

The Westword

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

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The Westword

2023-2024 Staff

Note from the editors

June 2024

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Dear Readers,

Thank you for your continued interest in the Westword. We are honored to be the prominent voice of the Westhill community. We are extremely excited to share the final edition of the school year with you.

Special Report covers the 4B Movement, highlighting key issues in women rights in South Korea and differences in social advocacy movements worldwide.

News showcases the introduction of the Minga app to Westhill, focusing on the Minga CEO's views on using the app as a hallway traffic management system at Westhill, and the end of year Six Flags trip taken by high level Physics and Calculus students at Westhill.

Las Noticias presenta diferentes ligas internacionales en el fútbol profesional y la representación latina en el Entrenamiento.

Feature details the latest addition to the Voracious Vikings column, presenting a special CSPA issue, senior college advice for younger students at Westhill, and an overview of different gyms around Stamford.

Supplement highlights Senior Wills, recounting what Seniors want to leave behind at Westhill once they graduate.

Limelight showcases one of Westhill's talented student artists, the top five Rom-Com movies to watch over the summer, The Barbie movie's cultural impact, and review of Ariana Grande's latest album, Eternal Sun-

shine.

Scatterbrain features a New York Times inspired Connections game, relating to various Westhill themes.

Sports includes an interview with Westhill's athletic trainer about the national trainer shortage, the story of 2024's Grand Prix and the Monaco Curse, and an overview of the 2024 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games being set in Paris, France.

Sincerely,

Arleny Flores & Mahathi Uppuluri

Editor in Chief & Associate Editor in Chief

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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 Westword staff, along with the Communications and Journalism 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*.

Announcements

There are no announcements at this time.

The Westword

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

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Editor-in-Chief & Contributors.

Leaving the Patriarchy Behind: South Korea's 4B Movement

Rim Ratibi

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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY: These photos feature a group of representatives of the South Korean feminist movement at an International Women's day conference. The event, organized by UN Women of Asia and the Pacific, aims to provide a platform for women to share their achievements and to speak about the problems facing women across the Asian continent and beyond. The event was held on March 8th at the Westin Josun Seoul.

South Korea is currently the country with the lowest birth rates in the world at 0.78 births per woman, compared to the 1.66 births per woman in the United States. According to TIME, this number is projected to fall even further to 0.65 next year. By 2065, it is estimated that over half of South Korea's population will be over the age of 65. These alarming numbers have sparked a recent question: why aren't South Korean women having more children?

There are numerous reasons why South Korea's birth rate is falling, including the economic strain on young couples in the country. Due to inflation, it is difficult for couples to support raising children and buy a home if both parents need to earn an income; in fact, it is said that South Korea is one of the most expensive countries to raise a child in. The job market and work culture in Korea is also highly competitive, making it difficult to attain a proper work-life balance.

The government has tried to tackle the country's low fertility rate in various ways, which include expanding its parental leave policies,

offering subsidies to newlyweds, and providing government stipends for couples with new babies. However, these solutions only tackle the symptoms of the country's low birth rate and not the core issue at hand: gender inequality.

South Korean women are fighting back against the systematic gender discrimination they face on a daily basis. Since 2019, there has been a rise in an online feminist campaign called the 4B Movement. 4B stands for four words that start with "bi-," or "no," in Korean: bisekseu (no sex), bichulsan (no child-rearing), biyeonae (no dating), and bihon (no marriage) with men.

There is a major cultural factor as to why women are straying away from childbirth and marriage. In South Korea, traditionalist expectations still prevail when it comes to gender roles within a family. Men are the heads of the household, and are expected to be the sole breadwinners. If a woman wants to pursue a career, she is expected to balance her work with raising children and maintaining a house. In a society that values working many

hours and dedication to a job, balancing these responsibilities becomes nearly impossible for South Korean women. Many women never return to their careers after having children.

"The problem is not just that things are getting more expensive and that it is harder to raise kids, it's that there is a lot of pressure on women to give up their lives for their children in a world that doesn't allow that," Arianna Berisha ('24) said.

The 4B ideology is a product of South Korea's previous feminist movements, including the international #MeToo campaign and the "Escape the Corset" movement. The word 'corset' is a term that Korean feminists on the internet use to refer to the gender constraints women face in Korean society; these include the expectation to get married for financial stability, the pressure to conform to strict beauty standards, and other socially enforced notions of femininity.

"I've heard of the corset movement before. I think beauty standards are strict enough, but everyone knows that it's much

more serious in Korea. I think that puts a lot of unnecessary pressure on women," Yisleidi Reyes ('24) said.

The goal of the 4B Movement and its counterparts is not to change the traditionalist mindset of Korean society, but to leave it behind as a whole. South Korean women want to show what a world without men would truly look like, and the detrimental effects that nonparticipation of women in society would have on other sectors of society.

While traditional gender roles do not solely exist in South Korea, their pervasiveness in the country's structural policies is why many women are demanding radical change. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, or the OECD, states that Korean women earn an average of 35% less than their male counterparts—the worst gender pay gap among all 38 countries in the OECD. Sexual harassment and gender discrimination is also not uncommon in Korean work culture. South Korea's laws concerning gender-based crimes are

also very lenient towards perpetrators, with many only facing light sentences and fines for crimes such as installing spy cams, stalking, dating violence, and even femicide. On the political level, only 3 out of 19 presidential cabinet members are female. The president is also campaigning to dissolve the country's Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, a vital public resource for women and victims of sexual assault.

"Gender inequality is not a new thing, but when they affect a society's government and social policies, that's when things can get really dangerous for women," Cheska Monteclaro ('24) said.

While the principles of the 4B Movement may seem radical and extreme, the protests of South Korean women are finally having an effect on a national scale. The future of South Korea's population is in the hands of its women as they strive to fight for a balance between their independence and femininity.

Minga CEO weighs in on hallway management at the Hill

Eugene Caibal
Managing Editor

Upon students' return from Christmas break, Westhill High School rang in the new year by launching a piece of hallway management software that would disrupt an already weary school community.

Minga is a "one-stop shop" for schools looking to not only manage hallway traffic, but also increase student and classroom engagement on campus, said founder and CEO Jason Richards in a recent interview with The Westword.

While Minga has been used at Stamford High since September 2023, the app's introduction to Westhill came at a tumultuous time, when Stamford Public Schools Superintendent Lucero had recently proposed adding an additional class to teachers' schedules, sparking protests across all three high schools across the district. The app roll out went almost unnoticed until it was not.

Students and staff have conceded that the original hall pass system was outdated: passes would often be re-used and every teacher had their own method of creating passes, enabling repeat offenders to roam as they pleased.

However, since Minga's introduction to Westhill in January, student reactions have been overwhelmingly negative. In a survey by The Westword nearly a month after the app's launch, nearly half of all 135 respondents rated the app 1 out of 10.

Most of the complaints fall on Westhill administration more than the app itself: more than 75% of respondents believed the 7-minute time limit allotted for bathroom passes is too short, since this conflicts with Westhill's locked bathroom policy during passing periods, making the search for open bathrooms a lengthy ordeal.

Richards acknowledges that "in a lot of our introductions to schools, we're frequently an initially hated platform by students because it feels like Big Brother. It feels like we're taking away the freedom and trust and respect between administration, staff, and students."

But the Minga CEO insists that the app gets better over time, citing case studies conducted by the company in schools such as neighboring Danbury and Stamford High, both of which report positive administrative experiences regarding the app's implementation.

While most students at Westhill preferred the original system due to its simplicity, Richards notes that this development is "a necessary path" that will change schooling at Westhill for the better.

(Continued on thewestwordonline.com)



MINGA IN THE HALLWAYS: Administrators have now transitioned from the traditional paper hallway passes to digital passes on Minga. Using Minga now allows teachers and staff to see all students that have active passes in the hallway. Photo by Eugene Caibal.

Physics Day: A “Roller Coaster” of Emotions

Chidube Kalu
News Editor

On May 28th, 2024, Westhill Honors Physics and Math classes went on a field trip to Six Flags Great Adventure. The trip was meant to provide students with a mix of fun and education, as they learned about the physics of roller coasters. This is the first time that the Physics Day field trip has ran since the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The field trip to Six Flags was designed to give students an engaging and practical environment in which they could observe and apply physics principles outside the classroom,” said Mrs. Suryawanshi, Physics.

There was a great amount of excitement in the air, as students from all over the tri-state area flooded into the park. The line to enter the park was lengthy, and the sun was punishing. After the line

games. However, due to it being a weekday, it wasn’t busy, with only a few stands operating. Past that area is the “Golden Kingdom”, a jungle-themed area with an incredible bamboo forest and a realistic and unique smell that would have anyone craving lunch. This area leads directly to Kingda Ka, the tallest coaster in the world for two decades.

“I really wanted to go on Kingda Ka. It’s the tallest coaster in the world.” said Aaryan Marathe (’25).

The ride has a unique “aura” that separates it from the others. Upon entering the park, the ride stands as if it is the zenith of Mount Everest, sparking worried whispers within the bus as we arrived. However, despite the fear surrounding the ride, many students went on it anyway. Upon entering the ride, the fear truly sits in, and you are given little time to think as the ride



THE ENTRANCE of the park, including a view of Kingda Ka and Superman. Photo by Nicole Baclayon (’24).

the world. This ride is the focal point of the Plaza Del Carnaval, a Mexico-themed area with neo-Pueblo architecture. The line for the ride was not very long, with many people buzzing with excitement to go on the ride. It is a quiet ride you wouldn’t notice much, however, the screams on the ride could be heard constantly, striking a moderate amount of fear into some of those who wished to ride. Upon getting on, it is easy to be left feeling confident El Toro will be easy to ride. However, at the top, your stomach drops as you realize the horrible mistake you’ve made, as the train cars roll down the hill rapidly, leaving you shocked. The thrill and enjoyment of riding El Toro led to it getting a lot of acclaim within Westhill students.

