

# THE LANCELOT

A large crowd of students is gathered in bleachers, many wearing black hoodies with 'NHS' and 'SCHOOL' printed on them. They are clapping and looking up at a sky filled with falling confetti. A chain-link fence runs across the middle of the scene, and a metal railing is in the foreground. The overall atmosphere is festive and celebratory.

Volume 6  
Edition 2



# The Lancelot

Dear Readers,

Welcome to *The Lancelot's* second issue of the 2023-2024 school year! We are so excited to share our winter publication with you. We hope this edition will bring you comfort during these cold winter days!

Yana and Gracie spread holiday cheer by highlighting different holiday celebrations and winter themed drinks on Page 4-5!

Samara explores WHS students-New Years resolutions for the 2024 new year on pages 6-7.

On pages 8-9 Emma explores the psychological effects of hitting snooze while, Isabel explores the sophomore slump phenomenon.

Saeeda Samed gives a step by step guide to applying and achieving scholarships on pages 10-11.

Lauren Montanari explores the psychological effects of music on the human brain on pages 12-13.

Isabella and Zoey explore and review Taylor Swifts *Red* and *Drakes For All The Dogs* on pages 14-15.

Get to know WHS's Gardening, Dance, and CDA clubs on pages 16-17.

Learn all about two all star studnet athletes who are making an impact in Waterford. Get to know D2 softball commit Melanie Martin and world title holder Olivia Marelli.

Enjoy our annual Winter Sports preview on pages 20-21, highlighting the talented sports teams all stars this winter.

Aly explores cultural sensitivity around WHS and society on pages 26-27.

Learn how to stay informed on world events and a guide to the Israel-Pal-estine conflict on pages 28-29. Don't forget to test your current events knowledge with our quiz!

We hope you enjoy this edition of *The Lancelot*, and have an amazing winter. Until next edition...

Happy Reading!

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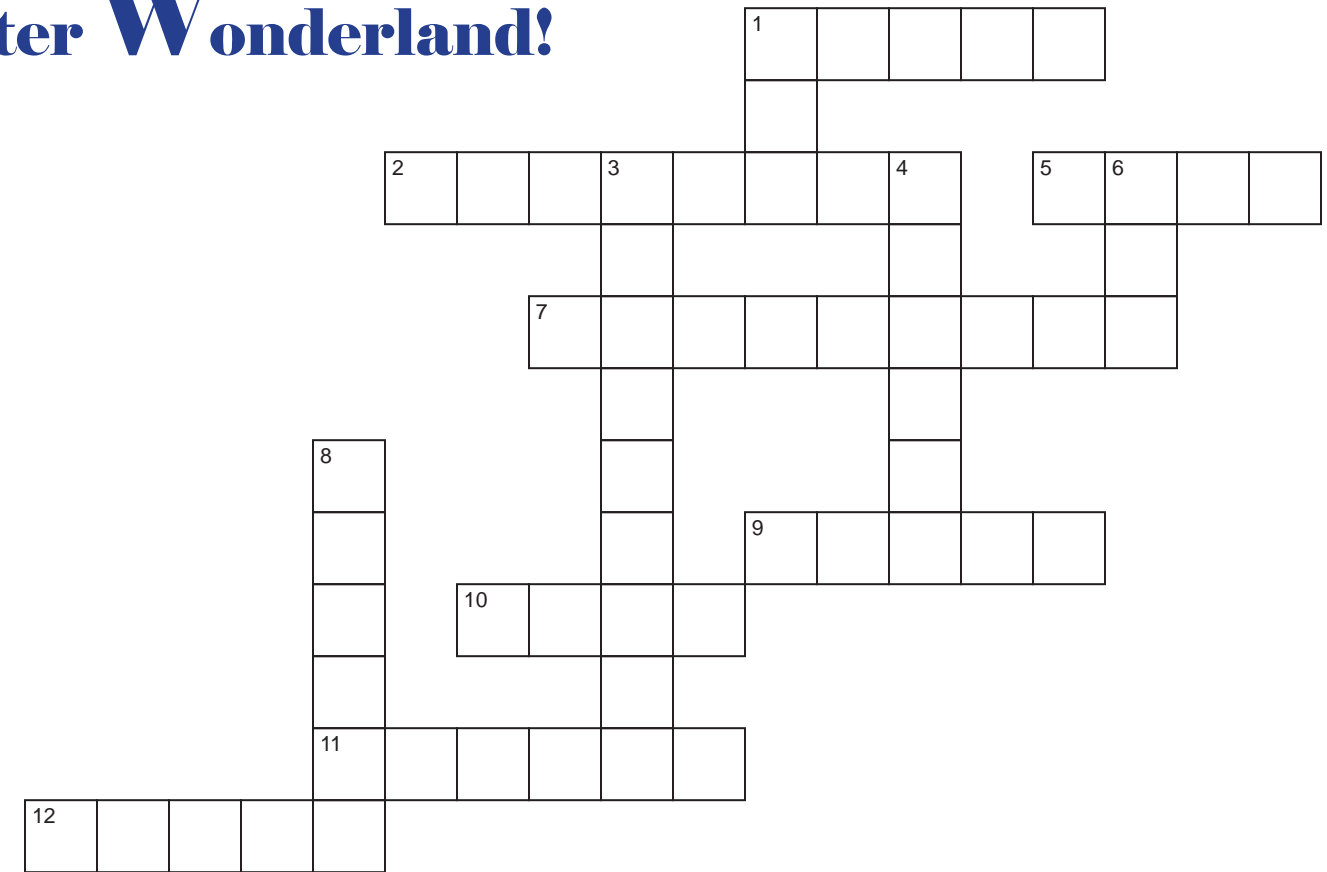
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# Winter Wonderland!



### Across

1. What jolly, bearded man delivers presents on Christmas Eve?
2. During this holiday season, what is hung from the chimney with care?
5. Sleigh bells \_\_\_\_\_!
7. Every \_\_\_\_\_ is unique!
9. Three \_\_\_\_\_ Day is on January 6, 2024!
10. The snowman from Frozen is named \_\_\_\_\_!
11. What shimmering decoration is often strung on Christmas trees and around the house?
12. What festive plant is associated with Christmas and is known for its prickly leaves?

### Down

1. The winter months are the perfect time to \_\_\_\_\_ the slopes!
3. What is a red and white minty treat?
4. On the fifth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me five \_\_\_\_\_ rings.
6. Be careful not to slip on black \_\_\_\_\_ this winter!
8. The snowman who came alive.

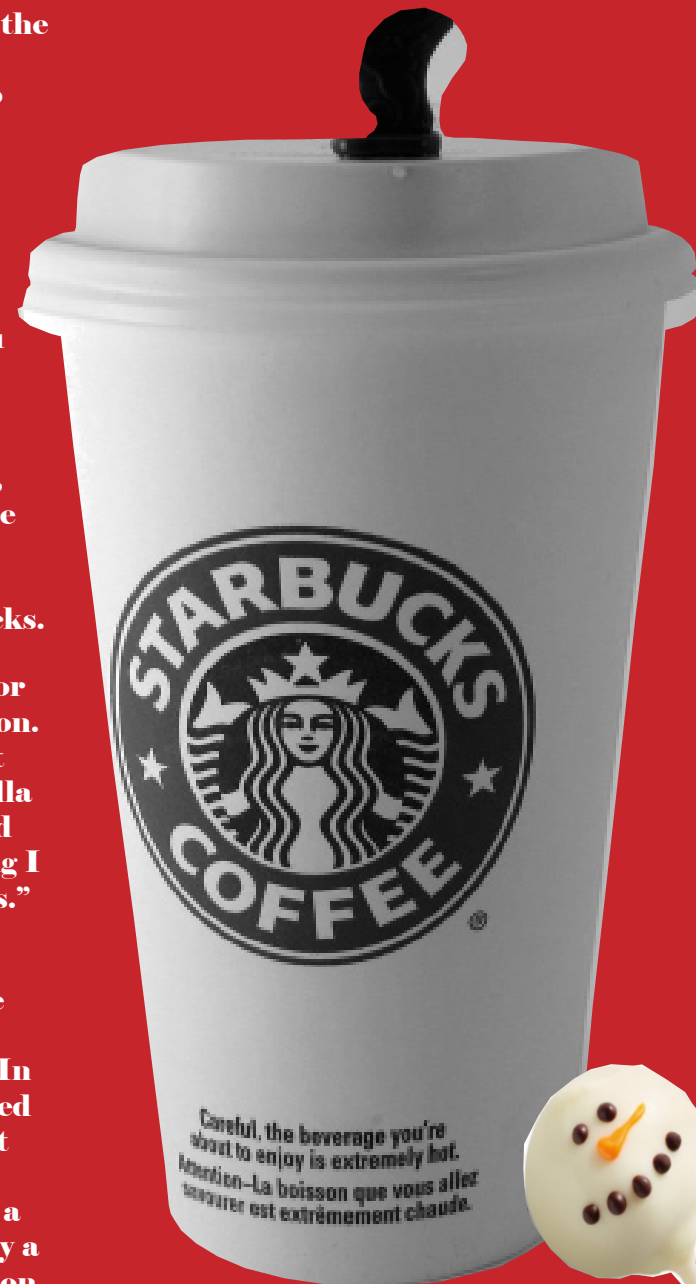
## Word Scramble

1. ELSTSOONIUR
- 2.OTPSYFI
3. HPSHSCLORSIA
4. LEETIDUY
5. AREGNGERDIB

(All the words are prominent words in articles)

# The Drop of The Holiday Drinks

By Gracie Bartelli



As of November 2 Starbucks has dropped their holiday drinks for the winter season. With some favorites returning, there is also a new drink being introduced to the menu. These drinks range from lattes, hot coffees, to non dairy drinks. There is something for everyone!

