

www.thewestwordonline.com  
Volume 45, Number 1 / October 2017

# The Westword

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

Principal Rinaldi brings a new attitude to the Hill

Page 25



4 SPIRIT WEEK  
AS SEEN  
FROM  
AROUND  
THE SCHOOL

12 EL  
DESTRUCCIÓN  
DE HURACÁN  
MARIA EN  
PUERTO RICO

36 RENOVATIONS  
OF TENNIS  
COURTS  
PLEASES  
MANY



# The Westword

## 2017-2018 Staff

October 2017

## Note from the Editors

### Editor-in-Chief

Noah Klein

### Print Executive Editor

Addison Magrath

### Online Executive Editor

Josh Eimbinder

### Managing Editors

Daniel Greco,

Rachel Plotzky,

Nicholas Zarrilli

### Ombudsman

Max Zussman

### Photo Manager

Sydnie Lesser

### Media Manager

Meghan Prabhu

### Business Manager

Paola Socci

### Social Media Managers

Christina Burgess, Valerie Neyra

### Distribution Manger

Hudson Price

### Head Illustrator

Alexis Marchetti

### Creative Director

Emma Cali

### News Editors

Katelyn Benner, Chole Gulini,

Katherine Pacheco

### Viewpoint Editors

Emily Reid,

Alexandra Watkinson,

Emma Whaley

### Las Noticias Editors

Catalin Medina, Alison Ordonez,

Nayeli Sierra, Nicole Vantman

### Special Editors

Ray Deutsch, James Lis,

Guilmar Valle

### Feature Editors

Molly Cannon, Niamh Keough,

Marta Zach

### Supplement Editors

Lexi Boccuzzi, Bailee Esposito,

Catherine Gaia, Micayla Roth

### Scatterbrain Editors

Veda Bhalla, Selena Jean-Pierre,

Jason Zarrilli

### Limelight Editors

Lucca Metzger, Joaquin

Monteclaro, Jude Ponthineu

### Express Editors

Sophia Colfer, Michael Dubon,

Arushi Mathur

### Sports Editors

Tamar Bellete, Joseph DiSalvo,

Jennifer Gentile

### Copy Manager

Sahithi Kollipara

### Copy Editors

Brooke Glatzhofer, Ryan Hart,

Shay Hernandez,

Kaela Shaulson, Sheetal Sudhir,

Jessica Wallen

### Pollsters

Zainab Jafri, Alexandra Lazo,

David Mezias, Kaela Shaulson

### Reporters

Ries Allyn, Audrey Molina,

Hannah Nekritz, Ashley Shapiro

### Illustrators

Neeka Baclayon, Zachary Kitay,

Katherine Kopec,

Tamar Frydman,

Paulina Seremetis

### Videographer

Skylar Rubin, Stephaine Tancs

### Photographers

Alexa Smeriglio,

Nikhil Tungaturthy,

Nicole Vantman

### Co-Advisers

Mr. von Wahlde,

Mr. Wooley

### Las Noticias Adviser

Ms. Mendez

### Columnists

Jennifer Carias, Kevin Costello,

Jackie Fahey,

Matthew Greenbaum,

Hudson Price, Valerie Neyra,

Jack Williamson, Max Zussman

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the first issue of the year, we are very excited to get back to work and look forward to another year of student journalism!

We would like to personally welcome Principal Michael Rinaldi to Westhill and cannot wait to see the new changes that he will bring to our school.

To begin, our Editorial this month examines the student voice at Westhill and looks deep into the voice students truly have in our community.

Continuing to News, you will see our coverage of Westhill's spirit week, the mayoral race, and a look at the Merit Scholarship Semi-Finalists.

In Viewpoint, we evaluate the

effectiveness of assemblies and the recent increase in school spirit.

In Las Noticias, there is a feature on health care in America, and we take a look at Hurricane Maria.

In Limelight, take a look at the fall drama *And There Were None*. Special Report investigates the recent natural disasters and the effort put into the relief.

In Scatterbrain, you can find Deanna Crevecoeur as well as this year's trending Halloween costumes and Nickailla McLean as our Artist of the Month for Express.

Finally, in our Sports section, you can read about the science behind anxiety and sports along with Casey Ottaviano and Gabriella Veseli as our athlete's of the month.

In our online edition we have several new articles going up every week. Currently you can look at our freshmen spotlights where we interview 9th grade students about their experience so far, as well as an article discussing the recent cuts to the Media Center and how they have effected students.

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

Sincerely,

Noah Klein & Addison Magrath  
Editor-in-Chief & Executive Editor

### Editorial Policy

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

The Editorial Board consists of Noah Klein, Addison Magrath, Josh Eimbinder, Max Zussman, Daniel Greco, Rachel Plotzky, Nicholas Zarrilli, Bailee Esposito, Alexandra Watkinson, Catalin Medina, Katherine Pacheco, Rachel Deutsch, Molly Cannon, Jude Ponthineu, Tamar Bellete, Mr. von Wahlde, and Mr. Wooley. The Editorial can be found on page 3.

### Announcements

*The Westword* welcomes Mr. Rinaldi into his first year at Westhill.

### Corrections

*The Westword* has no corrections to address at this time.

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

## What's inside

**3 Editorial** Investigating the student voice in the Westhill community

**4 News** A look into spirit week this year at Westhill

**8 Viewpoint** A look at two contrasting views on the pep rally

**12 Las Noticias** Explicando la asistencia médica y como recibes

**15 Special Report** Bringing awareness to the issue of hurricanes

**17 Supplement** An examination of the different aspects of autumn

**27 Feature** Highlighting Principal Rinaldi's increase in school spirit

**30 Limelight** A deeper look into the fall drama "And Then There Were None"

**32 Scatterbrain** Slay of the month: Deanna Crevecoeur

**34 Express** Artist of the month: Nickailla McLean

**39 Sports** An overview of the Westhill Volleyball team this season

**The Westword**  
**Westhill High School**

**125 Roxbury Road**  
**Stamford, CT 06902**

(203) 977-4894

westwordwhs@gmail.com

thewestwordonline.com

Visit [ourschoolnewspaper.com/Westword](http://ourschoolnewspaper.com/Westword)  
to view our print archives.

## Putting the power in the student voice

In any community, it is crucial that people have the opportunity to voice their own opinions. Through speech and through communication, positive changes can be made to communities in the most profound way possible. Even if certain sides disagree about a particular issue, the dialogue between them is crucial towards reaching a more progressive community where members can freely speak their minds.

At Westhill, students are fortunate to have a powerful voice, one that reaches other students, parents, administration, and even the greater Stamford community. By getting involved in the many extracurricular activities and clubs offered at Westhill, any student has the opportunity to promote social action. Recently founded clubs such as the The Young Political Science Club is just one example of a club where students can have a voice in their school community. Maddie Kaba ('18) reflects on the importance of such clubs having a voice in school saying, "They've given permission for us to use a classroom after school to discuss controversial issues freely."

At Westhill, students can join any club(s) that reflect their values as young adults. Anything ranging from the aforementioned club to the Mayor's Youth Leadership Council (MYLC), Interact, Gay Straight Alliance (GSA), and The Westword are great options that any students can get involved with as a means of expressing themselves. Students understand the importance of having a voice, even if others may not necessarily agree with their opinions. "Everyone deserves to voice their opinion, no matter how unpopular or ignorant," said Kevin Harrington ('20).

While it is important to always be respectful of others opinions, it is also important that sensitive topics are discussed. Some students have

struggled to find their voice in the school but it may be because they do not know where to look. "I don't really attempt to use my voice. Even if I wanted to, I wouldn't know where," said Bailey Paulk ('18). Students that feel similarly should check out the different clubs Westhill offers and see if any appeal to them. If any student feels passionately about a certain issue that does not have an

community without any administrative objection or interference is praiseworthy.

In order to become a functional adult, a person must be able to express their beliefs and stand by them. Reflecting on this issue, Ms. Reap said, "Students have a voice if they choose to use it." It is up to the individual student to possess the courage to voice their convictions, to make them known,

**Bottom line: Students have the opportunity to create a powerful voice for social change and political views, however, student voice is more of a whisper when it comes to school policy decisions.**

established club, they have the opportunity to start new clubs, to better share their voice.

In addition to clubs, students have many other opportunities and pathways to voice their opinion to fellow students, administration, and the district. Last year, a group of organized students were able to devise a public school pride walkout to protest the appointment of Betsy Devos as the Secretary of Education. Through the approval of administration, hundreds of students were allowed to participate in the walkout and openly express their opinions on the new appointee. The walkout was very meaningful to those involved and was done entirely because of student voice. Later in the year, a Black Lives Matter movement walkout was organized as well.

Students at Westhill may take opportunities like those for granted, or sadly as a means to get out of class, but they should understand how important it truly is for events like this to be allowed in our school. After all, there are plenty of schools across the nation where much smaller things like books, plays, or movies are censored. To be able to actively take part in political issues and voice opinions within the school com-

and to make sure they are heard by the people in a position to implement change. A good example of this initiative is the recently formed Feminism Club. "I think that [it] gives men and women a place to express themselves about topics they might not be comfortable talking about anywhere else. Also, it teaches them how to be political activists. High school teaches students how to be adults and part of that is being politically informed and involved," said club advisor Ms. Dunsmore.

When it comes to making important calls like budget distribution, infrastructure updating, and staffing changes, student opinion often takes a backseat, if it is considered at all on those matters. Even on issues linked directly to students like open campus, class selection policies, schedule changes, and even lunch menu, student opinion is largely ignored. While one might expect that students could impact these issues through student government, that, largely, has not been the case. "I think there's a voice for social action however, I don't think [students] have a voice in the functions and actions and policies that the school is implementing through the class student government,"

said Ms. Berkley, President of Interact. Even though students do not directly impact these policies, nor does administration actively seek out student input on much beyond social action, they are receptive to student opinions and concerns. Mr. Pereira (Dean of Students) has stated, "My door is always open to students who want to talk." Principal Rinaldi agreed.

During an interview with Principal Rinaldi, he was adamant on how he wishes students would become more involved in school policy. "Student voice is extremely important at Westhill. Students should be a part of many decisions made at school. After all, they are the ones affected." Rinaldi also discussed the possibility of restructuring student body government. A new system would

essentially have a president, vice-president, secretary and all other members of student government per grade as well as an overall student body comprised over the whole school. It would be set up similarly to the state and national government with the latter being the overseer. This system was in place at Westhill many years ago and was effective. "The old system for student government gave students much more of a voice with a better structure" said vice-principal Mr. Wax. This is an intriguing possibility for students in for the future and time will tell if changes will be made. While these changes to student government are not imminent, administration wants to make it clear they are always looking for student feedback and opinions.



**WALLED IN** A piece of the padded wall from the gymnasium is found inside the boys lockerroom.

Please submit op-eds and letters to  
Noah Klein's mailbox in Room 224 or  
email them to [westwordwhs@gmail.com](mailto:westwordwhs@gmail.com).



# Westhill's got spirit!

*Students dressed up for the first spirit week of this school year*

**Maura Johnston**

Staff Writer

After many school years passed with lack of school spirit, Westhill had one of its most successful spirit weeks. From October 2nd to October 6th, students and faculty were encouraged to dress up and come together to increase our Westhill pride.

The week began with Red, White and Blue Day when students were seen dressed from head to toe in their colors. Tuesday was Neon Day, filling the halls with bright colors. Wednesday was Jersey Day, and jerseys representing every team could be seen around the school. Thursday was Mix-Match Day, in which students combined polar styles of clothing. Lastly, the week was finished off with color wars, where each grade level wore a certain color to determine which grade had the most spirit. A pep rally was held that Friday afternoon featuring our fall varsity sport's teams. Each

day, the students that showed the most spirit took photos in the courtyard that were later featured on Principal Rinaldi's Twitter. Raffle tickets were given to those seen around the school for a chance to win a free spirit week t-shirt.

"At first, I was upset I did not get a t-shirt, because I went all out for each spirit day. I was told it is not the t-shirt that matters; but that we are supporting our school and its spirit," said Sarah Jane Bennett ('18).

This entire week was organized by new Athletic Director, Richard Cerne, along with Principal Rinaldi.

Rinaldi hoped to see "everyone on their best behavior" during this week, with hopes that we can continue to have pep rallies, spirit weeks, and other enjoyable school activities.

"Mr. Rinaldi did an awesome job of encouraging Westhill students to participate. He made it a school wide event that was a whole lot of fun while increasing our school spirit and pride," said sophomore Reilly D'Onofrio ('20).

Students were full of excitement throughout the entire week. "This was the first time in a long time that Westhill had visible spirit, and it really seemed like everyone was genuinely happy," said Bennet. Most students agreed that spirit was shown by many students throughout Westhill for the first time in quite the long time.

"Spirit week was a very exciting week. Everyone came together as a community to show their spirit and have fun," said Nevaeh Mills ('19).

The number of participants grew drastically from these past years. "Spirit week was a lot of fun and I was beyond impressed with how many people participated. It was probably the first time at Westhill where I truly felt a lot of school spirit," said Amanda Veseli. ('19).

Students were thrilled with the contagious excitement and spirit that flooded the school environment. All of Westhill's students are hoping that the spirit, and all the other events will continue to play apart in the following school years.



**VIKING PRIDE** Westhill students show their school pride by dressing up following various themed outfits throughout the week of October 2nd to October 6th.

Photos courtesy of SAGA.



# Merit scholarship makes a stop at Westhill

*Three students have been recognized for their exemplary work*

**Noah Klein**  
Editor-in-Chief

Only one public high school in Stamford will be able to say they have Merit Scholar Semi Finalists this year. Erica Shaulson ('18), Bailey Paulk ('18), and Sarthak Behl ('18) will all have a chance at the prestigious Merit Scholarship. According to their website, The Merit Scholarship Program strives to "promote a wider and deeper respect for learning in general and for exceptionally talented individuals in particular."

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation was established

in 1955 due to fear of the U.S. falling behind academically due to the space race. The National Merit Scholarship Program was formed in order to help identify and scholastically credit the most talented American students.

Westhill is the only public high school in Stamford to have students receive the honor. These students have truly stood out academically. In order to have been eligible, students must have been in the top 33 percent of the 50,000 highest scorers.

Guidance counselor, Mrs. Mitchell advises both Erica Shaulson and Bailey Paulk. "Erica and

Bailey are both conscientious students and serve as role models for their peers because of their leadership, dedication to their academics, and genuine concern for others," Mitchell said when asked to describe them.

Head of guidance, Ms. DeLuca, praised the students for their accolade, "They are a phenomenal group of kids, they are the top kids in the country," said DeLuca. When asked how it felt to lead a guidance department with such strong students such as Bailey, Erica, and Sarthak she said, "The kids do it all, it is a proud moment for everyone but it really is the

students that make the achievements so special. It is great to know that we are all Westhill and proud but ultimately it is the students who work so hard to get to where they are."

Their teachers echoed DeLuca's praise. "They are driven by knowledge, not by grade and enjoy learning and the way in which they present their learning in questions, being unassuming, and sharing of thoughts or ideas...they are thinkers, and they are questioners and probably will come up with some very big ideas that potentially could change who we are as people," said Social Studies teacher

Ms. Berkley, who teaches both Shaulson and Behl.

Several WHS students have also been named commended students for their scores. These are students who were also in the top ranks in the state, but did not receive the semi finalist honors. These Westhill students are Sophia Ciokajlo ('18), Koshik Mahapatra ('18), Sahithi Kollipara ('18), Reshmi Ranjith ('18), and Nikhil Tungaturthy ('18).

The semifinalists will now continue their application process and will have to wait until February to find out if they will receive the prestigious honor.



"I was really shocked, because I never would have expected to get it, but also really excited."  
*Bailey Paulk*



"I was honored and excited to see that the work I put in to prepare had paid off."  
*Erica Shaulson*



"I felt pretty proud of myself...a lot of juniors also asked me for help...and it was cool to have people younger than me ask me about it."  
*Sarthak Behl*

## Board of Ed Election

**Lexi Boccuzzi**  
Supplement Editor

The Stamford Board of Education plays a crucial role in determining what our life, as students of Westhill, is like. Many of us do not know anything about what the Board of Ed is or what they do. This is especially relevant given that Election Day is approaching and many of those on the ballot are running for positions within the Board of Ed. Generally speaking, Stamford Board of Education is a group of nine elected officials who manage the Stamford Public Schools (SPS). However, their role in Stamford Education extends much farther than that.

The Board of Ed has a variety of different duties regarding the Stamford Public Schools, all of which directly affect us as Westhill students. Some of these duties include: choosing and

monitoring the Superintendent, creating and managing school policies, developing the schools' budgets, and ensuring that the SPS properly reflect the needs of the Stamford community. They even control things such as teacher's salaries. Mr. Page, a social studies teacher at Westhill explains that this not only affects teachers, but students as well. "The BOE are responsible for hiring and salaries. More competitive salaries in this area could lead to higher retention rate for teachers who could possibly afford to live in Stamford and may affect student experiences and overall learning," said Page. The decisions they make especially those regarding budgets directly affect student's lives, through the teachers who teach us, the environments we learn in, and the materials we have to learn with.

The Board of Ed also plays a

role in the curriculum and material that are learned by students within the district. They ensure that the schools are up to the district's standards and that they follow the rules and regulations of Stamford Public Schools. Westhill student, Anissa Jahaj ('20) describes her understanding of what the Board of Education does, saying, "School boards, like the BOE, are responsible for making sure that tax money is fairly allocated to schools as well as controlling school budgets. They are also responsible for monitoring the school performance."

The Board of Ed is comprised of a group of individuals. Although they have specific positions, the board meets frequently to make joint decisions. This election day, many of these spots on the board are up for election. Many of the candidates for these spots are incumbents who have finished their

three year terms including: Andy George, Betsy Allyn and Jackie Heftman. The results of this election are particularly important as the presidential spot is now left open due to Geoff Alswanger's decision to not run again. Andy George is one of the possible candidates to fill Alswanger's spot if elected. He is a recent addition to the Democratic Party after he switched from the Republican Party, and then to unaffiliated. George has said that his focus, if elected, will be the school's facilities which became very important if the projected enrollment increase comes to fruition as predicted. There are also three other new candidates running for positions on the BOE, including: Jackie Pioli, Theresa Robbins, and Dan Mena, all of whom are Stamford residents. Despite this, people, especially teachers seem to be happy with the current state

of the Board of Education and are predicted to be voting similarly this election.

Nevertheless, many people have suggestions for what the Board of Ed could do to improve the state of Stamford Public Schools. "Overall, I am pleased with where we are as a district. I believe Stamford schools offer excellent opportunities for students to excel. Going forward I would like to see the district become more technologically savvy as well as [place a] greater emphasis on curriculum dedicated to the tech field," said teacher Mr. Page. Mr. Page is not alone in these feelings, as many teachers, parents, and students also agree. Post-election, the Board of Education will most likely take the public's suggestions into consideration for their upcoming motions and policy changes.

# The Mayoral race is upon us

**Ashley Shapiro**  
Reporter

On November 7th, while most of us are relaxing at home, many people over the age of 18 will be heading to the polls to vote in local elections. In the Stamford community, voters will have the opportunity to vote for Stamford's next mayor. The three candidates running are Barry Michelson, John Zito, and our current mayor, David Martin. While the majority of Westhill's students cannot vote yet, being knowledgeable about our own city is crucial. "I was unaware of the election until I heard about this article. I do not think we learn about it enough in school considering it affects us so directly," said an anonymous student. The candidates attended WHS recently and answered questions from students and staff.

Barry Michelson, the Republican candidate, focuses on taxes and the misuse of hard-earned tax money in our city. He says on his official website, "We have to stop punishing small business owners and Stamford families and treat their hard-earned tax dollars with the respect they deserve. 'Tax and spend' is not the answer. Live within your own means and

spend wisely and it will curb the ever-escalating tax rates we have suffered from under the current mayor."

Michelson's campaign focuses on how our current mayor, Mayor Martin, uses taxes to support our city by saying, "Sometimes it can be hard to believe

John Zito is registered as an independent. His campaign focuses on issues affecting schools in Stamford. Zito states on his website, "The racial achievement gap continues to be a persistent issue facing the City of Stamford. There are also concerns with classroom sizes,

be summarized by his campaign site where it is says, "My goals are a renewed sense of optimism about city fiscal health, a broader economic growth enabling well-functioning government services and operations, public safety in the context of the relationship between police and the community, and a strong economy makes a strong sense of community."