“El Toro was probably my favorite. I wasn’t sure what to expect, but my friends and I got in line after debating which ride to go on because of how long all the lines were. Despite the wait, I had a lot of fun on it,” said Nicole Baclayon (’24).

There are a lot of other roller coasters in Great Adventure. Close to Kingda Ka are Green Lantern and Superman: Ultimate Flight, both situated in the Boardwalk area. The floorless Green Lantern is known for its twists and turns throughout

the ride, going up an 155 ft hill before dropping and going through numerous loops. Superman: Ultimate Flight is a copycat ride typically used at Six Flags, with the same ride being situated at Six Flags over Georgia and Great America. It’s known for its inverted format, in which riders are left hanging downward as they descend the 106 ft hill. On the eastern section of the park resides The Joker, Nitro, and Jersey Devil.

There are also a multitude of food options at the park. At the center of the park is Yum Yum Cafe, in a building that stands out due to its pastel pillars and colorful dessert theme with ice cream and cake models on the roof. However, the restaurant serves a variety of foods, ranging from Pepperoni pizza to Caesar salad (and yes, lots of dessert!). Nearby is Fatburger, a burger restaurant known for its flavorful burgers, and especially the “Works” burger, that come with mayo, relish, onions, mustard, and other ingredients. It is also known for being one of the few outside chain restaurants. Close to El Toro is Macho Nacho, a “Mexican” restaurant known for its selection of burritos, empanadas, and taco salad. There are many other restaurant options at Great Adventure, including Granny’s, Mama Flora’s, and Primo’s Pizzeria.

However, a common complaint regarding the restaurants are their sky-high prices.

“I didn’t eat any food because of how overpriced it was,” said Baclayon (’24).

“I had a ‘walking taco’ from this tavern restaurant. The food was overpriced but pretty good,” said Marathe (’25).

In general, though the field trip was very short, it was very memorable, and Westhill students rated it very highly.

“I’d definitely rate the trip an 8/10,” said Marathe (’25).

“Even though our time was cut short, I think we got a solid amount of rides in and it was just a good time overall. Plus, the weather was really nice and we got to meet a couple of students from other schools,” Baclayon (’24) said.

“Collecting the data through these rides, students gain hands-on experience and a deeper understanding of the physical laws, making learning enjoyable and educationally enriching,” said Mrs. Suryawanshi, Physics.

Though the trip was fun, students didn’t go home without gaining invaluable knowledge relating to the physics and calculus concepts they worked hard to study all year long.



EXIT: Students left the park around 4pm, just in time to make it back to school before closing after a day of educational fun. Photo by Nicole Baclayon (’24).

cleared up and students entered the park, they split into groups, eager to conquer the scariest rides at the park.

Upon walking past the fountain, you are greeted with the center of the park. On the left, you would find the boardwalk, a massive boulevard known for its slate of carnival

accelerates rapidly up the hill. However, the ride is all bark and no bite. After 30 seconds, you find yourself at the end of the ride in a daze.

Nearby is El Toro. The ride boasts a maximum drop of 176 feet and a speed of 70 mph, making it one of the fastest and tallest wooden coasters in

LAS LIGAS ESTELARES DEL FÚTBOL

El fútbol, sin lugar a dudas, es uno de los deportes más populares conocidos en todo el mundo. Competiciones como la Copa Mundial son una de las muchas que unen a todos. En todo el mundo, la gente espera que su país sea el que levante el trofeo. Cuando no están ocurriendo competiciones como estas, hay ligas de fútbol en casi todas partes del mundo compitiendo en partidos a menor escala. Cada equipo está en ello para ganar su liga y llevarse el trofeo a casa.

Las tres ligas de fútbol más populares son la Premier League, La Liga y la Ligue 1. Estas ligas de fútbol son las mejores de lo mejor en cuanto al estilo de juego, los jugadores y el ambiente general que ofrecen. Los mejores equipos de estas ligas tienen la oportunidad de clasificarse para la Liga de Campeones de la UEFA y la Liga Europa de la UEFA, que incluye equipos de toda Europa. Este resumen discutirá cómo estas 3 ligas de fútbol se convirtieron en las favoritas de los fanáticos en todo el mundo.



PREMIER LEAGUE

Fundada en 1992, la Premier League es, sin duda, una de las ligas más competitivas en todo el mundo. Hay muchos clubes conocidos llenos de jugadores que tienen un talento excepcional para brindar a los fans.

Competiciones: FA Cup, Carabao Cup, EFL Cup, FA Community Shield, UEFA Champions League, y UEFA Europa League

Aficionados: Transmitida en 212 territorios. Una audiencia de 4.7 mil millones de personas y un promedio de 40,236 aficionados miran la Premier desde casa o en el estadio.

Equipos: Manchester United (82 M), Chelsea (54 M), Manchester City (47 M), Liverpool (45 M), Arsenal (41 M).

Futbolistas Destacados: Erling Haaland (Manchester City), Ollie Watkins (Aston Villa), Bruno Fernandes (Manchester United), Mohammed Salah (Liverpool), Bukayo Saka (Arsenal)



LA LIGA

La Liga es una liga de fútbol española fundada en 1929 que se hizo famosa por su primera división de fútbol. Barcelona, Real Madrid, Atlético de Madrid son solo tres de los pocos equipos que llevanla a su máximo potencial.

Competiciones: Copa Del Rey, Supercopa de España, UEFA Champions League, y UEFA Europa League

Aficionados: Se estima que entre 12 y más de 70 millones de personas ven La Liga en televisión y más de 11 millones de espectadores van a los estadios a ver los partidos.

Equipos: Real Madrid (37.75 M), Barcelona (335.11 M), Atletico Madrid (51.6 M), Sevilla (16.28M), Real Sociedad (13.13 M)

Futbolistas Destacados: Jude Bellingham (Real Madrid), Nico Williams (Athletic Club), Robert Lewandowski (Barcelona), Alvaro Morata (Atletico Madrid)



LIGUE 1

La Ligue 1 fue fundada en 1932 y es la liga principal de fútbol de Francia. Es famosa no solo por sus jóvenes jugadores, sino también por sus equipos excepcionales con su propio estilo de juego y competitividad que hacen que la liga valga la pena ver.

Competiciones: Coupe de France, Trophée des Champions, Coupe de la Ligue, UEFA Champions League, y UEFA Europa League

Aficionados: Se estima que hay 10.5 millones de televidentes y un promedio de 22,484 asistentes por partido en los estadios.

Equipos: Paris Saint-Germain (181.5M), Olympique de Marseille (19.36M), AS Monaco (20.15M), Olympique Lyonnais (11.7M), LOSC Lille (4.9M)

Futbolistas Destacados: Kylian Mbappé (PSG), Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang (Marseille), Jonathan David (Lille), Alexandre Lacazette (Lyon)



Voracious Vikings

El Toro Rojo

Arleny Flores, Mahathi Uppuluri, Laasya Kasaru
 Editor-in-Chief, Associate Editor-In-Chief, Online Editor

Service: ★★★★★
 Taste: ★★★★★

The culinary hosts of this column are named for their personalities, and from this point forward will be referred to as The Overtalkative Viking, The Self Absorbed Viking, and The Humorous Viking. This edition also has a special guest host who will be referred to as The Wacky Viking.

Venturing from their homeland, the Vikings decided to voyage to the Big Apple! The Viking Academy of Journalism sent the Vikings on an expedition to Columbia University for their annual Spring Press Association to unearth the sacred and highly guarded secrets of story writing. After an intense couple of hours trodding through the bustling campus, the Vikings could hear their stomachs growling. Luckily, a few feet outside of the campus, they spotted the El Toro Rojo food truck. The Wacky Viking screamed out of delight and did a backflip, mentioning how she saw the truck on some strange platform called "TicTack". After

hearing The Wacky Viking's shrieks of joy, the other Vikings decided to try it out. The Wacky Viking explained that El Toro Rojo was a popular Mexican hotspot for students of Columbia.

Unable to contain her excitement, The Self Absorbed Viking cut the line and was first to order. She ordered a veggie burrito which included pinto beans, classic mexican rice, lettuce, Oaxaca cheese, guacamole, salsa, and pico de gallo all wrapped up in a flour tortilla. Although the mix of flavors complemented each other nicely and the size was substantial, the Self Absorbed Viking felt that the burrito was not exceptionally flavorful to be priced at an expensive \$15.24. She also would've had to pay \$4.00 extra for sauces to enhance the tastes of the burrito. The chefs were very thorough in preparing and packing the order and made sure to plate the burrito very carefully which The Self Absorbed Viking appreciated, noting that

they must've known to make it extra special for her, of course.

The Over-Talkative Viking was delighted to finally try birria tacos! She dipped her tacos in consomé and ordered an orange Jarritos soda. The tacos were topped with cilantro, onions, lime and salsa roja, and came on a corn tortilla. The tacos came packed in a cardboard box separated by dividers. She looked forward to a spicy meal, but was surprised when her tacos were mild and bland. She was hoping for something more flavorful, especially considering the online attention the tacos were receiving. She enjoyed the juiciness of the tacos, and the warmth they provided her during the cold, rainy day.

The Wacky Viking could not believe what was before her eyes. The shining red food truck under the rainy sky could not stop neither The Wacky Viking or the other Voracious Vikings from trying the mouthwatering food before them. Instead of a regular walk to order, The Wacky Viking danced and jumped her way to place her order; she ordered two birria tacos with a side of piping hot consomé to dip the tacos in. The tacos consisted of warm corn tortillas topped with shredded beef that was simmering in a savory dark broth, that was then topped with cilantro and onion. When she opened the cardboard container, the steam that had hit her face from the hot consomé did not stop her from eating the tacos in under 3 minutes! All of what she ate cost her \$12, seeming like a good deal considering she was in the city and the sense of contentment it provided for her!