Not only did the holiday drinks come out, but new food items were also released. New to the menu is the chocolate pistachio swirl, while returning is the reindeer cake pop, sugar plum cheese danish, cranberry bliss bar and the snowman cookie. These seasonal favorites have people running to Starbucks.

Starbucks is also known for their customizable selection. Samara Holley says, "I get less oat milk and add vanilla sweet cream cold foam and instead of the spice topping I get the caramel brulee bits."

The holiday season brings extreme sale growth to the company. According to Starbucks management, "In 2019 the company exceeded all expectations in the first quarter and posted global revenues of \$6.63 billion, a number largely powered by a record-breaking \$4.6 billion in North American sales." These sales don't only come from drinks, they also come from the gift cards sold through the season.

The company added, "They attempted to do away with the Eggnog Latte several years ago, but brought it back due to customer demand." Although they did not earn the money they wished for, they listened to their customers.

## Drink List:

- Iced gingerbread oat milk latte
- Oleato gingerbread oat milk latte
- Peppermint mocha
- Iced sugar cookies almond milk latte
- Caramel brulee latte
- Chestnut praline latte



# Winter Holidays



Most winter holiday preparation is targeted towards those celebrating Christmas, although Hanukkah decorations are also accessible. Holidays like Yule, Diwali, and Kwanzaa get much less coverage. Kids are often taught about holidays from other cultures in elementary school, but they are rarely revisited. Here are some of the most celebrated winter holidays outside of Christmas.

## Yule (Dec 21 2023 - Jan 1 2024)

Yule is the Pagan holiday that many Christmas elements originated from. Although Christmas is very commonly celebrated and takes most of its traditions from Yule, not many people know about the original holiday. Yule is one of the oldest holidays and was started by hunters. There are many different Yule customs from all over the world, but generally the holiday is characterized by a hearty meal and joyous festivities.

## Hanukkah (Dec. 7-15 2023)

Hanukkah is the Jewish festival of lights celebrated in December. The holiday celebrates the Maccabees, Jewish warriors who fought to protect their religious beliefs when Antiochus IV took over their lands. In celebration of their victory, the Maccabees restored the temple of Jerusalem and burned oil at the new altar. The warriors only found a small jar of oil, one they would believe would only last a day. The oil, however, burned for eight days, inspiring the tradition of burning candles for eight nights. Hanukkah is a joyous festival, filled with gifts and games. Although not part of the original tradition, over the years it has become common for children to receive small gifts every night of Hanukkah.

## Diwali (Nov. 10-14 2023)

A festival celebrating the victory of light over darkness, Different religions such as Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism celebrate it differently, praying to various gods. The holiday is observed over a five day period with each day characterized by its own traditions.

## Chinese New Year (Feb. 10-24 2024)

Much like any celebration of a turn in the calendar year, the Chinese New Year is a celebration of saying goodbye to the old year and ushering in a prosperous new year. Families come together to celebrate and bright festivities are organized.

By Yana Abramova

# New Year New Me!!

By Samara Holley

When some people think of New Years resolutions, they say they are useless goals that you don't even really want to achieve. Others think it's a great way to organize themselves for the year and start off with a clean slate.

Not a lot of people actually achieve or follow through with the resolutions they've created. Some people may think you can feel a sense of clarity and accomplishment by having goals for the year and being able to follow through with them.

Everyone has their own interpretations of it, but what really are New Year's Resolutions? As the calendar turns to a new year, many of us find ourselves contemplating resolutions, promises to make positive changes in our lives. While New Year's resolutions are a common tradition for people of all ages, their impact on high schoolers can be particularly significant.

New Year's resolutions offer high schoolers an opportunity to set personal and academic goals. Whether it's improving grades, participating in extracurricular activities, or developing healthier habits, setting resolutions can create a sense of purpose and direction.

Learning to manage time effectively, prioritize tasks, and stay focused on goals are transferable skills that can contribute to success in both high school and beyond. Resolutions related to mental health, such as practicing mindfulness or reducing stress, can significantly impact the well-being of high school students. Sophomore Jessica Fielder says she has a lot of New Year's resolutions

for her mentality. "Remind myself that everyone makes mistakes and keep a positive mindset in 2024 and remember everything happens for a reason". Embracing the idea of New Year's resolutions encourages a growth mindset among high



schoolers. The belief that abilities and intelligence can be developed through dedication and hard work can empower students

to take on challenges, learn from failures, and persist in the face of obstacles. Athletes at the high school have resolutions set for themselves and not just about the sports they play. Sophomore Denatto Barnhill shares "My

new year's resolutions are to be a better person and become more understanding and I also want to make it big in sports and go D1 in football, hopefully



making it to the NFL one day". Freshman AJ Lowe states "I set resolutions for the next year because I have a dream of making it pro in basketball such as college, NBA, overseas etc". High schoolers set goals for what they want to do in life.

It's essential for students to set

realistic goals and recognize that setbacks are a natural part of the journey. A lot of high school students have future plans for after high school and individual paths for the new year.



Senior Aubri Girard says "my goals are to get settled into cosmetology school and get a job afford living in my own place" New Year's resolutions serve as a valuable tool for high schoolers to reflect on their aspirations and initiate positive changes.

By fostering goal-setting, self-discipline, and a growth mindset, resolutions can contribute to personal and academic success. As high schoolers embark on a new year, embracing the opportunity to set and pursue meaningful resolutions can pave the way for a fulfilling and transformative journey.



# Spotify Wrapped

BY NOLA GESSNER

Every year Spotify's annual tradition that shows users their most-played artist, songs, albums, podcasts, and how much time is spent listening all in a slideshow with bright colors and different designs.

Each user is excited to see who their top artist was and how many minutes were listened to. Here at Waterford High School, some of the most popular artists were: Drake, SZA, Taylor Swift, Kanye, and Tyler the Creator.

Leah Sanders was shocked to find that 16,414 minutes had been spent

listening to Taylor Swift. Her most listened to song by Taylor was, "August" and was listened to for 5,797 minutes. Jamaris Olivero also says Taylor was her top artist this year.

Samara Holly and Ethan Haynes say that their top artist was Drake. Samara finds that she had listen to Drake for 3,269 minutes, however Ethan says that his Spotify wrapped was "Messed up" Since he had listening to his other playlists, he says, "Its kinda ruined cause i've been listening to chiller music"

Among the big artists this year, Lacey Montanari says that her top

artist was Party Next Door. She said that she had spent 6,948 minutes on "Break from Toronto " and a total of 20,844 minutes listening overall.

Adrianna Caba spent a total of 32,436 minutes listening to SZA this year. One track was played the most in total of 3,829 minutes which was "Nobody Gets Me"

The release of Spotify wrapped is a fun way to end the year. It is interesting to see the differences in music taste here at Waterford High School.

## Guess The Teachers' Spotify Wrap

- |           |               |                             |
|-----------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. _____  | Mr. Ahlcrona  | A. Morgan Wallen            |
| 2. _____  | Ms. Lally     | B. Max Richter              |
| 3. _____  | Mr. Samuelson | C. Taylor Swift             |
| 4. _____  | Ms. Malhoit   | D. Flo Rida                 |
| 5. _____  | Ms. Batty     | E. Morgan Wallen            |
| 6. _____  | Ms. Pesko     | F. Gordon Lightfoot         |
| 7. _____  | Ms. Tessier   | G. Vampire Weekend          |
| 8. _____  | Ms. Prpich    | H. Florence and the Machine |
| 9. _____  | Mr. Ryan      | I. Jessie Reyez             |
| 10. _____ | Mr. Seltzer   | J. Patty Griffin            |
| 11. _____ | Mr. Silvestri | K. Taylor Swift             |

Answers: 1. G 2. H 3. A/E 4. I 5. C/K 6. B 7. J 8. A/E 9. C/K 10. F 11. D

Designed By: Evy N.

# SCHOLARSHIPS

WRITTEN BY SAEEDA SAMED

For the 2024 senior class, high school is coming to an end, fast. Post-secondary planning has now become the main concern for a large part of the senior class. Seniors are preoccupied with college applications, extracurriculars, and jobs. However, one thing that is not prioritized as much are scholarships.

Scholarships are grants or payments given towards college tuition that do not have to be paid back.

According to U.S. News, “The average tuition and fees at private ranked colleges has climbed by about 4% over the last year. At ranked public schools, tuition and fees rose 2% for in-state students and about 1.4% for out-of-staters” (Kerr). This general increase in college tuition has added to the stress and anxiety put on first-year college students.

For the first time at Waterford High School, a College and Career center was put on the first floor in room 105. The center was made to aid senior students on college applications, scholarships, or job opportunities. However, so far the center has been off to a slow start.

