

WESTFORD ACADEMY GHOSTWRITER



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Priceless

Donescu leaves mark on WA with new mascot design and mural

SOPHIA KEANG
GRADUATING EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
SRIVAS ARUN
CO-NEWS EDITOR

As she walked through the halls, her peers and teachers congratulated her. After months of meetings with the administration and tireless nights of redrawing the new ghost, senior Julia Donescu's

work on her unique mascot submission had finally paid off.

Earlier this year, WA officially announced the new school mascot, changing "the Grey Ghost" to simply "the Ghost". Out of the 40 WPS student mascot submissions, senior Julia Donescu's design was ultimately chosen to be

WA's official mascot.

While many students and faculty were not pleased with changing the new mascot due to tradition and the time the process took, many have begun to embrace it. For the few weeks after the mascot change, Donescu became a household name to student

organizations around the school. Over the school year, she has made numerous variations of the new mascot for WA organizations like the school's Mock Trial Club, WA Choir, the WA Ghostwriter, and the Westford Youth Lacrosse Program.

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Photo by Kate Kelly

Donescu works on her mural in the main gym.

23 Questions with valedictorian & salutatorian

PRAVAR MUKKALA
CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

It is that time of year where senior spirit runs high and conversations about senior futures and achievements dominate. At the forefront of these conversations are those who have accomplished

JAMES FARLEY
CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

much over their high school careers, including this year's valedictorian, Alison Chen, and salutatorian, Charles Lin.

The Ghostwriter was able to conduct interviews with both Chen and Lin, where

each was asked 23 Questions about themselves, recognizing the Class of 2023.

Visit our website, waghostwriter.com, to view the videos and flip to pages 18 and 19 to read the Ghostwriter's Q&As with them.

DuBois retires from Nabnasset Elementary



Photo by Noah Brown

DuBois in her office.

NOAH BROWN
SOCIAL MEDIA & GRAPHIC DESIGN
EDITOR

During the school day, the small, narrow halls of Nabnasset are filled with happy children and messages of kindness and compassion. These feelings are created by the environment, the teachers, and the staff, including the long-time Nabnasset principal, Susan DuBois.

After an extraordinary 36-year career as an educator, DuBois will be retiring at the end of the 2022-2023 school year. DuBois will continue to work with Nina Balfe, who will become the new principal, over the summer. However, DuBois's long-standing career and heartfelt legacy will be held forever in the history of Nabnasset.

DuBois, born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania then raised in West Point, New York, grew

up with a father in the military academy and a mother who was an educator. Having a childhood with educator parents allowed DuBois to see firsthand what being an educator was all about and how much it meant to the people around them. Motivated by her childhood experiences, her goal was to become an educator just like her parents were, and since then she has made this dream come true.

DuBois went through high school and then started at a private women's college called Cedar Crest College in Pennsylvania, later moving on to Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) for a master's in guidance and counseling. After that, she studied at George Washington University (GWU) and got an Education Specialist Degree in Administration (EDS).

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Plankey: four years of advocating for student voice at state level

SAANVI ARORA
CO-NEWS EDITOR

It is well-known that the nation's public education system has room for improvement. This is why senior Eric Plankey has spent the majority of his high school years looking at weaker spots and finding ways to fix them, prioritizing student voice above all else. With his positions as student Member on the Massachusetts Board of Education, founder and director of the Student Union, chair of WA's Student Senate, and chair of the State Student Advisory Council, Plankey is aiming to make a real difference in the field of education reform.

Plankey gained an interest in education reform when, during his freshman year, he noticed severe budget cuts occurring in Westford, and how they were affecting educators in the district. Plankey watched several of his previous teachers get laid off and wanted to know why this was happening.

"I heard a story of my sixth

grade ELA teacher running down the hall crying after she got laid off, and that really stuck with me," Plankey said. "And so once I peeled back the curtain for myself, I realized that students need to have a say in the educational process. Starting the Student Senate was the first step."

WA's Student Senate is a branch of student government that works towards bringing students into the forefront of the decision making process in their schools. They discuss issues within the school system that they are passionate about, while also meeting with local leaders, like school administrators, school committee members, and selectboard members, so they know what changes the students want made.

Over the past year, the Student Senate has been working on summarizing the Student Handbook created by administration into main points and looking at what improvements should be made



Photo provided by Eric Plankey

Plankey attends a Board of Education meeting.

from feedback given by the students.