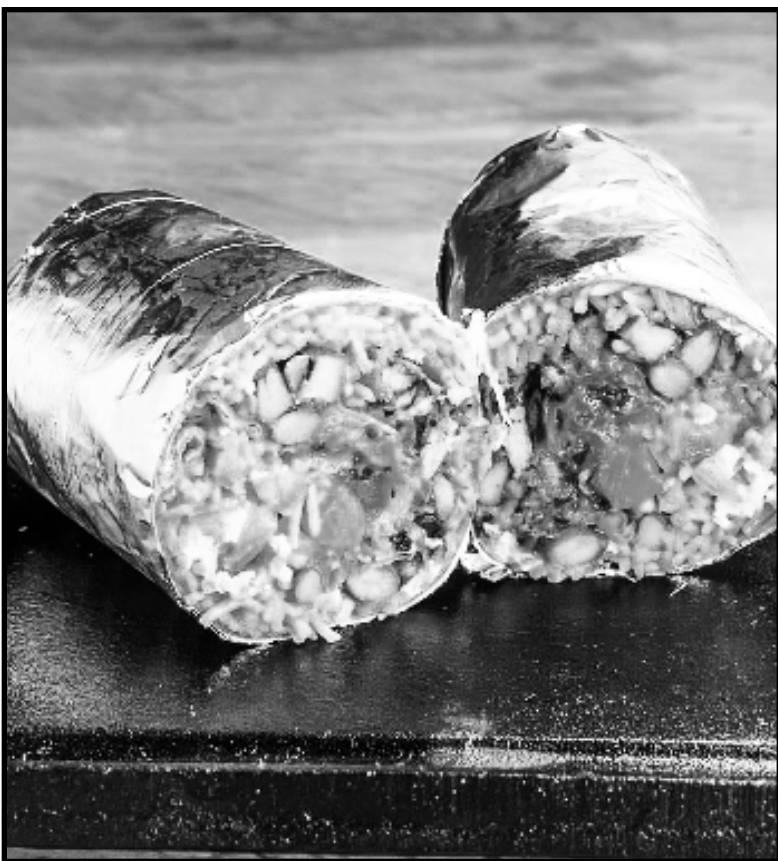
The Humorous Viking ordered last. Everything on the menu looked



BIRRIA TACOS as ordered by the Over-Talkative Viking.
 Photo by Mahathi Uppuluri ('24).

tempting, but she eventually decided on the chicken tacos. She ordered two chicken tacos but ordered a third after seeing the small size. The tacos included small tortillas with grilled chicken, cheese, onions, and cilantro with a slice of lemon. The Viking was disappointed as she wasn't given any sauce and resorted to squeezing the lemon all over the tacos. The chicken was juicy but wasn't

as flavorful as she hoped. The mix of cilantro, cheese, onions, and lemon overtook the chicken taste and the tortilla was a little soggy, breaking quite often causing the ingredients to fall out. With each taco priced at \$4, the Viking spent a total of \$12.34. Overall, the Viking was unsatisfied with her tacos, but she was glad that she was able to try something new in a new land.



VEGGIE BURRITO as ordered by the Self Absorbed Viking from the El Toro Rojo food truck. The Vikings gave the spot outside of Columbia University campus three-and-a-half stars out of five.
 Photo by Mahathi Uppuluri ('24).



EDITOR-IN-CHIEF ARLENY FLORES ('24) orders from the El Toro Rojo food truck outside Columbia University campus.
 Photo by Mahathi Uppuluri ('24).



ADMISSIONS OFFICE at Rhode Island College. Photo from Wiki Commons.

Admissions Advice from the Editor-in-Chief

Arleny Flores
Editor-in-Chief

As the class of '24 leave their nests and embark on the journeys forwards, it's now time for the class of '25 to start getting ready for their admissions cycle. Understandably, though, the process can be overwhelming if you haven't been given the right advice or tools you need, or what to even look for in a college in the first place. Rest assured, we're here to help! For this article, we will be discussing some tips and tricks rising seniors should utilize in order to ease their stress in the college admissions process.

Don't know what colleges to apply to, or not sure of what colleges you could get into? Common data sets allow applicants to make distinctions between safety, target, and reach schools, since they have information regarding admitted students' GPAs and test scores. They can also be useful for understanding how heavily other factors such as course rigor, demonstrated interest, religious affiliation, and geographical residence are weighed by a school's admissions officers.

For colleges that you're really interested in, students can demonstrate interest in a school by following the college's official social media accounts, signing up and clicking on emails to increase attention from the admissions office, attending admissions events, and visiting the school's campus. Students can take honors, ECE, and AP classes to add rigor to their course load. Some students also enroll in classes at community colleges to do so.

Academics play a significant role in college admissions, but personal qualities help admissions officers make difficult decisions. College essays, letters of recommendation, and extracurriculars give admissions officers an idea of who a student is past the grades on their transcript.

You also need to make sure you can back up your claims of obscene intelligence and community-driven enthusiasm through letters of recommendation! Students typically ask for letters of recommendation during the spring of their junior year. This allows recommenders ample time to make a decision and prepare a recommendation. During this time, students send their recommenders a "brag sheet," essentially a list of their accomplishments.

It is important that students select a recommender who knows them well. A quality recommendation from a person who knows them very well is generally better than a weak recommendation from someone with a recognizable name.

You should also let admissions officers know about the activities you do on the side. On the Common Application—Common App for short—there are ten spaces for applicants to list their activities. This may include hobbies, sports, clubs, jobs or volunteer work. If an applicant spends significant time on family responsibilities instead, such

as caring for an older relative or translating, colleges encourage that they share that information as well.

Applicants don't have to fill out all ten spaces, although it is recommended that they include all of their meaningful extracurriculars. The Common Application gives students limited space to describe their extracurricular involvement. Using action words and short phrases can help conserve space. Using numbers that show impact can elevate the quality of the extracurricular description.

Students can use the additional information section on the common application to explain more about an extracurricular if they feel something incredibly important was left out in its description. Applicants should make it clear that they are referring back to that activity.

For students with significant financial need, need-blind colleges may be worth looking into. Unlike need-aware schools, need-blind colleges do not consider a student's ability to pay for school throughout their college admissions process. It is still possible for students with significant financial need to be admitted to a need-aware institution, although they may be at a slight disadvantage. Students interested in financial aid may also be interested in researching colleges that meet 100% of a student's demonstrated financial need. These institutions are known for offering generous financial aid packages; in some cases without loans or work-study requirements. If necessary, students can contact their school's financial aid office to request additional financial support.

If cost is a concern for students, some colleges have financial aid calculators available on their website, which offer families an estimate of what they would be expected to pay if their student were admitted to that institution.

Aside from financial aid packages, students can also apply for scholarships to help fund their college education. However, at some schools, receiving external scholarships reduces the amount of financial aid that the college provides.

Applicants tend to have better chances of earning local scholarships compared to national and international scholarships, meaning some students prefer to focus their attention on local scholarships. Students can search online or ask their guidance counselor to learn about scholarships that they may be interested in applying for.

We at the Westword wish you all the best on your college and career journeys. Know that wherever you end up, you are bound to be successful and thriving, and remember that you will always be a proud part of the Westhill Viking community!



STAYING IN SHAPE IN STAMFORD: Planet Fitness, LA Fitness, and Edge Fitness are popular fitness chains that can also be found nationwide. Image

Bending Iron: A review of Gyms around Stamford

Zach Goldberg
News Editor

What drives the students at Westhill to spend hours on end, day after day, building/destroying their body in the gym? That is the question which was asked to Westhill students and faculty alike.

In a random survey of 50 Westhill students and faculty, The Westword found that 34% of people go to the gym. Of the people who responded yes, they were asked the following questions of where and why they chose to go to the gym.

One of Westhill's secret gym rats is beloved art teacher Kenneth Martin, who said he works out to maintain bone density, work on cardiovascular health, and support general physical fitness. He also stated that he works out not only for the physical benefits but for the stress relief.

Another one of Westhill's avid lifters, Paul Arvoy ('25), works out because he enjoys it and wants to be strong. Other students stated that they workout to stay healthy, keep in shape, and because they generally enjoy it.

And of course, no gym article would be complete without an interview with Westhill Principle and avid exercise enthusiast Mr. Rinaldi. To make sure he stays physically fit Mr. Rinaldi works out in the Westhill Gym (doesn't he maintain workout equipment in his office? Doesn't he regularly workout outside the building?) He loves that there as the gym has all the equipment he needs, as well as the fact that he can watch his students workout along with them, providing further motivation throughout his workout.

One of the most popular gyms in Stamford is **LA Fitness**. According to the gym goers of Westhill, some of the benefits of this gym are its large variety of machines, and generally large and open atmosphere. While some of the drawbacks of the gym are the regularly broken machines and overcrowded facilities.

Another popular gym for Westhill goers is, unsurprisingly, the **weight room** within Westhill. This gym is frequented by athletes, faculty,

and general lifters alike. The pros of this gym are its well worn and well-used atmosphere and the fact that it is conveniently within the school. The vintage appeal of much of the equipment is also a downside, as some of the weights and equipment need updating.

Planet Fitness is another popular gym in Stamford. Gym goers commend Planet Fitness for its large variety of machines and its low cost, saying that it gets the job done. It does, however, get periodically overcrowded, which can be inconvenient at times. The Lunk Alarm is cited as both a boon and a bane, depending on the person. Shirts are also required, tough guy.

Underground Fitness is a Stamford gym frequented by a large portion of high school students. It is open 24 hours a day, has a large variety of equipment, and is described as having a good atmosphere for lifting. One of the drawbacks is the heat, as lifters complained that it was sometimes too hot to workout optimally.