Lisa Sweeney, who was originally the school and career counselor and came to Waterford High School in Spring of 2021, was made in charge of the College and Career center this 2023-2024 school year. The center is open Monday to Thursday from 7:15-2:30.

Lisa Sweeney thinks that there is no reason why seniors at WHS



shouldn't pursue scholarships: “I will say it is a lot of work to find real scholarships and do the work to apply, but it is a great opportunity to get free money and help make paying off your college a little easier.”

Even with help offered from administration, scholarship opportunities are largely ignored and underutilized by seniors. Sweeney says, “The administration tries their best to make scholarship and grants opportunities known. It can be overwhelming to try to simplify the process of scholarships to encourage students to apply.”

Moreover, there are multiple scholarships available: “When applying for scholarships, start with the local and regional ones. They offer less money than the national scholarships but have a smaller application pool. If you apply for as many as you can, the money can add up,” Sweeney says.

One example is Waterford High School Senior Alexa Collins, who won the regional \$25,000

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship earlier this year after being told about the scholarship in school. The scholarship was reserved for people of color with leadership, community service, academic achievement, and character. It was awarded to 12 students and in the application the recipients had to complete an interview, an essay and when awarded the scholarship, they gave a speech to 700 people. For Collins, the work put into the scholarship was exhausting, but worth it in the end.

Additionally, earlier this school year, students were invited to the College and Career Center Google classroom. In this Google classroom, there are multiple resources available that share information on college visits, the college application process, scholarships, and career exploration opportunities. For students who would still like to join the Google classroom, the code is 3ugn7zc.



Scholarships are not only available for seniors: “There are scholarships available to junior and other grades as well. Right now, Senator Murphy has a MLK essay contest that is open to all students K-12. They have to write an essay and five students are picked from each grade level”, Sweeney says.

Another valuable resource to use is Naviance and Common App. On these websites there are scholarship searches available. Other websites to use that are reliable for scholarship searches are Goingmerry and Scholarships.com.

Furthermore, high schoolers should utilize scholarships and other resources given to make life after high school easier.



## Sophomore Slump

By: Isabel Henry

At Waterford High School, many students have experienced or are experiencing “sophomore slump.” Sophomore slump is the downfall of everything in sophomore year. Your grades, your mental health, and your motivation declines drastically. Fellow WHS students explain how they fell into sophomore slump, how they felt, and how sophomore slump affects them.

There are many ways sophomore slump can take over, such as workload, friends, and homelife.

A current sophomore at WHS, Audra Fiano, says, “The injury I had really affected everything.

Once I couldn't do sports I just had no motivation for anything. I resorted to sleeping and being lazy and now that I'm basically fine I continue with those habits. I always want to sleep and I'm constantly procrastinating on my work.” Fiano goes on to say, “The thought of good grades and things for college is stressful because last year I fell in a hole and now I have to try to dig myself out of it. I try so hard to keep up with my work but it stresses me out so I put it off.”

Another sophomore at WHS, Ali Jennings, says, “I feel like I got into my ‘slump’ during the end of quarter 1 and beginning of quarter two. The amount of work



given by teachers is really difficult to manage sometimes, it feels like the teachers seem to believe we only take their class.” Ali Jennings goes on to explain how the work from all the classes she takes piles up and, “there is only so much time in a day.”

# MUSIC'S EFFECTS

## ON THE BRAIN

BY LAUREN MONTANARI

Numerous Waterford High School students wear their AirPods or Beats during passing periods or class, but they rarely know the effects of music on their brain. While music can be distracting to some, there are many benefits in incorporating music into one's academics and their overall health.

To explain the benefits of listening to music, it's best to learn the processes happening inside the brain while we play our favorite songs. When we play a song, dopamine, the chemical that gives the feeling of pleasure, is released into our body. Eating sugary and unhealthy food is what gives an equivalent reaction.

Dopamine can become addictive to the body, and a reason why we listen to music so often, is to chase that dopamine rush.

When listening to new songs, brains

become more and more familiar with the sounds and lyrics the more we replay. The more familiar with a song we become, our brains can easily recognize the sounds and begin this release of dopamine instantaneously.

This release of dopamine is responsible for the overwhelming feeling of excitement and happiness when we listen to our favorite song. Our bodies crave familiarity, which drives you to replay and replay songs that you enjoy and continue to release dopamine. Consequently, music can be used as a tool to heighten your mood.

The human brain can associate emotion with certain sounds or music. Although music cannot directly make us feel a certain emotion, our brains can recognize the mood of music. A slow, quiet and mellow song evokes feelings of sadness while fast, loud, and high pitched music evokes feelings of excitement and happiness. Interestingly, processing the mood of a song is

possible even when words are incoherent and cannot be recognized.

According to Pfizer: "Science has documented numerous instances of people who suffered brain injuries and lost their ability to distinguish melodies but retained the ability to recognize the emotion conveyed by music."

Considering that memory is heightened by emotion, music has the property to also enhance memories while listening. This is demonstrated when the limbic system in our bodies, responsible for processing emotion, lights up when music is played. In addition, listening to music causes increased blood flow to the brain, especially the hippocampus. The hippocampus is the part of the brain that is responsible for memory which strengthens the relationship between memory music and enhances the vividness of our memories.

While music is used for one's own pleasure, its

benefits can be used as therapy. Music can boost your mood through the release of dopamine. The release of dopamine can be utilized as a distraction from the issue causing the anxiety. Moreover, music can be used for vibrational therapy. Music or sound of any kind is a vibration which affects our emotional, physical and behavioral health.

Physically, research shows that patients that undergo vibrational therapy regularly can reduce pain by about 50%. In addition, vibrational therapy can increase blood flow, improve muscle mobility, and increase muscle relaxation. Even though music is primarily used for our own emotional pleasure, its numerous physical health benefits should not be unnoticed.

Any Waterford High School student knows that the hallways are usually littered with students with AirPods or headphones. Since school is the primary source of stress for adolescents, music can help balance your mood while at WHS.

When asked when she listens to music during school, Senior Cate Smathers says "Yeah, when I'm in a bad mood. If I don't feel like talking to anyone I can listen to music and feel better." Using music is a tool which many students use without knowing. By tricking our brains to

## ARTISTS POPULAR IN 2023

DRAKE



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<https://www.flickr.com/photos/thecomeupshow/28082662994/in/photostream/>

SZA



Image modified from:  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:SZA\\_CTRL\\_Tour\\_Toronto\\_2017\\_8.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:SZA_CTRL_Tour_Toronto_2017_8.jpg)

THE WEEKND



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<https://www.flickr.com/photos/npado/44778856382>

release dopamine while listening to music, we can manipulate emotions.

Listening to music can also improve memory and focus. The emotional association our brain makes with music enhances our memories, which makes music a useful tool for studying. Music can also help focus when doing work as well. Some people find silence the only way they can think clearly.

On the contrary, many students become more distracted in silence. Audra Fiono says, "I listen to it when there is no other sound and I don't want to be on my phone and want background noise." Science says that this 'background noise' is used as a way to calm nerves.

Each human has a given amount of mental capacity, or brain space, to do everyday things like think, make decisions and interpret our sensory information. When we listen to music we take up more of our mental capacity and distracts us from our surroundings or a source of anxiety. Background noise when we go to sleep is used in this way to focus less on the room around you and more on falling asleep.

Listening to music is much more complex than one might expect. Whether music is part of your everyday life or not, its benefits should not be overlooked.

# For All The Dogs

By: Zoey Cone



“For All the Dogs” album cover

Drake is back with his eighth studio album, “For All The Dogs.” The album starts with the hit song, “Virginia Beach” and ends with “Polar Opposites.” This album hit number one on the Billboard Hot 100 on its release day. On November 17th, Drake also released a “Scary Hour Edition” that has an additional six bonus tracks.

According to Billboard Top Hits, the highest ranked song out of 23 tracks is “Away From Home.” This song is about Drake’s journey to success and the emotions he faced with it. It’s reminiscent of the struggles, memories, and sacrifices that shaped Drake into the artist he is today.

At number two is “Tried Our Best.” Drake wrote this song to talk about the challenges and complexities that are in a romantic relationship, including the struggles with the wants and difficulties that arise.

Number three is “Drew A Picasso.” Which was written to describe and explore the themes of love, heartbreak, betrayal and the art of letting go.

Number four is a fan-favorite, “Rich Baby Daddy.” “Rich Baby Daddy” explores the themes of desire, physical attraction, and fleeting relationships. It showcases different perspectives

of love and intimacy. This song is sophomore Jillian Saad’s personal favorite. She enjoys this song because of how upbeat and funky it is. The song hypes her up and makes her feel like she is ready for anything, and that nothing can get in her way when it’s blowing through her ears. She also likes how two different artists, Sexxy Red and SZA, were also featured.

Number five ranked is “Screw the World (Interlude).” Although short, this song holds just as much meaning as the rest. With lyrics that are open to interpretation, it talks about Drake’s personal life and emotions in the world.

Drake has over 80 million fans worldwide, including some of our very own Waterford High School students: Brodie Scott and Marco Tonucci.