The final candidate for mayor of Stamford is David Martin, the Democratic candidate. David Martin is our current mayor and is running for re-election this year. His claimed accomplishments of his past term included a focus on the quality of schools. On his website he says, "By the end of 2017, every school will have new LED lighting which will not only lead to significant energy savings in the coming years but will significantly improve the indoor lighting quality," showing his commitment to schools and their students. He also addresses other youth programs: "We have reopened the Yearwood Center, in partnership with the Boys and Girls Club, to provide well-funded after school educational and developmental programs to hundreds of young citizens." Students have also commented on who

they would vote for. "I would vote for David Martin because he has kept Stamford on budget and has no ulterior motive other than to help Stamford be the best it can be," said sophomore Kinga Berent ('20).

When speaking about what the new mayor should focus on in their coming term, one civics teacher who spoke under the condition of anonymity said, "As an employee of Stamford but not as a resident, I would hope any mayoral candidate, when in office, would prioritize the education and safety of the children and young people of Stamford; then the next generation of Stamford youth is looking for success, and only through education that is practical and safety on the streets will this be achieved."

"It is certainly a challenge for any mayor to determine a budget for the city that they are responsible for and certainly for those who work within that city, it is our responsibility to be advocates for what is important while doing our best with the resources available," said our Principal Rinaldi.

Regardless of who one may be voting for this season, it is very important to be educated on the issues of the city, as well as who is representing it.



**JOHN ZITO** the independent candidate, speaks to the student body regarding his plans as mayor.

Photo by **Dr. Forbes** / Westhill History Department.

our current mayor considers that it is our money he is spending when we see how he allocates our tax dollars. You work hard and struggle to budget your money wisely. Our government leaders should do no less. It is as if he does not realize or does not care that when he cuts a deal to a big company, we pay for it. Our money deserves respect and consideration. I will give it that."

school funding, test scores and building improvements." His focus is on education, which affects us as students. Zito also wants to address Stamford's infrastructure and says, "If elected, I would widely prioritize infrastructure investments because it is a foundational piece of this city's success." Zito is concerned with the economy in Stamford and improving the city as a whole. His focus can

## National Art Honor Society returns to Westhill

**Addison Magrath**  
Print Executive Editor

With the start of a new school year, many students are seeing changes in the school. Some of those changes are new clubs and activities. This year the head of the art department, Mrs. Konrad, decided to bring the National Art Honor Society (NAHS) back to Westhill. The club was once functioning here, but it has been over 15 years since then. The NAHS is a community available to all students, in order to support others, and become a better artist themselves.

The National Art Honor Society is an opportunity for students to be a part of a broad, country wide organization of more than 58,000 members. There are many benefits of becoming a member besides being a part of an artistic community. Student artists that are a part of

the society will have many opportunities to receive college scholarships. Colleges such as Columbus College of Art and Design, The Art Institutes, Maryland Institute College of Art, and the Pratt Institute are offering scholarships to members. Many students look forward to these advantages. "It gives people the opportunity to apply for scholarships and it is good to have on college applications," said Ali Cogan ('18).

Of course, these scholarships and a membership in the society don't come for free. Most importantly, a member must have a passion for art and want to spread awareness of art education. Other requirements include having taken at least one semester of art, and having a minimum art average of 3.0 (80 percent). To ensure people would take the club seriously, members also need to be clear

of discipline referrals, failing grades, and violations of the attendance policy. Recommendations from past or current art teachers are also required. Besides all of these requirements, there is also a cost. The membership fee is \$25.00, but fee waivers are available.

Despite all of this, the costs seem to be worth it. "[The NAHS] is an opportunity to showcase your work, dialogue with other artists, access scholarship funds, and I think the biggest thing is help the whole Westhill community become more aware of how important art is," said Mrs. Konrad. Members of the National Art Honor Society here at Westhill will have the opportunity to receive awards, as well as attend shows and competitions here in Stamford and all around Fairfield County. Rising Stars is one of the possible awards awarded for promoting

Art Education as a career. The Scholastic Art Award recognizes exceptional student artists, and the NAHS is the perfect opportunity for them to showcase their work. Students in NAHS will be participating in student art shows such as Teen Visions at Silvermine School of Arts in November, and at Sacred Heart University in January. These events are perfect for students who are looking to meet other student artists or put their work in the spotlight.

The club does not only expand on a national level, but worldwide as well. Through the NAHS, students are exchanging their artwork with others around the world. This year Mrs. Konrad is working on an Art Link between the NAHS here at Westhill and Kosei Gakuen Girls School in Tokyo, Japan. This art exchange is giving student artists in Stamford and Japan a

chance to explore another culture and is another way to spread art education.

While having an important purpose of encouraging art education, the NAHS also has fun. Mrs. Konrad and the copresidents, Alexis Marchetti and Nickailla McLean, are attempting to host monthly workshops here at Westhill for all members. Students will be able to learn a new type of artistic method, or showcase their talent. "We plan to hold contests and fundraisers for all students to promote the art department," said Alexis Marchetti ('18).

If you are interested in any of these activities and advocating for art education, think about becoming a member of the National Art Honor Society here at Westhill. Visit Mrs. Konrad in room 007 for more information on becoming a member.



## Good Month Bad Month

Column by  
**Matthew Greenbaum  
& Max Zussman**



## Good month for... Bad month for...

**NBA Reunions** This NBA off-season has been one of the busiest in recent memory with many all-stars switching teams. Teams such as the Oklahoma City Thunder, Houston Rockets, and Minnesota Timberwolves are a few teams that made a big splash in free agency to try to compete with the reigning champions, the Golden State Warriors. This off-season also saw a few reunions of former teammates. Dwyane Wade will once again play alongside LeBron James as they are hopeful of winning their third championship together.



**Cardi B** Bronx-born rapper Cardi B has soared up the Billboard's Top 100. She became the number one song in the country with her debut single, "Bodak Yellow." This is very impressive accomplishment for the young rapper as she became the first female artist to debut at number on the charts. The 24-year-old is the second female rapper in history to have a Number 1 song without other artists featured on the track.

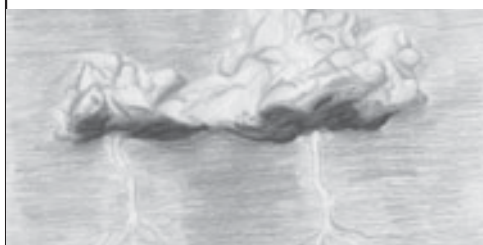


**SNL** Saturday Night Live has been tied for the most Emmy Nominations at the 69th award ceremony. They were nominated for 22 awards and they won four of them. SNL won awards for outstanding directing and variety sketch series. Alec Baldwin and Kate McKinnon, both of whom are on SNL, won awards for outstanding supporting actor and actress, respectively. Baldwin impersonates President Trump while McKinnon plays Kellyanne Conway on the show.

**The Giants** The Giants are off to a very rough start to the 2017 season so far. They started the season getting crushed the first two games. Week one, they took a huge loss to the Dallas Cowboys and week two they lost by 14 points to the Detroit Lions. They then went on to lose another three games in a row, making their record 0-5. Though, soon after they pulled off a great win against the Denver Broncos. Giants fans are hoping the team will find its chemistry and pick it up for the rest of the season.



**Toys R' Us** Toys R' Us announced on September 19th that they were filing for bankruptcy. Toys R' Us had fought hard to compete with online companies such as Amazon, along with cheaper retail stores like Walmart. However, they amassed five-billion dollars of debt in the process. The company has been in business for 69 years, and currently employs about 65,000 people, making such a hard hit devastating for each of them.



**Natural Disasters** Over the past few months, it seems that natural disasters keep coming one after another. First, Hurricane Harvey left Houston flooded and in ruins. Soon after, Mexico experienced a huge earthquake that is reported to have had a magnitude shock of 7.1. Hurricane Irma came pummeling through the Caribbean Islands and hit Florida with an unrelenting force. To make matters worse in the Caribbean, Hurricane Maria wrecked havoc in Puerto Rico. This seems to be a record breaking series of events over the past few months.

Illustrations by **Zac Kitay** and **Kathryn Kopec** / Illustrators.

## Connection Time absences

**Tyler Fisher**  
Staff Writer

The 17-18 school year is in full swing. With changes made to much of the school administration, new rules and class policies have arrived as well.

Stricter rules concerning class attendance and the presence of a "closed campus" is being enforced. The school's attendance policy is one that affects not just a few students, but every student in the school. The loss of credit has always been a consequence of too many absences. But now the senior class faces even more scrutiny from the administration.

As a result of the dramatically increasing absences in Connection Time, seniors are facing the possibility of not being allowed to walk with their peers during graduation.

Many students feel that these changes are unfair. "It is ridiculous that a class that does not really have any merit can impede you from walking during graduation and stop you from celebrating with your friends," said Emmanuel Restrepo ('18). This seems to be the general consensus amongst the senior class, and many other students have begun to question the true purpose of Connection Time.

Students are unsure if they are supposed to be "connecting" with their peers

or doing class work.

"A more efficient means of communication between students and teachers, outside of studies and classes," said Drew Rabadi ('18) when asked what he believed the intended purpose of Connection Time was. Surely what is believed to be the intended purpose is not what is actually occurring in Connection Time periods.

So why is this senior class as well as future classes facing a policy which greatly affects their high school experience?

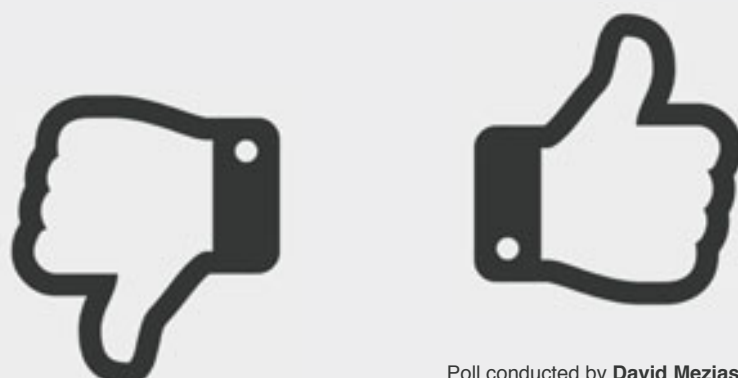
"They see it as an opportunity to get people to go to Connection Time," said Declan Donnelly ('18) when asked what he believed the intended purpose of Connection Time was. Some students share this opinion, and they believe that this policy is only an attempt to corral them. Connection Time is a period meant for "connecting" with others. It is beneficial to some, but not all and that is due to the fact that there is not a curriculum for which teachers can use as a guideline.

With this now being the case, why should students be required to attend a class that most teachers have their own reservations about?

The Westhill administration should be concerned with finding a more beneficial way to apply adjustments to not just the student's time, but the teachers' time as well.

## POLL: SHOULD CONNECTION TIME BE A GRADUATION REQUIREMENT?

96% 4%  
NO! YES!



Poll conducted by **David Mezas** / Pollster.  
\*Poll out of 100 students

# Students speculate school spirit

**Andrew Lappas**

Staff Writer

It is fall sports season, which means it is also pep rally season. Students shout and cheer for their favorite teams, including football, field hockey, swim, soccer, volleyball, and track and field. Pep rallies are a great way to get everyone in the school together and hype them up for the upcoming seasons. It is a time when seniors can make lasting memories from high school, and a time

when freshman can experience what their new school is like. Pep rallies are a great way to inform people of who is on the sports teams, and it encourages people to think about joining those sports the following school year.

The purpose of such a gathering is to inspire school spirit while supporting our sports teams. This also provides opportunities for students and faculty alike to honor and celebrate the school and their upcoming events.

To create some buzz before

the pep rally, spirit week, a week where each day has a theme, took place. Ideally, a pep rally creates an enthusiastic school environment and leads to everyone feeling more united as a school.

The pep rally this year featured all fall sports teams running around the field to showcase their athletes. However, athletes were not the only ones having all the fun. Students and teachers enjoyed dance competitions, a performance by our school band and routines by our cheerleaders.

Once the pep rally was over, students and staff felt an overall air of unity and excitement for the rest of the school year. Mrs. Cohen, a special education teacher, said, "a pep rally is great time to get everyone together. It is a time to celebrate the school and work in building a wonderful family that the Viking Nation can be."

Mrs. Aivalis was in agreement with Mrs. Cohen. "I think it is a great way to get students together to get hyped up for the beginning of the school year and

to start the year off with some great school spirit." Students all around enjoyed the pep rally as well. Kylie Ashlund ('21) said, "I thought it was really exciting, it felt great having the entire school come out and support not only me, but my teammates. It did not hurt that I got to miss some class either."

The hope of the administration for pep rallies is to inspire students to attend school events and games and become a contributing member in the school community.



**SPIRIT SPREADS** Students show off their excitement before the first pep rally of the new school year. Photos courtesy of **SAGA**.

**Sam Hamilton**

Staff Writer

For students who lack school spirit, the pep rally can be seen as a practice that feeds into the praising of student athletes. This culture puts student athletes on a pedestal and puts the remaining members of the Westhill community at a disadvantage. Some students do theatre, work a job, or take care of their siblings every day for the same amount of time that an athlete puts into practice. Yet, they are not given the same extra help, resources, or recognition. This makes it harder for the majority of

the Westhill student body to feel included and enjoy participating.

Some students find pep rallies to be a source of major anxiety. Putting the entire school in one place is not the ideal way to end the day for all students. "I do not like large crowds or lots of screaming, it makes me anxious, and during the last pep rally I had to go home early due to anxiety and a painful migraine," said Ali Cogan ('18). Luckily, the pep rally was hosted last period of the day and Cogan did not miss any class because of the migraine it caused.

However, the issue still remains that the mandatory event

has caused many students distress. On top of that, it takes class time away. "Not all students are comfortable in loud crowded places. When I was a student it was not during class. It was a community and family event instead of student based event. I am all for social development and school spirit, but if that is the case we need to adjust the pressure of the curriculum. When you are on a paced curriculum every disruption adds up," said science teacher Mrs. Paulinie.

In many cases, students who do not want to participate end up leaving school because there is no alternative. By implementing an optional

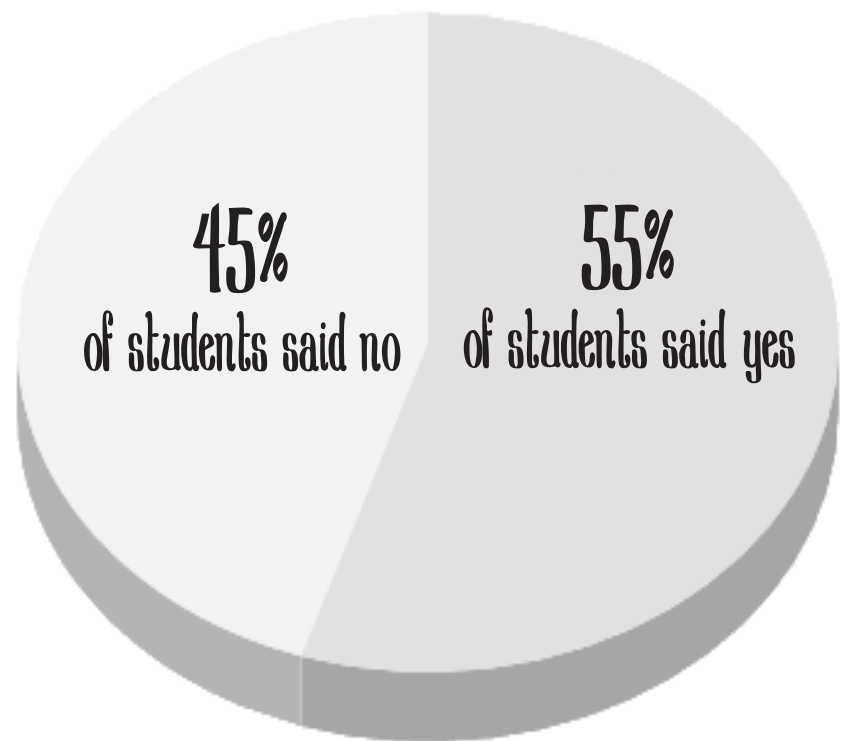
study hall period for students who do not want to attend the pep rally, less students would leave school property before 2:05 p.m. Plus, teachers would have extra time to get grading done while supervising. "To an extent it should be mandatory but there should be an opportunity for kids who don't want to participate to have different options," said Spanish teacher Mr. Forcelli. This would also make the concentration of students at the pep rally the students that are most excited to be there, ultimately accomplishing the goal to raise school spirit.

Some may argue that attending pep rallies should be manda-

tory, since it is a way to support your fellow students, but the same thing can be achieved by attending the actual games.

Having the entirety of students and staff miss class to cheer for every team and chant for 40 minutes is unnecessary. "For people that do not have outstanding school spirit it can be viewed as a waste of time," said Will Gold ('18). Both the athletes and the students would gain more by having students who want to participate attend the games. The athletes would have a group cheering for them when it matters most, and the students are more likely to be engaged.

## Should pep rallies be mandatory?



Poll conducted by **Bella Vaccaro** / Pollster.  
\*Poll out of 164 students



# Open campus policy limits student freedom

**Jack Williamson**  
Staff Writer

Westhill has enacted a restricted open campus, where seniors who have a study hall first period may come in late and leave early if they have it last period. Seniors who want an open campus pass must meet a certain set of criteria. Westhill's website states that a senior must have and maintain a grade point average of at least 2.0, must not have any class averages lower than 60 percent, and should have less than ten unexcused absences. Violations of any of these rules can result in the revocation of an open campus pass.

Westhill has started a wonderful new program by allowing seniors to get these privileges. Why come in early just to fall asleep in a study hall, when you can wake up late, get a coffee, and still make it on time for your next class?

Why stay for a period where you do nothing? Westhill has taken a step in the right direction by instituting a "limited" open campus.

However, Westhill should become a fully open campus for seniors that meet the listed criteria. "Everyone wants to leave just to get food, but most importantly to attain a sense of freedom," said Jose Regio ('18). The food served in this school's cafeteria is subpar. All the food is repetitive, bland, and unattractive. People want to go out to a local establishment and buy something freshly made. Most importantly, students want the option to choose. The school offers limited food options to students that rarely change. If buying a sandwich or coffee can make a person feel free, why not let them?

"I think we should have an open campus, as in we can leave whenever we want as long as we have our pass. However, I think that this privilege should only be

given to students with a C average," said Lindsay Sanchez ('18).

Expanding the open campus policy to include all periods is not just about letting students get food whenever they want, it gives them the ability to use that time for whatever way they choose. An open campus policy is not unprecedented; one area high school that implements this policy is Greenwich High School. "It prepares students for college. We get a lot of responsibilities being able to leave and making sure we are back on time for class," said Kacie Geary, a senior at Greenwich High School. So yes, the administration is on the right path by letting seniors leave first and last period if they have study hall. However, this right should be extended to all study hall periods, not just first and last. If the administration establishes a complete open campus, seniors will finally be free.



**OPEN CAMPUS** Seniors can leave school during first and last period study hall. But, many students want to extend this policy.

Photo by of **Sydney Lesser** / Photo Manager.

## Negative effects of assemblies

**Nathan Isenstein**  
Staff Writer

Do assemblies in school truly hold any value? Some students are engaged in assemblies and try to take something away from it. Other students, especially seniors, consider them to be a free period, and a time to mess around and not have to be in class. "I do not gain any knowledge from the majority of assemblies here," said Jason Vargas ('18).

Assemblies may also affect teachers and their teaching schedule. If a teacher has a lesson plan

for that class, but cannot teach because of an assembly, they will be behind in their lesson plan and will have to make up time.

"Assemblies that promote school spirit [are] fine. However, I would like assemblies to be more spread out because when they are back to back to back, it messes with our teaching schedules," said Social Studies teacher, Mrs. Taylor.

However, there are some students who appreciate assemblies and truly do benefit from them. "So far, I've really enjoyed the assemblies here at Westhill. They have been either

really assuring or fun at times," said Brynn Spingola ('21).

