it was something we were unable to accomplish the last two years. It showed us that we can achieve anything if we all work together as a unit, even after losing two key players from last year," said Gabby Lacona ('17). Their hard work has paid off because they have already seen much success. Although the team had lost their first official states game, they remain positive.

"It was really rewarding and exciting that we made it to states and we went into thinking we would play each game like we had nothing to lose," said Jessica Rubin ('17).

It has been quite the journey for the girls basketball team, and all of their hard work has truly paid off this entire season.



DRAINING BUCKETS In the 2016/2017 season, the Girls Varsity Basketball team has seen major improvements in all of the players work ethic which helped this team be very successful into making it into states this year.

Photo by Emily Savitt /Photo Manager.

APRIL SPORTS CALENDAR

Week 1 (5-11)

DATE: 7

EVENT: Varsity Boys Lacrosse

OPPONENT: Trinity Catholic

LOCATION: Away

TIME: 7:30 P.M.

DATE: 8

EVENT: Varsity Baseball

OPPONENT: Norwalk

LOCATION: Home

TIME: 10:30 A.M.

DATE: 10

EVENT: Varsity Boys Tennis

OPPONENT: Norwalk

LOCATION: Away

TIME: 4:00 P.M.

Week 2 (12-18)

DATE: 12

EVENT: Varsity Softball

OPPONENT: Bridgeport Central

LOCATION: Away

TIME: 4:00 P.M.

DATE: 13

EVENT: Girls Varsity Lacrosse

OPPONENT: Newington

LOCATION: Home

TIME: 12:30 P.M.

DATE: 17

EVENT: Varsity Girls Outdoor Track

OPPONENT: Trumbull / Ridgefield

LOCATION: Home

TIME: 4:00 P.M.

Week 3 (19-25)

DATE: 19

EVENT: JV Softball

OPPONENT: Danbury

LOCATION: Away

TIME: 3:45 P.M.

DATE: 20

EVENT: Varsity Girls Tennis

OPPONENT: Trinity Catholic

LOCATION: Home

TIME: 4:00 P.M.

DATE: 24

EVENT: Varsity Boys Golf

OPPONENT: Staples

LOCATION: Away

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

Week 4 (26-30)

DATE: 26

EVENT: Varsity Baseball

OPPONENT: St. Joseph

LOCATION: Home

TIME: 4:00 P.M.

DATE: 27

EVENT: Varsity Boys lacrosse

OPPONENT: Stamford High

LOCATION: Home

TIME: 5:30 P.M.

DATE: 29

EVENT: JV Girls Lacrosse

OPPONENT: Norwalk

LOCATION: Home

TIME: 4:00 P.M.

QUARTET

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Boys varsity lacrosse prepares for the upcoming season

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Josh Appel



Emma Jelliffe