Chelsea Piers in Stamford is considered to be a very nice gym. It has a sizable amount of space, filled up with a wide variety of well maintained and helpful personal trainers. The main drawback is the extremely high cost to workout there. This is a decidedly high-end gym.

The Italian Center of Stamford is a generally small, yet well maintained gym. A good option for someone who wants easy access to a pool and basketball court, it was recently redone and restocked with ample new free weights, machines. There have been general updates to lighting and structure as well.

The JCC (Jewish Community Center) is a place where asher Farber ('24) says a "couple of guys can go and get a proper workout." The JCC has very nice and well kept facilities and equipment, yet is lacking in overall variety of machines and space. The JCC also contains a pool and basketball court.

Arleny Flores

Williams College 2028

I, Arleny Flores, of a tired body and a curious mind, hereby leave...



MU: WNBA discussions, slow burn Tiktok love stories, and our dreams of seeing the aurora borealis. **RR:** our vlogs/food review videos, library/coffee shop study sessions, and target runs.

LK: The highest spice level at Chutneys, "Desi Girl" listening sessions in the car, and 20,000 steps from our walks downtown.

MS: Photos at your front door, naps on car rides home, the painted rocks we've placed around Cove. **MO:** sunsets, little treats, and all of your Instagram posts. **PC:** our deep admiration for Chappell Roan, your poor nyc navigational skills, and all the perfume scents in the world. **SV, KC, JS:** every photo in my camera roll, 15 minute voice memos, and the many exclusive tours of my vinyl collection that you never asked for. **TS:** my slime obsession, our selfies with Ms. Grant, and i nostri videodiari italiani. **BM:** the boba you refuse to try, a detailed report of every single one of my CSA scores, and "Bridgettttt" in a accent. **EH:** the queen M.L, matching skirts, and messages at work. **KG, DG:** DAK bracelets, "can someone come scoop me?", and sleepover extravaganzas. **JM, CM:** facetime study sessions, stuffed animal wars, and sour trolli gummies. **DP:** celeb cardboard cutouts, "real mature," and "where are you?"

RM, DC, AA, FB, AO, NB, EC, MO: Best of luck senior year!
MYLC, Westword: All my love.

Tamara Segal

University of Connecticut 2028

I, Tamara Segal, of gentle body and thoughtful mind, hereby leave..

Nina Lopes: penguin hugs, bear hugs, and hoping to see your face when I walk into English. **Arleny Flores:** enviro projects, boygenius, and your friendship with my mom. **Samir Afsary:** sudden and sweet, a friendship that that will last forever. **Emily Urda:** library dates, new developments, and understanding the chemistry struggle. **Atticus Guiffreda:** strange videos, many giggles, and the Jello. **Cheska Monteclaro:** the goofy, the freaky, and the boba. **Nicole Baclayon and Rim Ratibi:** spanish class antics and roaming the halls. **Mr. Ng:** life coaching sessions and good books. **Pippa Cooper:** eventually losing our dyed hair and Ironic by Alanis Morissette. **Laasya Kasaru and Mahathi Uppuluri:** "we ARE hunger games" and calculus's tribulations. **Bridget Mullen:** many laughs and runtime errors.





Laasya Kasaru

University of Connecticut 2028

I, Laasya Kasaru, of an exhausted body and an ambitious mind, hereby leave...

Mahathi Uppuluri: Dance performances, family events, one-sided beef, infinity amount of insta reels, and deep talks about the future. **Arleny Flores:** long downtown walks, Chutneys runs, mom jokes, and listening to desi girl. **Dania Pinto:** daily insults, AP Stats, and Dave's hot chicken daydreams. **Rim Ratibi:** "professional" baking, Bollywood movies, Stamford hospital adventures, and AP calc packets. **Rebecca Calvillo:** constant rants, Health Science and Economics partner and embarrassing Snapchat filters.

Anastasia Ladyka

Northeastern University 2028

I, Anastasia Ladyka, of nourished body and flourished mind, hereby leave...

The Visual Arts Department: their beloved office. **Mrs. Konrad:** floating ideas, the search for affordable housing in D.C., and an unknown quantity of sustained investigations. **Mr. Martin:** fried chicken and plantains, admission to Pratt Institute for a BFA in Jewelry, and unannounced observations. **Mrs. Taylor:** my late work and Psychology class films. **Mr. Ng:** "woke" discussions, whiteboard annotations, debatable Letterboxd reviews, and an Indiehipsterupdate '24. **Yuliana Dolishna:** iced matcha lattes and research projects. **Coach Ashton:** endless motivation, handshakes and hugs, and your favorite artwork of mine. **The security guards:** my open campus pass. **Westhill:** five hair colors, a newfound appreciation for caffeine, and the provocation to dream bigger.



Dania Pinto

University of Connecticut 2028

I, Dania Pinto, of tired body and active mind, hereby leave...

Arleny Flores: the one of us not concentrated in stats, accepting my love of Raising Cane's, always yelling at me. **Laasya Kasaru:** my future UConn roomie, always answering a day after the text is sent, only ever using the rolling eyes emoji. **Mahathi Uppuluri:** my January twin, the constant arguing but makeups 2 minutes later, never on time. **Mr. Schrag:** the constant attitude, never a dull moment in class. **Ms. Midy:** Your prominent laughter, your belief in me. **Westhill:** I'm finally done.

Natali Gudiel

University of Hartford

2028

I, Natali Gudiel, of energetic body and curious mind, hereby leave...

Dania Pinto: We grew up together having everyone ask us if we're twins, or sisters. But we graduate accomplishing one of the dreams we have. Maybe you'll go to Spain (let's see what your dad says) **Diana Ulaj:** All our Dunkin and Donut Delight drives for lunch, our 5 below shopping, that one time we went to IHOP for breakfast, and of course our daily chismes. **Italian 4 honors class:** nonostante, the random things that happened in there, the birds flying in, Magnifico's singing and yelling our names in the halls to hear the echos, and making fun of Magnifico. **Coach Deangelo:** Always calling me little but strong, catching up with you when I see you, your dad jokes, and of course outdoor track.



Mahathi Uppuluri

Indiana University Bloomington

2028

I, Mahathi Uppuluri, of caffeinated body and active mind, hereby leave...

Laasya Kasaru: Frenemies for life, weekly basement movie nights, cringe tiktoks, daily rants that turn into deep talks, and going from 1 minute to 14 hours away. **Dania Pinto:** Daily insults, my dad's ravioli, econ trauma, and travel plans. **Arleny Flores:** TikTok love stories, yap sessions, and fellow women's basketball simp. **Danielle Pareja:** Halloween NYC trip, questionable instagram reels, and "do it for the plot". **Purva Thoka:** SASA memories, bati bata, and barking in the audience at dance performances. **Westword:** My InDesign tears, CSPA adventures, and raging.



Sohni Vermani

Tufts University

2028

I, Sohnι Vermani, of tired body and happy mind, hereby leave...

Arleny Flores: my mom's home baked bread of course. **Melissa Silva:** daily updates, volleyball at cove, going on the swings, boba runs, boat rides. **Neha Tungaturthy:** Rikos nights, My Cousin Vinny, failing at the range, teaching each other our sports. **Jasmine Stops:** physics!!, daily walks and chats. **Caitie Came:** amazing teamwork on Hamlet quizzes and Remo's runs. **Ms. Saleh:** our daily chats and the best calc class ever.



Rim Ratibi

Northeastern University 2028

I, Rim Ratibi, of sleepy body and hyper mind, hereby leave...



Arleny Flores: Winfield dates, iced chai lattes, Taylor Swift lore I don't understand, and endless yap sessions. **Eugene Caibal:** 10% of all of my food and last-minute Westword clutches. **Ma-hathi Uppuluri:** Gym inspo and a future WNBA editing page of you. **Yisleidi Reyes:** Would You Rathers, IHOP birthday pancakes, forehead kisses, and the weekdays. **Laasya Kasaru:** Thanksgiving brownies, hospital lunch dates and horror stories, future bridesmaids dresses, and Bollywood movies. **Kaitlyn Gray:** Makeup tutorials, long drives, Adele-style dialogues, Tim and Moby posters, the occasional sweet treat, and the hundreds of dollars that I owe you. **Cheska Monteclaro:** Questionable middle school memories, a million head pats, and all of my Twice photocards. **Dhruv Hill:** My bowling trophies, future CTE treatment and knee surgeries, and being my clone. **Mrs. Taylor:** Scary ladybug plushies, countless selfies in your mirror, and 11:59-quality reflections. **Mrs. McNamara:** Very salty ice cream, 3 years of fun, and me having to Google very basic chem concepts. **Mr. Wooley:** SZA in your Spotify Wrapped. **Mr. Von Wahlde:** Our shared caffeine addiction. **Westhill:** Hitting my step goal in the hallways. **The Westword:** Countless hours spent designing these pages, and all my love.

Deanna Gjelevic

Hofstra University 2028

I, Deanna Gjelevic, of tired body and excellent mind, hereby leave...

Gabby Covert: Ice cream runs, late night food stops, going through the yearbooks 100 times, and all our laughs. **Brianna Cardona:** Swimming in your pool, sitting in my car on the hill before school, target runs, and sleepovers. **AJ Corelli:** Going to your house everyday and all our laughs. **Paul Interlandi:** Going to your house every other Wednesday and food runs. **Ayla Sestovic:** Always making me laugh and speaking your mind. **Kaitlyn Gray:** Hanging out in Ms. Grants room everyday and leaving during 3rd period to get food. **Arleny Flores:** Picking you up at random times to hangout and get Remos. **Ms. Grant:** Always sitting in your room when I didn't want to go to class or to just hangout. **Sammie Culhane:** Always telling you my problems and going to Vermont together.