After installing several Student Senates around the state, Plankey helped organize the Student Union of Massachusetts, a coalition

of all the Student Senates. The students in the union are dedicated to fighting for local education reform, focusing this year on helping students set up more Student Senates over Massachusetts, and

creating a road map to net zero, a step-by-step plan outlining how towns can reduce their carbon emissions to nothing by 2050. One of the most notable positions that Plankey holds is being a student member on the Massachusetts Board of Education.

With this role, he has full voting rights on any topic being discussed, which he believes is another way to bring students into conversations with the board.

"I think that the student position is something really

unique because unlike a lot of the other positions, which are decided by the governor, I have a group of people that I am responsible for," Plankey said. "I am representing almost a million students all over the state, and I have to keep their interests in mind."

According to Plankey, he is able to accomplish this goal with the State Student Advisory Council. The idea is to allow for the student member on the Board of Education to bounce around ideas discussed at the board meetings. They also work on creating annual reports breaking down important topics that need to be addressed throughout the state.

"We all know that things can be better in public education, but it's about having the skills and language necessary to actually make change on those issues," Plankey said. "For me, having that language is the definition of empowerment."

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One last quote: cheers to the Ghostwriter

SOPHIA KEANG
GRADUATING EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

It's currently 7:46 p.m. and this article was supposed to be completed by last week. That pretty much sums up my time at the *Ghostwriter*. Joking. I was pretty good with my deadlines. However, the writer's block I experienced was a daily occurrence during my time at the paper. I actually thought of what to write during my AP exam yesterday, so I apologize to my teacher.

To preface this column, I've been writing for the *Ghostwriter* since my freshman year. It's probably the student organization I spent the most amount of time and energy on throughout high school. From staff writer to Opinions & Reviews Editor to Managing Editor to now former Editor-in-Chief, it feels like life is moving way too fast.

People always ask me why I decided to take up journalism in the first place, and for the longest time, I didn't even know why myself. I always gave the most blunt answer I could think of, saying it was because no other electives interested

me when we had to select courses back in eighth grade. And the rest was history.

I had never planned to continue the paper this long. But I just never seemed to be able to part ways. Every person who has taken Journalism before me has had the same

Taking Journalism was one of the best choices I made in high school, and I'd do it again.

lesson about how this class teaches you how to manage your time, communicate and collaborate with your peers, and be a leader. And all of those are true. I learned the most useful life skills from this class compared to any other course I've taken in the past 12 years I've gone to school.

The *Ghostwriter* helped me find my voice in myself and my community. As cliché as it sounds, I don't know who I would be or what else I'd do if I wasn't a part of the paper. The countless amount of late nights I've spent finishing

up an article for a deadline and frantically texting the other editors at 11 p.m. to edit my stories has been, at times, both frustrating and rewarding. Every student journalist can relate to that feeling of satisfaction when people text you or come up to you the next day to tell you they read your article

that will last a lifetime in that newsroom. From working on the WA Grads account on Instagram since freshman year—yes, that Instagram account was my blood, sweat, and tears—to simply interviewing peers and faculty for articles, I will cherish these experiences as I move on to the next chapter in my life.

I will never forget being a part of the *Ghostwriter*, and I'd recommend being a part of the paper in any way possible to all students. I know this sounds biased coming from a former editor, but taking Journalism was one of the best choices I made in high school, and I'd do it again.

So thank you to all the editors, staff writers, the readers, and of course the advisers, Ms. Fonden and Mr. Holbrook, for making the past four years a time I'll never forget. And hopefully my work as a student journalist doesn't end here.

and liked it. And while I try my best not to get caught up too much in others' validation as the aspiring unbiased writer I try to be, it is nice once in a while.

I've cultivated friendships and memories

JOIN THE GHOSTWRITER!

The *Ghostwriter* is a collaborative club where students can expand their writing, speaking, graphic design, and photography skills. We meet every Tuesday in room 250 from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Scan with your smartphone to see
waghostwriter.com.



GHOSTWRITER MISSION STATEMENT

The *Ghostwriter* strives to inform, entertain, and address the issues in the Westford Academy community with integrity. It is our mission to accurately deliver relevant news, represent the voice of the students, to celebrate the successes of the school, and to engage the community in debate and discussion.

