

BEHIND THE WALL



The Boyfriend

By: Peter Vaiciulis

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Special points of interest:

- WCS students triumphantly perform *The Boyfriend*
- A propane spill causes an evacuation at WCS
- Lady Eagles make Section VII Title run
- WPTSO conducts another successful Volleyball Tournament
- Moriah to move up to Class C
- 39th Tanneberger Tournament Commences



Smell that in the air? It's the smell of spring, comrades, and along with flowers, green grass and warm temperatures we are treated to Westport's very own school play.

This year's play was considered an oddball by many who were unsure of its origins when it was first announced - "The Boyfriend" was its name and romantic comedy was its game.

The play revolves around a little town on the French Riviera, home to a girls' school headed by Madame Dubonnet. A young rich girl named Polly (Malynda Lobdell), is a student at the school who longs for love. She finds a delivery boy named Tony (Hudson Stephens) who seems to be after the same thing as her, and they plan to go to a dance together. In between then and the dance, Polly is misguided

to believe that Tony is a thief going after her wealth. She is distraught and feeling deceived, but is convinced to go to the dance anyway. While she is at the dance, feeling sullen as a mourning dove, Tony appears. It is

formance unfold in front of me. There were many points of interest such as the fact that the musical score was entirely played live by a pianist (Mrs. Mero). The stage crew this year also seemed to be utilizing new technology like headsets and

walkie-talkies, and eagle-eyed viewers even noticed a lot of similarity between this year's production and last year's "Grease". Westport seems to be following a trend of plays supporting the theme of identity.



then realized that Tony is not really a delivery boy, but in fact the son of a very wealthy family. Knowing that he is not a thief her feelings for Tony are liberated, and they dance.

I was among the throng of viewers on Saturday's show. At seven o'clock I began to watch the per-

The dimly-lit room was accompanied by bouts of laughter and moments of awe from the audience during the play. By the end of the performance, I was left with a feeling of deep satisfaction in my gut, and I hope that you who read this are filled with the same sensation.

Propane Spill Causes WCS Evacuation

By: Hudson Stephens

“A muffled confusion and somewhat controlled chaos ensued, as evacuees struggled to understand the seriousness of the situation.”

On March 23, 2018 students and teachers alike headed for the exits after an emergency evacuation announcement was issued by Principal Joshua Meyer. A muffled confusion and somewhat controlled chaos ensued, as evacuees struggled to understand the seriousness of the situation. All anyone had been told was that the school was aware of the propane leak and that an evacuation was to take place. It could be assumed that the situation was not too dire, as we were encouraged to grab a jacket before leaving the building.

After filing outside, the entire student body patiently waited in the brisk March weather, hoping for some kind of answer to their questions, or better yet, news that would perhaps release them from school entirely. After a short time, we were ushered into the gymnasium, where we spent the next half hour huddled in small groups, with no idea what would come next. Student morale seemed high though, and after only a slightly inconvenient amount of time, Mr. Mey-

er appeared to address us all. After informing us that the building was completely safe, he explained that there was a minor propane leak that had been dealt with, but as a result, the heat would be turned off for the rest of the day. He also urged us not to use Mrs. Delong's staircase. This concluded our time as evacuees, as we were released shortly after the announcement, and the school day proceeded as per usual.



Varsity Basketball Season Wrap Up

By: Blake Liberi

BOYS VARSITY

Record: 10-10

Coach: Ike Tyler (Barry Morrison & Hokie McKinley)



Coming off of an unimpressive 5-14 season, the Boys' Varsity Westport Eagles were looking for some sort of improvement from last season. Their offense was led by 2 double-digit scorers. Senior, Riley Martin, averaged a double-double, dropping 14.2 points per game, and pulled down 11.0 rebounds, while sophomore, Blake Liberi, chipped in 10.2 points per game, and junior, Hudson Stephens, led the team in assists, averaging 3.1 assists per game.

In the first game of league play, they dropped a close game to Chazy, 56-52, while Riley Martin dropped a career-high 28 points. They then turned it around when they played them at home, where they won 49-37. Five of their 10 wins were won by

more than 20 points, showing their offensive dominance.

Going into Sectionals, they earned the 8th seed, which let them face off against Lake Placid, whom they beat three times before. They squeaked by, winning 47-36, and, deservedly so, proclaimed themselves the "Preliminary Champions." This, however, allowed them to go to Port Henry and face the #1 Class D Basketball team in the state-- The Moriah Vikings. This evidently put a halt to the Eagles season, giving them a 10-10 record.