What was your favorite song and why?

Brodie Scott’s favorite song is “What would Pluto do.” He states “the melody is very smooth; the lyrics are good and creative.”

Marco Tonucci’s answer was “IDGAF featuring Yeat”. Tonnuci states “I like this song because it’s really catchy and I like Yeat’s part in it; it makes me feel like nothing can get in my way or bother me.”

What did you like most about the album?

“I like that on the album Drake put a lot of other artists in features and he even let his son sing a part of a song,” is what Brodie had to say when asked the question.

“One thing I like about the album is the variety of people that are featured. For example, I like how you can have rappers like Yeat in one song, but also

singers like SZA in the same album,” Marco replied.

Why do you listen to Drake?

When asked, Brodie states, “His voice is very calming and all of his lyrics are very different and creative.” To Brodie, Drake means a lot to him.

When asked, Marco replied, “I listen to Drake because of his blend of rap and R&B, his lyrical storytelling, and his catchy beats.”

What does Drake mean to you?

According to Brodie, “He means a lot to me because he pushes me through the problems I come across, and listening to his music is very relieving and helps me move forward.”

According to Marco, “Drake’s music resonates with me and helps me express certain feelings.”

Each of Drake’s songs come with a meaning. Each is influenced by the lessons he’s learned, his memories, and his life experiences.



# 1989 (Taylor’s Version): Does it live up to all of our Wildest Dreams?

By: Isabella Dioquino

On August 9, 2023, at her Eras Tour, singer-songwriter Taylor Swift announced that 1989 (Taylor’s Version) was to be released on October 27th, 2023. The Album was also going to have five vault tracks, which are tracks that were created during the original era, but were not released, as they had “stayed in the vault.”

The original 1989 album was her first fully pop album, as well as her best-selling album. With beloved pop sensations such as “Wildest Dreams” or “Shake it Off,” the original 1989 album garnered much praise and popularity, even winning a grammy for Album of the Year in 2015.

However, in June 2019, Swift’s former record label, Big Machine Records, was bought by Scooter Braun, subsequently meaning that the masters of Swift’s previous albums—Taylor Swift, Fearless, Speak Now, Red, 1989, and Reputation—were now owned by Braun.

Swift decided she would re-record her previous six studio albums, including 1989.

In the first week of sales, 1989 (Taylor’s Version) sold over 1.35 million copies in the US, and more than 3.5 million copies

globally, which is more than the original 1989, which sold more than 1.28 million copies. Additionally, 1989 (Taylor’s Version) garnered almost 380 million streams.

Despite the booming sales and streams of the album itself, the reviews of 1989 (Taylor’s Version) from our school are mixed.

Our resident Swiftie, Nathan Wheeler, is content with the outcome of the album. “I’m very satisfied.” Wheeler states, “I think there were not as many differences as other Taylor’s Versions.”

Similarly, sophomore Cassandra Soucy says, “I think it’s great.” She follows up by stating,

**“It’s also real, and holds so much emotion.”**

Another sophomore, Maya Smith, states, “It’s really really amazing, and she definitely hit the mark on almost all of her songs, but some were a bit less amazing than the first release.”

However, when asked if 1989 (Taylor’s Version) lives up to the original, junior Katie Jamroga states, “No. I don’t think that the re-records themselves do.”

A common problem with the re-recordings is that many people believe that they either sound too different from the original songs or don’t sound good at all. Most people said that the worst re-recording on 1989 (Taylor’s Version) was the eighth track on the album: “Bad Blood (Taylor’s Version).”

“I think that song for me was never one of my favorites, and I think my personal feelings of it kind of just goes into why I don’t think even the re-record is good.” Wheeler states.

“I just don’t really like the song.” Soucy adds.

Nevertheless, one positive thing that seems to be unanimously agreed on is the quality of the vault tracks.

1989 (Taylor’s Version) added five new tracks from the vault, those being “Slut!” “Say Don’t Go,” “Now That We Don’t Talk,” “Suburban Legends”, and “Is It Over Now?” 1989 (Taylor’s Version) [Deluxe] also added one additional vault track, that being “Bad Blood (feat. Kendrick Lamar)” which, on the original 1989, was a single that was added to it in May of 2015.

“The vault tracks were really really good, so I was really happy with the vault tracks.” Jamroga stated. “I think some of the additional songs are somehow better than some of the original songs” said Soucy. Wheeler even stated, “Having the vault tracks makes it more likable.”

In Smith’s opinion, “She’s an absolute icon for having the energy, idea, and mental capacity to be able to re-record all of her albums and add new, unheard of songs to them that are just incredible.”

Although 1989 (Taylor’s Version) may not be the exact same as the original 1989, it is still an overall wildly successful album, with a lot of heart and soul put into it. It may not live up to everybody’s wildest dreams, but for some people the album will never go out of style.



# CLUBS and ACTIVITIES in and around WHS

## Gardening Club by Regan Bernardo

Are you interested in joining any after-school clubs? I suggest the gardening club at WHS! It runs from 2:10-4:10 pm in room 326. Mrs. Agins is the organizer and creates an enjoyable environment for everyone participating. Some days you pull weeds, and others you do fun activities such as creating lavender soaps. The teachers even bring in some snacks for the participating students! Here are some of the benefits of joining:

► **LTS hours.** If you ride the late bus home, you can get 1 hour, but students can earn up to two hours per meeting. As a highschool student, LTS hours are necessary, and some stress about it, but joining the garden club, is an easy way to earn those hours!

► **Experience!** If you lack experience in gardening, it is an effortless way to gain some. You learn about the different types of flowers and plants for the season and which plants are good for the environment around you.

► **School participation.** If you participate in the gardening club, you are also improving the school and making it look nice. When you plant more, it makes the outside of the school look more alive adding pops of color.

► **Meeting new people.** Like through any after-school extracurricular activity, you meet new people and make new friendships and can bond over your newfound interest that you share.



If you're interested in joining, or have any questions, contact Mrs. Agins ([kagins@waterfordschools.org](mailto:kagins@waterfordschools.org)).

## Cultural Diversity Alliance by Saeeda Samed

At Waterford High School, diversity is very limited. Last year, the Cultural Diversity Alliance Club was created by seniors.

Saeeda Samed, Kecelia Hill, and alumAlexah Napoles, formed the club with the help of Mrs. Baumgartner as the club advisor. The club's focus is to celebrate and recognize different races and cultures in the Waterford

Community. The club prides itself on being a safe space for inclusivity and diversity at Waterford High School. Initially, the club was met with hesitation because of the uncertainty of the purpose of the club.

During the 2022-2023 school year, one of the few projects put together was a flag display for Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

As time went on, the club gained more positive reception from the student body at Waterford High School.

After the success of the Lancer Activity Fair, the Cultural Diversity Alliance grew in numbers with a variety of underclassmen and upperclassmen joining the club. The club does an array of activities that vary from discussions, projects, volunteering opportunities, and displays. For the 2023-2024 school year, the CDA club is planning a Culture Day open to the Waterford community late March and will be held at Waterford High School. The point of the event is to celebrate the different cultures that reside in the Waterford community. The event will have entertainment, food, and presentations all spotlighting a variety of cultures.



## Dance Club by Lexie Hullivan

Pull out your leg warmers, Lancer Nation, it's time for the Winter session of the WHS Dance Club. If you were too busy to join Dance Club for the fall, due to conflicts with a sport or just trying to adjust to the new school year, there is still another chance to join.

The Dance Club splits their season into two sessions: Fall and Winter. This fall, students learned a fun jazz dance, choreographed by advisor Paula MacDougall, that will be performed at the show in March. In the winter, not only will Paula be choreographing a group modern piece, but certain upperclassmen students will also lead rehearsals for their own dances. These students

include Seniors Lizzie Saucier, Cienna Nummy, and Skyler Jones, and Juniors Lexie Hullivan and Ava Rivera. There will also be one dance for seniors only and one dance for juniors.

Rehearsals for the winter season begin on Monday, December 4th. There will be different dances rehearsing each day of the week from then to the show in mid-March. Paula's group piece, which holds rehearsals on Wednesdays, is mandatory for club members. As for the student-choreographed pieces, members can pick and choose what pieces they want to do based on what works best with their schedule. All rehearsals will be taking place at the Waterford Community Center in the dance room.

Four-year member, Lizzie Saucier, says "joining Dance Club is a great opportunity to meet new people, be creative, and try something new!" The only requirement to join Dance Club is a willingness to learn and have fun. No prior dance experience is needed! If interested, email Paula for additional details ([pfmacdougall52@gmail.com](mailto:pfmacdougall52@gmail.com)).



## BKC Presents Matilda: The Musical by Lexie Hullivan

While they may sing "Revolting Children," students at Broadway Kids and Company are anything but "Naughty."

On January 5th and 6th, Broadway Kids and Company will be making its return to the Garde Arts Center of New London, CT. Rehearsals have been underway since the cast list hit students' inboxes in October. Students and staff, led by director Kristin Burrows, only have two weeks left to prepare before tech week.

Waterford High students involved in the show include Juniors Lexie Hullivan (Trunchbull), and Olivia Marelli (Mrs. Wormwood), and Freshman Keniyah Hill (Big Kid/Mrs. Phelps Understudy). As principal characters, these students are undertaking a lot of responsibility. They must learn music, dialogue,

blocking, and choreography.