Camila Lopez: Artist of the Issue

Aya Homsi
Staff Writer

This issue features Camila Lopez ('26), a student at Westhill who has gained recognition for her exceptional crochet skills. Additionally, Camila Lopez is a former staff member of the publication.

In the spring of the 2023-2024 academic school year, the crochet club intends to host a fashion show with the theme, "rainy spring". The majority of the costumes in the show will be pastel colors, and Lopez's work will be put on display. Aya Homsi ('26) interviewed Lopez on her passion for crochet.

(WW): What inspired you to pick up the crochet hook?

(CL): I first started

crocheting when it was my friend's birthday and I didn't know what to get her. I then decided to crochet a little frog for her. I guess that's what inspired me, to make gifts for others.

(WW): Could you walk us through how you decide what to crochet next?

(CL): Usually when I start a new crochet project I consider items that I might need or want. If someone's birthday is approaching, I can typically crochet them something, but if not I just crochet items that I like. Right now I'm currently making a tank top, I've also crocheted a few headbands lately because I felt like I needed more accessories.

(WW): How do you approach learning new techniques in crocheting?

(CL): If it's something I don't know, I search up tutorials on Youtube or Pinterest. But if it's something I'm familiar with, most of the time I can usually know the stitches just by looking at the photo.

(WW): How has being a part of Westhill High School, particularly the Crochet Club, impacted your crochet journey?

(CL): I think the Crochet Club people have helped bring me closer to people who also share the same interest as me. I think it's wonderful to have a community that supports you.

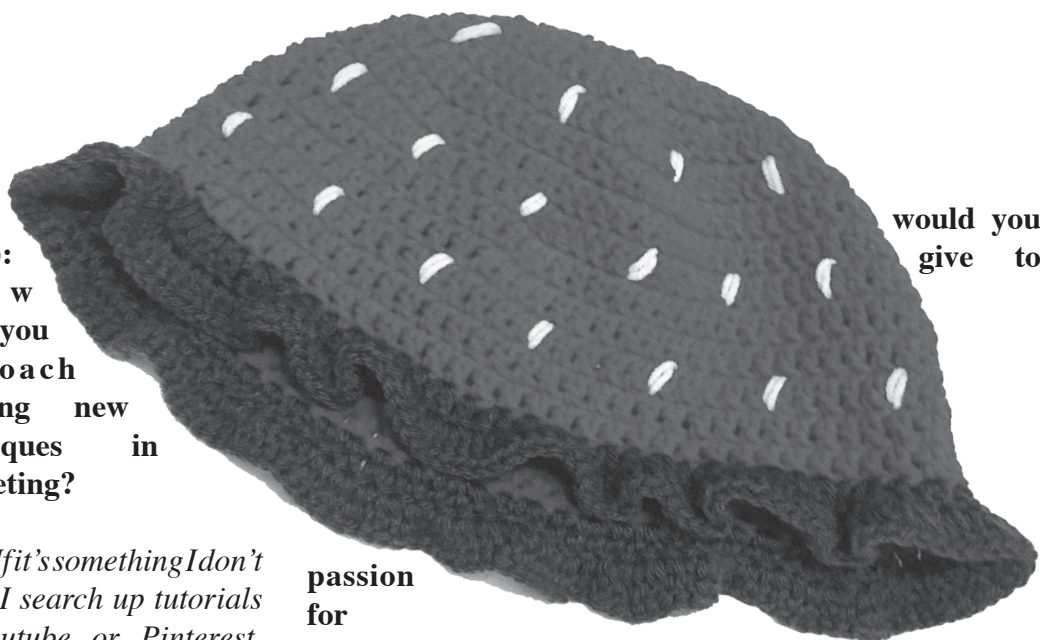
(WW): How do you balance your academic

year I don't crochet as much. But during the summer I like crocheting a lot more.

(WW): Do you have a favorite crochet artist?

(CL): There's this girl on Tik Tok named "mahum." She inspires me a lot. She's very original and her designs are cute.

ALL PHOTOS provided by Camila Lopez ('26).



would you give to

passion for crocheting?

(CL): I always try to put my academic life first. That's why during the school

someone at Westhill High School who wants to start crocheting?

(CL): My

advice would be not to give up and to be as determined as possible because it can be really tricky at first getting your stitches right and knowing where to put your hands. It was really hard for me at the beginning especially because I was alone in teaching myself. I feel like you should join the crochet club because there are a lot of people who can teach you.

(WW) Do you have any ideas for the fashion show coming up?

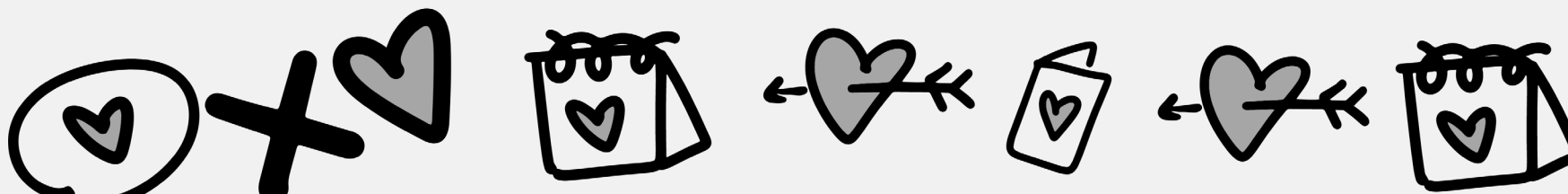
(CL): For the spring fashion show I'm thinking of designing an outfit inspired by the theme "rainy spring."

The Westword continues to support Camila in her artistic pursuits and wishes her well for the next talent show.

commitments with your

(WW) What advice





Article by Fernanda Camille Orellano ('24) | Graphic by Rim Ratibi ('24)

TOP 5 2000s ROMCOMS TO WATCH THIS SUMMER

Summer is the perfect time to dive into some classic romantic comedies that have the right mix of humor, love, and nostalgia. The 2000s were a golden era for rom-coms that charm audiences with their timeless appeal. Here are five must-watch romantic comedies from that era to add to your summer movie list.

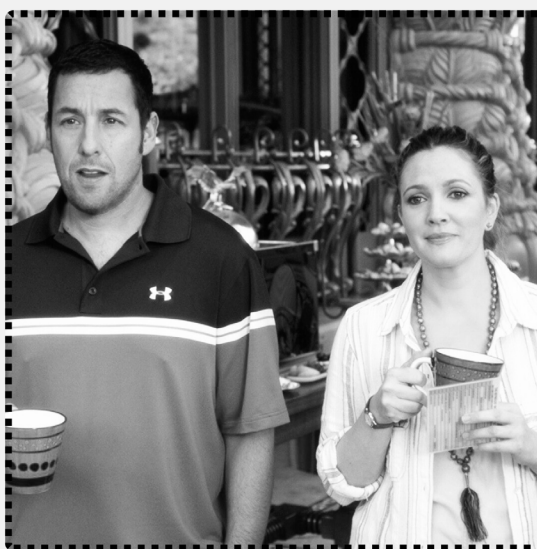
13 Going on 30 (2004)

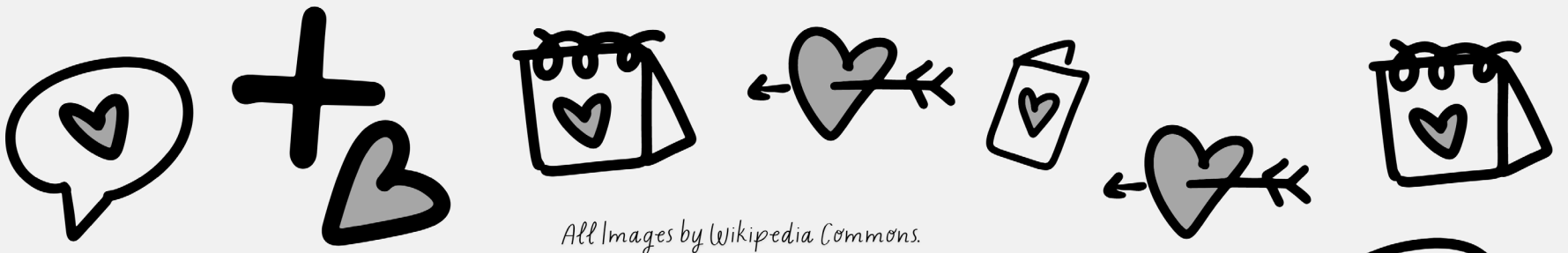


"13 Going on 30" is a quintessential rom-com that embodies the magic of wish fulfillment. Jennifer Garner stars as Jenna Rink, a 13-year-old girl who magically wakes up as a 30-year-old woman. Navigating her adult life with the mindset of a teenager, Jenna reconnects with her childhood friend Matt (Mark Ruffalo) and discovers what truly matters in life. The film's whimsical charm and heartfelt story make it a perfect summer watch.

50 First Dates (2004)

Another gem from the early 2000s, "50 First Dates" features Adam Sandler and Drew Barrymore in a unique love story set in the picturesque landscape of Hawaii. Sandler plays Henry Roth, a man who falls for Lucy Whitmore (Barrymore), a woman suffering from short-term memory loss. Every day, Henry must win Lucy's heart all over again. This blend of comedy and romance, along with the stunning Hawaiian backdrop, makes it an ideal film for a summer movie night.





All Images by Wikipedia Commons.