GIRLS VARSITY

Record: 20-3

Coach: Bradley Rascoe (Ron Mitchell)



With a loaded senior class, this year's Girls' Varsity Westport Eagles had all the pieces in place for a State run. Coach Rascoe looked to end his Varsity Basketball coaching days on a high note, as did all the seniors. To start off the season, they faced a bolstered Moriah Vikings squad who proved

to the Lady Eagles squad that there was some competition in their section. They played Moriah a second time, where they lost once more, but was still a night to remember. Hannah Schwoebel, 2017 MVAC League MVP, scored her 1000th point in the loss.

In their first Sectional matchup, they easily went by Lake Placid to advance to the semi-finals, to face off against the Bolton Eagles. Last year, Bolton was responsible for taking our Eagles out of Sectionals. This year was different, as our Lady Eagles defeated the other Eagles, beating them for a 3rd time this year. The Sectional Final was where they met the Moriah Lady Vikings for the

Our Lady Eagles ended their season undefeated in conference play, overall MVAC champions, and Section VII runner-up.

third time in the season. While it was a close game all the way through, Moriah went on a run early in the 4th quarter, and our Eagles never came back. This was not the end our Lady Eagles hoped for, but they ended the season MVAC League Champions, Section VII Runner-Up, and with a record of 20-3.

“The students are willing to try different foods that we offer, and they let us know how they feel about different things.”

What’s Cookin’

By: Annette Stephens

In my time as a student at Westport Central, the cafeteria has improved an astonishing amount. There have been many different people in the kitchen over that last 10 years, but the cafeteria crew really seems to have peaked in these past couple of years. Now, teamed with the Westport Wellness Committee, the cafeteria game seems to be stronger than ever. The Wellness Committee was restarted this year, after dying out several years back; it consists of parents, teachers, the cafeteria manager, and student representatives who get together and chat about healthy options for WCS. In an interview

with cafeteria manager Tricia Fields, I gained insight on what’s happening in the kitchen.

While in my time at Westport, I have seen the cafeteria switch from serving “empty carbs” to balanced colorful meals, and more homemade treats and appealing produce. In Fields’ time, she has been a part of the changes in what’s being served for breakfast and lunch; there are more healthy options and more things made from scratch. What some people may not know, when they are judging the cafeteria food, is that there are requirements on the food that is served.

Some of these include using whole grain foods, serving low fat meals, and using minimal amounts of salt. When asked what she was proud of in the cafeteria, Fields replied, “The students are willing to try different foods that we offer, and they let us know how they feel about different things.” She would also like people to know that eating healthy is important as it makes for a productive day and keeps your body going. Overall, the goal of the cafeteria and Wellness Committee is to get students to be healthy, which is certainly being aided by the cafeteria crew’s hard work and care for the Westport students.

“Players flocked from near and far to compete in the annual event, although only one team of six can take home the double you.”

WPTSO Volleyball Tourney

By: Peter Vaiciulis

The WPTSO volleyball tournament commenced on the ninth of March and was nothing short of a home-run. Players flocked from near and far to compete in the annual event, although only one team of six can take home the W.

I can attest to the highly

competitive nature of the tournament, as I myself was on a team. From the very beginning I was somewhat struck by the graceful athleticism on show during that wonderful evening. On my team were seniors Taylor Gough, Hannah Schwobel, Ellie Storey, and Casey Halloran, and sopho-

more Blake Liberi. We finished fourth.

The WPTSO, short for “Westport Parent Teacher Student Organization”, is a great cause, among the best. The organization provides a lot for the community, including scholarships and awards for those who participate in sports. Go WPTSO!



Moriah to Move Up to C; The End of a Rivalry?

By: Maggie Plouffe

The Moriah Vikings have made their presence known across New York State and have established their dominance over the past five years in girl's soccer and basketball by winning a grand total of five Section VII Championships, two Regional Championships, and making two appearances in the NY State Final Four Tournaments in basketball alone. In soccer they have accomplished one Section VII Championship win, one regional win, and one Final Four appearance.

Despite their prestigious athletic reputation and their above average Class D school size, our Lady Eagles are known to have been one of the biggest obstacles for

the Lady Vikings.

Their boys don't disappoint either, as they have been named Section VII Champions, as well as Regional Champions for five consecutive years, while also making five Final Four appearances and three State Championship appearances. Not to mention, in 2017 the boys also remarkably won the State Championship.

The numerous down-to-the wire games, such as this year's soccer and basketball Sectional Championships, as well as some passive-aggressive social media posts, have fueled a heated rivalry that has lasted for awhile now... But will soon be cooled down as Moriah is to be moving next year to

where they belong--Class C. Their main gig has been to jump up a league and play bigger schools in the CVAC, and then drop down to play smaller schools in Class D Sectionals.