Even though there may be a few assemblies that are enjoyable and beneficial, the whole "education through entertainment" idea does not hold enough stock in the learning of students.

I find that the majority of students, including myself, have a hard time learning and paying attention at assemblies.

Even though the stories the speakers tell may be interesting, they relay their stories and presentations in a tedious mood, making students fall asleep.

Other students, especially juniors or seniors, may even leave campus during the assembly.

Many would rather spend their time being productive in the classroom and getting their work done as opposed to sitting in a room for an hour and listening to presentations that are hard to understand and learn from.

People may argue that students learn in many different ways, and assemblies create an opportunity for students to learn in a unconventional fashion.

Nevertheless, based on experience, I find that along with many

other students at Westhill, assemblies seem to be a waste of time and serve as a free period rather than an opportunity to learn.

Instead of school or grade-wide assemblies, teachers should try to get presenters to come into certain classes to speak. The size of the audience is smaller, making it more engaging for students.

This also benefits teachers, who can build their lesson plans around these presenters. Having specific people coming in to talk to classes rather than talking to the entire school would enhance the learning experience for students.

## Bees cause a buzz



**YELLOW TERROR** A close up of a yellow jacket, the type of bee around the school.

**Phoebe Lukawitz**  
Staff Writer

Many students love to enjoy their lunch in the courtyard while the weather is nice. Except how is it possible to enjoy when bees are attacking you?

Most of the time you will catch at least two people swatting away the bees or running away from their lunches to protect themselves during lunch.

This would not be a problem if the bees were bumblebees, but the bees in the courtyard are

yellow jackets and honey bees. Honey bees have stingers and can cause problems, especially for people that are allergic to bees.

There are different reactions to the bees. "I do believe that the bees in the courtyard are a problem because there is a large amount of them. I just do not see it as a problem that we should address because bees are unfortunately endangered species and also winter is coming soon so it should not continue to bother us too much," said Danielle Crevecoeur ('19).

Another student agreed that the bees are an issue, but some-

thing should be done about it.

"The bees are a problem. They are just annoying and get in the way of everything, especially in the courtyard, I see them around the trash cans," said Kimi Polak ('21).

Some even think that bees are a problem inside the school as well. "That is because of the warm fall and we have not had a killing frost and most students drink these fruit drinks and eat candy, so it attracts them. It could be more of a problem [in the 400s] because we face south and there is probably something with the angle of the

sun and sky triggering them," said Social Studies teacher, Mr. White.

"I do not get any bees in my class, I am lucky enough that all of my screens are functioning and I have not run into any issues even when I am passing through the courtyard and whenever I am walking to my car," said Science teacher, Ms. Ritz.

Everyone has different outlooks on this situation, but either way winter is approaching and soon enough the bees will not be flying around, enjoy this time until the bees buzz back around in the spring.

Photo courtesy of [wikipediacommons.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org/).

# Cell phone home or prison?

**Ray Deutsch**

Special Report Editor

The cell phone home policy has come to student's attention due to its increased use this school year. Teachers can implement the policy within their classrooms at their own discretion. The idea was introduced in an effort to gain student attention and participation during class lessons. Math teacher, Ms. Ashkin, began using the pockets this year. "Having the cell phone pockets eliminates a whole other layer of discipline in classroom. It helps keep students more focused and [removes] distractions."

Although students understand the policy's reasoning, they have mixed feeling about their property and a source of entertainment being taken away. Teachers will require that students place their phones in designated pockets at the start of class, often for attendance purposes, but the school claims no liability for any damaged or stolen devices.

Sophie Ciokajlo ('18) thinks phone addiction needs to be addressed in a positive manner without student reprimand. "I like the

idea behind them and the goal of asking kids to focus but I [do not] think taking away our cell phones achieves the goal. I feel like if they really want us to focus on our school work there needs to be a cultural shift at Westhill where we prioritize academics instead of taking away student privileges."

The threat of the cell phone pockets is often used as a scare tactic. Teachers will warn disruptive classrooms with their ability to implement this policy in order to maintain appropriate classroom behavior. Yet, if a teacher sees a student using their phone, they can easily confiscate it without removing devices from every student.

Kate Hollenberg ('18) notes that restrictions are already set on what students can do with their devices when they can be used in school, "I think that what we do or look up at school on the internet is our responsibility and not the schools. Certain sites are blocked with the school Wi-Fi and they prevent me from doing research or listening to music."

Social Studies department teacher, Ms. Berkley, noted student distraction and pure negli-

gence of important topics was becoming a rising issue and barrier to education. "I have grappled with using a phone holder over the past few years. Last year while showing a movie clip of concentration camps being liberated at the end of WWII, a few students were looking at their phones and laughing. In that moment it became clear to me that many of my students were losing out on their education due to their uncontrollable need to use their phones. I felt as though I had no choice but to institute a policy on cell phones in the hopes that they would grow both personally and academically."

As much as we students hate to admit it, use of these cell homes have had positive effects on the classrooms. "The cell phone pockets keep us focused in class. While I love texting, I find that taking a break from my screen and learning government from Ms. Berkley is a very worthwhile experience," Will Gold ('18). Students are more attentive with minimized distractions of their personal devices. We should give this opportunity of an electronic purge a fair chance.



**CELL PHONE HOME CADDY** Math teacher, Dr. O'Brien's caddy hanging off her whiteboard, is an attempt to try and keep her students focused and attentive inside the classroom.

Photo by **Addison Magrath** / Print Executive Editor.

## Playboy's effects on journalism

**Nicholas Zarrilli**

Managing Editor

The first thing that comes to mind at the thought of *Playboy* Magazine is the images of scantily clad or completely nude women. This makes sense, as photos of those women have been the magazine's main marketing and selling point since its inception in 1953.

However, pornography has never been the overall purpose of the magazine. *Playboy's* main focus has always been set on the acceptance and celebration of sex, that sex is something natural, healthy, and nothing to be ashamed of. The publication embraced sexuality and attacked hatred and violence in its long and philosophical articles and editorials, being one of the most forward thinking and influential American enterprises in its early decades.

*Playboy* always strove to not just be adult entertainment, but adult education as well. Creator and editor, Hugh Hefner, always wanted *Playboy* to be a sophisticated men's publication, so he

came up with the tactic of using the magazine's titular cover photos and centerfolds as selling devices to get people to buy and ultimately read the magazine. This tactic worked and *Playboy* sold and sold, expanding into a worldwide enterprise and leaving a profound impact on the world of journalism as a whole.

The first impact *Playboy* had on the journalism world was, fittingly enough, a blow against government censorship. In order to control what was published in America indirectly, the U.S. Government utilized the United States Postal Service (USPS). If they thought that a publication was unfit to be read, the USPS would deny the publication its second class mail licence on grounds of obscenity, effectively grounding the magazine to a local area of circulation. Hugh Hefner publishing took the post office to court where the case was quickly settled, stating that denying *Playboy* its mail license was a violation of First Amendment rights.

While *Playboy* was able to

get itself shipped across the country, getting into stores was a whole other issue. *Playboy* began widespread circulation in the early fifties, a decade defined by its post WWII conformity and conservative values. Hefner took it upon himself and his magazine to go against the flow of the decade, to thrust through the current of conformity using smut as his fuel.

Unsurprisingly, there was huge initial backlash against the magazine. It was being banned and removed from bookstores, college campuses, and suburbs throughout the country. Each banning, however, only sparked more interest in *Playboy* and therefore fueled more desire for it. The magazine was plastered in newspaper headlines and Hefner was invited to TV interviews. Despite all attempts to stop *Playboy* from growing, it persisted and thrived off of the negative, but free, publicity. "I think that *Playboy* should not be discredited, it interviewed presidents like Jimmy Carter and it offered a different perspective from mainstream journalism," said his-

tory teacher Mr. Page.

It was as though nothing could stop *Playboy's* growth, not even the magazine itself. *Playboy* pushed more than simple pinups. It published abstract art and cartoons, a practice unheard of at the time. Its articles and fiction were very long, but they were interesting, and people read them because they had come into possession of the magazine one way or another.

Its take on sex as a natural fact of life to be talked about and presented without beating around the bush was extremely forward thinking for its time. In an interview for "How *Playboy* changed the world" Hefner stated, "I think that anybody who calls *Playboy* itself pornography is ridiculous, if *Playboy* is pornography then everything sexual is pornographic."

*Playboy* would also take a forward stance during the civil rights movement. *Playboy's* penthouse, the corporation's 1960s syndicated TV show was fully integrated with white and black guest performers intermingling in the set. Hefner believed that

hatred and bigotry aren't natural, they must be taught, and he had never learned. The magazine itself also often interviewed prominent black figures during the time period like Martin Luther King Junior and Malcolm X. The first *Playboy* interview was conducted in 1962, featuring both a black subject and interviewer. "I think that *Playboy* paved the way for the acceptance of human sexuality. I don't think that it should be discredited just because it is a provocative magazine. Sometimes it takes something provocative to get our attention" said history teacher Mrs. Taylor

*Playboy* was not hypocritical on its message of free and open sexuality either. It supported LGBTQ rights through its fiction, even if not in its photos. *Playboy* published stories like "The Crooked Man" about a world where society is made up of mostly homosexuals and heterosexuals are persecuted. Despite the controversy over the explicit magazine, *Playboy* proved to be one of the most famous publications of its time.



## Limiting Birth Control

The pill, the most popular form of birth control, is a hormone based medicine that can prevent pregnancy and has other various health benefits when taken daily. Being 99 percent effective, when used perfectly, the pill is considered to be the best and easiest form of contraceptive. Birth control has helped to reduce unwanted pregnancies in teens, as the teen birth rate has dropped by 50 percent from 41.5 births per 1,000 teenage girls in 2007 to only 20.3 births per 1,000 teenage girls in 2017. Approximately 71 percent of our elected officials are men, who therefore cannot fully understand why birth control is a necessity beyond avoiding pregnancy. Many teenagers, along with adults, take birth control to reduce or prevent acne, PMS (premenstrual syndrome), anemia, bone thinning, and to regulate otherwise unpredictable and often painful periods.

It was originally ruled in the 1965 Supreme Court case, *Griswold v. Connecticut*, that married couples had the constitutional right to access birth control. It was not until 1972, in *Eisenstadt v. Baird*, that the Supreme Court decided single people could use contraceptives as well. Soon after, in the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* case, abortion, defined as the termination of a pregnancy, was declared a constitutional right. The United States is currently experiencing its lowest rate of unintended pregnancy in 30 years, which roughly aligns with the timing of the *Eisenstadt v. Baird* ruling.

The limitation of accessible birth control is a direct violation of the liberties individuals were given to access and use birth control back in 1972.

With 62 percent of reproductive aged woman currently using contraception, ranging from about ages 12 to 49, rescinding coverage would have a significant effect on a large portion of the female population. The structure of the Affordable Care Act, which was passed during Obama's presidency, included in-

This coverage should be universal throughout all health care, and not be dictated by one's boss' own moral or religious reasoning.

According to the Star-Ledger Editorial Board, "Trump has turned a socioeconomic issue into a religious-political issue," as Trump has now made access to birth control a religious debate. The exceptions first came from the 2014 Supreme Court *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.* ruling that private, closely-held businesses could drop

coverage, and therefore will not receive it. Women, who are approximately 35 percent more likely to live in poverty than a man, would face the harshest repercussions of cuts on birth control, including increased risks of birth defects, such as low birth weight, mental or physical disabilities, or even early infant death. Along with the impacts on the child, mothers may struggle with depression and extreme financial stresses.

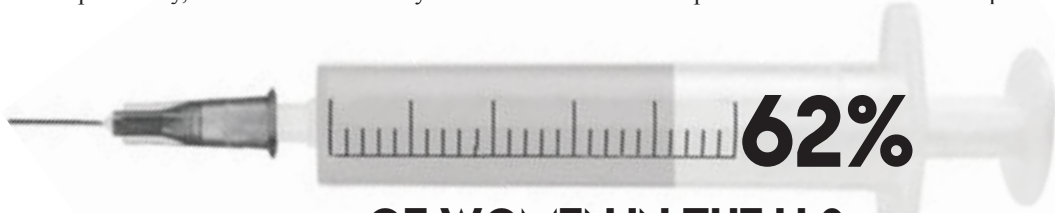
For women to accomplish their

women of childbearing age, and consider maternity leave a financial burden. According to *theguardian.com*, one third of managers would rather hire a man in his 20s or 30s just in an attempt to steer clear of supplying maternity leave and child care when a woman returns to work. If women are already discriminated against while only applying for a job, those who do not want a family should not have to deal with the additional hassle of fighting for maternity rights in the workplace.

Those who are not against the birth control mandate rollback argue that employers should have never had the power to restrict birth control in the first place, as they believe any health services should not be determined by employers. While they see this new regulation as a sign that employers should be removed from health insurance decisions, the reality is that most insurance comes from one's job, therefore birth control should be included.

Without a doubt, birth control belongs under one's coverage. Throughout the years, accessibility has been improved and has drastically benefited the female population, along with their partners. It allows women to flourish in their careers, personal goals, stay healthy, and ultimately, avoid pregnancy. Employers should have no say in whether or not it is covered.

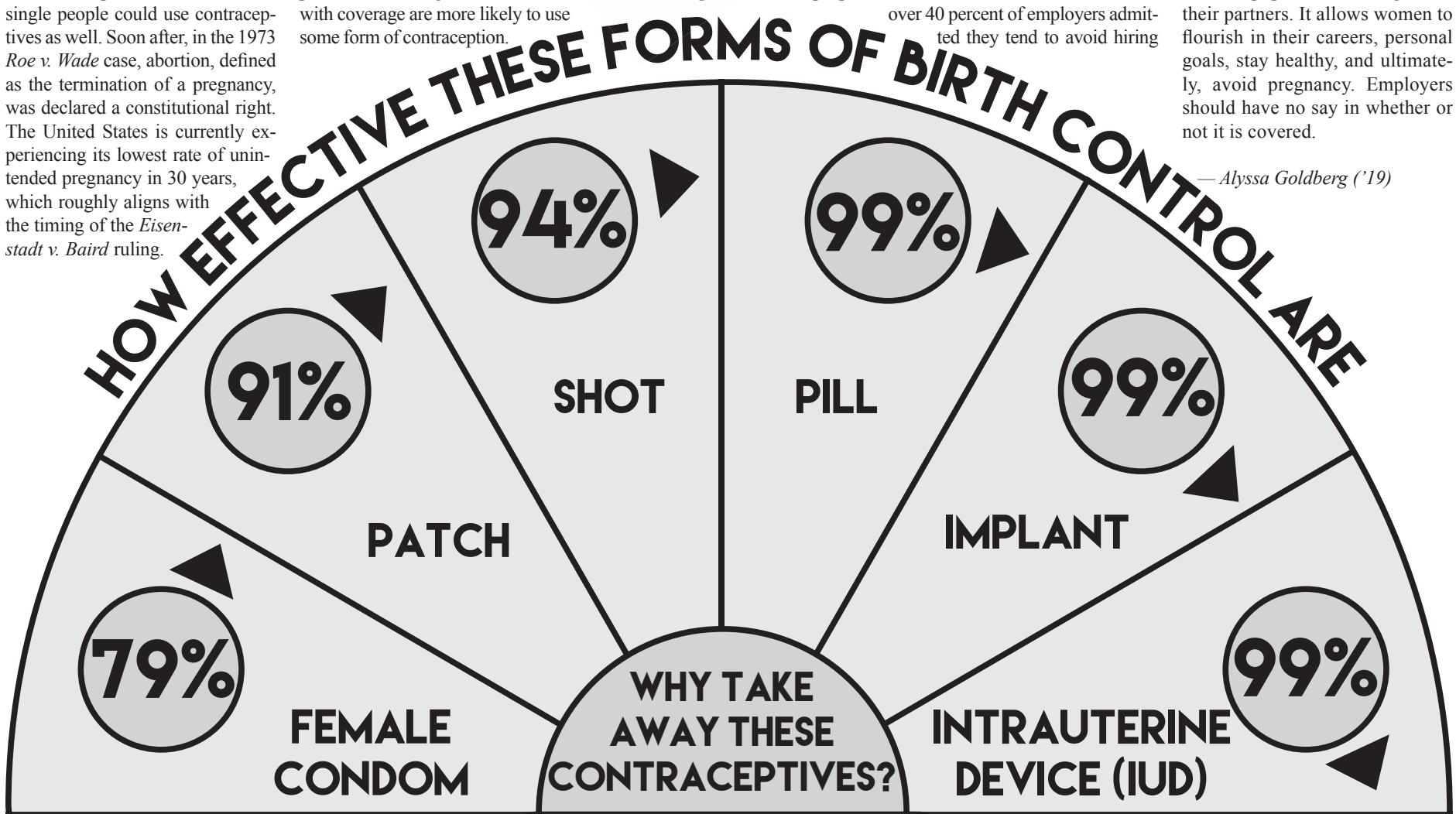
— Alyssa Goldberg ('19)



### OF WOMEN IN THE U.S. USE BIRTH CONTROL

contraceptive coverage. However, Trump's new policy applies to every employer, even non-profits and universities who sell to students. While this does affect all women, it will mostly impact those of low income, as they simply cannot afford contraception without proper

goals, they must be able to control their lives to the same extent as a man can. To have unintended pregnancy be the barrier in one's path to success would not fall short of being considered a tragedy. A survey of five hundred managers by law firm Slater & Gordon revealed that over 40 percent of employers admitted they tend to avoid hiring



# 12 | LAS NOTICIAS

## ¿Qué es la asistencia médica?

### ¿QUÉ SON?

La asistencia médica es el mantenimiento o mejora de tu salud a través de la prevención, el diagnóstico y el tratamiento de enfermedades, lesiones, discapacidades tanto físicas y mentales. Es brindada por profesionales dependiendo de tus necesidades.

### ¿CÓMO AYUDA EL "TRUMPCARE" CON LA GENTE EN LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS SIN DOCUMENTACIÓN?

El presidente Trump no ha hablado directamente sobre cómo afectará o ayudará a los indocumentados con su nuevo plan de implantar "Trumpcare", Pero ha hablado sobre que en los planes de implantar "Trumpcare" la gente tendrá un fácil acceso a este programa sin importar la clase social con tal de que cumplan algunos requisitos.

### ¿QUÉ OPCIONES TIENES PARA LA ASISTENCIA MÉDICA?

- Derecho a elegir su agencia de asistencia médica a domicilio.
- Derecho a que su propiedad sea tratada con respeto.
- Derecho a obtener una copia de su plan de cuidado y participar en las decisiones acerca de su cuidado.
- Derecho a que su familia o tutor actúen en representación suya en caso de estar incapacitado

### ¿CÓMO LA RECIBES?

El plan de asistencia médica de Trump también pide que se requiera "transparencia de precios" para permitirles a los pacientes que "compren y encuentren los mejores precios" para su asistencia médica y eliminar las barreras que en la actualidad hacen que sea mucho más difícil que ingresen medicamentos extranjeros más baratos al mercado de salud estadounidense.

Informes de **Alison Ordóñez** / Periodista

## Huracán Maria trae destrucción

**Bridgette Calderon**  
Periodista

El Huracán María es uno de los huracanes más potentes en la historia de Puerto Rico. Destruyó hogares, hospitales, empresas, carreteras y plantas solares. El huracán Maria afectó en todos los aspectos a el país. Económi-

camente, afectando los ingresos en turismo. El huracán a su paso también destruyó hoteles y centros turísticos. Destruyó casi por completo la red de energía eléctrica, el gobernador señaló que podría tomar meses poder restaurar el servicio en algunas zonas. El sistema de telecomunicaciones y el del agua potable. El servi-

cio Meteorológico Nacional de los estados unidos con ayuda de drones realizó un estudio detallando a toda su capacidad de la devastación que el huracán María dejó a su paso.

En westhill se organizaron ventas para recaudar fondos y ayudar a nuestro país hermano Puerto Rico. La comunidad de

stamford puede organizar ventas de comida, ya que somos una ciudad formada por diversas culturas, todos tenemos algo diferente que ofrecer. Además, hay muchas organizaciones sin fines de lucro que reciben donaciones monetarias para la ayuda en la reconstrucción de Puerto Rico. Organizaciones como: Friends

Of Puerto Rico, Cruz roja americana, Miami Foundation, Unidos por Puerto Rico, ConPRmetidos, GlobalGiving, y UNICEF USA.

