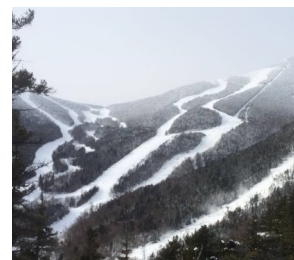


# BEHIND THE WALL



## WCS Spelling Bee

By: Blake Liberi

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Westport Spelling Bee	1
Environmentalist Victory	1&2
Yoga Prodigee	2
Mountain Report	3
Winter Blues	4
Technology	4
Senior Acceptances	5
Westport Yacht Club	6

### Special points of interest:

- Learn who the top spellers are in grades 4-8
- Annette Stephens wins a grant for a new water fountain
- Ms. Zurshmit informs us of her background in Yoga
- An Olympic edition Mountain Report
- What to do about the Winter Blues
- What to know about technology and how it effects us
- Where our seniors have been accepted thus far, and who has committed
- Insider info on the Westport Yacht Club



Westport Central's 2nd Annual 4th-8th grade Spelling Bee commenced on January 10th, and our winners were informed that they will be sent to Peru Junior/Senior High School for Regionals.

For Westport, we have 5 representatives, with 5 alternates ranging from 4th grade to 8th grade. In 4th grade, Jane Kimball took 1st place, while Phineas Turner will serve as the 4th grade alternate, as he came in second. Sofie

Fiegl earned 1st place for 5th grade, while Luna Van Deusen came sec-



ond, and will be Sofie's alternate. First place in 6th grade was won by Annalie Hammond, while Gabrielle Mazzotte came in second. Moving

into the middle school, Abbey Schwoebel took 1st in 7th grade, with her alternate being Grace

Reynolds. And finally, 8th grade was won by Ruby Feinbloom, and Rachel Storey will be her alternate. Regionals, held on March 12th, will consist of three oral rounds, and one written round. Anyone completing over

80% of those words will move on. After that, students will spell words until there is one student left. That one student will move on to the Scripps National Spelling Bee in

## Environmentalist Victory

By: Maggie Ploufe

Annette Stephens has accomplished a huge project for our school, in an attempt to positively improve our effects on the environment. Not only did she help her team create and initiate a Climate Action Plan in our school, but she also put an immense amount of time and effort writing a thorough application to win the one thousand

dollar "Wild Center Mini-Grant" for our school.

The main goal of the Climate Action Plan is to make Westport school more eco-friendly by improving waste management by implementing composting methods, encouraging students and staff to recycle, and encouraging the use of reusable water bottles as op-



Annette Stephens

***“In doing these things, along with remembering to always reduce, reuse, and recycle our waste, we can together help make our school more eco-friendly and create a healthier environment to study in.”***

## Environmentalist Victory (continued)

**By: Maggie Ploufe**

posed to plastic water bottles. In an interview, Annette explained that the “grant will be used to install a new water fountain in either the cafeteria or the gym, which will be the same type of self-filling water fountain as the one that has already been installed in the downstairs elementary hallway”. Keeping that in mind, Youth Climate Summit team (Annette Stephens, Patrick Fair, Lawrence Lobdell, and Carter Smith) came up with an idea to utilize the water fountains for an eco-friendly project.

In order to solve the plastic water bottle problem, they designed a strategic system

where there would be a bin of plastic reusable cups next to every water fountain for students and teachers to use as they please, or if they just happened to forget their own water bottle. The \$50 plastic cups were funded by money that was won by the team at the Youth Climate Summit. This system would aid in reducing waste, and also eliminate the amount of time missed by students who ask to get up to get a drink during class. To ensure sanitation, there would be bins labeled “clean” and “dirty” to separate the cups, and they would be washed by the cafeteria staff in the cafeteria.