Being a large D school has its perks as you can see, but next year might just be a reality check for the Vikings as they then will be playing schools closer to them in size. This change allows other Section VII schools to step up to the plate and take a rival position to our fierce Lady Eagles. Next year we will see who has what it takes to match Westport's athletic ability, and this change in Moriah's class has people all over asking: Who will it be?



State Testing

By: Kassidy Brack

New York State exams in English and math are given in third through eighth grades. New York State also gives exams in science in fourth and eighth grades. Parents may have their student refuse to take the tests by sending in a note or emailing the teacher giving the state test. Students who refuse will go to the auditorium to read; they may not complete any classwork during this time. The ELA exams will be given April 11th and 12th, with the math exams being administered on May 1st and 2nd. The

science tests will be given later in the spring.

There are both positives and negatives to all state tests. Some positives are they help parents see where their child is having trouble, and they can help them work on these skills. The tests also show teachers what areas students need to be taught more to understand the subject better, and it evaluates the students to see how well they're doing in each subject.

Some of the negatives about

State tests are students can get stressed out when they have to take the tests; the exam evaluates the students without bringing other things into consideration such as test-taking anxiety, stress, or the inability to sit for a long period of time on tests. The exam doesn't show how much some students have grown in their weak area and how much more they understand. It only tests some skills like math, reading, writing, and science, and doesn't show other skills like creativity, motivation, and cooperation.

What to Know About the Merger

By: Victoria Cole

. *Note: These are facts from the merger meetings. This is NOT opinion based.

- The Merger Study: It provides information for school district officials, the communities, and the Commissioner on enrollments, staffing, program, transportation, facilities, and finances; it is facilitated by consultants; is overseen by the school/community advisory committee of twenty people; report is the responsibility of the consultants; and both Boards of Education decide how to proceed with the final study.
- Purpose of the Merger study: to paint a clear picture of each district so that its neighbor has a good understanding of the assets and liabilities it brings to the merger; and to develop a set of recommendations for the new board of education to consider regarding district organization, staffing, finances, transportation, and educational programming should a merger occur.
- The grade level organization at the start of the merged district could feature both of the school buildings housing elementary grades, Westport's campus housing grades 7 and 8, and Elizabethtown-Lewis' campus housing grades 9-12. Both campuses could also continue functioning as community centers as a feature of the merged district.
- The State aid ratio of the merged district would be roughly 90% on State-approved expenditures for voter-approved renovations, modernization, and repairs to existing facilities, along with any new school facility that might be approved by voters and constructed during the first ten years of the merged district.
- In June 2018, a merger study report is to be submitted by the consulting firm to the State Education Department, as per State regulations. In August 2018, the merger study report is to be presented by the consulting firm to the Westport school board and the Elizabethtown-Lewis school board. And in September 2018, the two school boards will host information/discussion sessions for stakeholders.
- In October 2018, the Westport school board, and separately, the Elizabethtown-Lewis school board, have a public session discussion and school board members vote as to whether or not the merger study process should advance further to referenda voting by district residents. If one or both school boards do not vote in favor of submitting the question to a community referendum, the process is halted at this point in time. In November 2018, a preliminary advisory referendum is voted on by district residents at the Westport school district; and a separate preliminary advisory referendum is voted on by the district residents at the Elizabethtown-Lewis school district. If one or both communities do not vote in favor of continuing the process, this ends the merger process. And in January 2019, a final referendum is voted on by district residents at the Westport school district and a separate final referendum is voted on by district residents at the Elizabethtown-Lewis school district. If one or both communities do not approve the final and binding referendum, the merger will not occur.
- Why consider reorganization? It may increase course offerings for students; upgrade facilities and equipment; more cost effective administrative structure; eliminate duplication of facilities, equipment, and staff; consolidate and coordinate support functions; and it may reduce taxes.

- Why might reorganization be difficult? Fear of losing local identity; perception that the communities are incompatible; uncertainty over board representation; less personal attention for students; busing time for some students will be increased; fear of losing job security by employees; and natural resistance to change.
- Timeline for the study/merger (draft-final timeline from SED): In May, 2017, the boards meet to begin study process; In April, 2018, the study will be completed; In June, 2018, the study reviewed by S.E.D.; In August, 2018, the study is presented to boards; In September, 2018, public information and discussion; In October, 2018, the boards decide to go forth; In November, 2018, the advisory referendum; In January, 2019, the final referendum; In April, 2019, voting for new board members; In May, 2019, the budget vote occurs; and on July 1st, 2019, the new district begins operation.
- How they will inform the public: district newsletters; newspaper articles; district websites; notes from advisory committee meetings; PowerPoint presentations from advisory committee meetings for observation and limited comment only; and joint press releases.
- Recommendations in the report: It will benefit student learning; will be sensitive to the unique cultural contexts of the school districts; will be independent of special interest groups; will be educationally sound; will be fiscally responsible and realistic; and will not recommend whether or not a merger should occur.
- Expectations of committee members: attend all committee meetings; freely express their points of view; be a key communicator with stakeholder groups; be respectful of the committee and the study process; and be a positive contributing member in other related committee activities.
- Scope of the study: Use data to provide objective information on: adding classes; reducing the staff; creating building configurations by grade level; adding bus runs/drivers; calculating potential staffing savings; and assessing financial impact of the merger. Outside the study scope: Making decisions for the merged district: name, colors, or mascot for the new district; identifying classes to be added/staff reduced; developing bus routes with stops; deciding when staff savings might be realized; and deciding how financial decisions will be made..