The *Ghostwriter*, as a student newspaper, keeps in mind these goals:

- To increasingly use aspects of multimedia in stride with current trends in professional journalism.
- To deliver fair and unbiased coverage of school and community news and events.
- To keep integrity, respect, and ethics at the forefront of our reporters' and editors' minds.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Submissions to the *Ghostwriter* are welcome from members of the WA community. Please email thewaghostwriter@gmail.com to set up a meeting with the advisers and the editorial board to discuss any necessary revisions.

All submissions are subject to edits and clarifications. Letters to the editor are published as independent works that are not affiliated with the *Ghostwriter* staff.

Sophia,



We are so proud of all you've accomplished! We cannot wait to see what lies ahead at UPenn. We wish you the best of luck and we love you.

Love,
Mom, Dad, Stephen, and Tera

The privilege many WA students don't realize

SOPHIA KEANG
GRADUATING EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

It is no secret that Westford is a distinctly “well-off” town. With a median Westford household income of nearly \$162,000 and a median home value of \$590,800, the town is clearly home to those who are able to live a “comfortable lifestyle”.

When I moved to Westford in the fifth grade, it was already clear to me that I felt so out of place. As my new classmates shared what they did over the summer, kids mentioned their trips to their house on Cape Cod, their annual Disney World vacation, and let's not forget their lavish travels to the world's most exotic countries and islands. And what did I do? Well, besides moving to a new house, I went to my old neighborhood's community pool. That's what I shared.

I had never truly realized there was an economic disconnect between Westford residents and the rest of the world until now, when I've reached my senior year of high school. While I had always known that everyone came from “different backgrounds,” I didn't realize how big of a difference it truly was.

Many WA students have the privilege of not having to worry about such financial burdens students in neighboring towns and cities have. While prioritizing education is one of many WA students' top priorities, more often than not, we fail to realize the privilege of having that be one of the most

important things in our lives. Understanding that there are obviously other external factors that can still affect WA students, whether that be a family illness or a loss of a loved one, it would be ignorant not to mention that our problems are valid. However, failing to acknowledge the economic leverage many WA students have is similarly ignorant.

Oftentimes, it can seem like WA students are carbon copies of one another: so extremely academically focused, believing that the only way to succeed is to get into a “good college,” whatever that may mean. And the thing is, our parents support that. They will do anything for us to stay focused in school, paying hundreds of dollars for SAT prep classes and spending thousands so we can attend the “prestigious” high school summer program.

Before moving to Westford, I never knew people, personally at least, who used housemaids on a weekly basis or hired people to shovel their driveways for them in the winter. I'd only ever known the housemaids themselves. Additionally, many of my peers would

discuss the daily dinner plans that consisted of them eating out at restaurants often. Before I started to manage my own finances in terms of gas money and spending money, I'd never realized how much money it costs to eat out at these fancy restaurants my classmates would go to in Boston. A lot of WA students grow up believing that these things are normal, but we're just numb to the privilege. Additionally,

the amount of money spent on kids' extracurricular activities such as playing a club sport, taking dance lessons, music lessons, or even participating in the robotics team can be costly.

The amount of money parents invest in their kids is actually eye-opening to the fact that there is a real economic divide between Westford residents and the rest of the world. Think about it: the city of Lowell is only a 15 to 20-minute drive from Westford where the median household income is only \$64,489 compared to Westford's, which is \$161,076. This is nearly a difference of \$100,000.

Because of the privilege we have, we don't have to worry about getting a job to help pay the bills. We get a job so we can earn money for a new pair

of shoes, trendy makeup, or gas so we can hang out with our friends and spend more money. While I'm not saying we aren't working hard for our earnings, we simply have a different purpose for it—and that's where our privilege comes in. We live in a town where it is normal, or at least it's not surprising to know, that people own vacation homes with boats.

As we come from an already financially stable background, we fail to realize our privilege. I know this sounds like our parents lecturing us about “being grateful”, but we should. We have the PRIVILEGE to be so talented on the piano, in soccer, or simply not have to worry about finances until later in our lives.

While our parents remind us every day to be grateful for everything we have, it often goes in one ear and out the other because of how repetitive it becomes. But they're right. WA students become too caught up in their academics and fulfilling their resumes with a surplus of extracurricular activities that we forget that there's a whole world outside getting an A in calculus or becoming president of that club we joined in freshman year.