How can we, as students and members of the school, help this project become successful? Annette says that once this project gets off the ground, students and faculty can help take action by: “Giving it a chance to work; as in trying it and being positive about it, using the cups and water fountains responsibly, and for teachers to help make sure that everyone is respecting the property.” In doing these things, along with remembering to always reduce, reuse, and recycle our waste, we can together help make our school more eco-friendly and create a healthier environment to study

## A Yoga Prodigy Among Us

**By: Hudson Stephens**

Ms. Zurschmit, a Syracuse native and graduate of SUNY Nazareth, provided us with detailed information on her somewhat sinuous background in yoga. Ms. Zurschmit’s interest in yoga was aroused in college after suffering an injury while playing soccer. She attended yoga sessions as a form of rehab and found it extremely helpful. Her career as a teacher began in Boston where she taught classes for about 5 years or so before travelling to Fiji and further immersing herself in the unique world of Yoga. She met some of her favorite instructors and mentors in Fiji, and continues to use techniques acquired from

her time there. Currently, Ms. Zurschmit teaches children’s yoga classes in Plattsburgh with students as young as 3 years old. She says that she’s begun to teach some adult courses but prefers to work with the younger crowd.

Ms. Zurschmit explained that on top of the physical gains, such as flexibility and stereotypical strength, yoga can help one cope and manage stress, as well as practice and learn mindfulness. She is an advocate for the integration of yoga into younger people’s lives, exclaiming that she wished someone had introduced it to her when she was in high

school. Ms. Zurschmit is excited that there is interest in Westport, and revealed that she’s already done work with the 7th and 11th grade. An unconfirmed rumor even suggested that she would be working with the juniors to help reduce stress levels every Friday for the rest of the year. She also added that there are many unique styles of yoga, it’s not one size fits all, so there is something for everyone. Whether you could use some exercise, are feeling overwhelmed, need an outlet to help you navigate your busy world, or are just plain curious, there is no wrong reason



*Speech Pathologist - Ms. Emily Zurschmit*

# Mountain Report (*Olympic Edition*)

By: Peter Vaiciulis

"You see the snow on Whiteface?"

"You bet I did" -McKenzie Stephens to PDV

This year's Westport Youth Commission ski and ride program has started off with a bang! Just this Sunday I, and many other snowboard and ski savants, arose in the wee hours of the morn to hopefully catch a ride to Whiteface Mountain, situated within an hour of the heart of Lake Placid.

Whiteface Ski resort in Wilmington was home of the 1932 and 1980 Winter Olympics events like downhill skiing and slalom. Lake Placid was also one of the first US cities to be host of the Olympics at least two times. The 1980 Olympic games are very special in the hearts of many, because this was when the "Miracle on Ice" took place.

The Miracle on Ice was an ice-hockey match between the Soviet Union and the United States during one of the later rounds in the tournament. To understand the match a little better, you need to get a hold of the Soviet's history as an ice hockey team. Of the last six Olympics, they won five gold medals. Russia's team was comprised of extremely talented players, who were mostly professional and full of experience. They were immensely favored to win the gold medal at Lake Plac-

id. The US team was made up of only amateur players, who were great players undoubtedly, but lacked the experience and training of their Soviet enemies.

Despite these and other overwhelming odds against them, USA defeated them late in the third and final period. It was an immense feat of athletic determination and is still a celebrated event today. It was not only a classic underdog tale, but was significant because the match was increasingly



heated by the Cold War.

But I digress.

The WYC (Westport Youth Commission) has thus far made two journeys to the base of Whiteface. This year is a very different year for the organization from last year. I boarded the bus around 7:30 on both days, which is quite earlier than the scheduled 8:00 departure time, so there were few on board besides myself.

However, as 8:00 approached, younger children with ages between five and fifteen began to fill the bus at, what was to me, an alarming rate.

By the time the last people boarded the bus, I do not believe it would be incorrect to guess that there were



A packed Westport Youth Commission ski bus indicates the success of the program

around forty people on board. This was a huge improvement over last year, when there were often fewer than ten people riding at once.

In my opinion, we are fortunate to live so close to a very prestigious ski-resort such as Whiteface Mountain. I am very glad to see that younger kids are taking the risk to experience something as dangerous, different, and absolutely delighting as snowboarding or skiing.