Puerto Rico necesita ayuda en reconstrucción, para que las personas puedan recuperar sus hogares, los negocios puedan empezar de nuevo y el país entero empiece su recuperación.

**"Recaudar víveres, que cada estudiante traiga dos unidades de comida enlatada y cuando todo ya este recaudado, mandarlo a Puerto Rico."**

*Vanessa Sandoval*

**"Podemos vender cosas que le gustan a los estudiantes como los bagels, ya que a todos nos gustan, sería algo que se vendería rápido y por consiguiente se podrían recaudar varios fondos."**

*Camila Noreña*

**"Organizar un Car Wash y cobrar por cada automóvil, y todo el dinero que se recaude en el evento, donarlo a una de las organizaciones que ayudan a Puerto Rico."**

*Shamar Bryce ('19)*

¿Quieres más de *El Westword*?

¿No puedes **esperar** un mes más para un edición nuevo?

¡Tenemos un sitio web!

Simplemente va a:

**THEWESTWORDONLINE.COM**

...para leer artículos sobre la comunidad de Westhill y Stamford.



# Fotos de nuestra asamblea de patrimonio cultural hispánico

Fotos de Harrison Travaglini / Fotógrafo



**JOHN THE BAKER**  
TRATTORIA  
CUCINA ITALIANA  
**PIZZA**

SERVING LUNCH  
11AM TO 3PM

Catering For  
All Occasions

**2 ENTREES** Monday & Tuesday Only  
**\$20.00**

John The Baker 203-325-0707  
*No Sides Included. Limited Menu. Expires 6/2018  
 Not to be combined with any other offer.  
 Now available for take out, delivery & dine in.*

**DINE-IN • TAKE-OUT • DELIVERY**  
 Monday - Saturday 11:00 am - 10:30 pm  
 Sunday 12:00 pm - 10:30 pm  
 30 LONG RIDGE ROAD • STAMFORD, CT 06905

**203-325-0707**

A  
P  
P  
E  
T  
I  
Z  
E  
R  
S  
•  
S  
O  
U  
P  
S  
•  
W  
R  
A  
P  
S

S  
A  
L  
A  
D  
S  
•  
W  
E  
D  
G  
E  
S  
O  
R  
P  
A  
N  
I  
N  
I  
S

# Looking back at the hurricanes of 2017

**Marta Zach**  
Feature Editor

When the 2017 Hurricane Season hit, it hit hard. Texas, Florida, and the Caribbean were heavily devastated, and have yet to recover. It seemed as if the storms did not stop coming, Stage four hurricanes struck, and never seemed to cease. It left behind death, destruction, and people in helpless poverty. Puerto Rico is one extreme case, as it is one large humanitarian disaster affecting nearly three and a half million people. “The president is not doing anything either, his barely-there efforts are not enough,” said Rachel Mensah (’20).

While our president, Donald Trump, visited Puerto Rico and made efforts to aid, his attempts were minimal and his visit was considered a “political disaster” to some.

When Trump met with government officials after arriving in Puerto Rico, he made the fol-

lowing statement: “Every death is a horror, but if you look at a real catastrophe like Katrina, and you look at the tremendous— hundreds and hundreds of people that died, and you look at what happened here, with really a storm that was just totally overpowering, nobody’s ever seen anything like this. What is your death count as of this moment? 17? 16 people certified, 16 people versus in the thousands. You can be very proud of all of your people and all of our people working together. Sixteen versus literally thousands of people. You can be very proud. Everybody around this table and everybody watching can really be very proud of what is taken place in Puerto Rico.” He made it seem as if the situation in the Caribbean was simply a minor inconvenience.

Our nation should come together and be encouraged to help out the needy. The people

of Puerto Rico need more than encouragement and assistance. There is an ongoing crisis, and they need help. Puerto Rico had been in debt prior to the storm, which only made matters worse.

There are no excess funds to aid people, supply food and water, or repair infrastructure. Puerto Rico is in massive debt. It is estimated that it could take nearly 60 billion dollars to rebuild the island. The island’s electric grid was severely damaged, as well as infrastructure, houses, and communication networks. Nearly half of the population is without clean drinking water, and the majority of people lack electricity.

“We need to donate [to Puerto Rico]. My family and I gave money to a charity that is helping the hurricane victims. They need as much help as they can get,” said Lucas Pinto-Leite (’20).

People are starving because there is a shortage of food. In fact, everything is

scarce. Gas lines in small villages are nearly a mile long, and people do not have electricity. Homes have been utterly destroyed and many facilities have been shut down. Children no longer attend school, and many families are forced to remain at home and hope for the best.

The situation deserves more coverage in the media. Many people are unaware of the drastic situation. Puerto Rico is a territory of the United States, and therefore we should make our best efforts to help out.

“We need more support from the government, as Puerto Rico is legally a United States territory,” said Katelyn Guzman (’19). Students agree that there has not been anything in the news. “I have maybe seen one thing on television about the storm in the Caribbean,” said Kayla Mendiola (’20).

Westhill students started a fundraiser to help the victims

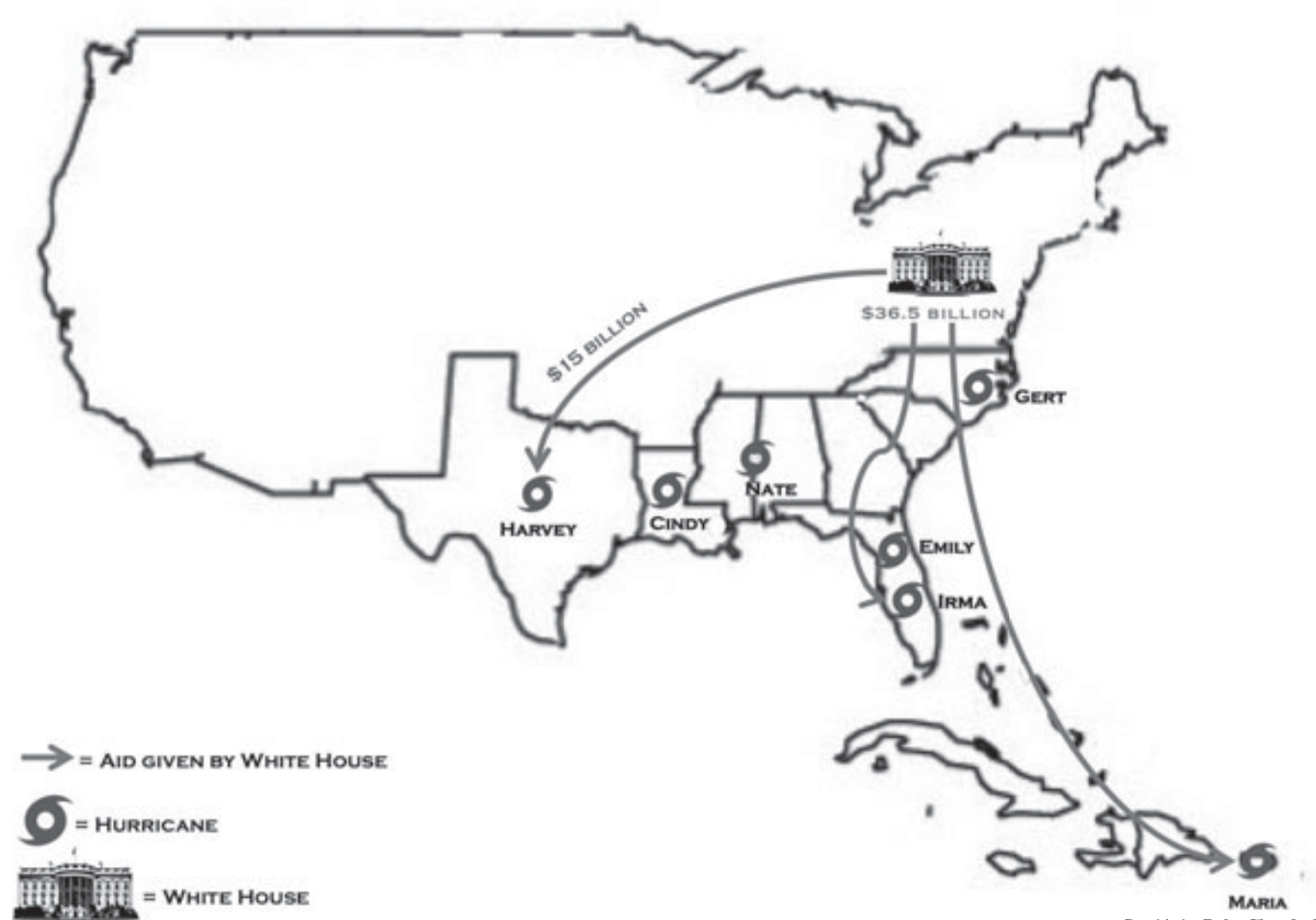
of Hurricane Harvey. The same should be done for those in the Caribbean. They certainly need it.

Many Westhill families have family in Caribbean or are of Puerto Rican descent, and not only would they be willing to help out, but they would also appreciate the aid of their home country. These people need as much help as they can get.

Even though it would take years and cost billions of dollars to rebuild after the destruction, any sum we raise could save lives. People are desperate for help, and they need it immediately.

Students are quite fond of the idea to fundraise and feel that any money would be much appreciated by Puerto Rico, no matter how small.

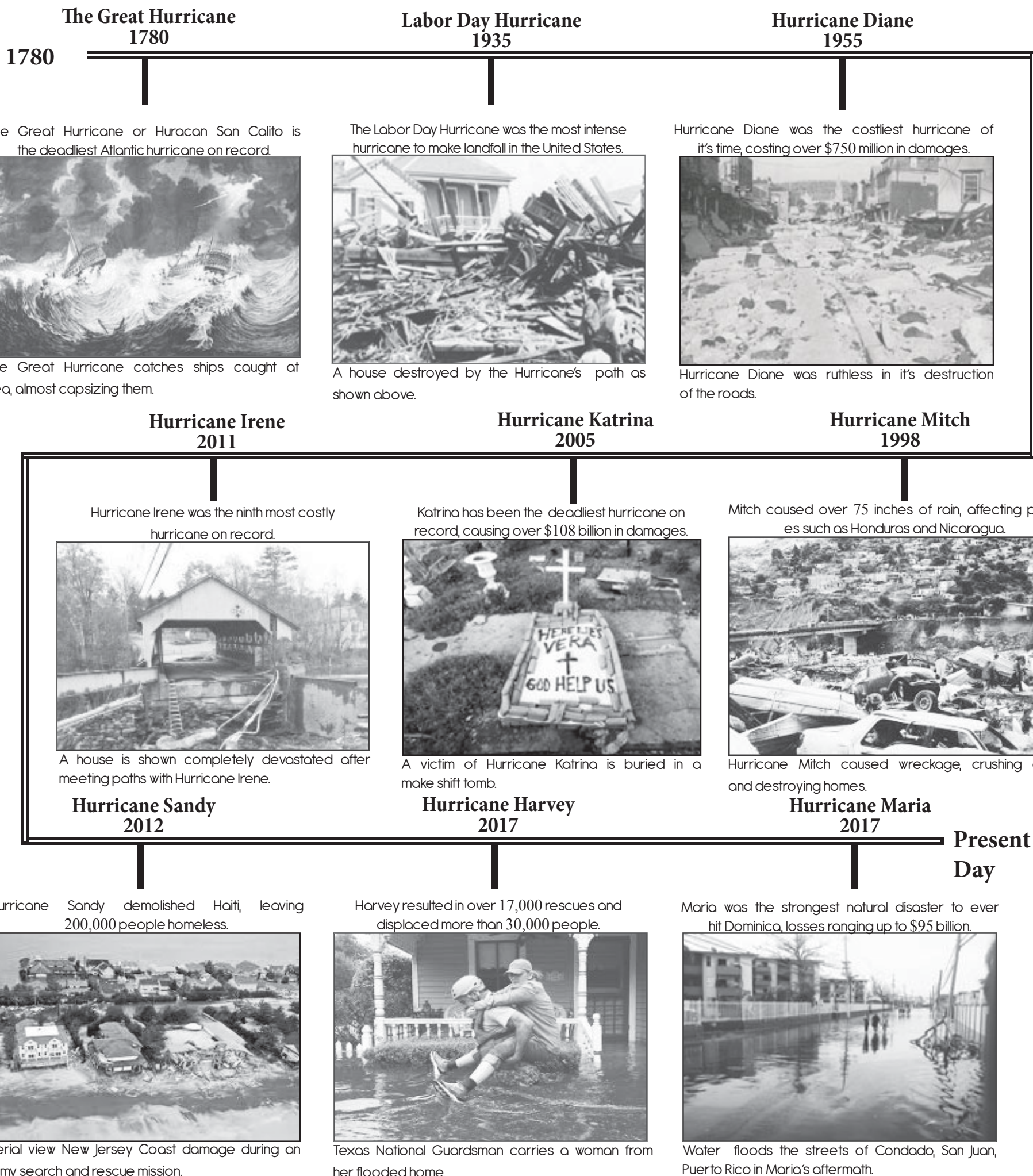
“We might not change the world with one hundred dollars,” Rachel Mensah noted, “but we could change someone’s world.”



Graphic by Ryka ChandraRaj / Graphic Designer.



# A timeline of history's deadliest hurricanes



Photos Courtesy of [usnews.com](http://usnews.com), [commons.wikimedia.org](http://commons.wikimedia.org), [defense.gov](http://defense.gov), [wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org) & [hurricanesience.gov](http://hurricanesience.gov).



# Leftword/Rightword

*Presented by The Westword*



Politics, Current  
Events, and More

New Episodes  
Every week!



@thewestword

@thewestword





# The Westword Supplement

ALL THINGS AUTUMN





# Climate change and its effect on fall

**Leiny Otero**  
Staff Writer

The weather this season has been very inconsistent. Some mornings around six o'clock it has been 40 degrees and by three in the afternoon it is about 80 degrees. Other days in the morning it will be 50 degrees and by the end of the day it will be about 60 degrees. The weather does whatever it wants without it being a problem. "It is pretty nice outside for once, and I am getting the feeling that winter is going to be really bad. The cold that is missing for fall is going to go to winter," said Sabrina Boyd ('19).

According to NASA, "just in the last 650,000 years there have been seven cycles of glacial advance and retreat, with the abrupt end of the last ice age about 7,000 years ago marking the beginning of the modern climate era — and of human civilization."

Climate change is such a big issue, and it is causing more problems. Starting with a controversial topic of global warming. "When I was younger, it would always still be cold, I think by now it would be snowing," said Jordana Smith ('20). Glaciers are shrinking, and the ice that is left on rivers and lakes are disappearing faster and faster. Trees begin to flower sooner and the heat waves are

also getting stronger.

"One minute it is very cold and rainy and you have to wear a sweatshirt and then it is so hot you cannot breathe, it deals with global warming because we are almost in November and it is so hot," said one student.

Human activities are causing greenhouse gases. This impacts the way scientists predict what is to come in the next couple of decades. Scientists think that global temperature will continue to increase over time.

According to NASA, "the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which includes more than 1,300 scientists from the United States and other countries, forecasts a temperature rise of 2.5 to 10 degrees Fahrenheit over the next century."

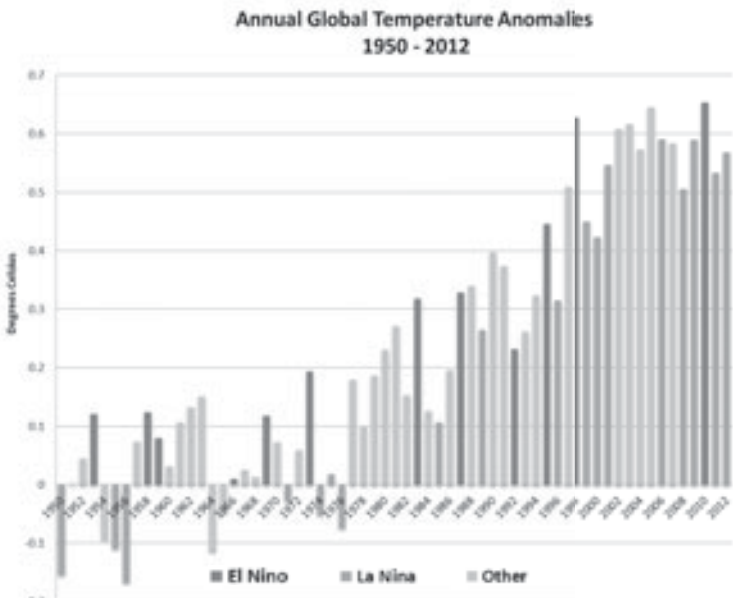
The global warming that the Earth is receiving is causing widespread wildfires and heat waves, changing the ranges of animals and plants.

According to the IPCC, "the extent of climate change effects on individual regions will vary over time and with the ability of different societal and environmental systems to mitigate or adapt to change."

One of the main causes for the global warming is the human expansion of the greenhouse effect. The IPCC study has shown that "trends over the past century are extremely likely due to

human activities."

The IPCC predicts "that increases in global mean temperatures of less than 1.8 to 5.4 degrees Fahrenheit (one to three degrees Celsius) above 1990 levels will produce beneficial impacts in some regions and harmful ones in others. Net annual costs will increase over time as global temperatures increase. "Global sea level has risen by about eight inches since reliable record keeping began in 1880. It is projected to rise another one to four feet by 2100. This is the result of added water from melting land ice and the expansion of seawater as it warms." Climate change is impacting the environment and us greatly each day.



TEMPERATURE INCREASE the "Annual Global Temperature Anomalies" graph above depicts the enormous changes in temperature which result from Los Ninos and Las Ninas.



WILDFIRE this is an example of climate change and its effects on the environment as seen by the Biscuit Wildfire of 2002 in Oregon.

## HOW GLOBAL WARMING IS CHANGING THE ICE CAPS



Graphic by **Emma Cali** / Creative Director.  
Photo courtesy of **flickr.com**.  
Graphic courtesy of **wikimediacommons.org**.



# Science behind the change in leaves' colors

## Summer Leaf



Throughout the spring and summer, leaves perform photosynthesis, during which they absorb light. This light is absorbed by the chloroplast of the leaves' cells which contain chlorophyll, a chemical that makes the leaves appear green.



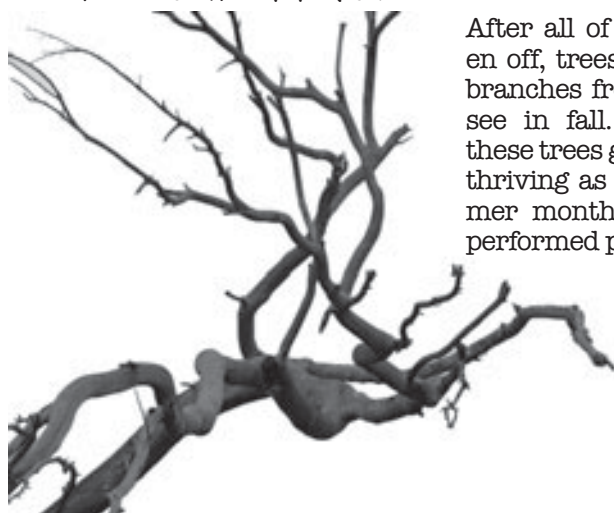
## Autumn Leaf



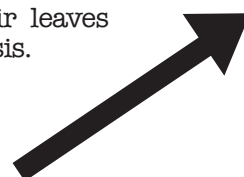
During the fall, the chlorophyll in leaves breaks down and the other chemicals which are usually blocked out by the chlorophyll absorb the light instead. These chemicals include carotenoid, which makes the leaves yellow; among many others which create the beautiful colors we see in fall.



## No Leaf Winter



After all of the leaves have fallen off, trees appear barren with branches free of all the color we see in fall. During the winter, these trees go dormant, no longer thriving as they did in the summer months when their leaves performed photosynthesis.



## Spring Budding Leaf



In the spring, the process begins all over again. As the temperatures begin to rise, small buds sprout on the branches. Over the duration of the spring months they grow and grow until they are the full grown leaves we see in summer.