BKC is coming off hit reviews for their spring musical, Mean Girls, in which Hullivan played Janis and Marelli played Kevin G. Olivia Marelli is excited to step into such a different role: "I don't get to rap this time, but I did get to learn some classic Latin and ballroom technique

for my song 'Loud,' like salsa, rumba, cha cha!" BKC students have learned lots of new skills for this show, notably how to do a masterful British accent.

Go to <https://gardearts.org/events/matilda/> to get your tickets now! They are the perfect holiday gift for a child, parent, sibling, friend, or loved one!



# A Triple Threat

## Melanie Martin



BY KAYLA KELLY

Melanie Martin, a senior athlete who has progressed from little league to division two softball, is ready to embark on the next chapter of her life: collegiate athletics.

In her tenure at WHS, Martin has won three ECC softball championships, captained both the field hockey and softball teams, and is currently the top-ranked female thrower in shot put. She has done this all while also achieving academic success. None of this has come easy to Martin, who has devoted her summers, weekends, and childhood to becoming a well-rounded athlete.

It was Waterford Youth Softball that sparked Martin's passion for sports. When Martin was five years old, she enrolled in Waterford's Little League program. She was immediately enamored with the game and became fixated on improving as a player from an early age.

She found her calling as a catcher in youth softball leagues, where she joined travel teams, summer leagues, and attended clinics around the East Coast with her parents.

Martin's dedication and hard work paid off, as she quickly became a standout

player in the local softball community. Her skills behind the plate were unmatched. Through softball, Martin has developed strong leadership skills and learned how to work effectively as a member of a team. Martin's success in softball has not only given her a sense of fulfillment but has also opened doors for her future athletic endeavors. She hopes to make a significant impact on the University of Bridgeport's softball team and continue pursuing her passion for nursing alongside her athletic pursuits.

Martin's success cannot be attributed solely to Waterford's youth softball; she credits her sister Makayla Andrews, a former Division One soccer player, as a role model both on and off the field. "My sister pushed me to become a better athlete, not to just be skinnier, but to be active and work harder." Martin credits her sister's gym workouts as a key success skill for her athletic career, along with running and dynamic stretching activities. Her sister's biggest

inspiration for her was her multisport background, inspiring her to try two new sports: field hockey and track.

Martin joined the indoor track team as a thrower in 2021 and has excelled. She credits the track team and Coach Blackburn for teaching her own mental and physical strength: "I always knew I was good, but never thought I was athletic. Track taught me I could do it, I could run, lift, and could do anything." With her changed mindset she is ready for other sports.

With her newfound confidence and belief in her abilities, Martin decided to give field hockey a try. She discovered a passion for the sport and found herself excelling on the field as a center back, thanks to the skills and discipline she had developed through softball and indoor track.

Now, Martin is eager to explore and continue pushing herself to new heights at the University of Bridgeport next fall, joining the Division 2 softball team with a major in nursing.



# Profile: Olivia Marelli



As a local dancer and performer, as well as a loyal member to the Lancer Nation, Olivia Marelli. Olivia is the epitome of a true Lancer and has a contagious enthusiasm for her Waterford community.

While she is not currently a member of any WHS sports teams, Olivia's talents lie elsewhere. She spends her nights and weekends at Broadway Kids and Company School, a dance and theater company located in Niantic. She is one of five members of the current senior elite company for the upcoming competition season. Olivia says, "my favorite style of dance would probably be jazz. I also love contemporary dance." Olivia is also a talented tumbler, with skills including aials, walkovers, and handsprings.

Olivia is both a national and world champion. Alongside her teammates, the Broadway Kids' competitive dancers took home a national title at Believe Talent National Dance

Competition, and two weeks later, they won first place at the World Dance Championships. Olivia says her experience winning an acclaimed award can best be described as "an out-of-body experience. The best part was definitely winning with my best friends and knowing that all of our hard work from the season had paid off."

You can catch Olivia next at the Garde Arts Center on January 5th and 6th, where she will be in BKC's production of

Matilda: the Musical. Olivia portrays the principal role of Mrs. Wormwood, Matilda's mother.

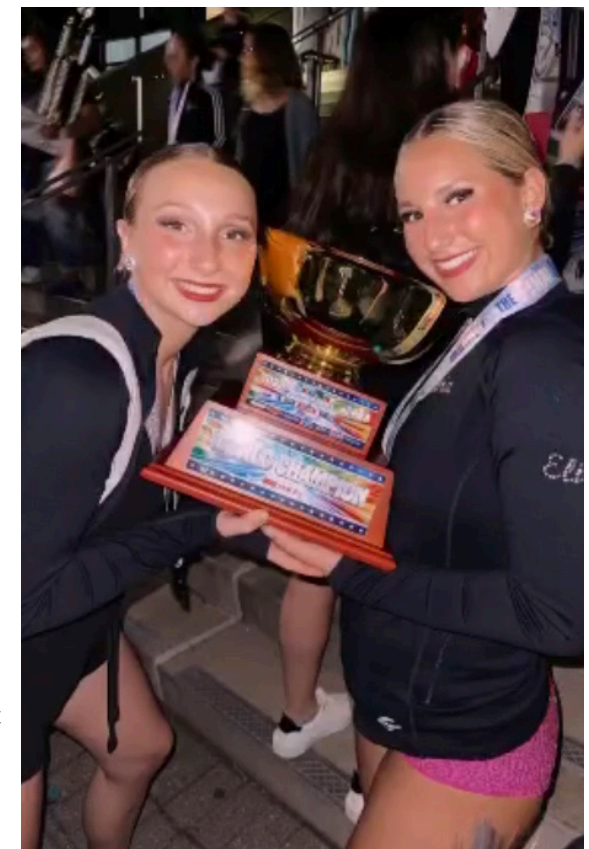
Olivia is no stranger to the stage, and received positive reviews from her performance as Kevin G in Mean Girls this past May. "Olivia's natural humor and inclination to make people laugh is what made her shine as Kevin G, and I'm sure the next show will be no different," says Ava Burrows, WHS and BKC alumni. Olivia finds joy in making people laugh and finding light in tough situations.

Olivia's favorite time of the WHS school session is "definitely spirit week. It is so fun dressing up with my friends, taking pictures, and showing how much I love my school." Olivia, who is also a vocal member of the Student Council, got mic'd up to represent her class as an announcer at Pep Rally and was crowned as one half of the Junior

Spirit Squad, alongside Dennis Du. "It always makes me sad to see that some people don't participate in spirit week at all and my goal is to make as many people have pride in Waterford as I can," Olivia added. Olivia runs the Class of 2025 instagram and encourages her classmates to follow @waterfordhs.2025 for updates on all things regarding the Junior class.

Olivia is well-liked by WHS staff and kids, regarded as a student symbol of the Lancer Nation. Olivia's passion for her various interests is palpable, and she plans to graduate satisfied with her high school experience.

Check out the podcast featuring Olivia as the special guest!  
@WHStheLancelot.com



# Winter Sports

Written by: Lauren Piotrowski

Photos by: Wendy Morris

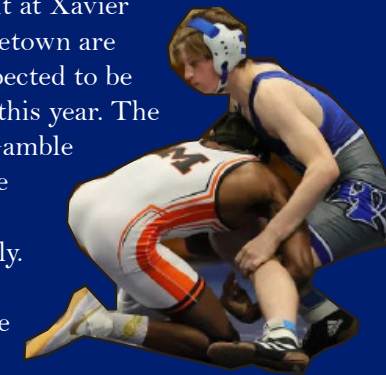
The Lancer Boys Basketball team has a long history of victories. Coach William Bassett is looking forward to another exciting season. He says, "This team will have talent, but not a lot of experience, so it will be fun seeing them grow as the year goes on." The returning star players are senior, Juan Morel, varsity starter for the past 3 seasons, and sophomore Parker Spencer, who played varsity last season. Some other players that are sure to contribute to the team this year are: Sean Kramer, Jordi Cassar, Griffin Neal, Quinn Speller, Porter Swenson-Cardwell, Gabe Lombardi, and Matthew Shampine. Coach Bassett tries to set a practice environment centered around teamwork, discipline, and preparation in order to have a successful season.



After 5 consecutive ECC championship wins, a lot is resting on the Lancer cheerleaders this year. Head Coach Kirsten Maskell is looking forward to seeing how a new group of athletes will work together, and use each other's strengths for a successful season. Returning cheerleader Rebecca Roarke is coming back for her 8th season cheering at WHS, and will be a vital part of the team once again. As returning ECC champs, that will be an exciting competition for the team, and they are hoping to redeem themselves at the state competition with a clean routine. Coach Maskell tries to build an environment of confidence, hard work, team work, and positivity.