***"By the time the last people boarded the bus, I do not believe it would be incorrect to guess that there were around forty people on board."***



Young Westport shredders take to the mountain

***“From a more scientific viewpoint exercising, eating healthy and even listening to music have been scientifically proven to significantly increase overall happiness.”***

## Winter Blues

**By: Annette Stephens**

The “winter blues” are not uncommon at this time of year especially in this part of the world where, whether Punxsutawney Phil sees his shadow or not, winter seems to drag on forever. Sick season is in full swing, the temperature consistently resides below freezing, and basketball season drones on and on. Dealing with other people grows more difficult, daily activities lack excitement, and instead of getting excited about the things you normally look forward to, they seem like chores. While hitting snooze on your alarm clock eight times in the morning, or ignoring the homework given to you seems like the only way to get to the weekend, change your routine and you may find more luck in being your best self. While current life

may seem drab, do not lose hope! There are ways to get out of that mid-winter funk. Try getting out more if you are one to normally stay in. Go to a basketball game, for a skate on the Ballard rink, or visit Benji at Jambs. From a more scientific viewpoint exercising, eating healthy and even listening to music have been scientifically proven to significantly increase overall happiness. Another factor contributing to your winter blues is a lack of Vitamin D. While the frigid temperatures make getting that much needed sunlight difficult, simply opening up the blinds or working in bright environments can make you feel better. Another one of the major symptoms is a general feeling of discontent. Helping others will make

you feel better about yourself and can relieve some of your blues. If the temperature, the salt on the roads, or the snow is what’s getting you down, the most effective solution is to embrace it. Once you stop resisting it, you will enjoy it more. Everytime you complain, try following the complaint with something corresponding that you are thankful for, and you will gain a more positive mindset, encouraging your friends and family to do the same will also increase happiness. In conclusion, instead of letting yourself get down during the long, depressing winter months, find ways to pick yourself up and you will see a major change in your mood.

## Technology Schmechnology

**By: Taylor Gough**

Children growing up in the 2000’s definitely didn’t experience the same pastime as today’s youngsters. Free time was spent on coloring books, creating endless fun with our imagination, board games, reading, playing outside and maybe calling a friend on the house phone. Now, kids spend a lot of their time staring at screens and letting phones and video games do the imagining for them. What has suddenly sparked the change of interests? With the world constantly changing styles and producing shiny new toys, the younger generation is bound to want to invest all of their attention towards them. An environment full of electronic screens

and devices differs greatly from the childhood most millennials experienced. All of this technology brings great entertainment and communication into the world, but it brings more than that to children at such a young age. Studies show that technology at a young age can impose both positive and negative impacts on a child. But how could something so magical and fun be harmful? Well, with how frequently people use TV’s, video games and the internet, their brains are being wired to rely on these gadgets to do all of the entertaining and doesn’t require the brain to put any

effort into thinking or using an imagination. They cause one to have fragmented attention, constantly forcing the brain to focus on something different and new. Yes, there are positive sides to electronic uses. Communication between on-the-go family members has never been more present with today’s highly regarded cell phones. Video games have been found to enhance reactions times, and they tend to improve visual and spatial capabilities of objects. However, this doesn’t change the fact that they wire brains to be less ready to thrive in the

world. Growing up within the ever-changing world of technology has impacted the way children now spend their free time. In order to heighten their minds and create a brain that is ready to take on the challenges the world gives them, children need to set down their phones and tablets, turn off the TV, and do an activity that doesn’t require a screen. Play a game, make a fort, read multiple books, start a garden, walk your pet, have class outside, and start using technology not as a pastime, but as a resource for knowledge.



# Seniors and Their Acceptances Thus Far

By: Victoria Cole and Kassidy Brack

Do you know what you're going to be doing in August? It's okay, most people don't know, but some of the seniors know exactly what they will be doing—packing and getting ready to head to college! It's always sad to see our friends go, but they are moving into more exciting adventures which will lead to amazing lives after their college experience. Some seniors have picked their college while others are either waiting or trying to choose the right one. This is not a definite list, but according to Mrs. Cross-Baker, it will be by the end of April. Here are the seniors and the colleges they've been accepted into so far:

Ellie Storey has been accepted to Hamilton College, located in Clinton, NY, and St. Lawrence University located in Canton, NY, but has chosen Hamilton.