What I'm trying to say is that we should acknowledge this privilege. I think WA students tend to isolate themselves in the “Westford bubble” and we sometimes forget that there's a world outside of academics and winning the next tennis match. There's more to life and we have to understand that.

Our educators deserve better

DEEPA GAUTAM
CO-MANAGING EDITOR

It goes without saying that teachers are the backbone of any student's education. From kindergarten all the way to graduation day, teachers support us from their classrooms. Whether it is staying after school, coaching sports, or advising clubs, their dedication is what sets up students for success. And although no one seems to dispute the hard work of teachers, their efforts still tend to go unappreciated. It is for this reason that over the past few months, waves of teachers across the country have gone on strike, demanding changes to an educational system that is in dire need of repair.

A glimpse of this movement was seen in Westford when educators from the Westford Public Schools system stood outside the Annual Town Meeting on March 25, signs of protest in hand. And although the crowd was composed of everyone from teaching assistants and school nurses to high school teachers, their purpose was the same: advocating against years of inadequate funding and pay. In any case, the message is clear. Teachers are taking a stand, and whether it's across the country or here in Westford, it's time for us to listen.

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"WA students become too caught up in their academics [...] that we forget that there's a whole world outside getting an A."

Logan,



We couldn't be more proud of you! Believe in yourself, chase your dreams, stay humble and be true to you what you do because happiness is the key to your success! We love you beyond words!

Love,
Mom, Dad, Lily, Chase, Papi & Roxy

Above average results, below average pay: why educators deserve more

Continued from page 3

This is nothing new. Since 2001, the country has seen a 19% decrease in the number of students with a bachelor's degree in education, with less willing to work as teachers, due to stressful working conditions and inadequate salaries. Recently, this growing decline of the field has only been exacerbated in light of COVID-19 disruptions and economic difficulties, with nearly 44% of public schools reporting at least one teaching vacancy. The lack of quality teachers threatens to damage America's public education system, inflicting long term consequences to teachers and students alike.

One of the most pressing reasons for this growing shortage, and one that Westford is currently facing, is a lack of funding towards educator salaries. In negotiating a new three-year contract for 2023 and beyond, the Westford Education Association (WEA) has expressed several concerns when it comes to teacher salaries.

According to the WEA, teachers and nurses in Westford are paid 5% less than teachers in similar districts, such as Needham and Wellesley. Additionally, the maximum salary for a teaching assistant (TA) in Westford is about \$25,000 a year, while the average living wage in Middlesex County for an adult with no children is nearly double, at around \$40,000. This will, in the end, hurt not only our teachers but the school district as well—if salaries are

so low, educators will be less inclined to teach here.

Similarly, another major concern has been the cost-of-living adjustment for salaries (COLA), which is meant to counteract the impact of inflation. According to the WEA, the currently offered COLA, which is less than 2.5% for teachers, counselors, and nurses, is not a sufficient raise when considering the current living wage and the competitive salaries of other districts.

For a town that takes pride in its high-performing schools, these statistics reveal a less favorable reality for the educators behind the rankings: how can we expect to maintain a high achieving district with underfunded teachers and schools?

Whether they are TAs, nurses, or teachers, each play a critical role in a student's education. As a student, I have seen how great teachers have the capacity to change lives and encourage success in a way that others cannot. As someone who has family members working within the education field, I've also seen the long hours that go into grading, planning lessons, and genuinely caring about their students, both inside and

outside the classroom.

Yet, despite low salaries, constant pressure, and possible burnout, our TA's, nurses, and teachers embrace the hard work, citing their students as motivation. Paying our teachers living wages—and in doing so, acknowledging their hard work—should be a priority. Not only do better wages result in a more desirable position, but have also proven to produce higher quality teachers, and even a 5% to 10% increase in student performance. With all the time and effort teachers constantly sacrifice in the best interest of their students, a living wage should be the least we do.

The consequences of this far-reaching issue are not only unfair to educators, but student learning opportunities as well.

prioritized in a town like Westford.

To add on, during the fiscal year 2021, Westford's per pupil expenditure was \$16,256, which is almost \$2,200 less than comparable districts. Although budget cuts are inevitable, the way our funds are allocated also reveals where our priorities lie. And in a town where families come ready to invest in their child's education,

the lack of funds towards our schools and staff seems rather ironic.