**Guilmar Valle**  
Special Report Editor

One of the defining features of fall are the amber, gold, and purple colored leaves that seem to come out of thin air. We all know that during the summer and spring months, the leaves are green, but how do they seem to magically change color for the fall?

During the spring and summer months, the leaves serve as factories where the food necessary for the tree's growth is made. This takes place in numerous cells containing chlorophyll. It is these cells that give leaves their green color. This chemical absorbs energy from sunlight and transforms carbon dioxide and water into carbohydrates such as sugar and starch. As the chlorophyll absorbs all colors of the light spectrum except green, this color reflects it into our eyes, thus why we see the green so often associated with plants. But how and why exactly do the leaves change color in the fall?

Besides chlorophyll, there is an abundance of other chemicals present in the leaves of a plant, such as carotenoid, and anthocyanin. Usually during the summer and spring months, the chlorophyll tends to drown out all other chemicals and shine, but during the fall months, the aforemen-

tioned chemicals shine. Carotenoid is responsible for colors such as yellow, orange and brown, where as anthocyanin is responsible for the red we might see. As there is little daylight in the winter compared to the summer, there is insufficient fuel to power photosynthesis, and thus the leaves start to consume more energy than they produce. At this point it is no longer worth having leaves and most trees shed their leaves.

You may have noticed, however that not all trees do this, and you are right. Trees such as the evergreen undergo an entirely different process to survive the cold, and instead keep their leaves. To power photosynthesis, water is transported through the tree's vascular system by its xylem and phloem, all the way up to its leaves. In other trees, this water would freeze and kill the leaves during the winter months, but the evergreen perseveres. This is due to its small pine needles, which reduce water loss through a process called transpiration. To further defend themselves from the elements, trees such as the evergreen have a waxy coat called cutin to protect them. All of these unique features are what allow the evergreen to survive in the winter.

As mentioned before, there are other chemicals present in a

leaf besides chlorophyll, and there is an easy and fun way to see this for yourself, and it is called paper chromatography. Paper chromatography is a method used to separate dissolved chemical substances by taking advantage of their different rates of migration across a sheet of paper. It is inexpensive and a great tool to be able to visualize the various chemicals composing a solution. With paper chromatography, one can separate the various colors of the leaf, by cutting up leaves and adding some rubbing alcohol, and finally dipping a piece of paper in this. One could easily see the differences in color, with lighter colors at the bottom, and the darker colors rising to the top. Being able to separate the different colors of a fall leaf is a great fall activity.

The most vibrant colors can be from October 31st to November 6th, which is known as peak foliage, when the leaves in a given area, are at their most vibrant colors. In our case this falls during the first week of November, as the length of the day, temperature, humidity, etc will all be at their best in order to show off the prettiest colors.

On your next fall walk, instead of wondering why and how the leaves change color, you will be able to understand the process that drives this change.



# Fall fashion trends of 2017



## Sweaters

When the temperature outside begins to plummet, the go-to addition to any outfit is the classic sweater. What makes the sweater so versatile is its ability to preserve body heat while its woven structure still grants the wearer some level of breathability while indoors. Sweaters have increasingly been the staple to autumn outfits since they evolved from the unbearably itchy and dense texture into more comfortable blends such as merino wool. Sweaters also go with practically any outfit, which makes them a must-have for the season.

Along with the decrease in temperature comes yet another problem— low-top shoes such as Converse, Vans, or Toms just don't cut it when it comes to keeping in the heat. Boots of all kinds offer great style paired with comfort and warmth. While Uggs slowly fade away, the new trend is tall leather boots. Such footwear provides durability for the harsher months towards winter, while the form-fitting construction does not appear too bulky like a classic winter boot would. For men, the leather work boot pairs nicely with jeans, also providing a rugged quality for when the ground begins to frost over.

## Boots



## Flannels

A perfect pairing with jeans and a solid t-shirt is a flannel. The flannel fabric has been traced back to the 16th century, but the name 'flannel' most likely originated from France during the 17th century. Flannel is often misidentified as any cloth with a plaid pattern, whereas the true definition of a flannel lies within its structure. Flannel is often woven cotton, wool, or another synthetic blend, and varies in its level of fineness and texture. This fabric has been a continuous trend throughout many years, though it took off in popularity during the '70s and '80s. The classic style of a flannel shirt is one of the many embodiments of autumn.

The crisp autumn breeze starts to turn frigid over the course of a few weeks; if you want to keep warm whilst not sacrificing style, the scarf is the way to go. Recently, the trend is knitted or woven infinity scarves for women— most commonly pairing a dark scarf with a light sweater or cardigan. For men, solid color "traditional" scarves work the same way— but instead drape from the shoulders. Once you get indoors, you can simply remove the scarf and fold it away.

## Scarves



## Fleeces

For the colder fall days, a fleece jacket provides just the right amount of warmth. Polar fleece, most commonly referred to as just 'fleece', originated in Massachusetts during the late '70s. Its invention was inspired by the will to move away from using chinchilla pelts, in order to preserve wildlife, manufacture at lower costs, and ensure that each piece of fabric was uniform. Its polyester base gives it a hydrophobic property, retaining less than one percent of its weight in water. When saturated, polar fleece still holds its powerful insulation properties, and can be dried quickly. On top of this, polar fleece can be manufactured from recycled polyethylene terephthalate bottles, which are most commonly found encasing soda or water. A fleece goes along with practically any outfit, making its use extremely flexible.

Briefs by **Dan Greco** / Managing Editor.  
Photos courtesy of **Sydnie Lesser** / Photo Manager.  
Photos courtesy of **flickr.com**, **wikimediacommons.org**, **pixabay**.

# The ways to use up your leftover apples



## Pie

This traditional "all-American" dessert is the perfect way to use up your leftover apples from apple picking. The classic taste is just right for a cold fall day and on the warmer days enjoy it à la mode! It is very easy to make. All you need for the dessert is your apples, butter, sugar, cinnamon, and some crust. "I love apple pie because my mom makes it the best." —Jared Goldstein ('19)

Take a break from the desserts and make yourself a warm cup of cider. If you want to make the cider yourself, prepare early because it is a long process, but the end result is definitely worth it. The cider takes about three hours to cook, and takes another few hours to cool down. With some sugar, cinnamon, allspice and a little bit of time, you will have the perfect fall drink. Drink it warm on a cold day, or cool on a warm day— it always works. "I like drinking it in the fall because it has a crisp taste and reminds me of pumpkin picking." —Melanie Montalvo ('19)

## Cider



## Roses

If you are adventurous in your baking endeavors, baking an apple rose is the challenge for you. The pastry not only tastes delicious, but has the appearance of a beautiful rose. It requires a careful hand in slicing the apples thin and carefully twisting them to form the petals of a rose. This dessert takes the traditional apple pie and makes it into a delicious mini flower. Pastry chef or not, this temptational treat is a great way to use up those apples. "I like them because I am Italian and I eat them a lot." —Nick Porecelli ('19)

Instead of a pie or a tart, try baking your apples into a cake! This alternative calls for opportunities to include new and different ingredients. The apples pair perfectly with different nuts and spices, and eventually a mascarpone cheese frosting. Of course this is just one of the ways to combine all of these ingredients and there are many more possibilities when it comes to cake. Caramel also pairs as the perfect topping and combination with apples and a nutmeg spice.

## Cake



## Stuffing

If you are looking to indulge in something a little bit less sweet, try making chicken with apple stuffing. Apples are more commonly used in desserts and treats, so try something new with this recipe. Cut your apples up into cubes and combine it with a stuffing mix. This is a simple, heart-warming, delight of a dinner. "It is pretty good and I really like it when my mom and I make it together." —Sydney Eben ('20)

Briefs by **Addison Magrath** / Print Executive Editor.  
Photos courtesy of **wikimediacommons.org**, **feaston.wordpress.com**, **pixabay.com**, & **flickr.com**.



# Autumn's effect on mental health

**Devonte Atwell**  
Staff Writer

Seasonal affective disorder, also known as SAD, is a type of depression that deals with season changes. Symptoms of this disorder occur during the changing seasons and have different effects on people depending on the season change.

According to the US National Library of Medicine, these symptoms include: feeling depressed most of the day, becoming uninterested in activities that were previously enjoyed, low energy, problems with sleeping, etc.

During autumn and winter, the most common symptoms are oversleeping, appetite changes and weight gain. According to the US National Library of Medicine, patients may "sleep too much and may also feel depressed." While during the spring and summer seasons, symptoms usually are poor appetite, weight loss, and anxiety.

Seasonal affective disorder

can be caused by decreased serotonin levels, increased melatonin levels, or a sporadic circadian rhythm. Serotonin is a chemical in the brain that affects a person's mood. Reduced sunlight can cause a drop in serotonin levels. Melatonin is responsible for sleep patterns as well as mood. Seasonal changes can affect these levels. Changes in the amount of sunlight can lead to depression.

A few risk factors include: bipolar disorder, or living far from the equator. Seasonal affective disorder can lead to problems such as social withdrawal, school or work, anxiety other mental disorders, and suicidal thoughts and behavior. According to the U.S. National Library of Medicine, around 25 percent of patients with bipolar disorder may present symptoms of a depressive seasonal pattern.

To diagnose SAD, doctors may ask if you have been depressed during the same season every year or if your depres-

sion has gotten better as the seasons change for two years in a row. If you answer yes to these questions, you show symptoms that often occur with seasonal affective disorder. A close relative such as a parent, brother, or sister that has SAD might be another indication of the disorder.

SAD can be treated in a number of ways, one of them being through the use of light therapy. One way of performing light therapy is Bright Light Treatment. During this treatment, a light box is placed a certain distance away from the patient. The patient sits in the front of the light box and performs simple activities one would normally do throughout the day such as reading or eating. Dawn Simulation is another treatment for seasonal affective disorder. For this type of therapy, a dim light goes on in the morning as the patient sleeps and slowly gets brighter, similar to a sunrise.

"I love fall because everything is pumpkin flavored."

-Jessica Nirschel ('21)



"I love fall because of the leaves that change color."

-Kylie Ashlund ('18)



"I love fall because I can go apple and pumpkin picking!"

-Mary Leydon ('19)



"There is so much to look forward to in the fall."

-Michaela DePreta ('20)



"I love the sweater weather."

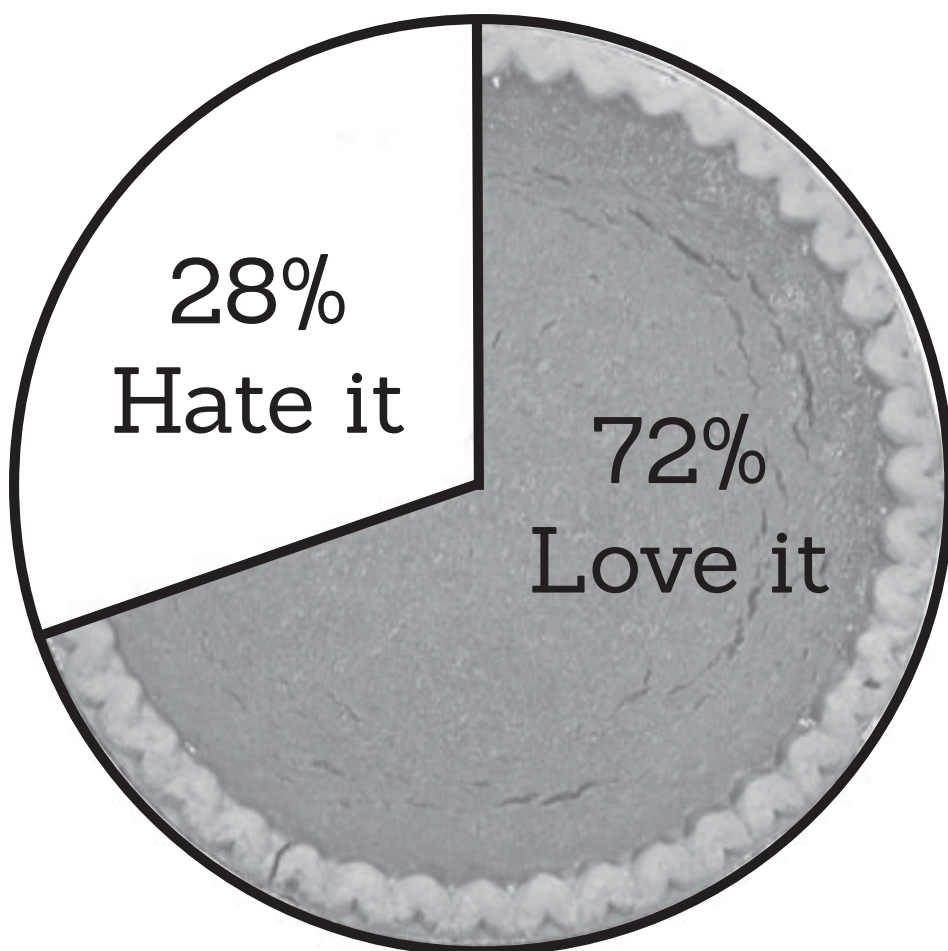
-Caroline Ross ('18)



"It is my favorite season because I love Halloween and the cool weather."

-Amanda Veseli ('19)

## HOW STUDENTS FEEL ABOUT FALL

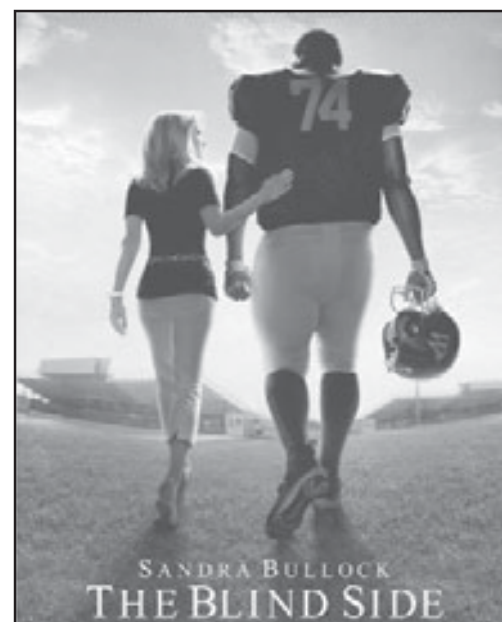


# Fall films: Getting in the fall mood

## *The Blind Side*

Starring: Sandra Bullock, Lily Collins, Quinton Aaron

The Blind Side is based on the true story of Michael Oher. Oher is an abnormally large teenage boy who grew up without a proper education, a drug addict mother, and an absentee father. He has been passed from grade to grade his entire school career because his teachers had no idea what to do with him. Sean Tuohy, the husband of Leigh Anne Tuohy who is an interior designer, notices Michael picking up leftover trash in the bleachers. Later they see him walking the streets alone in the rain and take him into their car, they then bring him into their home. After taking him in, he becomes part of the Tuohy family and finally has people looking out for him. Leigh Anne Tuohy treats Oher as her son and does everything she can to help him succeed. If you are a football fan this one is certainly for you, considering Oher becomes the star football player at his high school after being given a chance. Or if you want a movie about someone's life being changed for the better— a massive tear jerker— you can bet this one will keep you satisfied.



## *Coraline*

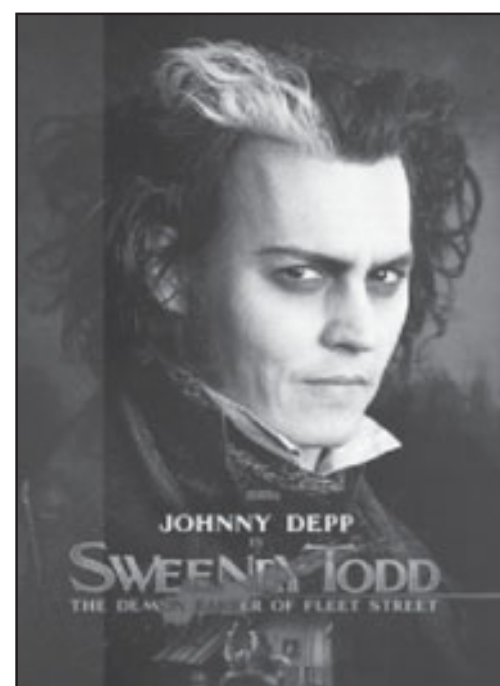
Starring: Dakota Fanning, Teri Hatcher

Coraline is a stop motion fantasy film adapted from the Neil Gaiman book of the same name. Young Coraline Jones and her parents move to a new neighborhood, where she meets her neighbors Mr. Bobinsky, Miss. Forcible and Miss. Spink, two retired burlesque dancers, and Wyborne "Wybie" Lovat, the grandson of the landowner whose sister disappeared mysteriously years before. Coraline receives a doll from Wybie that oddly resembles her. It leads her to a patched up secret door in her living room. After discovering the key, she crawls through this secret door and enters the "Other World", where she discovers the same people in her own universe, except they all have buttons for eyes. She meets the "Other Mother," who is significantly nicer than her real mother. The Other Mother showers Coraline with gifts and more love than her actual mother had given her in order to trap her and make her stay in her world. After Coraline refuses to sew buttons into her eyes, the Other Mother turns into a spider like creature and attempts to trap Coraline in the Other World forever. This fall film really brings out the spirit of Halloween and is a great family-friendly horror film that is sure to keep everyone at the edge of their seat.

## *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*

Starring: Johnny Depp, Helena Bonham Carter, Alan Rickman

Sweeney Todd is a slasher film adapted from Stephen Sondheim's critically acclaimed musical. The story focuses on the handsome Benjamin Barker, a man with a beautiful wife and daughter. They are both lusted after by the corrupt Judge Turpin, a man who falsely accuses Barker of a crime he did not commit, throwing him in prison. Fifteen years later he arrives back in London (and changes his name to Sweeney Todd) with Anthony Hope, a hopeful and cheerful fellow who later falls in love with Joanna, Sweeney's daughter. He meets Mrs. Lovett, an energetic middle aged woman in her run down and unsuccessful meat pie shop. Mrs. Lovett and Todd develop an uneasy relationship with Adolfo Pirelli, a boisterous stuck up man. After Todd beats Pirelli in a shaving competition, he threatens to reveal Todd's true identity to the judge. Todd hit Pirelli over the head with a kettle, killing him. After his death, Mrs. Lovett proposes the idea that they use human meat for her pies, giving Todd a chance to murder more victims until he can get to Judge Turpin. If you are into slasher, horror, or musical films this one is certainly for you.









# Principal Rinaldi increasing the energy in the school

**Caitlin Covello**

Staff Writer

Both staff and students alike can feel the difference in the mood of the school this year. Newly instated Principal Rinaldi makes an effort to start everyday with energy by playing music and greeting students as they enter the school. His efforts to increase school spirit have led to a very successful spirit week and pep rally where students were excited to show they were “Westhill and proud.”

“He is getting way more in-

involved and having more events compared to my freshman year. It is very obvious that Rinaldi loves this school,” said Isabella Adamo (’20).

These efforts have had an effect on the day-to-day function of the school. Students feel like they are part of a community and that their voices are heard. The idea of school pride has been taken past the notion of loving our sports teams, and brought into the classroom.

“The faculty has unbelievable camaraderie... there is an overall sense of general happiness, everyone is working

hard and wants to be at school. Everyone feels more engaged and feels a part of the school,” said Mrs. Nesbitt, a Westhill teacher since 2000.

Teachers have expressed feeling that their opinions are welcomed and listened to, making them feel encouraged to engage more with administration. Principal Rinaldi also pushes a team attitude, believing we are all an important part of Westhill and that by forming a community atmosphere, everyone will be more successful.

“[Prior to Principal Rin-

aldi] there was a community atmosphere; I think he just goes about things differently. I really enjoy his morning routine where he is saying hi and shaking students hands. It makes it more visible,” said Mr. Capriotti.

Principal Rinaldi’s enthusiasm and energy has not gone unnoticed. He makes the effort to visit classes, sit with students at lunch, and learn students’ names. These small actions have helped students feel like the principal is there for them rather than just making sure the school runs

smoothly on a bigger scale.

“He actually wants to get to know us,” said Kaitlynn Henderson (’20), “it makes school more enjoyable.”