Coach Gamble and the Lancer Wrestling team has a solid team this year, a combination of strong returning athletes, as well as new faces. The new wrestling room that is now by the old gym should bring changes to the program and hopefully a strong start to the season. Four returning wrestlers placed in the ECC and Class S tournaments last year. Junior Lucas Gannotti placed 2nd in both the ECC and Class S state meets last season. Senior Devon Powers placed 2nd in ECCs and 3rd at the state meet. Junior Braeden Sollima placed 6th in both the ECC and state tournaments, and senior Zach Ruest placed 5th at both tournaments. Coach Gamble is confident that he has a strong group of wrestlers returning from the ECC and state level, as well as other varsity members that he has hopes for this season. The ECC tournament and the midseason tournament at Xavier High School in Middletown are the meets that are expected to be the most exciting for this year. The environment Coach Gamble tries to set for practice is challenging both mentally and physically. In addition to that, he tries to keep it positive and upbeat, and has a hope that each athlete improves each day to reach their full potential.



Lancer Fencing is ready to build off the success of the last few years, and is looking forward to another great season. Women Epee and Foil are returning with complete teams from last year, where they finished first and third in the state. Men Epee and Foil are also returning with solid teams. Women's Epee returning stars include Hazel Siu, Maple Siu, Lauren Gerboth, Isabela Zwier and Jolina Campisi. Women's Foil returning stars include Kyijong Tenzin, Jiarou Liao, and Isabela Haque. For men's Epee, Aidan Dupont and Atlas Hoff are the returning key team members, with Tom Bourez and Jacob Pierce returning for men's Foil. Coach Teel hopes to continue to grow the team, with 15 novice fencers this year. The exciting meets for this season are the Novice Tournament on February 10 in the Field House, and the ECC Tournament on February 24 in Griswold. Coach Teel likes to run a fun but structured practice, where the more experienced fencers help out the less experienced.



Boys and Girls Indoor Track and Field coach Jay Criscuolo is looking forward to a focused and successful season. He is also excited to see how the cross country runners from this past season carry their training into indoor track. The star returning runners include Lexi Collins, Avery Maiese, Sarah Conti, Jay Zimmermann, Elliot Childs, and Jon Booth. Some new athletes that will play a key role in the team this season are Elle Dibuno, Ava Tucker, Brodie Scott, and Ian Rush. The ECC Championship on February 3rd is a meet that Coach Criscuolo is looking forward to focusing on time management, and trying to go outside on the turf are two hopes for practice this year.



The boys swimming and diving team is ready for its first co-op season with Ledyard High School. Captain Alex Startz says he is excited to see how the season goes with the new coaching staff. Some other returning swimmers include captain Ethan Jones, Louis Dhervilly, and Andrew Bertrand. Niko Vajdos from Ledyard, and Waterford freshman Mason Huoppi and Aries Dupont are some new team members that are sure to be key members of the team. The senior meet is an exciting meet to recognize the commitment of the swimmers. Startz says swimming is a very demanding sport, and keeping the practices upbeat yet disciplined is the way for everyone to best succeed while pushing themselves to get faster.



Much like the boys team, the girls basketball team is young but ready to win. Coach Kaitlyn Sullivan is looking forward to watching them grow and improve. Some key returning players include Lucy Walker, Sadie Tiven, Jennie Macca-Barnes, and Cate and Emma Smathers. Sarah Davidson, Brianna McNeil, Audrey Steward and Serafina Weymouth are some new players that will help the team this season. The Go Gold and rec night, as well as the East Lyme are predicted to be the most exciting. Sullivan tries to find a balance between and competition during practice.



# The Rise of Women's Athletics

By: Emerson Lane

The time has come where new world records are being set and women's athletics is getting the credit it deserves. Two world records have recently been set by college athletics for the highest crowd attendance in history.

Dating back to Title IX in 1972, the Federal Civil Rights Acts which fight for equality in women's athletics and scholarships in educational institutes. In recent times women's sports are finally the recognition and equality it has deserved in comparison to men's athletics. Not only has Waterford High School girls athletics set new records in their recent seasons through their fall records and championships, college athletics have continued to raise the bar. Over 2023, skyrocketing numbers of viewers came through with two new records set in the college athletics, by Iowa women's basketball and Nebraska women's volleyball for highest attendance in history. The records influence women across America and inspiring younger girls to continue to work hard to accomplish their dreams to have the hope of making it to similar settings themselves.

Nebraska Volleyball is one of the most popular college volleyball teams in the nation. They have had a show-stopping season, finishing off the regular season undefeated up until now. Even through incredible matchups that were tough battles, Nebraska took down #2 in the nation, also undefeated, Wisconsin. After 5 sets Nebraska swept through with the win. Unfortunately, the hustle and determination Wisconsin had through their rematch Wisconsin took back the win in only 3 sets. While their stellar streak is something to applaud, their record breaking game vs. Omaha is something to go down in history. On August 30th women's college volleyball surpassed all records for the largest crowd in history of women's athletics, with a total of 92,003 fans.

This game included a fly over and a day full of celebrations. Taking place on the Nebraska Cornhuskers football field, the stadium was filled to the brim.

Following Nebraska's amazing attendance, the University of Iowa women's basketball team broke yet another record for crowd attendance. During an exhibition game on October 25th vs. DePaul, Iowa's basketball team set the record for the largest audience in women's basketball with a total of 55,646.

Women's soccer and basketball have had increasing amounts of viewership. Last basketball season the women's 2023 college basketball finals had a total viewership of about 10 million viewers, as well as the women's world cup gained almost 15% more viewership than previous years.



Waterford High School has had new season records broken by the girls volleyball team. This season with the youngest roster they have had so far, WHS volleyball has been able to complete the best record in WHS history with a record of only 17-3 in the regular season and 20-5 including post season tournament games. Athletics at the school have been impressive over the past few years with girls volleyball and softball winning the ECC Championship. Some names to honor for the Class of 2024 one of the larger groups of girls who will be stepping foot into the high division 1 and II settings from WHS are athletes, Emilia Podeszwa, who will be attending Binghamton University, Amarys Jiminez, who will be attending University of Rhode Island, Gracie Muti, who will be attending St. Peter's College, and Melanie Martin, who will be attending Bridgeport University.

An issue that hasn't changed throughout many seasons is the attendance record at women's athletics. Waterford High School has had stellar seasons through girls volleyball and softball. Throughout the years both teams have won multiple ECC Championships. While the volleyball team this year had an amazing season with the best record in history. Attendance at games has not increased in any way at all. Last season where the girls won the ECC Championship, the girls had a total of 1284 fans year round at home games. Barely a difference of fans attended this year's season with only 1280 fans at home games. Women's athletics are working hard to get their recognition and equality to men's athletics. Waterford High Schools athletics have improved tremendously over the years. It is now time to find the fans and gain the recognition and use the energy from college athletics to get women's athletics the hype it deserves.

Students at Waterford High School are very proud to see the rise in athletics and all that comes along with it. Senior Aly Lewis says, "I think Nebraska's big volleyball game set off the run, giving people an appreciation for sports. It brought a whole new hype to women's sports". It is so important that women continue to support one another in their goals and achievements as it has been shown on all levels they can accomplish so many things and break world records. College and high school athletics have big goals for this upcoming winter and spring season looking to break more records and set new highs.



# Eagles Hockey

## The upcoming season

By: Maddie Parent

As the air gets colder and autumn comes to a close, the transition from the fall sports season into winter is on its way. Each year, Waterford excels during the winter season, sporting triumphs in girls and boys fencing, boys swimming and diving, girls and boys basketball, indoor track and field, and competitive cheerleading. However, each year one team goes unnoticed as they travel around the state competing against private schools and large name teams: boys ice hockey.

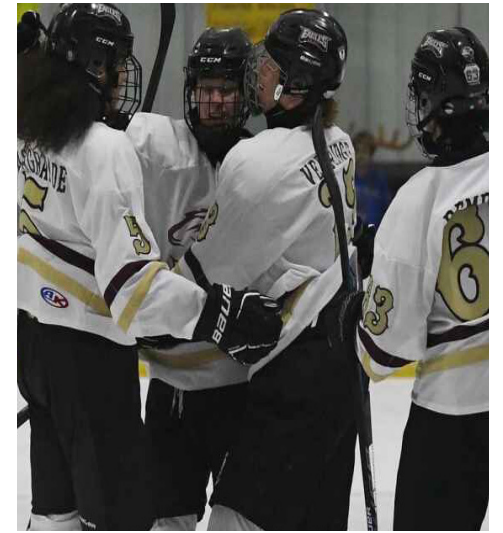
Waterford is part of the co-op Eastern Connecticut Eagles hockey team that is made up of players from around the ECC, most notably East Lyme and Stonington. The team plays home games hosted at the Norwich Rose Garden ice rink, which usually retains a relatively large East Lyme student section. The energy is high in the Rose Garden Arena during home games, Waterford High School senior Kayla Kelly states, "The games are super exciting, hockey is one of my favorite sports to watch and going with your friends can be a great activity during the boring winter months."



The players practice year round, but have their regular season competing between the months of November and March.

The Eagles compete in the Nutmeg conference against Woodstock, Tri-Town, Housatonic Co-op, and Suffield/Granby/Windsor Locks co-op (SGWL). They've claimed three Nutmeg championship titles in 2018, 2019, and 2022, and one Division III state championship title in 2018. In 2023, the Eagles made it to the conference championship against Woodstock, losing after putting up a hard fight. The team is administered by head coaches Eric Sager and Chris Bertelli.