At the same time, balancing the constraints and limits of the town budget and keeping pace with comparable districts is admittedly a complex task. In a statement released by the School Committee regarding ongoing negotiations with the WEA, it was shared that, although the town aims to support its educators and reach a mutually beneficial contract, it is not possible in the current operating budget for the Westford Public Schools to accommodate certain salary increases.

Amidst this ongoing debate over the contract, it is clear that there is no easy nor immediate solution. But acknowledging the hard work of our teachers as Westford gains a glimpse into the nationwide teacher crisis is crucial for the future of education throughout the country.

On the local level, supporting this movement may start with becoming more involved within the town budget process, whether that means tuning in to school committee meetings or voting during the annual town meeting. Bringing attention to this issue, voicing support, and signing WEA petitions are all ways to make it clear that schools and educators deserve to be a priority. As residents, students, and parents, it is our job to speak out and support the educators who have supported us for so long.



A group of teachers protest outside WA prior to the Annual Town Meeting.

Photo by Deepa Gautam

Maddie,

Maddie, you are a kind, smart and talented girl. We are so proud of you and cannot wait to watch you continue your journey in South Carolina!



Xoxo Mom, Dad, Sam and all your four legged friends

Online sports gambling is on the rise at Westford Academy

JAMES McDERMOTT
Co-Sports Editor

Last names have been removed to protect sources' identities.

Gambling has been a prominent aspect of sports culture for the majority of history. Ever since gambling online through sportsbooks became officially legalized as of March 10, 2023 in Massachusetts, the volume has increased significantly. After evolving to the point where one can gamble from the comfort of their home, the United States put up record-setting gambling numbers in 2022, reaching roughly 55 billion dollars in revenue. This is not only a national development, as the gambling addiction has made its presence felt inside the walls of Westford Academy. There have been many students and faculty members throughout WA who have indulged in their fair share of sports betting. Of these people, there are many different forms and experiences to be shared. Juniors Perry and Ethan have both been experimenting with sports gambling for about a year and a half, beginning together in the fall of 2021. At the time, sports betting was not yet legalized in Massachusetts, so they placed their bets in New Hampshire on DraftKings until it became legal in March. Perry and Ethan have both been disciplined about how much money they risk and they both agree that they are just in it for the fun. "It is a fun way to keep track

of other games going on and to stay engaged in sports, especially when your team isn't playing," Perry said. "It is also a nice way to feel like part of a community." Perry and Ethan also recognize the dangers of betting on sports and how it takes discipline to not go down a risky path. They mostly focus on football and basketball and only put down small wagers. "It is important that people take into account the risks associated with sports betting, as it naturally can be very addictive," Perry said. "I think that if someone is a fan of sports, and understands the risks and how to combat this, it is not necessarily a bad thing." In December of 2022, junior Shane began his journey with sports gambling. He utilizes the up-and-coming app Fliff. Fliff provides a less risky platform, which can be very beneficial for anyone who is new to sports betting. As long as there is less than five dollars in an account, Fliff enters a dollar per day in credit into the account. Once the account exceeds five dollars, it is no longer given a free dollar every day. This allows people to enter no money into an account and still make money. Once the account reaches 50 dollars, a withdrawal can be made. Shane enjoys utilizing the app to stay engaged in current sport events, but he also makes sure he is smart about how much he risks. "It's fun to win and it makes me more involved in

teams and players," Shane said. "You just have to make sure it does not become a problem." On the faculty side, English teacher Russell Coward has also spent many years betting on sports. He used to make the drive to New Hampshire in order to legally place bets, and now is able to stay in Massachusetts. Coward only bets for the enjoyment of staying involved in current sporting events and even uses it as a way to keep in touch with his good friends. On the other hand, Coward is also slightly concerned about the effect it might have on the younger population. "It's a lot like drinking and marijuana. I think that you are going to have a solid percentage of kids who are going to abuse it and are going to get in trouble," Coward said. "Unfortunately that burden will probably fall on the parents, but if they don't have that support they could get into some serious debt." Sports gambling has definitely infiltrated Westford Academy and schools around the world. There are many individuals who are extremely knowledgeable about sports, but that does not eliminate the risk of gambling. Sports betting can be a fun and even profitable activity when used properly and in moderation. "Unfortunately, there is going to be a certain amount of people that are going to abuse it. As far as the legality of it, I see no reason why it should not be because most people will be somewhat responsible," Coward said.