A Clap for a Gap

By: Taylor Gough

Life after high school can seem scary, especially once you're a senior. You may find it hard to decide what you want to do with your future, and going to college the next fall would just be too big of a step, or maybe you don't have an interest in college life yet. Gap years have become a popular way for post high school grads to take a year off and explore.

Whether it's traveling around the world, having a job, or participating in some type of program, gap years allow young adults time to figure out what they are really interested in and give the chance to grow as a person while stepping into the adult world.

Semester programs are fantastic for gap years, and, just

recently, a semester program has moved into our community. Westport's very own beloved summer camp, Camp Dudley, has now expanded its program introducing the "Dudley Gap Experience." Dudley, along with its sister-camp, Camp Kiniya, are summer camps that give boys and girls the opportunity to develop characteristics that will help (continued on page 8)

A Clap for a Gap (continued)

By: Taylor Gough

them to succeed in the real world. Tom McDonough, Gap Program Director, and Kat Nelson, Gap Instructor, lead the program and are very proud of what they've built. I had the opportunity to talk to Tom and Kat about their newly established program.

Tom said he first thought of the idea while on a backpacking trip with some high schoolers in Wyoming. He said he wanted to "create a program that would let students learn in different ways than they might in a typical classroom." He realized that gap years were something kids actually wanted to take advantage of.

Kat added, "As Gap years are becoming more common for students before or in college, we know we had a great opportunity to build a special program." They focused the program on core values used at camp: community,

character, leadership, and stewardship. During the semester, they take excursions through the Adirondacks, around the North Country, into Canada, through partnerships with NOLS and The Island School. The time that they spend in Westport is catered towards certain skills. "On the Dudley campus, we focus on learning things like cooking, farming and carpentry. We also learn about outdoor education by working with school groups." The program was, also, very involved with the community, including working with students, watching sports games, and contributing to the businesses within the town. "Our connections to Westport and to the Adirondacks were vital to the experience. We knew that having a sense of home here in town was going to be important, and looking back on the 2017 program, we could not have done it anywhere

else."

From the information I received, it seems like the first fall semester of the Gap program went swimmingly. Their hopes and expectations were exceeded, and they are already prepping for the Fall 2018 semester. Tom and Kat both feel thrilled for what the fall program brings, "We are excited to keep building on what we have created. We have seen that this program can work wonders, and we know that this program could not survive without the care and support of the community."

Dudley's Gap program is the perfect example of the amazing experiences and skills gap years offer young adults. If you're someone who's thinking about taking a gap year, I highly recommend looking into Dudley's program, and any other programs similar to it.

39th Annual Dr. Thomas Tanneberger Basketball Tournament

By: Lizzie Stephens

Year after year, Westport basketball alumni make the journey home to participate in the Dr. Thomas Tanneberger Alumni Basketball Tournament. The tournament began 39 years ago, in honor of Dr. Tom Tanneberger a young veterinarian, who tragically died in an accident. Tom was an excellent student and involved athlete. Proceeds from the basketball tournament, along with those of the memorial golf tournament in June, go to the Tom Tanneberger scholarship fund. A graduating

Westport senior who excels in academics as well as athletics is awarded a \$4000 scholarship. In addition, an alternate is awarded a \$500 scholarship.

The 39th annual tournament was held March 17th, and involved the traditional men's and women's games, along with the second annual "Legends" game. Schylar Kurth, a 2017 graduate, was the youngest player to take the court. With nearly 40 years on Kurth, Vern Lewis, who graduated from Westport in 1956, made an ap-

pearance in the Legends game, and even threw up a few shots. Players traveled to Westport from as far away as North Dakota to reconnect with alumni and play some friendly ball, all while raising money for a graduating senior.

Spread the word to any alumni friends that the Tanneberger golf tournament will take place at the Westport Country Club this year on June 8, 9 and 10. To learn more about the Tanneberger events or scholarships, visit tanneberger.org.