As a graduate of Westhill, Principal Rinaldi understands what it is like to be a student here and that having a passive presence won’t make the impact he wants on the school. His pride for Westhill is evident in every announcement, interaction, and tweet he shares. While only two months into school, it is clear that the energy of Westhill has changed drastically.

## POLL: HOW HAS RINALDI AFFECTED WESTHILL’S SCHOOL SPIRIT?

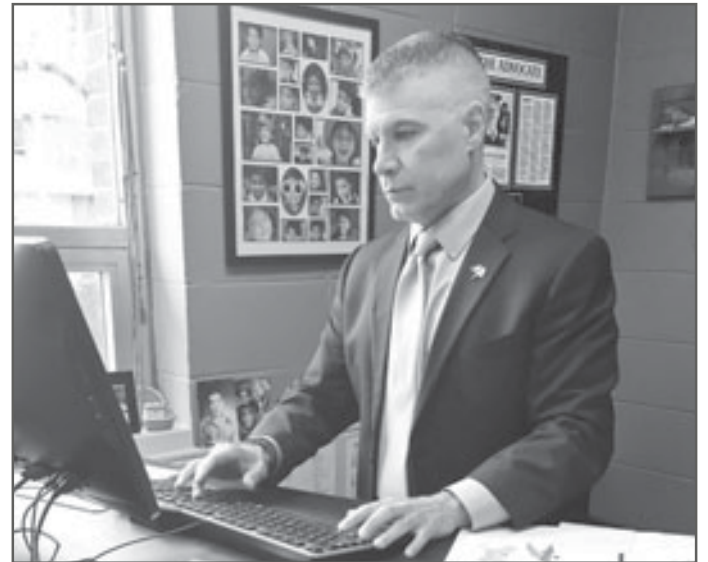
INCREASE IN SPIRIT:

97%

NO CHANGE IN SPIRIT:

3%

Poll out of 102 students conducted by **Zainab Jafri** / Pollster.



**WORKING HARD** Principal Rinaldi stationed at his stand-up desk.

Photo by **Alexa Smeriglio** / Photographer.

# College applications inflicting stress on students

**Lucy Hart**

Staff Writer

It is that time of year; the pressure, excitement, and confusion of the college application process have been bearing down upon the majority of Westhill’s senior class for some time. While this process may entail many different elements and emotions, the Westhill community has a lot to offer to students during this difficult time.

This process is different for everyone. First, students must decide when to apply to each school. They can apply early decision, early action, or regular decision. Early action and early decision applications (which are only available for certain schools) have earlier deadlines, the latter binding a student to attend the school to which they applied upon acceptance.

Regular decision applicants generally apply in a larger pool of candidates at a somewhat later date.

For many students, the process entails the completion of the Common Application or Coalition Application, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), a “Personal Statement” essay, and school-specific supplement essays. They must also request letters of recommendation from teachers with whom they feel they have formed an academic as well as a personal connection. Finally, test scores, usually SAT or ACT and AP scores, must be sent to the colleges to which students are applying.

While these elements alone may seem intense, the list of requirements may be extended further for students applying to certain programs, especially

those in the fine or performing arts. One student described her experience applying to highly competitive academic programs in addition to auditioning for prestigious dance programs. “My college process is a little different because I am being judged on the material I submit but also on my performance and physical self when I audition live,” said Sophie Ciokajlo (’18). “I am struggling with balancing all of my applications with trying to stay in my best shape physically and all of the pressure is really taking a toll on my health,” said Ciokajlo.

This process is, indeed, likely to cause students a great deal of stress, especially as they must balance applications with their senior year academics and extracurriculars. “The college application process has forced me to prioritize in ways

I never have before,” said senior Marcos Pinto-Leite (’18). “Having to balance school, extracurriculars, and the application process really makes you consider due dates, and the importance of a given task,” Pinto-Leite said.

Another student referred to the process as “bittersweet.” “The pressure of meeting deadlines and the anxiousness of the waiting after applying causes a noticeable amount of stress on a day-to-day basis,” said Noah Schaffer (’18). “However,” he said, “if you manage your time well, it feels really great to get everything done, and you start to get really excited about all of the possibilities that college brings.”

Some students notice no change in their life; “I do not think [the college application process] affected my academ-

ic life too much; I think I put my Common Apps before my homework or projects, but it has not really affected it too drastically,” said Sydney Fisher (’18). “And, as for my social life, I think that I am definitely waiting to hang out with friends until I finish my Common App, but I think I will be good until then.”

Students should also be reminded that many resources lie available to them in the Westhill community. Whether it be support from the guidance department, or help editing essays with your favorite English teacher or the Writing Center, the staff and student bodies, alike, are here to provide a helping hand. While this process can be stressful and confusing for the students in Westhill, it will undoubtedly be rewarding in the end.



# The newest members of the Westhill family

**Audrey Molina**  
Reporter

Freshmen are not the only people to join the Westhill community for the first time this year. Many teachers and administrators are also new to our halls. They must adjust to the various aspects of life at Westhill just as we all did when we first arrived. For some, like our new principal Mr. Rinaldi, Westhill is a familiar stomping ground. For others, it is completely new territory. Ms. Llamas, the most recent edition to our English department, taught in California before she moved to Stamford. She says that our diverse culture has been a major adjustment, but she loves the opportunity to teach dif-

ferent kinds of students. When asked what the most difficult part of the job has been so far, she exclaimed, "The lunch breaks! They're only 20 minutes long. We got 40 minutes in California!" Despite this minor acclimation, Ms. Llamas says Westhill has been an exceptionally welcoming workplace: "My coworkers are really supportive. They make me feel like my opinion is valued."

Ms. Mirontchik, who teaches 9th and 10th grade math, has found her experience so far to be overwhelming, but rewarding. After coming from a smaller school in West Hartford, she has had to get used to Westhill's huge building and class sizes. She found an immediate connection with her freshmen stu-

dents, who she calls "talented, funny, and respectful", because they understood her struggle as a newcomer to the school. She says, "The kids are by far the best part of the job."

Mr. DiGiovanna teaches graphic art, drawing and painting, and photography. Previously, he taught at Dolan for six years. His middle school background has made him appreciate the "college atmosphere" and independence granted to students at the high school level. He is proud to work in a place that offers so many unique opportunities to students. He says of the transition, "The art department is a particularly tight community, so I haven't had much difficulty finding my way."

Ms. Ritz, who teaches science to freshmen, has also found a specific connection with students due to their shared experience in a new place. She interned here last year, but the workload is still difficult to keep up with. "I'm just trying not to drown in all the work!" she told me with chuckle. Her biggest goal is to inspire her students to achieve more than they thought possible, just as her high school chemistry teacher did for her.

Finally, our new principal Mr. Rinaldi calls his new position a "dream come true". This is his first year as a principal after working at 6 different Stamford schools throughout his career. When asked what his first few days on the job were like,

he immediately said, "How do I even describe it?" After a moment of thought, he called the experience incredibly exciting. He explained, "Understanding how to be present and involved in a school this large is a beautiful challenge. I love challenges." One of his biggest challenges so far has been learning the names of as many students and staff as possible. Every morning, Mr. Rinaldi stands in front of the school to greet students as they first walk in. This is one of his favorite parts of the day. He says his passion for education stemmed from his time as a student at Westhill: "I feel I have a debt of gratitude to pay to this school, and I intend to pay it back in full, with interest."

***"I feel I have a debt of gratitude to pay to this school, and I intend to pay it back in full, with interest." Principal Rinaldi***

## 72 Hours: Eating only junk food

Column by Valerie Neyra and Jennifer Carias



*For three days each month Jen and Val will be challenging themselves to try something new and or fun. These challenges will consist of things they have never tried doing before and they will be documenting the outcome. This month's challenge: Eating nothing, but junk food for 72 hours*

### Day 1:

**Jen:** I eat a lot of junk food. I try my best not to, but it gets hard with the lunch the school serves us which is almost the same everyday, so I usually end up eating chips for lunch or getting food on my way home from school. When we decided to take on the 72 hour challenge of eating nothing but junk food I thought it would be easy because that is basically my diet anyways, but I was wrong. On the first day I bought us a breakfast sandwich from The Village Table, it consisted of sunnyside up eggs, melted cheese, bacon, and potato cones. On paper it

seems delicious and it is in real life but once I took that second bite I realized just how much grease was actually in it and I was only able to eat half of it. We then went to Five guys after school. We both have eaten there before and we knew what we were getting ourselves into, but it did not really hit us until we got our order and the bag was soaked in grease from the fries I ended up finishing all of it and I didn't realize how tired it actually made me until after I got home when I instantly went to take a nap.

**Val:** Junk food is available to everyone, which is probably why I eat it so much. Going into Day 1 I knew I wouldn't feel my best. It's pretty obvious since junk food is not real food. For breakfast, Jen bought me a sandwich that consisted of bacon, eggs, cheese, and potato cones from The Village Table. I will admit that the potato cones threw me off. It was really hard to finish off the sand-

wich, and I ended up throwing some of it away. After devouring the incredibly unhealthy sandwich, I did not want to eat for the rest of the day, but obviously I had to. Throughout the school day I felt drowsy and tired everywhere I went. After school, Jen and I went to Five Guys and got our usual orders, which consisted of burgers and a mountain of fries. We ended up finishing both our meals, but I was not enjoying this challenge anymore.

### Day 2:

**Jen:** On the second day I decided to skip breakfast and I once again had chips for lunch but we did end up going to Tony's Pizza after school. All I ordered was a slice of pizza and it was dripping with grease. I did not finish the whole slice because it was just way too greasy for me and that was even after I patted it down with a napkin.

**Val:** On day two I skipped breakfast and ended up hav-

ing goldfish for lunch. As you could probably guess, skipping breakfast and only having goldfish for lunch is not a good combo. Just like day one, I felt drowsy and tired. Luckily after school we decided to go to Tony's Pizza and I had Calamari with Fries. I didn't realize how big the portions were, and soon regretted my decision to order both. I ended up only eating maybe a quarter of my meal, while our other friend, Naomi, took the rest home.

### Day 3:

**Jen:** On the 3rd and final day of the challenge I once again skipped breakfast and lunch, but because I was starving I met up with my friend at the mall and we went to eat ChickeNow. At first all was fine because I had barely eaten all day and I just wanted food but once I finished It felt as if I had eaten a whole thanksgiving meal and it was only 3 pieces of chicken and some fries.

**Val:** Day three consisted of me skipping breakfast again (I know shocker) and having a bag of chips for lunch along with a Capri Sun. You have no energy when you eat poorly, and that's exactly how I felt. Later on that night, I went to McDonald's with my friend Leslie, and got a McChicken and fries. That is all I ate for the night and it honestly filled me up.

All in all, we would say this experience was eye opening. Eating healthy is very important for not only your overall performance throughout the day, but for your health in the long run. When eating the Junk food meals, we will be honest and say it did fill us up for the most part, but it did not last long. And last but not least, EAT BREAKFAST. If you are to take anything away from our experience, it is to eat breakfast. It will give you energy throughout the day and you will not be as hungry.



# Don't Enroll In The Wrong Driving School

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

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

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

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

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

### THE HIGH RIDGE DRIVING SCHOOL ADVANTAGE

	Other Driving School Options	High Ridge Driving School	<b>FREE TEST DRIVE!</b> Any student accompanied by a parent can sit in on one of our weekday classes absolutely FREE so you can get a feel for our school, our curriculum, and our teaching methods.  <b>INTERESTED IN ONLY THE 8-HOUR DRUG &amp; ALCOHOL CLASS?</b> We offer 16 & 17 year old students the chance to take just this class every weekend. (EXCEPT MAJOR HOLIDAYS) Always separate classes for teens and adults.
Flexible Schedule	No, they schedule sessions that begin and end. So, if you miss a class, you might need to go to another town, or wait quite awhile to finish your training.	Our classes NEVER end. We teach in the classroom 52-weeks a year. In the summer we offer up to 3 classes a day!	
Driving Hours	We know of students from other driving schools that have needed to go to other towns to finish their driving hours. Some schools do not even offer in-car sessions on a regular basis!	We drive 7-days a week, all year long. You're assigned an instructor who's dedicated to providing you with the best driver education experience possible. Plus, we pick-up and drop off ANYWHERE locally.	
Off-site Testing at the School	Possibly.	Always available in Stamford multiple times a month since 2005 - And always will be!	
Customer Service	Questions, phone calls, and DMV paperwork usually handled by a corporate office or a branch office in another town, generally only by phone. Some schools do not generate DMV CS-1 certificates in Stamford. VERY limited office hours in Stamford, if at all.	We're almost ALWAYS open – in person or by phone. All phone calls, certificates, and paperwork handled in Stamford. No phone queues or customer service reps, we deliver REAL customer care with our dedicated Stamford staff. We invite parents into our facility and offer training and support to ensure the time spent driving with your teen is productive.	
The Oldest Driving School in Stamford	No.	Yes, High Ridge Driving School has been locally owned and operated since 2005!	

*We think you'll agree that the advantage of*

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

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

# High Ridge Driving School

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

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



# WESTHILL'S CLUBS

## ANIME CLUB

New to Westhill this fall is the Anime Club, a student run organization that meets every Thursday from 2:05 to 3:20. Students are invited to vote on and watch videos and eat delicious Japanese snacks each week. "Anime is an art form that has been around since the 1950's. It is something that isn't a trend, but [is] something that is here to stay" said club advisor Deborah Furletti. "It is great. You just get to watch interesting anime. It is very fun to support student interest," she continued. Founded by Angela Ramirez, the club has now grown to around 40 kids. It is a fun place to bond for people who enjoy Anime and a fun time.

"Some of the snacks we get are popular and well known in Japan," said Angela Ramirez. "I bring them in so that people have snacks to look forward to and also to enhance the experience of watching shows and having discussions," she continued. Ramirez came up with the club after listening to someone express their love for a certain anime they had recently seen. When she realized there was no anime club at the school, she took it upon herself to make one.

"The best part in my opinion is definitely watching shows as a group. It provides a whole new experience when more than one person could watch the same thing and enjoy it and laugh in unison" said Ramirez.



## YOUNG POLITICAL SCIENCE CLUB

Created at the start of this school year is the Young Political Science Club. The goal is to promote political diversity so that kids won't be afraid to say what they believe. "We've had about 30 kids every week, and they are kids who aren't afraid to say what they believe" said founder Jordan Jang ('19). The club meets every Friday directly after school in room 415. "It is tough to talk about complicated topics in class environments" said Junior Dan Brennan ('19). "What is nice about this club is that you are not getting attacked. It is purely a back-and-forth discussion," he continued. No matter if you are liberal or conservative, the club is a good way to here opinions and take a look at the opposing viewpoint.

## STOCKS AND FINANCE CLUB

Rejuvenated after one year of going silent, the Stocks and Finance Club is back! The group is tasked with investing in companies that they find are best to profit off. Since the start of this year, the club has invested almost \$500 worth of money into businesses. "Members propose different companies and stock options that they believe will see an increase in their stock, thus creating revenue" said senior and secretary Max Zussman ('18). There are around 30 members, and they meet every Tuesday for about 45 minutes. Stephen Temelini, a Business/Unified Arts teacher is the advisor for the club. Membership is \$10, which allows the students to vote and have a say in the companies that they might invest in.



## ZINE CLUB

Also new to Westhill is the Zine Club! Founded by Emma Cali, the group often discusses and plans new zines and material to sell at the festival. There is casual conversation throughout the hour spent at the meeting. "We all really care for the club and the people in it, so meetings always range from creating and planning, to discussions about things we feel are relevant," said Emma Cali. The club is relatively small and is a club based on subject matter that not many people have ever heard of. The club advisor is Erin Taylor. "I asked her because she has always been incredibly supportive and is always on board to talk, interact, and suggest ideas to the club. She was the first person who came to mind because she has always been able to make time for me as her student, and provide me with guidance in the creation and execution of ideas" continued Cali.

Cali discovered zines in her sophomore year, and has always been fascinated with how to make it. "I have always loved print making and have a strong passion for creating any type of art, so having this club has really allowed me to expand my knowledge of different media and learn from my peers," she said.



## Save room for dessert

*Westhill's performance of "And Then There Were None"*

**Petra Ramirez**

Staff Writer

*This years fall drama is "And Then There Were None". The first show will be on Thursday, November 2nd at 7:30 p.m. The show will close Sunday, November 5th. The Westword staff had the privilege of sitting down with the Director Ms. Cahill to discuss this years fall drama.*

**The Westword: Why did you pick this play?**

**Ms. Stephanie Cahill:** We have never done a murder mystery in this school since I have been here. I thought it would be an interesting genre to take on because it combine, both comedy and drama together, if that makes sense with the mystery theme. I also was a big fan of Agatha Christie books when I was a little kid, so I thought it would be fun to finally get to produce a show here.

**TW: Do you think the students**

**like the play and how the rehearsals are going?**

**SC:** Yeah, I think so. They seem to have a lot of fun with it. I mean, we are experimenting with accent work, which is also a fun time because they take on British accents. We also get to play around with stage death and all sorts of character traits that we have not got to do before.

**TW: Do you think the play will influence people or maybe get people interested in mysteries?**

**SC:** I think that the play might be able to get people interested into reading mystery novels if you do not already like to. All of Agatha Christie books are mystery books. She does a lot suspense books with detective work and what not, so her plays follow the same kind of genre. So hopefully by putting the name to particularly production, people will be interested in reading it too.

**TW: What is the play about?**

**SC:** It takes place in the 1940's

in this isolated island of the coast of England and these 10 random guests are invited here by a letter. They are asked to attend a dinner party and spend a weekend at this place and none of these people really know each other. They do not totally know why they are there and they come to find out that they were all sent there because of evil accusations from the past and they are basically on trial in this house. It turns out that they are trying to figure out if somebody here is trying to kill them, mess with them, or play a joke on them and it keeps everyone on their toes. I will not say who is guilty, but people slowly start to disappear and all the characters start to point fingers at each other and try to figure out who did it.

**TW: What do you hope the viewers take away from the play?**

**SC:** Well first and foremost, I kind of hope that they have a good time. Ultimately, with theater performance, I would

hope people are entertained. Not everyone is exactly the way you expect it, never underestimate what people are capable of because they think that is the ultimate crime of the show. It is that a lot of people underestimate when they find out who the killer really is and what he or she can really do.

**TW: What have been the biggest hurdles in putting on the play this year?**

**SC:** Time. We had a really quick turnover for the fall show. We did auditions in mid September and it is the being of November. So it ended up being nine weeks to put together a show and it is a long and complicated show to do because it required accent work and a lot of language that is not really used anymore. Most characters had a lot of monologue to memorize which is a lot of work. We are also dealing with under studies which takes time to run rehearsals so time is definitely a

challenge.

**TW: Who were the standout actors/actresses/tech members for this production?**

**SC:** It is hard to say. I mean everyone has just been so great. It is hard to isolate just a couple of people because we are such a large group. Without one person the whole thing could not work out, every part is essential to making the show work. From the people backstage to the people on stage.

**TW: What is coming in the future for Westhill theatre?**

**SC:** We have our Connecticut Drama Association performance, that is to be announced. We will get that you as soon as we can. For the musical we are doing *Footloose*, which is something to look forward to. The improvisation troupe that is ongoing and starting up this year. Their first performance will be some time in the winter.



**SETTING THE STAGE** The actors are getting ready, rehearsing and getting into character. None of them will be caught dead forgetting a single line.

Photos by **Marjie Pinto-Leite** / Contributor.



# WIZARD OF OZ

## Kansas comes to Connecticut

**Valerie Neyra**  
Social Media Manager

Every year, Stamford Public Schools brings together all different kinds of students varying from different grades (K-12) in public, private, and parochial schools to put on a musical that everyone talks about. For example, in 2010, there was the production of *Hairspray*; in 2012 *Beauty and the Beast*; in 2013 *Shrek* and so on. This year is no different, as the production of *The Wizard of Oz* will be put on for both adults and kids alike to enjoy.

The musical *The Wizard of Oz* is based on the classic movie surrounding a young girl named Dorothy Gale. After running away from home, she is swept away by a tornado to the magical land of Oz where she befriends a Scare-

crow, a Tin Man, and a Cowardly Lion who help her find The Wizard Oz, as she believes he will help her return home to Kansas. Obviously, it wouldn't be a good production if there wasn't a bad guy. In this case, it is the Wicked Witch, who is very determined to stop Dorothy by making her and her friends tackle many obstacles along the way.