Taylor Gough has been accepted to Stony Brook University located in Stony Brook, NY; Clarkson University, located in Potsdam, NY; SUNY Geneseo, located in Geneseo, NY, and SUNY Oneonta, located in Oneonta, NY.

Hannah Schwoebel has been accepted to St. Lawrence University, located in Canton, NY and LeMoyne located in Syracuse, NY.

Malynda Lobdell has been accepted to Southern Virginia, located in Buena Vista, VA; Plattsburgh State; Saint Rose; located in Albany, NY, and SUNY Fredonia, located in Fredonia NY, but has chosen Southern Virginia.

Abby Mero has been accepted to Plattsburgh State; the University of New England, located in Biddeford, Maine; Springfield College, located in Springfield, Massachu-

setts; and LeMoyne located in Syracuse, NY.

Lizzie Stephens has been accepted to Bishop's University, in Quebec, Canada, and Stony Brook University in Stony Brook, NY.

Kaleigh LaMotte, Riley Martin, and Kyle Conley have all been accepted to Clinton Community College.

Jeanette Staats has been accepted into SUNY Plattsburgh, and Paul Smith's College, located in Paul Smiths, NY.

Carter Smith and Craig Cumber are still waiting to hear back from their colleges.

After graduation, the seniors will be packing and getting ready to head to college! We wish all seniors good luck and we hope that all of you have great adventures in your next chapter in life.

***"Some seniors have picked their college while others are either waiting or still trying to choose the right one."***



# Westport Yacht Club to Reopen

By: Lizzie Stephens

*Behind the Wall recently received breaking news of the revival of the Westport Yacht Club, which will add to the blooming business success in Westport over the past year.*

Westport, NY, February 1, 2018...Westport native, Scott Brankman and wife, Emily Farnsworth-Brankman will re-open the Westport Yacht Club in May 2018. The restaurant, a long-time favorite of Lake Champlain boaters, locals and tourists, first opened as a private club and was transformed into a public restaurant in the 1980s. Since then it has been under several managements, and has been closed since August 2016.

Both Emily and Scott have family ties to Westport going back generations. They currently own and operate Braeburn Tavern in Saratoga Springs, NY and will open the family-friendly Yacht Club on

weekends beginning Mothers' Day, daily in late June, serving their signature American cuisine for lunch and dinner.

Prior to operating the Braeburn Tavern, Scott and Emily owned and operated Jack Tar in Marblehead, MA for 9 years. They bring decades of front and back-of-the-house experience with a unique focus on providing a warm, inviting and welcoming dining experience for all guests. The team will include three employees who have followed Emily and Scott from their original restaurant, to Saratoga and now to Westport. They will also be hiring 15-20 local employees.

Making the announcement, Farnsworth-Brankman commented, "We are so lucky to be coming home to the very special community where we both grew up. We plan to honor the Yacht Club's rich history while updating the

menu and ambiance. Westport is being constantly re-invigorated so providing a warm and friendly, delicious dining experience to locals, boaters and tourists is a natural fit!"

Chef Scott's seasonal menus specialize in American cuisine, drawing influences from his experiences in kitchens from Colorado to Boston to Southern California. Emily brings over 20 years of front-of-the-house experience to developing a creative drink menu and global wine list as well as managing a loyal team whose family-like dynamic provides uplifting service.

*Scott and Emily want to stress that the Yacht Club is family and kid friendly, and hope that business will boom both by land and lake. Check out their instagram, @braeburnsaratogasprings, and Facebook, Braeburn Tavern, to get a look into what is ahead. Be sure to stop by the Yacht Club this summer and support these revivalists while having a delicious meal on Lake Champlain.*