27 Dresses (2008)

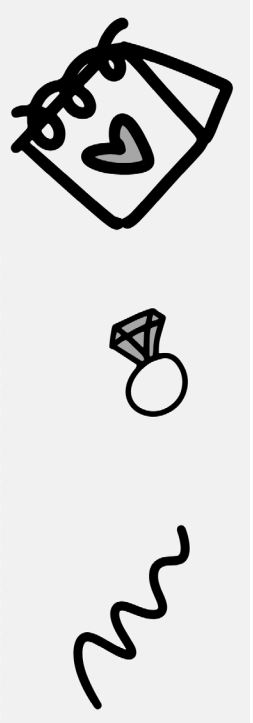


Katherine Heigl shines in "27 Dresses" as Jane Nichols, a perpetual bridesmaid who has been in 27 weddings but never her own. Her life takes a turn when she meets Kevin Doyle (James Marsden), a cynical journalist who writes a story about her. The film balances light-hearted fun with deeper themes of self-discovery and finding true love. Its charming premise and Heigl's engaging performance make "27 Dresses" a delightful and uplifting choice for a summer movie night.



The Notebook (2004)

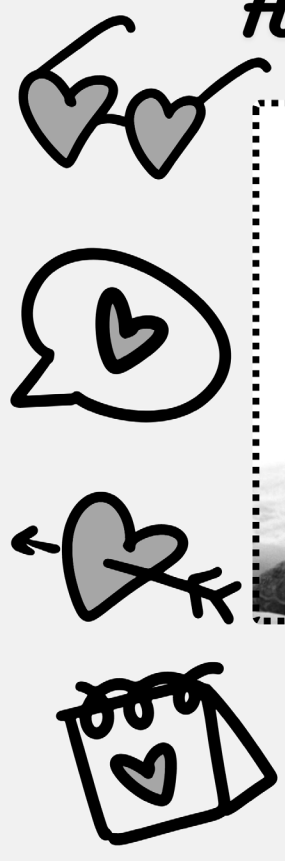
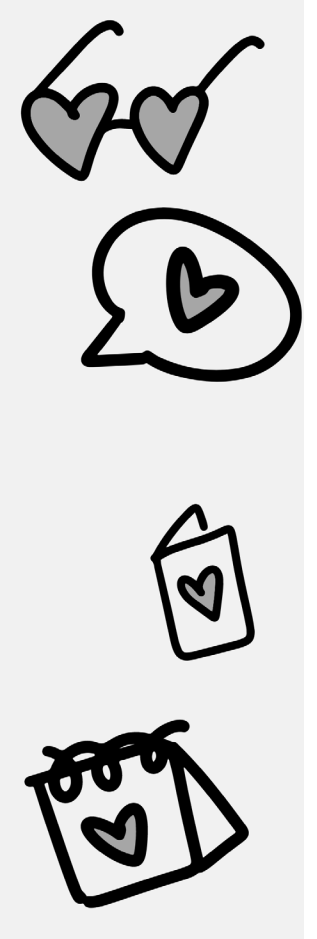
While more of a romantic drama, "The Notebook" has become a modern classic in the romance genre. Directed by Nick Cassavetes and based on Nicholas Sparks' novel, the film stars Ryan Gosling and Rachel McAdams as Noah and Allie, two young lovers separated by social class and circumstances. Their enduring love story, told through the reflections of an elderly couple, is both heart-wrenching and beautiful. The picturesque Southern setting and timeless romance make it an essential summer watch.



How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days (2003)



This beloved rom-com features Kate Hudson as Andie Anderson, a magazine writer who sets out to write an article on how to drive a man away in 10 days. Matthew McConaughey plays Benjamin Barry, an advertising executive who bets he can make any woman fall in love with him in the same timeframe. The resulting antics are hilarious and heartwarming, with Hudson and McConaughey's chemistry lighting up the screen. It's fun premise and engaging performances make it a classic worth revisiting.



Pink, Glitter, and Gold: Barbie's Cultural Impact

Fernanda Camille Orellano and Jade Rueda
Staff Writers

The *Barbie* movie, an iconic cultural presence, transcends mere entertainment to leave an enduring mark on various facets of our culture. Barbie's cinematic journey has resonated globally, shaping trends and perceptions that extend far beyond the screen.

One of the most palpable impacts lies in the realm of fashion. The *Barbie* movie has

presenting a diverse array of personalities, each with unique features, like stereotypical Barbie, Weird Barbie, President Barbie, Writer Barbie, etc. *Barbie* acknowledges the privilege of being a conventionally attractive woman, but also challenges these conventional notions and contributes to fostering a more inclusive society.

"I definitely feel that The *Barbie* movie really

towards young viewers. Barbie's influence reaches beyond the celluloid, permeating our society and contributing to a cultural shift towards a more accepting and diverse definition of beauty in women.

Moreover, Barbie's on-screen narratives deliver powerful messages of perseverance and empowerment for all women in society. The

becomes not just a plastic figure but a symbol of resilience and determination, teaching audiences that challenges can be overcome with perseverance and a positive mindset.

The *Barbie* movie has also etched its mark on popular culture, becoming a landmark and a source of nostalgia for those who grew up with the iconic doll.

prominent, underscoring Barbie's status as a cultural phenomenon. From limited-edition dolls to themed events celebrating her legacy, Barbie has become more than just a toy; she's a cultural touchstone connecting generations ever since she was created.

In conclusion, the *Barbie* movie's profound impact on society extends beyond the silver screen.



BARBIE REIMAGINED: Barbie (2023)'s social commentary on beauty and womanhood shines through the iconic bright-pink eccentricities of Barbie's fashion sense. *Printerval*

consistently showcased the latest trends, serving as a muse for both fashion enthusiasts and designers. Barbie's diverse wardrobe and ever-evolving style have positioned her as a timeless fashion icon, influencing and inspiring generations of trend-conscious individuals.

From the glamorous gowns to the casual chic, Barbie has effortlessly donned myriad styles, becoming a mirror reflecting the ever-changing landscape of fashion.

Beyond the world of clothing, the film has been a catalyst in redefining standards of beauty. By

helped me to envision myself in a position of power and see new possibilities for myself that I didn't see myself doing or with the possibility to do so and the movie change that perspective for me, by seeing people from different ethnicities and skin colors, like myself do all these things made me feel more represented and part of the movie in a sense", said Maggie Denninger ('26).

The movie has sparked crucial conversations on body positivity and self-acceptance, encouraging viewers to embrace their individuality, especially

stories underscore the significance of embracing one's uniqueness, pursuing aspirations, and overcoming obstacles that women face in society.

"I liked *Barbie* because it shows how it's impossible to be a woman in American society and how hard it is to live up to the standards that society has put us in and that we have to fit into these boxes," said psychology teacher Ms. Tintle.

These themes resonate deeply, particularly with younger audiences, imparting valuable life lessons and instilling a sense of empowerment. Barbie

"The *Barbie* movie made me very nostalgic since I grew up with the doll, and seeing also how when we turn into teenagers we can drift apart from our mothers based on ideas from our peers, but I loved seeing them reconnect because they communicated with each other on how they felt", said Ariana Ulaj ('26).

The franchise's continued success has led to a plethora of new Barbie-themed products, solidifying her integration into society. Collections, themed parties, and even scholarly debates on the doll's cultural relevance are increasingly

It has shaped standards of beauty, fostered empowerment, and evolved into a symbol of cultural nostalgia. Barbie's influence reaches far and wide, making her a lasting cultural icon that continues to reflect and influence societal ideals beyond the confines of the entertainment industry.

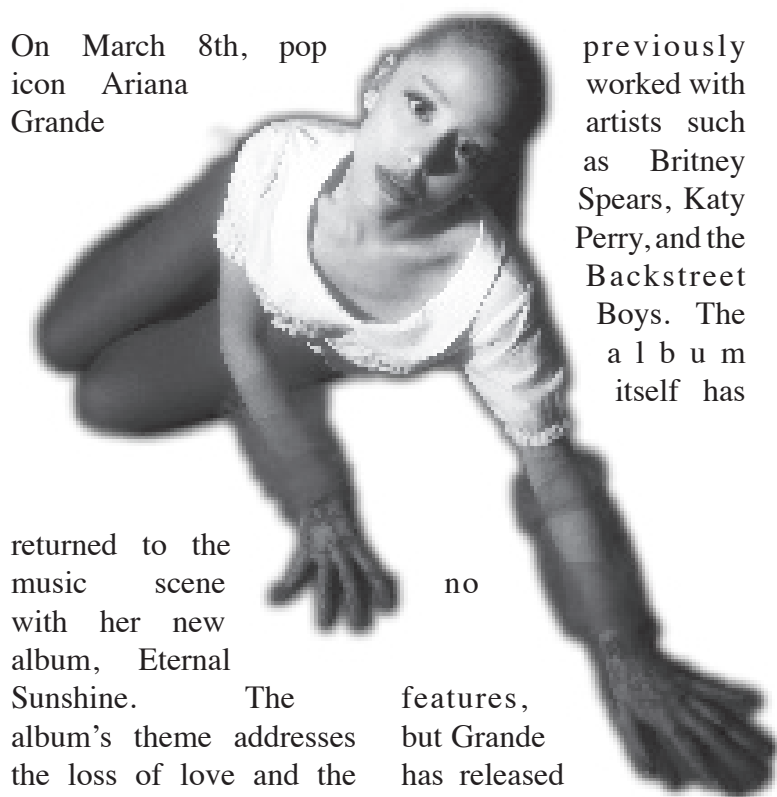
As Barbie continues to evolve and resonate with new generations, her cultural significance remains, ensuring her place as an enduring symbol in the ever-changing tapestry of our collective identity.

Eternal Sunshine: Album Review

Rim Ratibi

Print Executive Editor

On March 8th, pop icon Ariana Grande



returned to the music scene with her new album, *Eternal Sunshine*. The album's theme addresses the loss of love and the end of a relationship, as well as the beginnings of a new potential romance. Reaching the end of her 20s, Grande uses this album to reflect on her early adulthood. She describes the album as a fusion of her previous three albums, calling it her favorite one yet.