Waterford High School alum and former Eagles Captain Josh Bertelli graduated in 2023, leaving behind a successful 4-year legacy as a key player on the defensive lineup. Bertelli reflects on his time with the Eagles as memorable, recalling "the best part about being on the team is the environment." He says that despite the team being made up of players from different towns, growing up



playing together made it a close-knit environment. Bertelli predicts the Eagles will perform well this season as they face competitive teams, and believes their new coaching staff will be effective in pushing the team towards success.

This year, Waterford is sporting yet another Captain on the Eagles, Kaden Casteel. Kaden is a senior at Waterford High School, playing defense for the Eagles and wearing #47 out on the ice. He plays alongside sophomore Lucas Vincenti, Waterford's other notable player on the team this season. Kaden has been playing hockey for eleven years, rightfully earning his Captaincy senior year entering his fourth season with the team. Kaden doesn't plan on continuing hockey in college, although he is looking forward to one final season with the Eagles. He hopes to help the team achieve another conference championship this year.

If you are looking for a fun activity this winter, come support our Waterford players as they begin this year's season with the Eagles.

The Eagles' home opener was Wednesday, December 13th against SGWL co-op. They play at home again this Saturday, December 16th against Housatonic.



Sean Kramer in ECE Marine Bio

# Heads Up!

BY: ELIZABETH SAUCIER

Many WHS students participate in athletics both in and out of school. Sports are an opportunity for people to stay in shape, build a routine, and find a community. However, participation in athletics increases a person's chance of getting hurt.

Broken bones, strained muscles, and stress fractures are some common injuries in high school athletics. However the worst injury students have to look out for cannot be seen: concussions.

Someone can receive a concussion in a split second, but symptoms last much longer.

For senior Sean Kramer, a simple accident changed everything. At basketball practice last winter, Kramer was blocking his teammate's layup when his legs were hit out from under him. Because of this, he was unable to land properly and ended up hitting the back of his head and passing out.

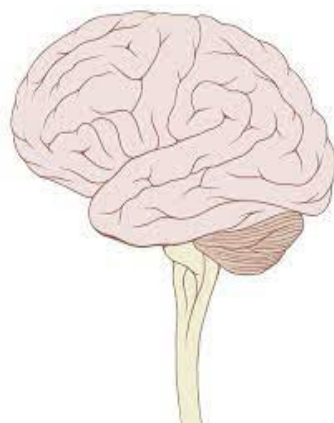
The CDC's return to play progression has 6-steps. Step 1: Athletes have to first be back to regular activities, like school. If they are able to do this for a few days, they can then move to step 2: light aerobic activity. These include exercises like bike, walking, or a light jog to increase the athletes heart rate. Step 3: moves the activities to a more moderate level. They should continue to raise their heart rate as in step two, but can now begin moderate-intensity weightlifting.

If able to conduct the activities of step 3 without any worsening in their condition, athletes can move to step 4: heavy, no contact activity. This includes sprinting, high intensity stationary biking, regular weight lifting routine, and non-contact drills in three planes of motion. Step 5: the athlete can return to practice and full contact in a controlled practice environment. Finally, step 6: athletes are allowed to return to competitions.

After being diagnosed with a concussion, these are the steps Kramer had to follow if he wanted to be able to return.

It was two days before Kramer was cleared by his doctors to return to school. He said, "I wasn't allowed to even watch practice because the noise would be too much." Over the next two weeks, he went through concussion protocol. This primarily consisted of riding the stationary bike, doing longer rides as the week progressed.

Similarly to Kramer, senior Emma Smathers received a concussion during a basketball game.



Smathers was tripped mid-air, landed on the back of her head and was taken off the court by the athletic trainer. The next day, she was put on concussion protocol for the next week and a half.



Smathers started this week off on the stationary bike, but by day four, moved on to light cardio and no-contact practice drills. By day eight, she was able to fully participate and was cleared a few days later.

The events on the court changed things for both Kramer and Smathers in the classroom. Neither athlete missed too many days of school, but their condition made it difficult to complete work.

Teachers did their best to be accommodating. Kramer explains, "my teachers were understanding and gave me extended deadlines." Smathers adds that her teachers "limited her work load for healing."

Even with the accommodations, work piled up for both of them. The two of them shared similar feelings of stress as they played catch up.

There is no full-proof way to avoid a concussion; however, there are various types of equipment that aid in preventing head injuries. The most well-known protective equipment used in high school athletics is helmets.

For sports like football, boys lacrosse, baseball/softball, and hockey, helmets are a requirement. In these sports it is important that the helmet is the correct type for a person's sport and age. However, some sports do not require head protection.

At WHS, girls lacrosse and field hockey are two examples of sports that do not require helmets and masks.

Although some equipment is not a requirement, many athletes still wear

it. Senior field hockey player Kayla Kelly says, "My field hockey mask has saved my face so many times." Sports are unpredictable, "When you do a penalty corner, you never know how high it is going to go. When I wear it, I feel so much more protected."

There is no completely concussion-proof helmet, however, they can greatly reduce the risk of head injuries. Along with wearing a helmet, the CDC recommends that hits to the head are avoided as much as possible.

Being out of your sport can be upsetting. Along with that, my high schools struggle with social pressures and not wanting to seem "weak." While it is not always easy, doing what is best for a student's health should be top priority. Smathers says, "The protocol is long and frustrating because you want to get back out there but there is a process to follow."

It is much better to miss a few weeks of practice, than to create permanent brain damage that can affect you for years and years to come.

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# Is Sensitivity Taking Away from Tradition?



Photos by Wendy Morris

## OP-ED BY ALYSON LEWIS

Is there a way to be accommodating and inclusive without stripping away traditions? Students at WHS are expressing concern that while being inclusive is a top priority, it is also taking away traditions that are key to the high school experience, such as homecoming court, prom king and queen, senior superlatives, and spirit weeks. The fear of being unintentionally



offensive and the need to take everyone's feelings into consideration have seemed to make us lose sight

of tradition. Traditions are a key aspect of the full "high school experience," and now students are being deprived of the things they grew up looking forward to.

A major event students typically look forward to is the spirit week before homecoming. It is the build-up for the big homecoming football game and pep rally. Class color wars is the last day of spirit week, and we section the students by grade. In the past years, the colors consisted of white, black, red, and blue. First-year students are wearing white, sophomores are wearing black, juniors are wearing red, and seniors are wearing blue. Within the past two years, the school has prohibited the wearing of black or white during spirit week class color wars. Now seniors and juniors still get to wear red and blue, but underclassmen choose their class

colors each year. As long as they are not black, white, red, or blue, they are approved. Even if they are not our school colors, this is due to the fear that some students may take behavior into their own

"We should be punishing individuals because there are very few people who would do that. But now instead, they punished us and future classes for behavior that hasn't even been displayed by the majority,"

hands and do blackface due to ignorance and racist behaviors, or purely to get a laugh from peers. So, instead of the administration enforcing strict rules to prevent and punish these behaviors of the few, they completely take the tradition from the majority. Says senior Saeeda Samed, "Simply taking it away during color wars doesn't stop the issue; it puts a bandage on a wound that needs stitches. Rather than educating, we avoid it."

Race is not the only issue administration tiptoes around, but also gender and identity within the school. Things such as homecoming court, prom king and queen, and senior superlatives have fallen victim to the chopping block.

Gracie Bartelli gives examples of ways to avoid the tough topic of gender. Instead of the homecoming court and the prom king and queen being based on boy and girl candidates, the council proposed

"During class council, multiple students gave multiple ways for them to include people without gendering them,"

royalty instead. It could be anyone based on purely votes, not gender. These ideas were rejected, and instead of finding a solution, we will no longer have a homecoming court or any royalty.

Senior superlatives have posed the same issue. Typically, in the past, each category would have a

boy or girl winner. The worry of gender, though, has caused the change to only have one person winning each category unless it is a duo category. Rather than having two people (not based on gender but off of the votes), the administration has decided only one person will win each category, unless it is a duo-specific one. While this is an attempt to be inclusive, it does quite the opposite. Senior superlatives are about 40-45 categories, with around 5 being duos. This year's senior class consists of around 164 people. The number of categories alone will leave at least 114 people out of the "award show" that is being hosted. If they adapted and still had two people winning each category, not based on a specific gender, it would only leave around 69 people who wouldn't be winning an award. This would be about 42% being left out, versus a whopping 70% of the class not being included.

The fear of offending a small percentage is drastically taking away from the larger percentage. This is a fear the administration should be approaching from a different perspective. This is an issue that needs more discussion and information. This is a where they should really be considering alternatives from the target audience or group affected, the students.



\*this is the opinion of senior Aly Lewis and was written without input from administrators or advisors



# Palestine and Israel Conflict

By Lauren Montanari

In recent months, tensions between Israel and Gaza have intensified and have been picked up by countless media platforms. In addition, this conflict has divided Americans over which side they support.

In order to understand the war as a whole, it's important to take a closer look at the both sides individually. The conflict involves two countries, Palestine and Israel. In 2006, the Palestinian city Gaza was overtaken by Hamas, an Israel resistance group. Hamas now governs the Gaza strip (a strip of land on the west bank of Israel) and intends to destroy Israel and then replace the country with an Islamic state. Hamas initiated the conflict on August 7th by attacking Israel from Gaza.