Stony Brook teacher Murphy donates kidney

VICTORIA FARLEY
Co-Sports Editor

Aimee Murphy has lived in Westford her whole life. She taught fifth grade at Abbot Elementary School for a number of years and has been teaching sixth grade English at Stony Brook Middle School for the past eight years. Throughout her teaching career, she has made a positive impact on all of her students. Just recently, she has expanded her impact on others, selflessly donating a kidney to her friend's son. The whole process began in December of 2020 when the son of one of Murphy's closest friends was diagnosed with kidney disease. Murphy's friend has been a strong supporter of her throughout her whole life, and Murphy found this as a chance to return the favor. "She has been a dear friend of mine for over 20 years. She also became my mother's caregiver for over 10 years until her death. She saved me in so many ways," Murphy said. "I was able to still teach, be a mother to my three kids, and try to have a typical family." Originally, the boy was treated with medication, then after Christmas in 2020, he began dialysis. Dialysis is a process that removes unnecessary liquids and waste products from one's blood when the kidneys are failing to. This is when the search for a kidney donor started. Murphy was quick to

help as she reached out to the Dartmouth Hitchcock donor team in Lebanon, New Hampshire on Dec. 29 for an interview, putting her name in as a person who could possibly donate a kidney. The odds were not on their side as there was only a 10% chance of being a perfect match for the kidney. However, Murphy passed the kidney function test, which meant that she and her friend's son had matching kidneys, officially allowing Murphy to donate her's. "The purpose of the kidney function test is to see what percentage each of my kidneys were functioning," Murphy said. "The differential needs to be 5% or less to donate. Most people have kidneys that can work 70 to 30 or 60 to 40, and it never affects them. But to donate, my kidneys had to be close to 50-50." The surgery took place on Wednesday, May 10, and everything went according to plan, allowing for Murphy to currently be recovering at home in good health. While recovering, Murphy is currently unable to lift anything above ten pounds for about six weeks in risk of hernia. She also has to be aware of her medication and food intake. "I can't take Aleve, ibuprofen, or other NSAIDS," Murphy said. "Those medications make the kidneys work harder to process and since I now have one. Continued on page 13

Dearest Prajna,

We are proud of your accomplishments and wishing you a great future ahead!



With lots of love from Mom, Dad and Praneel!

Joshua,

We are so proud of you and cannot wait to see where this next chapter takes you. Congratulations to you and the Class of 2023!



Love, Dad, Mom, Olivia, and Faith

Special Ed. teacher Gekle retires DuBois leaves an unforgettable legacy

ELLA DiRUGGIERO
STAFF WRITER

After teaching for a total of ten years, Special Education teacher Curtis Gekle has decided it is time for him to retire. For most of his time at WA, Gekle taught freshman math, and worked with juniors and seniors preparing them for their life after high school.

Working in a school environment is a great experience. Over time, teachers create relationships with students and have the opportunity to watch them

rambunctious and leave for their Senior Capstones as well-mannered young adults.”

Apart from watching students grow throughout their high school years, Gekle also enjoys watching students accomplish their small but incremental “aha” moments. He also enjoys working with staff, students, and families at WA.

After his retirement, Gekle will not stop working completely, but he will be using his time differently in a post-teaching environment. Gekle said that his life



Photo by Ella DiRuggiero

Gekle stands in front of his classroom whiteboard.

grow into young adults. Being a part of a student’s learning experience is a special opportunity for all teachers, so leaving this environment can be difficult.

“I’ve had many opportunities teaching freshmen and having those same students again as seniors,” Gekle said. “These freshmen arrive in WA a little

is going to be very different after retirement, given that he has worked continuously since he was 14.

“Thank you to the students who allowed me to play a small role in their academic life,” Gekle said. “The WA staff and administration have been a pleasure to work with.”

Continued from page 1

During her years of college at VCU, DuBois landed a spot in her substitute teacher job in Williamsburg, Virginia, and got her first taste in education while moving across every academic subject in school.

“It was the best thing I ever did, I did it all [...] it was a great [and] invaluable learning experience,” DuBois said.

After working as a substitute teacher for a year, DuBois transitioned to teaching second graders. Then she moved to Concord-Carlisle, taking roles as a kindergarten teacher and a language specialist, and then finally moving to Westford as a full-time assistant principal of Nabnasset School.

Unexpectedly, the original principal decided to retire the following year of DuBois’s arrival. That being the case, DuBois took on the role of principal of Nabnasset in 2002.