The album is characterized by Grande's restrained vocals and signature strings, emphasizing the emotional vulnerability she typically displays in her songs. This pop and R&B album carries influences from house music and synth-pop, separating it from her previous albums. The title is inspired by the 2004 film *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* starring Jim Carrey, who Grande has previously cited as one of her biggest inspirations. The recording took place at the end of 2023 during the SAG-AFTRA strike that paused the production of the *Wicked* adaptation, where Ariana Grande will be starring as Glinda.

Max Martin, the album's lead producer, has

previously worked with artists such as Britney Spears, Katy Perry, and the Backstreet Boys. The album itself has

features, but Grande has released a 'slightly deluxe' version with appearances from Troye Sivan and Mariah Carey.

In a conversation with *Billboard*, the singer describes the album as a collection of songs surrounding the same circumstance in her life: "It's kind of a concept album 'cause it's all different heightened pieces of the same story, of the same experience," said Grande.

Many people also believe that the album has separated itself from the popstar's



previous works.

"This might be my favorite Ariana Grande album. It's different from the pop hits that made her famous, but I think it suits her new vibe really well," said Maria Garcia ('26).

The album's intro opens up with a mellow string harmony, as Grande reflects on the state of a relationship that is slowly coming to an end. The next track 'bye' transitions into a more upbeat melody as Grande sings about finally putting an end to that relationship. Grande doubles back on these emotions on 'don't wanna break up again,' a ballad on the pain love brings on and her desire to stay with her lover in spite of it.

The theme of the album is then encompassed on the track 'Saturn returns (interlude),' narrated by astrologer Diana Garland. Grande uses the cycle of Saturn as a metaphor for her journey into adulthood and shedding the old parts of herself. The interlude then transitions into the title track 'eternal sunshine.'

Grande returns to an upbeat tone in the middle of her album with 'supernatural,' a low tempo R&B song about being drawn to a lover she feels inseparable from. 'True story' is a 2000s inspired electric R&B track where Grande acknowledges the public perception of her relationships and responds to media gossip. The song then transitions into 'the boy is mine,' a provocative single that Grande calls a "bad girl

anthem."

"'the boy is mine' is my favorite song on the album, for sure. It's extremely catchy," said Arianna Berisha ('24).

The album's house-inspired lead single 'yes, and?' dismisses criticisms of her personal life and gives Grande a platform to show off her self-confidence.

With the next single

makes humans unique. *Eternal Sunshine* then comes full circle with the ending track 'ordinary things,' where Grande finally answers the questions she posed in the introduction of the album and reflects on being grateful for the mundane experiences of everyday life. She closes off this song with an outro spoken by her grandmother



ETERNAL SUNSHINE's album cover features Grande leaning on a clone of herself. Photos from Wiki Commons and Printerval.

'we can't be friends (wait for your love),' Grande returns to softer vocals and emotional strings as she sings about the ups and downs of unrequited love. The following track, 'i wish i hated you' deals with emotions of grief and regret associated with the end of a relationship.

"Even with her lighter voice, I think Ariana does sadder songs really well," said Catherine Castro ('24).

The penultimate song of the album 'imperfect for you' highlights appreciating the nuances and complexities of relationships and what

Marjorie Grande.

Eternal Sunshine's lead single 'yes, and?' was released on January 12th, debuting at #1 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 Chart. The album's second single, 'we can't be friends (wait for your love)' also debuted at the top of the chart, breaking the record for most #1 debuts as a female artist. The album also received a 7.2 Pitchfork rating and a Metacritic score of 84. The album is praised for Grande's striking honesty and softer vocals, and is dubbed as one of her more mature projects.

Try to solve this Westhill-themed Connections!

Eugene Caibal
Puzzle Editor

This issue, we wanted to try something special for our Scatterbrain section: our page dedicated to puzzle-solving and general trivia. Connections is a puzzle game originally created by the New York Times. Within this puzzle, there are four groups of four matching terms that correspond to various

themes related to Westhill and Stamford at large. Your job will be to find and match the correct group of terms with each other and, eventually, solve the puzzle! When you are finished, look at the back cover of this issue to check your answers. If you get all of them correct, DM a picture to @thewestord.

Create four groups of four!

PAGE

WICK

SEMINAR

ROXBURY

WHITE

LUKE'S

EURO

NORTHEAST

SPANISH

HART

ENGLISH

MICRO

NG

JOE'S

STARK

KING

Westhill trainer Scott Glucksman speaks on nationwide athletic trainer shortage

Mayelin Disla
Staff Writer

From being the first line of defense in high school sports medical emergencies to injury advising for injured athletes, athletic trainers play a crucial role in high school athletics. However, there is a dire need for more trainers in Connecticut schools, according to reports by the Stamford Advocate and other news outlets.

“To hear stories of other high schools in Connecticut who do not have any athletic trainers is frightening, to put it nicely,” Kevin Frederick, the head football coach at Maloney High School in Meriden, said in a legislative meeting with the State Public Health Committee in late-February. “This is a serious matter that shouldn’t be overlooked.”

This begs the question: why is there a growing shortage of athletic trainers? Most could say that the process of becoming an athletic trainer has been made too difficult. Since 2015, prospective trainers needed to earn a master’s degree to qualify for state certification and licensing. This takes more time and money than the traditional 4 year path for the career originally lasted.

Scott Glucksman, one of two athletic trainers at Westhill, is feeling the strain of short supply in his work every day here at the Hill.

(WW): How hard was it for you to get the certification to become a trainer?

(SG): *I did a four year college degree, now it’s a five year college degree to come up with a masters*

[degree], which is pretty cool. And then you have to take a certification exam after, but it wasn’t that difficult because you went for four or five years of college before preparing for it.

I was there for 15 years as the athletic trainer. But I live in Stamford so I wanted to work closer to home.

(WW): How has your experience been so far?

(SG): *It’s been great. It’s*

can’t find enough athletic trainers to cover all the other events.

(WW): Would you agree that the higher standards for athletic trainers have been detrimental?

(SG): *Yeah, I think over*

(WW): Do you think that athletic trainers are being poached by other industries and school districts?

(SG): *It’s a big thing now. People are realizing again how important athletic [trainers] are, not just in the sports world, but in the industrial world. For example, [in] Amazon warehouses where people are picking up big boxes all day long, people get hurt. So, Amazon is employing athletic trainers. [Trainers] can help them learn how to live correctly, they can help them through injuries better. So there’s a big demand in the industrial world as well now.*

Luckily, Westhill does not need to worry about losing Glucksman any time soon.

(WW): Have you been tempted to leave Westhill? If so, what factors have persuaded you to do so?

(SG): *Yeah, there’s a lot of demand out there and obviously that’s why I came here. But no, at this point obviously this is where I want to be. That’s why I came to Westhill. I’m a Stamford guy, so this is where I hope to make my future residence.*

As the demand for athletic trainers rises for not only sports but in industrial settings as well, trainers like Glucksman are in the center of an issue pivotal to high school athletics across Connecticut. Where the state goes from here will have lasting ramifications across Connecticut for years to come.



THE VITAL ROLE OF ATHLETIC TRAINERS: Athletic trainers can work in a variety of settings, ranging from a high school soccer field to the courtside medical team of a professional league. Photo from Professional Physical Therapy.

Finding a properly licensed athletic trainer seems to be getting harder in recent years. Increased competition from more affluent suburban schools with bigger athletic budgets have led to a shortage in urban schools like Stamford High and Westhill, according to reports by the Stamford Advocate.

(WW): So why Westhill?

(SG): *I came from Ridgefield High School,*

been obviously helping. You don’t know anybody, so we start to learn people as you go.

(WW): How has the current situation regarding athletic trainers affected you?

(SG): *[The situation] makes it so, a lot of times in the winter, there’s basketball and hockey at the same time. And so sometimes we have to hire a paramedic or an EMT to cover because you*

time there’s been a lot more like obviously there’s always been a demand for it. but I, there’s a lot more notoriety, especially after what happened to the football player for the Bills a couple years ago where the athletic trainer was able to save him that people have a lot more realized how important and like something very bad can happen very quickly and you need somebody trained there immediately just in case.”

The Monaco Curse is Officially Broken: Charles Leclerc Wins the Monaco Grand Prix

Mritika Omkumar
Reporter



THE MONEGASQUAN CURSE: In the last 92 years, a driver from Monaco has never won the Grand Prix in their own country. On May 26th, 2024, 26 year old Charles Leclerc lifted the curse with his historic victory, leaving Australia's Oscar Piastri in second place and Spain's Carlos Sainz Jr. in third behind him. Pictured above is one of the cars that Leclerc has used in the past as a part of the Perma Power Team when he was still a Formula 2 driver in 2017. Donning the #1 on his car foreshadowed his future success as being the first Monegasquan driver to win the Grand Prix in almost a century.

Formula 1 is one of the most watched racing sports in the world. Ten teams participate in the sport, each having two drivers, a team principal, and a series of engineers and mechanics that allow the drivers to maintain quick pit stops and super fast cars. The ten teams participating in the 2024 Formula One season are Red Bull Racing, Ferrar

ri, Mercedes-AMG Petronas, McLaren, Alpine, Aston Martin, Williams, Haas, AlphaTauri (Racing Bulls), and Kick Sauber. The countries that participate in F1 racing are known for their unique tracks and turns, including Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Australia, Japan, China, United States (Miami, Austin Las Vegas), Italy (Emilia

Romagna, Monza), Monaco, Canada, Spain, Austria, United Kingdom, Hungary, Belgium, Netherlands, Azerbaijan, Singapore, Mexico, Brazil, Qatar, and United Arab Emirates (Abu Dhabi).

The history of Grand Prix racing is a rich tapestry of legendary circuits, iconic drivers, and unforgettable moments.

"Each race has its own track that makes watching the Grand Prix that much more interesting," Niko Mischkulnig ('26) said.