As always, a few of our students from Westhill High School will showcase their singing and acting abilities. The two students who will be in the musical are Ava Mastrone ('20) as Glinda and Marcos Pinto-Leite ('18) as the Scarecrow. They have both been in musical theater for a while and hope the audience will enjoy the musical as much as they enjoy being a part of it. Ava Mastrone describes the musical

as, "A musical that appeals to everyone. Kids will enjoy the colorful costumes, music, and dancing while the adults will enjoy the message". Marcos Pinto-Leite describes it as, "Heart-warming revelations about family and forgiveness."

No musical would be complete without the production team. Both actors have had nothing but good things to say. "I've been friends with the producer and director for years and they are amazing at putting on shows," said Mastrone. Pinto-Leite says, "The production team is made up of hyper-dedicated parents who make sure the shows are well organized and well-funded. It is also a place for young actors to participate in a professional environment". The pro-



**HARD AT WORK** Actors getting into their scene.

Photo Courtesy of **Nalani Zhuta-Medley** / Photographer.

duction team has continuously put on shows, so we are excited for opening night.

*The Wizard of Oz* will be shown on December 2nd, 8th, and 9th at 7:30 p.m. and December 3rd and 10th at 3:00 p.m., with a meet and greet following right after on December 3rd. All

performances will be taking place at Westhill High School, and tickets are on sale now.

For more information visit [stamfordallschoolmusical.org](http://stamfordallschoolmusical.org)

## This month in hip-hop

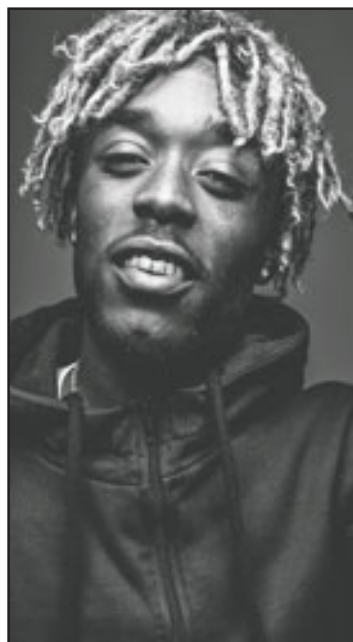
Column by Hudson Price



This month in hip hop, we continued to see the rise of songs such as, Rockstar by Post Malone and 21 Savage; Bodak Yellow by Cardi B; and Rake It up by Yo Gotti & Nicki Minaj. However, the big story this month in hip-hop seems to be the unstoppable rise of a younger generation of rappers: Lil Uzi Vert, Lil Yachty, XXXTentacion, Playboi Carti and Lil Pump. Perhaps the most interesting out of the group, Lil Pump, a 17-year-old soundcloud based rapper who recently signed with Warner Brothers Records, is gaining the most hype over the past few weeks. With his album release of

"Lil Pump", on October 6, many people are starting to recognize the growth of his fan base. Other popular new releases this month include: Confirmed by Dame D.O.L.L.A.; Wu-Tang: The Saga Continues by Wu-Tang Clan, and more hits to come. Bringing it back to Stamford, the d\_cyphernauts are currently working on an album, release date to be determined. I had a chance to talk with both Mr. Wooley and Mr. Celcis about the album. They were so excited about their work that they let me preview a few tracks. Finally, the throwback song of the month is 'Check The Rhime' by A Tribe Called Quest.

The song, originally released in 1991, it was ranked number 29 on VH1's 100 Greatest Songs of Hip Hop in 2008. The spelling choice 'rhime,' is defined as the obsolete form rhyme. The interesting choice of words was probably chosen by the group because the song discusses each rappers' past. Lines from the song such as "Yo, Phife, you remember that routine, That we used to make spiffy like mister clean?" and "Okay, if knowledge is the key then just show me the lock, Got the scrawny legs but I move just like Luke Brock." This song shows just how great the group is.



**ARTISTS** Lil Uzi (Left) and Post Malone (Right); trending artists  
Photos courtesy of [commons.wikimedia.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org)

# SCATTERBRAIN

## Top Trending Halloween Costumes

**Rayshawn Gipson**  
Staff Writer

It was that time of the year where the ghost, the ghouls, and the witches make their annual appearance. That's right, Halloween 2017 has come and gone and it brought some new and familiar faces to the spotlight. From Spirit, to Party City, each store had a lot to offer for this years Halloween.

At the number one spot is the fierce, gorgeous goddess, Wonder Woman. This was another movie that did very well and now that it is Halloween the ladies are looking to be "Princess of the Amazon". There are two types of ways you can pull this off, either with Prin-



cess Diana's bright red, blue, and gold armor gear. Or you can go with the more classy version of the costume, which is any blue dress. You can make the costume at home or you can buy the outfit yourself at any local Halloween store.

Disney's Belle from *Beauty and the Beast* has returned once again to take the spotlight. There are a plethora of options to make yourself look like Belle. Ladies if you would like to look like the popular Disney princess, all you need is a yellow dress. Of course if you are Belle, you are going to need a beast!

If you are a big Netflix fan, then you must know of the show *Stranger Things*. If not just know it is your typical show with unexplained events, but it is actually worth watching. All the characters are great and they each have their own personality but the one who receives the most attention has to be Dustin. His costume was pretty basic, all you need is a brown curly haired wig, a two tone trucker hat, waupaca white shirt, stone washed denim jacket, a book bag, a men's basketball redemption shoe, and you'll officially be apart of the *Stranger Things* cast.

There is one person who

America talks about all the time and that is our President of the United States, Donald Trump. This man has had a crazy year, sometimes he's been funny. Hence why he is the next person on the top 10 Halloween



costumes. There are multiple ways you can dress as Trump, whether if it is the mask or if it's face paint and a suit. You could possibly take a spray tan bottle and use a blonde wig, it's your preference.

As you can see, a lot of costumes are coming from TV shows and popular movies. The next couple of costumes come from a very popular TV show on HBO called *Game of Thrones*. Recently the shows ratings have increased, smashing a series record and attracting 12.1 million

viewers. If you wanted to be Jon Snow all you need is a gray shirt, dark jeans, dark curly hair, and a big fur jacket or cape. For the ladies, Daenerys is a popular female character, and all that is needed is a dress with fierce jewelry.

Next on the list for the top Halloween costumes is another critically acclaimed book and TV show, *The Handmaid's Tail*. The politically charged show talks about the vulnerability of women's rights, conveniently following the 2017 presidential election. If you do choose to be apart of the show all you will need is a red cloak, a white bonnet, a tan mesh bag, and black ankle boots.

For children there is an abundance of costumes, most were superheroes like Iron man, Superman, The Flash, or for the girls little princess costumes. At the end of the day it is still super adorable.

Next on the list is The most anticipated, classic horror of the year not only did huge numbers in the box office, but it also made number one on majority of the costumes list. Stephen King has always been a brilliant writer and everything that he has written has psychologically affected his fans

by portraying realism, especially his critically acclaimed novel and movie *"IT."* If you really wanted



to give someone a good scare, replicating Pennywise the clown might do the trick. The costume is not as detailed as the character Pennywise, but you get the gist of it, a creepy clown mask, a clown suit, with a bright balloon.

The last one on the list is something different, Now if you and the family are all going trick or treating and you happen to have a pet, you must dress the furry friend up in something! Dogs have the most creative costumes, ranging from yummy sushi rolls, or bright orange pumpkins, to funny looking lobster tails; you have to admit it is

Photos courtesy of [wikimediacommons.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org/)



# The Hungry Vikings

Column by Jackie Fahey, Jack Williamson & Kevin Costello

Fusaro's Deli: ★★★★★

Fratelli Market: ★★★★★

Enzo's Italian Fine Foods: ★★★★★

It was a dreary October morning with idle leaves of amber wilting from the heavy morning dew. There was little to do for the Hungry Vikings besides satisfying their endless hunger with what their ancestors called a "Quest for the Best." This year's culinary conquests kicked off with an age-old question that has stood the test of time from our Nordic roots until this very moment: Who has the best meatball parmigiana sandwich in all of Stamford? After much discussion over how to tackle such a curious challenge, the trio decided to divide and conquer before gathering for their Italian feast.

Our first Viking took his gargantuan appetite and rumbling stomach to Fusaro's Deli. Upon entering the establishment, he encountered walls of classic Italian cuisine on either side of him. The grizzly Viking was instantly

impressed by the quaint and welcoming ambience. He sauntered up to the counter to find two women speaking in their native Italian tongue. He waited only briefly for his meatball parm wedge. The on-site experience for Viking Number One was pleasant and satisfactory. He made his way back to the Hungry Viking cabin.

Viking number two's appetite brought her to Fratelli Market. Immediately, she detected a savory aroma of meatballs and marinara. As she placed her order, she was entranced by the variety of meats and cheeses lining the deli counter. As one of the more talkative Vikings, she was pleased by the friendly and sociable staff. Between the conversation and colorful surroundings, the four minute wait for her meatball parm flew by like a Norwegian vessel conquering the weaker clans. As a whole, Viking Number Two left

content and eager to dig into the Italian masterpiece with her fellow Vikings. She made her way back to the Hungry Viking cabin.

Viking Number Three and his empty stomach made the voyage to Enzo's Italian Fine Foods. This authentic deli made the Viking feel as if he were conquering land in Italy itself. He could hear the enthusiastic nature of the Italian language coming from all parts of the cozy and comfortable seating area. His order was ready in a flash and his experience from start to finish was certainly enjoyable. He made his way back to the Hungry Viking Cabin.

The time had come for the three Hungry Vikings to feast on the heavily anticipated meatball parmigiana wedges. To maintain the anonymity of each sandwich's origin, Father Viking used his battle axe to split each sub into thirds and placed them on plates

with their respective delis written on the bottom.

The Vikings commenced their Italian conquest with plate number one. The first bite sizzled their taste buds with savory chunks of tomato coating the dense meatballs. The marinara and mozzarella, however, they were soon overpowered by the salty aftertaste of the meatballs. Overall, plate number one was a tasty start, but our "Quest for the Best" continued.

Plate number two entered the race with high standards set by its competition. The doughy bun was overflowing with breadly meatballs which made for a mouth-watering sight. Similar to plate number one, this sandwich had flavorful cheese that was quickly overwhelmed by the abundance of meatballs. Although the quality of the meatballs certainly met the Vikings' expectations, the quan-

tity was considerably excessive.

Plate number three was a treat for both the eyes and the taste buds. Cheese could be seen oozing out of the toasted sesame wedge and cascading down to the plate. The cheese to meatball ratio was as close to perfect as one could expect and surely was the most valued trait of the sandwich. The meatballs themselves were not what won us over, but rather the flavorsome blend of herbs and spices paired with the plentiful amount of cheese put plate number three at the top of our list.

Father Viking returned to unveil each sandwich's origin. It was revealed that our runner-ups, plate numbers one and two, were from Fusaro's and Enzo's respectively. That leaves Fratelli Market as our first place deli, thanks to their delicious food and atmosphere. Our Quest for the Best has been conquered...for now.



# SLAY OF THE MONTH: DEANNA CREVECOEUR



"My name is Deanna Crevecoeur, I am 16, and a junior here at Westhill High School. I have loved fashion for as long as I can remember. My mom bought my twin sister Danielle and I our first sewing machine in 4th grade, and ever since then, we have been teaching ourselves different techniques on the machine. Sewing truly requires close attention to detail. I usually spend hours working on one thing, but it is extremely rewarding when it's all done and what is produced is exactly what I had initially imagined.

"Although I like to sew, I don't want to necessarily be a fashion designer. I am more interested in the business side of the industry. One day, I would love to be the CEO of a big clothing retail company like Free People, Forever 21, or ASOS. Having a representative from the Fashion Institute of Designing and Merchandising in California speak to us at the fashion club last year definitely helped narrow my decision. She informed us about the wide range of majors they offer, and the different jobs their students obtain upon graduation. This visit alone was enough to make me strongly consider applying to this school.

"My style definitely changes day to day. One day it could be bohemian, the next it could be vintage inspired, or it could be very grunge. The one thing that is consistent

about my style is that I wear jeans almost everyday. I have more jeans than anything else in my closet. Some people collect shells, I collect jeans!

"These aren't just any jeans though. My parents tell me that I wear some pretty wild jeans. My favorites would have to be the very 70's extreme flare jeans, or the blue eyelet detailed jeans (as shown in the picture).

When it comes to fashion I am very versatile and open minded to try new styles. I love to mix and match everything in my closet to create an entirely new and different outfit every day.

"One person who inspires me the most would have to be my older sister, Lindsay. I love how she never fails to be daring when it comes to her outfit choices, despite knowing that others will find her style quite odd. She inspires me to wear whatever makes me happy, even if it isn't considered the norm. I used to care a lot about how others felt about my clothing choices, but now it doesn't faze me one bit. I am glad I have reached this point because nothing makes me happier than being able to express myself through my unique clothes.

"I highly encourage being proud of your individuality. Don't ever let anyone make you feel guilty about being yourself."

## TO DO NEXT MONTH: NOVEMBER

**NOVEMBER 5TH:**  
**TOUCH-A-TRUCK AND CHILI COOK OFF**  
HEAD ON DOWN TO THE STAMFORD NATURE CENTER TO LEARN HOW THE VEHICLES WORK AND GO INSIDE A FEW. YOU CAN ALSO SAMPLE CHILI FROM THE AREA'S BEST

**NOVEMBER 11TH:**  
**VETERAN'S DAY**  
IS ABOUT HONORING THOSE WHO FOUGHT FOR OUR COUNTRY. BE SURE TO THANK A VETERAN IN SOME WAY.

**NOVEMBER 18TH:**  
**72 GIANT BALLOON INFLATION PARTY**  
GO BACKSTAGE TO TAKE A LOOK AT THE UPCOMING PARADE. THERE WILL BE PERFORMANCES, MUSIC, CLOWNS AND A VISIT FROM SANTA.

**NOVEMBER 19TH:**  
**STAMFORD DOWNTOWN**  
EXPERIENCE ONE OF THE LARGEST HELIUM BALLOON PARADES IN THE COUNTRY. THIS PARADE FEATURES THE MOST WELL KNOWN BALLOON CHARACTERS, MUSIC AND FANTASTIC FLOATS.

**NOVEMBER 23RD:**  
**THANKSGIVING**  
THE DAY OF EATING STUFF YOUR MOUTHS WITH TURKEY STUFFING AND CORN BREAD BECAUSE WHAT COULD BE BETTER THAN THAT? JUST REMEMBER IT'S ABOUT BEING THANKFUL TOO.

**NOVEMBER 28TH:**  
**RED PLANET DAY**  
CELEBRATE THE FOURTH PLANET FROM THE SUN BY WEARING ALL THINGS RED

Do you want **more** of The Westword?  
Are you unable to **wait** for a new issue each month?

We have a website!

Simply go to:

**THEWESTWORDONLINE.COM**

...to read articles about the Westhill and Stamford Community.



the

**westword online**

student voice of the westhill community

¿Quieres **más** de *El Westword*?

¿No puedes **esperar** un mes más para un edición nuevo?

¡Tenemos un sitio web!

Simplemente va a:

**THEWESTWORDONLINE.COM**

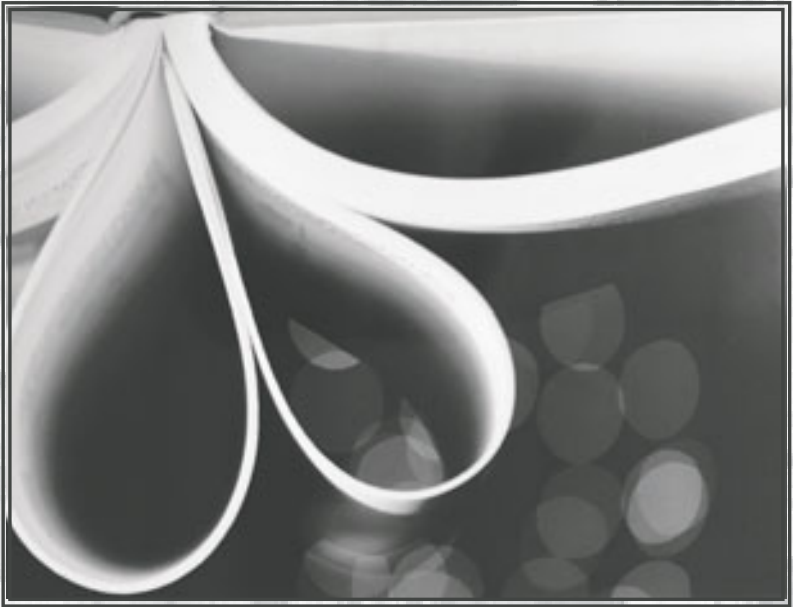
...para leer artículos sobre la comunidad de Westhill y Stamford.



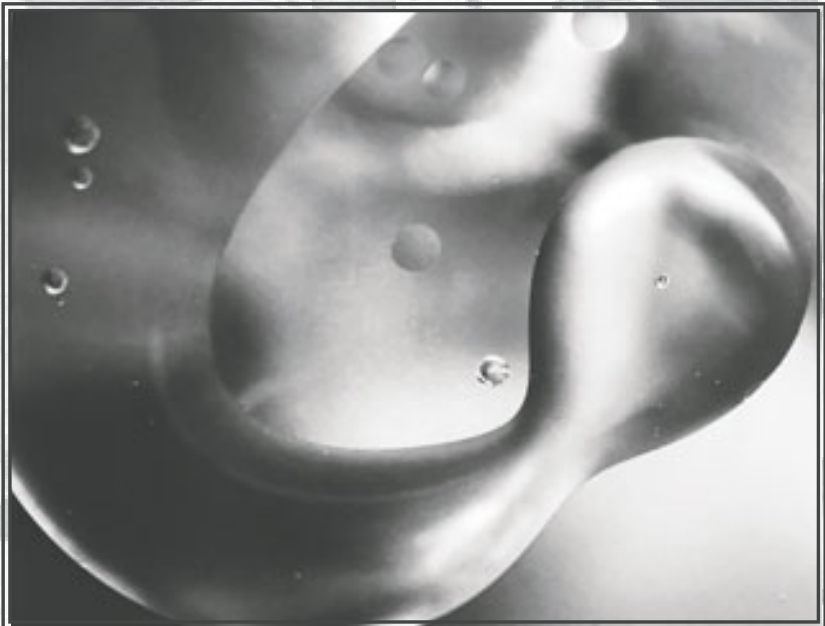
# EXPRESS



Steve Garcia ('19)



Katelynn Benner ('19)



Djesnie Glaude ('18)



Alondra Carrera ('20)



Emma Whaley ('20)





*Senior Nickailla McLean sat down with The Westword to discuss her artwork. She spoke about her experience with art and what has influenced her artistic style.*

**The Westword: When did you first start becoming interested in art?**

**Nickailla McLean:** I started becoming interested around 8th grade, one of my teachers gave me an assignment and he kept pushing me to get it done. He kept influencing me to never give up on anything and just to keep getting better at things until it was perfect.

**TW: How would you describe your artistic style?**

**NM:** It is all around stuff, I do not stick to one style. I like to experiment with a lot of different things. Different medias, different art, there are a lot of different types of arts that I like to try to mix together.

**TW: What is your favorite medium?**

**NM:** My favorite medium is acrylic because it was the first type of paint I actually started painting with and I got the hang of it pretty easy.

**TW: What is your favorite thing to portray through your art?**

**NM:** My favorite thing to portray is the perception of black women in society. This idea speaks to me. The community I lived in was fairly mixed growing up. At Rodgers, where I went to K-8, the school was diverse as a community but within my classes I saw different culture groups and felt labels did not allow me to build relationships with my classmates. This is how I got concentrated on the topic of perception of black women, it was mostly about accepting yourself and trying to make others realize that there is more to you than what society puts on you. Basically there is more to yourself than what the label says.

**TW: How has art influenced your life?**

**NM:** Art has made me feel like there is more to me then what people know about me, I can express myself differently then how I can express myself through speaking to people. It has given me many opportunities that I don't think I would have gotten if I did not start doing art.