“I had a lot to learn from her and I was really enjoying the job [...] but I thought, why not, and went for [becoming the principal],” DuBois said.

Ever since then, DuBois has been working hard as the Nabnasset principal, representing the slogan that all the Westford Schools follow: “Shaping the Future One Child at a Time”. From teaching young students about

gratitude to working with the outside community to make the school a better place, DuBois has collaborated to make Nabnasset an impactful stepping stone to the rest of the students’ lives.

“You have to make sure that our kids are well cared for [...] We know that students have to feel good in order to learn, they have to feel safe,” DuBois said.



DuBois poses in front of lockers at Nab.

Caring about the students and faculty members always was a top priority for DuBois. She is not only grateful for the experiences that she has been a part of but also for the memories that she created for the numerous Nabnasset alumni. Many students today remember good memories from the school as well as the caring attitude towards every student from DuBois.

Many former students remember her well, but a person that remembers

her vividly is Former Superintendent Bill Olsen. During his 49-year education career, Olsen spent much of his time working with DuBois or alongside her. Recollecting the times spent together in the education field Olsen always had something good to say about her.

“DuBois is solid wood and could always be counted on for anything,” Olsen said. “She motivates, inspires, and believes in everyone around her.”

After she retires, DuBois is planning on traveling the world with her husband, especially to Italy, while also staying in the area and doing the things that she loves including biking, skiing, reading, and gardening.

Now looking back on her initial goals and legacy that DuBois wanted to leave, she had many things to say about her long career and past experiences at Nabnasset.

“It has been a job that I have enjoyed immensely. I have learned a great deal personally and professionally along the way. I’ve come into contact with people that have taught me wonderful lessons that I’ll carry with me. [...] I truly love this place and I can’t imagine not being here anymore,” DuBois said.

Photo by Noah Brown

SARAH AND MEGAN,

We are so proud of you both! Don't ever forget your time at Westford Academy but be open to all of the great things to come. You are ready to do amazing things, and be out on your own, while still knowing that your family (and your twin!) will always be there for you. We will miss you so much but we look forward to watching you succeed in college!



LOVE ALWAYS, MOM, DAD, EMILY, AND MATT

Scully wins teaching award

DEIB forums: a new asset at WA

JACK ZWIRN
OPINIONS & BROADCAST EDITOR

WA teacher Stephen Scully is set to receive the 2023 William Spratt award for excellence in teaching social studies. The award's recipient was announced at the Westford School Committee meeting on Monday, April 24 by Superintendent Christopher Chew.

In order to be nominated, one must be a social studies teacher for grades 9-12. In addition, they must also meet certain qualifications decided by the Massachusetts Council for the Social Studies (MCSS). These qualifications include making the content creative and interesting for students, being involved in activities outside of the classroom such as workshops or being on committees, and some other qualifications.

Earning this award was never a goal for Scully. While some may take this award as a confidence booster, Scully is not the kind of person who lets his accomplishments get to him. He recognizes his achievement but

does not want it to change anything about the way he teaches.

"I appreciate the acknowledgement, but to be praised is awkward sometimes. I'd rather lift kids up than put myself above them," Scully said.

Scully's teaching style is experiential learning or learning through reflection

and experience. The learning done in his classes are not traditional lectures but instead are creative, hands-on activities to keep students engaged.

"Experiential learning to me is creating hands-on activities for students, providing them an immersive environment so they can see, touch, and

feel the past," Scully said.

According to Scully, he has the perfect classroom for experiential learning, as he is surrounded by his collection of antiques.

"History is best taught through anecdotal stories. [...] And I've always collected antiques, which are a great way to create these stories through experiential learning," Scully said.



Photo by Jack Zwirn

Scully surrounded by his antiques.

KATE KELLY
CO-FEATURES EDITOR

On Tuesday, March 28, a group of both students and teachers met in the auditorium after school. They didn't need to be there, but they chose to be. It was only an hour period, but within that time, a new outlet of communication was brought to Westford Academy.

The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging forum was organized by Principal James Antonelli, along with educational leadership professional Dr. Michelle Shannon and the Anti-Defamation League, also known as ADL. Its purpose was to give students an opportunity to voice their personal opinions and perspectives, hopefully using this information to better improve the community.