From the inaugural French Grand Prix in 1906, which set the stage for modern motorsport, to the prestigious Monaco Grand Prix, held on the narrow, winding streets of Monte Carlo since 1929, each race has its own charm and significance. The Italian Grand Prix at Monza, known for its high-speed straightaways, and the British Grand Prix at Silverstone, where Formula One began its World Championship journey in 1950, are pivotal tracks of the racing calendar. These events are not just races; they are enduring traditions that celebrate the heritage and evolution of motorsport.

As said before, the Monaco Grand Prix is known for its historic track—the streets of Monte Carlo are known to be narrow and hard for overtaking other racers. However, the Monaco GP is known for another reason as well — the Monegasquan "curse". In over 92 years, no racer of Monegasque nationality has won the Monaco Grand Prix. Charles Leclerc, a Monegasquan racer for Ferrari, is one to have felt this curse.

"It may sound superstitious, but there's no way that it's a coincidence," Saksham Behl ('26) said.

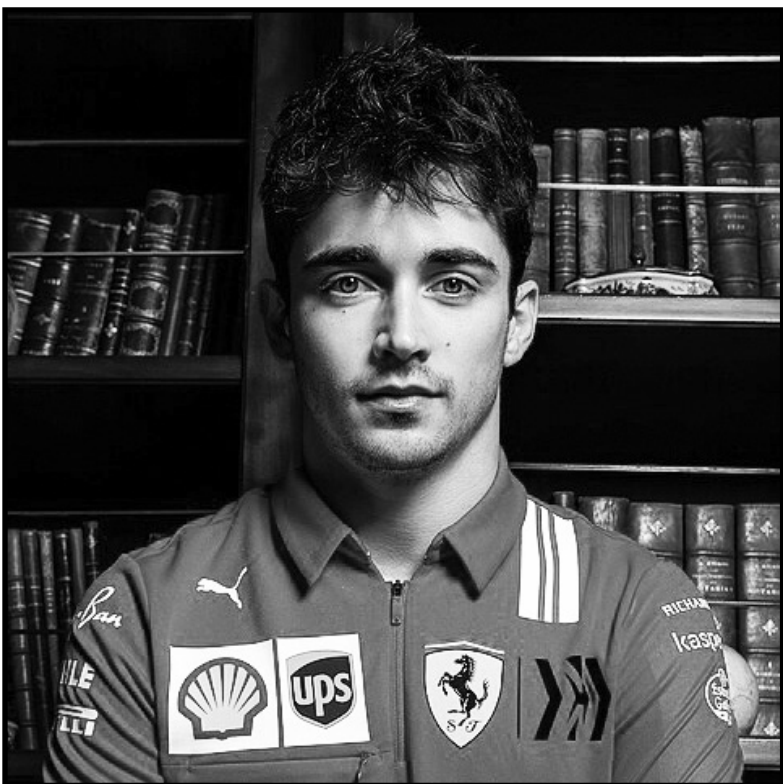
Despite his talent and promising starts, Leclerc has faced a series of unfortunate events at his home race. Mechanical failures, crashes, and strategic errors have plagued his attempts to secure victory on the streets of Monte Carlo. This "curse" has added a dramatic and emotional layer to the race, as fans eagerly watch to see if and when Leclerc will finally overcome these challenges and win his home Grand Prix.

Ferrari fans as well as Leclerc fans celebrated the

historic win on May 26th, 2024. The Monegasquan claimed the title after 92 years of the "curse."

"I'm so happy for him, he really deserves this," Keeran Giritharan ('26) said.

Leclerc's victory was monumental for several reasons. It ended Ferrari's long winless streak, reminding the world of the team's rich heritage and potential. For Leclerc, it was a validation of his talent and perseverance, marking his place among the sport's elite. The historical win also began a new chapter for the younger racer as well as Ferrari fans. Leclerc's victory in Monaco is more than just a highlight of the 2024 season. It represents a new era for Ferrari, with a young driver paving the path to greatness. As the team celebrated in Monaco, there was a renewed sense of optimism and belief that Ferrari could once again dominate the pinnacle of motorsport. This historic win has set the stage for what promises to be an exciting and competitive season ahead, with Charles Leclerc at the forefront, driving the "Prancing Horse" back to its former glory.



CHARLES LELERC: As of the time of this publication, Charles Leclerc stands at #2 in the 2024 F1 rankings out of all drivers. Leclerc is a Ferrari driver, sponsored by large companies such as Shell, UPS, Puma, and more. Photo by Gilzabase.

2024 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games set to be held in Paris, France

Alexa Martinez Aguilar
Staff Writer

The Olympics and Paralympic Games will be returning this year hosted in Paris, France. This will be the third time the games have been held in Paris. Over 100 different countries will be competing in winning for gold, silver, and bronze medals.

There has been a special change with this year's medals. Each medal will contain a piece that was once of the Eiffel Tower, a symbol of France.

"What's impactful for this year will be having a part of the original Eiffel Tower metal, the iron, in these

various medals, and so this is what we wanted to do, to infuse all these 2024 athletes with that metal." Tony Estanguet, President of the Paris 2024 Organising Committee said.

The Olympics Advisory Group has planned the opening ceremony to be set not only in a stadium, but to sail athletes on a parade of boats across the Seine River shining a view of the Eiffel Tower. After the parade, viewers and spectators will see the lighting of the cauldron with the Olympic Torch to officially begin the



THE 2024 OLYMPICS will feature athletes such as Nathan Chen for figure skating, Shelley-Ann Fraser-Pryce for track and field, and Nelly Korda for golf. Image from Creative Commons.

games and two weeks later to be extinguished. The Summer Olympics will be held from July 26th to August 11th, 2024.

The Olympics have announced around 10,000 athletes will be competing in several areas of sports. Sports like beach volleyball, wrestling, fencing, skateboarding, and basketball will be played near famous landmarks such as Les Yvelines, Hôtel de Ville, Trocadéro, and Place de la Concorde. Some games like water polo, hockey, climbing, and rowing will be required to play outside of the capital of France. The Olympics Committee has added a new sport making its full debut called "Breaking," commonly known as Breakdancing. Breakdancing originated from New York during the 1970's. African Americans and Latinos

began to increase the popularity of the dance competing in dance battles out in public. Breaking will be split into two events, where 16 B-Boys and 16 G-Girls will compete in solo battles showing off their impressive and cool moves.

The cauldron will be rekindled and celebrated with a new flame at the opening ceremony of The Paralympic Games on August 28, 2024. Over 4,000 Paralympians will play 20 sports, raising awareness for individuals with disabilities and giving them a chance to shine and show off their extraordinary athletic abilities. It has been said to be among the largest sporting events in the world.

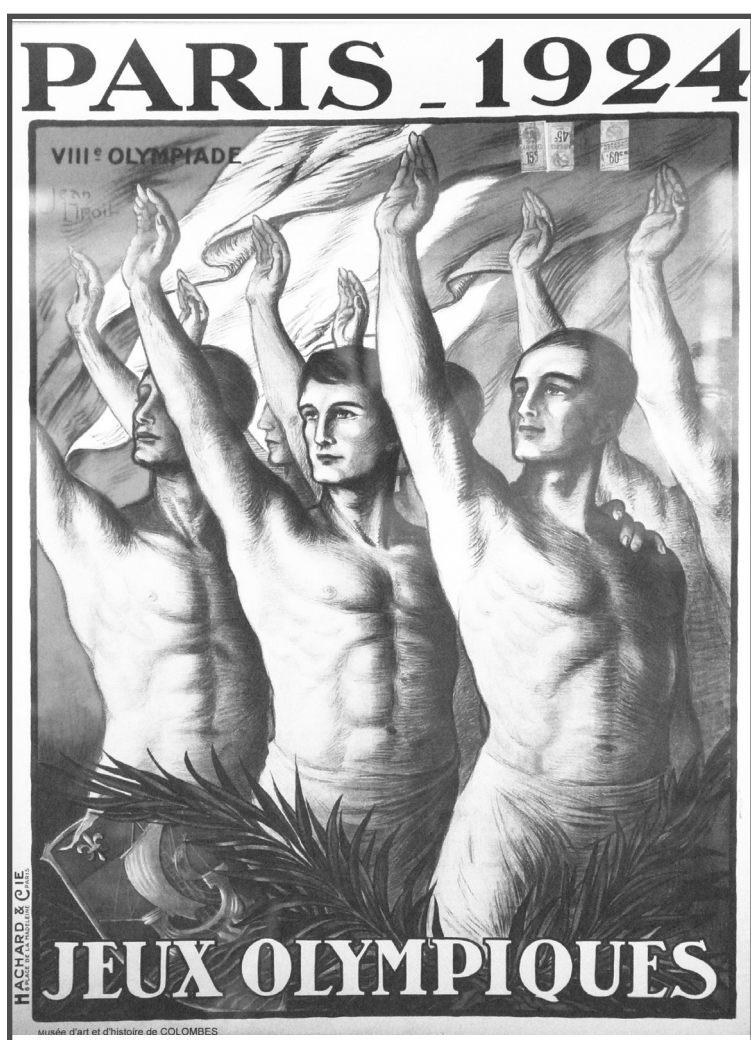
Many viewers at home are expressing how excited they are to

see the Olympic games over summer break.

"After seeing the last Olympic games, I've been motivated to start playing soccer again." Rachel Najera ('25) said. Some others are excited to see their favorite athlete again.

"I heard that Simone Biles will be competing again this year, she's my favorite athlete." Natalie Sandoval ('25) said.

The Olympics and Paralympics are genuinely inspiring and fascinating games that show nations around the world their amazing skills and sportsmanship. This will be one of the most awaited sporting events to see this summer.



1924 PROMOTIONAL POSTER: Paris hosted the Olympics twice before, once in 1900 and once in 1924. This is the first time in a century that the French capital will be hosting the games. Image from Wikipedia Commons

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