Reasons for the conflict originated long before August 7th, however. Palestine has always been an important area of land to both Jews and Muslims. The two groups, and others, have been fighting over the Holy Land for centuries now. After WWII and the Holocaust, many ally countries wanted to ensure safety for Jewish people.

Palestine had been named a national home for Jewish people since 1917, but was still inhabited by Arabs as well. In efforts to relieve tensions due to religious differences, the State of Israel was created in 1948 specifically for Jewish people to live in.

The city of Jerusalem, which has immense religious importance to both Muslims and Jewish people, was located in Israel. Due to the Islamic loss of the Holy Land in Jerusalem, the relationship between Palestine, the predominantly Islamic state, and Israel, the predominantly Jewish state, had deteriorated.

In modern day, the conflict between Palestine and Israel was started by Hamas, when they attacked Israel by breaking through the border, taking hostages, and bombarding their military defense system. Israel retaliated by attacking Palestine and cutting off the internet and power blackouts in Gaza, in efforts to try and cut communication off between the Strip and the rest of the world.

Recently, a ceasefire has been made in the war between Hamas and Israel in order to exchange hostages and to let both sides recover. As of today, Hamas and Israel are still in conflict and the end of the war is not in sight.

## Quiz : Things to Know About the World

- 1) What is the hottest year on record so far?  
A. 2021      B. 2023  
C. 2008      D. 2019
- 2) Which country is currently the most populous?  
A. China      B. America  
C. Russia      D. India
- 3) In what part of Israel is the Gaza Strip located?  
A. West Bank      B. Eastern border  
C. Northern border      D. Southern border
- 4) Who is the president of Ukraine?  
A. Vladimir Putin      B. Volodymyr Zelensky  
C. Petro Poroshenko      D. Xi Jinping
- 5) What is the goal of the current space race?  
A. To go to Mars      B. To start a new world  
C. To return to the moon      D. Send rovers to Venus
- 6) What was Olivia Rodrigo's latest album?  
A. GUTS      B. Sour  
C. Best of High School Musical      D. Bizaardvark
- 7) Which country is currently going through a forced labor crisis?  
A. Ghana      B. Congo  
C. Palestine      D. Belgium
- 8) What year did the modern Russia-Ukraine conflict start?  
A. 1975      B. 2022  
C. 2014      D. 1996
- 9) Which company created ChatGPT?  
A. Google      B. OpenAI  
C. Tesla      D. Arize AI
- 10) Which song is the highest ranking Christmas song in history?  
A. "Santa Tell Me" by Ariana Grande  
B. "Jingle Bell Rock" by Bobby Helms  
C. "White Christmas" by Bing Crosby  
D. "The Christmas Song" by Nat King Cole



# CHIPOTLE COMES TO WATERFORD!

By: Isabel Henry

Chipotle is finally coming to Waterford. Summer of 2024, Chipotle is expected to be on Boston Post Road in the Aldi Plaza.

Many students at Waterford High School love Chipotle, but it is such an inconvenience that the closest Chipotle is across the bridge in Groton. There are only 34 Chipotle locations in all of Connecticut. Comparatively, there are 143 McDonald's in Connecticut.

The construction and work on the Chipotle landscaping and building has already started this fall of 2023. The construction of Waterford's Chipotle has multiple stages to the process which is why it will take quite a long time. The demolition process has already taken place, but the construction will take the majority of the time. Along with the construction, the overall look of the building itself has to match the existing look of the plaza therefore, the Chipotle will have a red brick exterior matching closely to the exterior brick of Aldi.



Chipotle has been a chain restaurant for quite some time, but more recently has become increasingly popular to the citizens and students of Waterford. Chipotle coming to Waterford is a large benefit for WHS students. It opens up job opportunities as well as satisfies cravings. The average salary of a Chipotle worker in Connecticut is between 14 and 19 dollars depending on the position.

The Chipotle will be close to the high school and have easier access and with the building there will be a drive thru or "Chipotlane" for even more convenience.

Summer of 2024, come to Chipotle in Waterford to enjoy some delicious Mexican food.

## HISTORY OF LUMPIA

By: Aly Lewis

Lumpia, a kind of spring rolls, are widely available in the Philippines and Indonesia. Lumpia are made up of thin pastry skins, called "lumpia wrappers," that contain savory or sweet contents and mimic paper or crepes. It is frequently offered as a snack or appetizer and can be either fresh (unfried) or deep-fried. Often eaten during Qingming Festival, lumpia are the Indonesian and Filipino versions of Teochew popiah and the Fujianese runbEng.

It is believed that in the 19th century, Chinese immigrants from Fujian brought lumpia to the Dutch East Indies. Because lumpia was developed from the Hokkien dialect of lumpia, it was derived from Fujianese runbEng. Lumpia was brought to Semarang, Central Java, by a Chinese immigrant named Tjoa Thay Yoe, who arrived around the end of the 1800s. This is according to local legend that is passed down through the city. At Pasar Johar in Semarang at the time, Tjoa was a vendor selling a range of pork-based dishes as well as bamboo shoots. At that point, he got to know Wasih, a local Javanese lady who worked as a food seller, selling dishes with potatoes and prawns. After marrying, Thay Yoe and Wasih went on to make and market cuisine, jointly producing and selling lumpia to villages. The dish became widespread overtime and a large part of Asian culture. Mainly being a huge part of Philippine culture.

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 pound ground pork
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- ½ cup minced carrots
- ½ cup chopped green onions
- ½ cup thinly sliced green cabbage
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro (Optional)
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce
- 30 lumpia wrappers
- 2 cups vegetable oil for frying, or as needed







## The Battle Between Students and Alarms

By: Emma Way

Hitting snooze in the morning can be hard to avoid, especially when the first bell rings at 7:25. Alarms are common among teenagers getting up for school, and are viewed as an important tool to get to class on time.

While hitting the snooze button a few times might make one feel like they are getting more sleep, it actually causes more sleep deprivation long term. Mrs. Prpich, a teacher at Waterford High School, says, "There are no good effects to hitting snooze, it's procrastination."

In one of her classes, AP Psychology, sleep is a topic of discussion. It is said that the quality of sleep that you get in those few extra minutes is actually not as beneficial as you might think. You are better off to wake up at the time you force yourself from bed, and stay asleep for those few minutes you would normally use snooze.

Along with hitting snooze, a lack of sleep is common. Less sleep is seen as something to be proud of if you can function with less than the recommended amount, 7-8 hours, but we are the only species that deprives itself of sleep purposely. If you are constantly waking up late or sleep deprived, you are creating unnecessary

stress, mentally and physically. It is better to be proud of getting more sleep, rather than less.

The effects of sleep deprivation can be extremely damaging. It affects our entire body, from the health of our immune system and our mood to the longevity of our life. "Sleep is the bottom of our health pyramid, affecting everything around it," says Prpich.

The way students learn can also be greatly affected by a lack of sleep. When students lose important hours of sleep, they tend to lack focus, creativity, and have an inability to store memories. Students should make sleep more of a priority.

While the average amount of sleep recorded for Waterford students is 7 hours, there are some exceptions. Taken from a poll of 40 students, 4 hours of sleep per night was the least recorded, while the most was 10 hours. There is a massive gap between the two, and most others fall in the middle.

Depending on extracurricular activities, sports, home life, and responsibilities, some students have less time to sleep than others.

Some students argue that school should start later, in order for our students to have a better learning experience. Jeremiah Leguerre, a senior, says, "I think school should start later because I won't be as focused in school if I'm too tired. If it starts later, students will have more time to get ready and eat breakfast."

Addi Brothers, a sophomore at Waterford, agrees. She says, "Kids at Waterford would be more focused during the day if school started later than it does right now."

In recent years, the states California and Florida are the first to require later school times. This was in response to research about the effects of sleep deprivation in students at public schools. They claim that the difference is extremely beneficial, and

the students have gotten more sleep and better grades since.

One reason for the lack of sleep in teens, as well as children, is the abundance of screen time taking place before bed and during the day. The light emitting off of the screens can cause the suppression of melatonin in the body, which can be extremely harmful to the sleep acquired at night.

The article "Sleep" stated, "Your body won't begin producing melatonin the minute you step away from the screen. Your brain takes some time to realize that it's dark and it's time for bed. It may take two to three hours before the process of creating melatonin begins."

Strangely, some students have become accustomed to the light emission of their phones. Senior Amarys Jiminez says, "I stay on my phone up until I go to bed at night, but I get 8 hours every day."

Depending on individual preferences and needs of students, their education and well-being can fluctuate.



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# November and December Recap!



Girls on The Run and other community members participating in WHS's Senior Class Turkey Trot!



Students carving pumpkins.



Tim Fioravanti and the band performing at WHS's Winter Concert.



Connor Motzko with the slap for WHS's Winter Concert.



Senior girls at Superlative Night!



Jaydev Villa at Stonington soccer game



Junior Girls posing for a photo after school.



Girls cross-country at Ledyard meet



Students holding a donut pinata they made for the Pinata Decorating Contest

Want to see more pictures from our year?  
Buy the 2023-2024 yearbook!