**TW: What has inspired you to create art?**

**NM:** Different artists of my race. The first person I really got into was Kehinde Wiley and soon after, McLane Thomas. They inspired me because of the message they show. They show perception of people of color.

**TW: Is there a message you want to convey?**

**NM:** Do not judge a book by its cover. There is more to people than people think. A lot of people think and judge people before they know the real story about their life and why they do the things that they do.

**TW: Do you see an artistic career in your future?**

**NM:** Yes, I want to have my own studio and be able to teach other kids how to paint and draw. I want to teach kids in underdeveloped communities where they do not have money to purchase art supplies, I think that is why some kids do not pursuit art; because of the money requirements, I want to change that. A lot of people notice how I have strong attention to detail. My teachers say my time management has improved.

**TW: How do people typically describe your art?**

**NM:** People typically describe it as empowering to women, especially women of color, people say my art is thought provoking as well as insightful. People say I am not afraid to try new media or format.

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

**NM:** My advice for young artists would be never give up. Never let people or the cost of the art get in your way. I think that is what stopped me at first, the cost of art, and the fact that people were saying no one should spend so much money on art.



A  
R  
T  
I  
S  
T  
O  
F  
T  
H  
E  
M  
O  
N  
T  
H  
N  
I  
C  
K  
A  
I  
L  
L  
A  
M  
C  
L  
E  
A  
N



# Tennis court receives upgrade

**Maria Mirafuentes**

Staff Writer

After 12 long years, Westhill has finally been able to remodel the tennis courts. This remodel will help out immensely since the tennis courts were out-dated. The tennis team complained about how dangerous it was to play on the courts, with them becoming slippery and the floor cracking.

Eventually, it got to the point where if it would rain the day prior to a game, they would not be able to play on it because of how bad the conditions were. The team would ask for a change but nothing was done until a specific person who stands out throughout this process of the new courts became involved. Morgan Magrath, Westhill Alumni, started taking her time to attend meetings with the mayor and the superintendent while on the tennis team last year. "We fought for new courts for years so it felt good when they gave us the attention and let us speak about it for ourselves. We were passionate for the new courts because the old ones were causing harm to the team, it delayed our practices whenever it rained

because it was slippery. We had players hurt themselves on multiple occasions before when it could have been avoided. These new courts show that the city takes our team and sport seriously," said Magrath.

A big help in making this happen also came from the parents of the tennis athletes with fund-raising and petitioning. They petitioned for a long time trying to have their voices heard, and letting it be known that new courts were needed. "Putting a band-aid over it for years got to the point where it just was not safe anymore, now we are starting from scratch," said former athletic director Mr. Savo. Not only did the parents of the athletes think it was unsafe but the athletes themselves did also.

"That is huge! We [have] needed that for so long," says Rishi Jaaswal ('19) who played on the tennis team. Hopefully having new courts could impact the way the season goes this year as well as in the future years after, with the players not having to worry about slipping or falling. The tennis courts are due to be done before the season starts in



**SHOWING LOVE FOR THE COURTS** The Westhill tennis courts are currently under construction and being redone so that the courts will be ready for the upcoming spring 2018 season.

Photo by **Maria Mirafuentes** / Staff Writer.

# Westhill girls volleyball takes on States

**Yulia Lozyska**

Staff Writer

This year, the girls volleyball team is having an exceptional season with a record of nine wins and five losses overall. They have a very young team, who have all stepped up to make the year great. In pre-season the Westhill girls' volleyball team got together to play in order to have extra time getting their hands on the ball. In the beginning of the season they were all individual players. Now they are one team and have really bonded and learned how to connect on the court. They have a freshman setter, Vana Servo, and sophomores, such as, Sophia Thagouras, Betsy Sachs and Sanjana Nayak, who have improved so much from the

beginning of the season. There is great communication and bond on and off the court. "I could not be more proud of how far we have come from previous seasons. We fight hard for each game we play and have already made States. I am so happy to be captain this year because our team is so amazing. It feels great to be able to set an example and be considered a leader for the younger girls," said captain Nina Bakuradze ('19).

So far they had big wins against Trinity Catholic and, for the first time in 15 years, a win against our rival Stamford High. They went to five sets in a game against Fairfield Warde and never gave up. As a team they pick each other up if they make mistakes and make sure everyone gives it their

all. It was one of their first FCIAC wins and they were all happy and excited because they saw the potential in the team. "We know that these past couple of losses has been undeserved because we can perform better than we have. We have been working very hard in practices, targeting little aspects that have a big effect on our overall outcome. I feel good about these upcoming games because we all want to start winning again." Said Nikki Newcomer ('19).

The game against Fairfield Ludlowe was a three-one win. The first set was rough for the girls; they got their nerves out and really played their game after that. The win over Fairfield Ludlowe has helped them regain their confidence.



**KILLIN IT** Senior Gabbie Veseli hits the ball as middle blocker Betsy Sachs covers her in an intense game for the city championship against cross city rivals Stamford High.

Photo by **Sydney Lesser** / Photo Manager

# Captains better Westhill's athletic community

**Josh Eimbinder**  
Online Executive Editor

The captain's council, which started meeting at the beginning of this year, enables sport captains to meet every other week and discuss certain topics. The council talks about issues such as current events in professional sports, ways to improve the athletics program at Westhill, and planning events for the Westhill community. Each team is represented weekly to promote them and their athletes. The overall goal is to better the athletic programs, and create more chemistry on and off the field.

"I think having the captain's council serves a good purpose because it helps show support to a lot of teams who do not always get attention," said gymnastics captain Stephanie Melia ('18). "Having a group of people dedicated to a sport and want to better our athletic program as a whole is another good reason we invented the council," she continued. Melia is the assistant to the athletic director, and helps with schedul-

ing and assisting in anything the athletic department needs.

The council has about 30 members on it. They are made up of seniors and juniors, all from different sports. "The negatives are that we need to make sure that the captains are at the meetings in the morning so we can discuss what is working and what we can improve on throughout the year," said Stanley Villard. Villard says it was created because of Mr. Cerone's experience at Wilton High School. He saw how passionate the students were and wanted to bring that passion to Westhill. "Hopefully, in the near future, we can be like Wilton or Ridgefield and be very spirited," said Villard.

Westhill's Purple Pack, along with the council, have been encouraging students to attend all sporting events since the start of this year. Both groups are trying to boost attendance and change the fan culture at the games. As a result of these efforts, there has been an uptick and a bigger presence from students who are looking to cheer on the Vikings. The council

is working towards that goal.

"The job as a captain is simple; be a role model, make sure everybody has school spirit, and keep everybody on track" said golf captain David Lang ('18). "Coach Cerone does a great job teaching us skills and showing us how to behave as captain," Lang continued. The council, while although boosting the spirit and Westhill community, does have its negatives. "Personally, I am a morning person so having meetings at 6:45a.m. does not phase me. However, there are not many captains that enjoy waking up early" said Lang. "With the meetings being so early, less people show up and less people are fulfilling the role of a captain." Additionally, sports captains must report to the council even when their sport season is not currently being played. For instance, the baseball captains still have to attend meetings despite their season not starting for another five months. This does lead to frustration but the members know the council exists to improve the school environment.



**ROLE MODEL** The captains Council is a great way for all athletes to interact with one another and improve Westhill's Athletic community and individual skills.  
Photo by **Mr. Cerone** / Contributor

# Science behind sports anxiety

**Noah Klein**  
Editor in Chief

Anxiety is one of the most prevalent mental health topics in the country right now, especially in teens. One thing that is not looked at as much, is the effect of anxiety on an athlete. Recently BlueStreak Sports Training, a local training facility in partnership with Innovative Health and Rehabilitation, hosted Dr. Tom Woodman of Brain and Body Wellness in Norwalk. Dr. Woodman gave a presentation in which he discussed the different types of anxiety disorders, as well as the upward trend on anxiety at younger ages. Dr. Woodman discussed how currently 25 percent of children 12-17 have an anxiety disorder. Meaning that these disorders are reaching about six million children.

In terms of athletics, Woodman included the idea that sports can increase emotional stress and therefore will negatively impact an athlete in terms of performance. This can be seen in situations in which the coach of the opposing team will "ice" the other player to force them to think about the situation and stress about the future task. Specifically in football, coaches will call a timeout before the kicker has a big kick coming up. Head football coach, Frank Marcucio said, "I would ice the kicker to create a mental game and make him anxious, it will make him anxious and mess up his mechanics. It also messes with the snapper, the holder, and the entire process." Head kicker Jose Regio ('18) added "If someone called a timeout before my big kick I would feel pretty anxious

but I would pull together mentally and do my best to make that field goal and make the big kick for my team." Other athletes feel stress get to them and see how it can effect them as well "the timeout takes your focus away from the game so it can weaken your performance. Sometimes if your are serving the opposing coach will call timeout to make you think about it and try to make you miss," said volleyball captain Gabriella Veseli ('18).

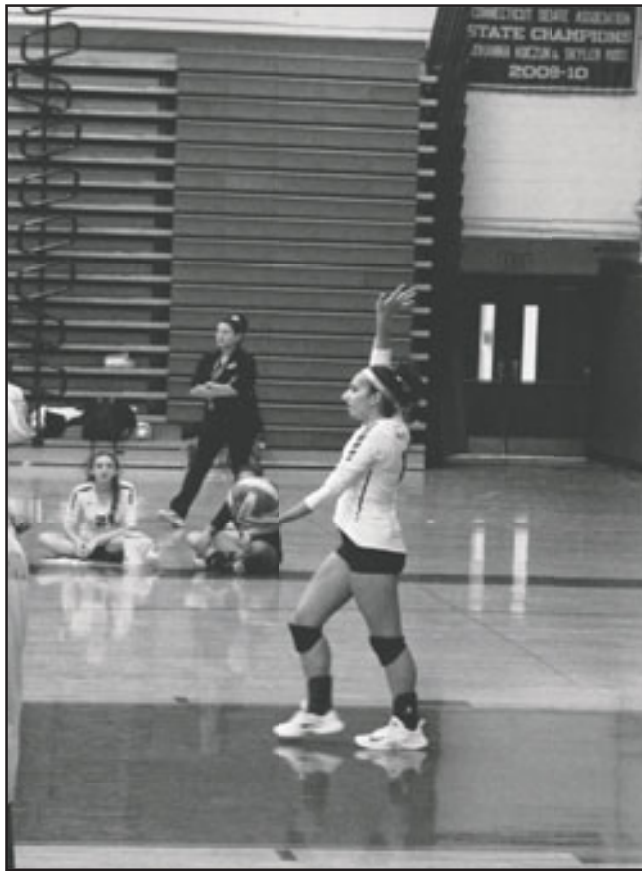
The science behind why anxiety can decrease performance, is partially thanks to a chemical in the brain known as cortisol which helps the body use sugar and fat for energy. Cortisol also helps the body manage stress. Dr. Woodman claims that too much cortisol in the body results in more stress leading to a weaker athletic performance.

Another variable in the brain that affects the performance of athletes is the amount of GABA they may or may not have. GABA is essentially a brain messenger that reduces stress and anxiety. The amount of GABA people have however, does vary. AP Psychology teacher, Ms. Tintle had a more detailed description of the effect, "I know some girls do not see competing as stress...their body is heightened. Others get very anxious and they do not perform well." Ms. Tintle also discussed how the Yerkes-Dodson law plays a part in the levels of stress that an effect athletes on game day. The Yerkes-Dodson law essentially says that any person will perform to the best of their ability under the proper amount of stress. Too much stress will throw someone off their game, and too little stress

will do the same. Relating back to Dr. Woodman's discussion. Dr. Woodman's ways of dealing with the issues included aromatherapy, decreasing video games and use of computer at night, as well as Brainwave neurofeedback which he claims has a 92 percent satisfaction rate from his Norwalk office. Whether it be the Yerkes-Dodson law, GABA, or cortisol levels, sports can get stressful for students. It is important that all student athletes take a step back and understand that high school sports are not the "end all be all" and were created so that students could have fun. All athletes are reminded that whenever they feel stressed they can talk to their guidance counselor, coach, athletic trainer, or athletic director.



# Veseli spikes it up a notch



**Guilmar Valle**  
Special Report Editor

*Most students are aware that being involved with sports is a full time commitment, as such as its requirement of sheer dedication and a will to excel in a sport. As a result, this month's athlete of the month is none other than Gabriella Veseli. Gabriella is the captain of the volleyball team, and it is due to her sheer dedication to the sport that she has earned this month's spot. The Westword conducted an interview with Gabriella to gain an insight into her busy sports life.*

**The Westword (TW): How long have you been playing sports?**

**Gabriella Veseli (GV):** When I was younger I took gymnastic and dance classes, it was not until my freshmen year of high school that I started to play sports competitively.

**TW: Why did you decide to start playing sports?**

**GV:** I tried out my freshmen year because I found volleyball interesting and a lot of my other friends

were playing. Later on I grew to have a love for the sport.

**TW: Who taught you how to play volleyball?**

**GV:** I only learned the fundamentals of volleyball my freshman and sophomore year, but my club coach, Tim, taught me everything I know about volleyball, and my coaches Marianna and Kevin made me the player I am today.

**TW: How does sports interact with your day to day life?**

**GV:** I am always practicing and I enjoy it a lot but that does mean it is more difficult to hang out with friends since I have such a busy athletic schedule.

**TW: What role do sports play in your life?**

**GV:** They play a huge role honestly. If I am ever busy you can just assume I am at practice. My season goes from late August to early November and then my club season starts in the middle of December and goes till May so you could say I am always on the court and I love it!

**TW: What is your personal sports goal for this year?**

**GV:** Now that the season is over,

I would have to say my volleyball goal is to play on the 18 nationals team and travel to Minnesota and Philadelphia to play volleyball.

**TW: Are you interested in playing sports in college?**

**GV:** Since it is such a huge part of my life I will definitely try and play in college. Although, I am not the tallest and most of my college choices are Division One I will be looking into playing club in college.

**TW: What is your favorite memory from playing volleyball?**

**GV:** I have so many great ones, but my all time favorite has to be winning City Champs against Stamford High in a five set battle at home my senior year.

**WW: What is your favorite quote?**

**GV:** "Never let the fear of hitting out keep you from playing the game," A volleyball version of the famous Babe Ruth quote.

**WW: If you could be an animal what would you be and why?**

**GV:** I guess in the context of volleyball I would be a giraffe because they are really tall and I wish I was.

**DEDICATION** Gabriella Veseli has been an athlete since she was a young girl. Ever since she fell in love with volleyball she has experienced nothing but positivity in her life.

Photo contributed by **Tamar Bellele** / Sports Editor.

# Ottaviano goes over the top



**Micayla Roth**  
Supplement Editor

*Senior Casey Ottaviano has been dedicated to soccer ever since he was young. He sat down with The Westword to discuss his experiences of being the soccer team's captain and a Varsity teammate for all four years at Westhill.*

**The Westword (TW): How long have you been playing soccer? What got you into playing?**

**Casey Ottaviano (CO):** [I have been playing] since I was four, because of my father. I have been playing with a club team and school teams at Cloonan and Westhill.

**TW: How do you practice outside of school?**

**CO:** I play on the weekends with my dad and my friends.

**TW: What position do you play?**

**CO:** Striker and right-wing.

**TW: What are your individual goals for this year? What are your team's goals?**

**CO:** I would like to have my team win states. [I am working on] trying to play college soccer.

**TW: What are some of your proudest achievements?**

**CO:** My club team has won the state championship three times, and we have won team of the week with Westhill when I was a freshman, [and I made] Varsity as a freshman. I was the only one for awhile and after a couple weeks I was joined by one of my best friends, so we were the two freshmen on Varsity.

**TW: What do you enjoy most about soccer? Do you have a favorite memory as a Westhill Viking?**

**CO:** The feeling of scoring. My favorite memory as a Viking was beating Stamford High in my freshman year.

**TW: Do you look up to any professional soccer players? If so, what team are they on?**

**CO:** Paolo Maldini. He used to play for Italy and AC Milan.

**TW: Do you see yourself playing soccer in the future?**

**CO:** Yeah. I am not 100 percent sure where yet.

**TW: Have you learned anything from your experience as team captain?**

**CO:** [I have learned] how to deal with keeping the sport fun for everyone while maintaining discipline.

**DEDICATION** Casey Ottaviano has been an athlete since the very young age of four.

Photo courtesy of **Casey Ottaviano**/ Contributor.



# Leftword/Rightword

*Presented by The Westword*



Politics, Current  
Events, and More

New Episodes  
Every week!



@thewestword

@thewestword



## NOVEMBER SPORTS CALENDAR

### Week 1 (1-8)

**DATE:** 4

**EVENT:** Varsity Football

**OPPONENT:** Trumbull

**LOCATION:** Home

**TIME:** 2:30 PM.

### Week 2 (9-16)

**DATE:** 10

**EVENT:** Varsity Football

**OPPONENT:** Wilton

**LOCATION:** Fujianiti Field

**TIME:** 7:00 PM.

### Week 3 (17-24)

**DATE:** 18

**EVENT:** JV Football

**OPPONENT:** Stamford

**LOCATION:** Home

**TIME:** 11:30 AM

**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE FALL SPORTS  
TEAMS FOR THEIR SUCCESS THIS  
PAST SEASON!**

QUARTET



# Viking Sports

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

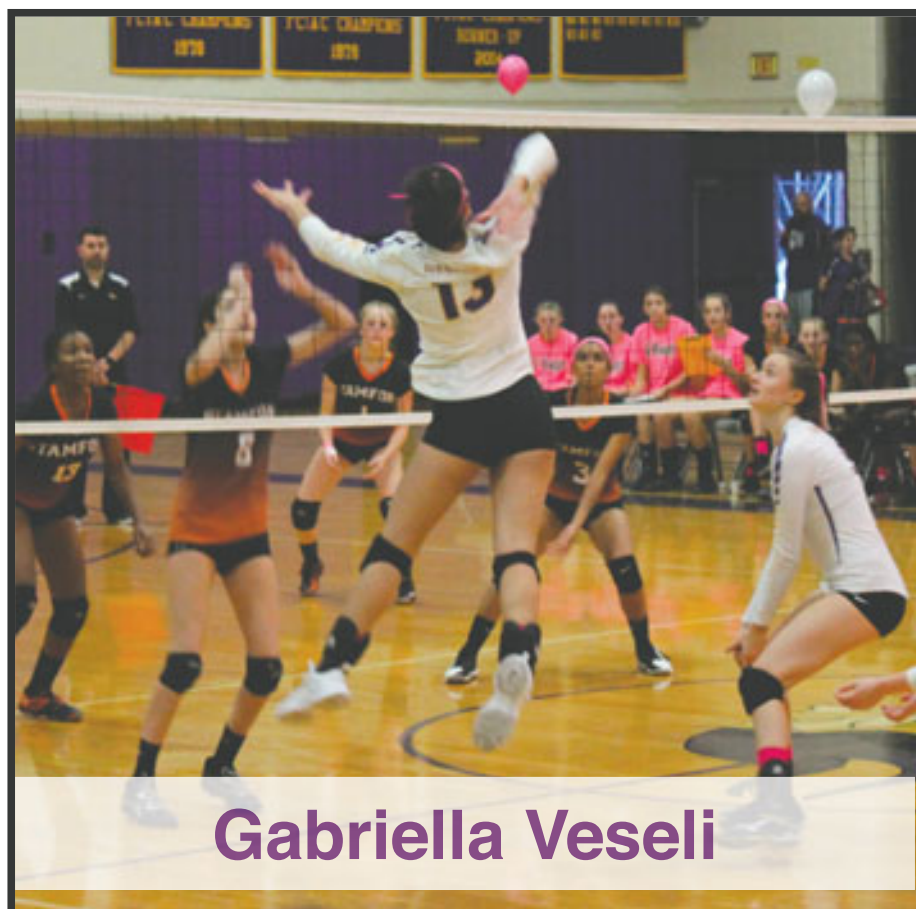


**Westhill Boy's Soccer team vs Stamford High**

**Athletes of the Month *p.38* / The science behind sports anxiety *p.37***



**Casey Ottaviano**



**Gabriella Veseli**