The forum was simple, just a meeting in the PAC with a group of students who had heard about the event and found interest. A list of planned questions displayed on the projector gave students the rest of the time for open conversation. Students passed around microphones and shared their varying views.

Shannon started the meeting by addressing ground rules, emphasizing the fact that "excellence without equity is not excellence". The bulleted list of intentionally planned questions varied in topics, asking about pros and cons students find learning at Westford Academy.

"I thought it went well because the feedback that I received was really positive," Antonelli said. "I think that there was a nice cross selection of people there that were able to share their thoughts as a representative number of our student body."

The process leading up to this forum started far before this year. Antonelli and Shannon became close around the time of an incident at a basketball game against Wayland where WA students were caught making racist commentary. Both the school and community found themselves in reflective situations, and Shannon was a source of guidance during this time.

"She helps me to see different angles and she helps me to understand where I'm coming from," Antonelli said. "I think we collaborate really well together."

Although it was the student ADL that had a huge part in supporting the school's DEIB, as well. They educate the student population on terminology and issues as well as spotlight stories that are less heard and often overlooked. This group supported the forum and is enthusiastic about working on upcoming events in the future school year.

"As ADL continues to grow I think that we continue to create safe spaces that allow for uncomfortable conversations about racism, sexism, homophobia, and so forth," ADL officer Sofia

Gutierrez said.

While all of the slideshow points weren't covered at the initial forum, much of the discussion was centered around the pressures WA students face. The external versus internal forces were expressed and emphasized by facilitators and students alike.

"I think the forum was a really good opportunity for students to have these important conversations with each other," Gutierrez said. "However, I can't wait until we have future conversations where we can go into deeper conversations about other issues and topics in the school."

However, Antonelli does in fact hope to have one to two more Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging forums before the end of the year, and is determined to finish this important conversation from the first afternoon as well as others. The first DEIB forum opened the gateway to many conversations to come.

Antonelli also wanted to develop some other themes, not just DEIB, but other topics that we can have open forums about.

"When I think about WA, I think about a place where I want people to like coming every single day," Antonelli said. "I know not everybody's going to feel that way, people are going to have peaks and valleys, [...] but as a principal you want students to enjoy their experience here."

DEAR EMILY



We are extremely proud of your outstanding achievements and unwavering dedication throughout your high school journey. We have every confidence that you will continue to excel in all your future endeavors. May your college years be filled with exciting opportunities, personal growth, and continuous success.

LOVE, MOM AND DAD

Congratulations,
Maggie!



Way to go!!
Love, Mom and Caitlin

Arnav Kumar finds passion in concert photography

DEEPA GAUTAM
Co-MANAGING EDITOR

The beat drops and the crowd roars as the artist steps onto the stage. Lights flash and a flurry of fans sing along to the lyrics. In the midst of this vibrant concert is senior Arnav Kumar, camera in hand. With a click of his camera, the moment freezes in time, and he captures the electrifying energy of a live concert.

For Kumar, it was the summer before junior year that he began exploring this unique medium of art, taking photos of his friends and family. Now, having amassed nearly 50,000 followers on his Instagram account, @AKflix, Kumar specializes in concert photography, connecting with musical artists and sharing his stunning images with the world. However, Kumar’s journey to success didn’t start with a grand plan or a professional camera; it began as a simple fascination with his father’s camera one summer.

“I had just found my dad’s camera, started playing around with it and that’s when I really started taking interest in photography,” Kumar said. “I learned mostly by myself, and watched a lot of videos on YouTube on all the techniques for taking shots and editing. As time progresses you figure things out, and I really had to keep working on it and practice consistently.”

It was over that summer Kumar discovered a fun way to incorporate this newfound hobby into his everyday life: taking photos at gatherings with

his friends. In fact, his first ever post as “AKflix” features the 16th birthday party of senior Unnati Bhat, one of Kumar’s close friends.

“The first time Arnav made an appearance as a photographer was at my 16th surprise birthday party in July of 2021. I had no idea what would become of this,” Bhat said. “Arnav captured the moments that I still cherish and am happy with in a way that I hadn’t seen in a way a lot of amateur photographers know how to do. We could all see that his hobby had real merit.”

As he began taking more photos, Kumar was drawn to the creative freedom that came with the editing process. Whether it be adjusting the saturation or manipulating colors, experimenting with different techniques allowed him to explore various styles of photography. In addition to being an artistic outlet, photography also proved to be a fulfilling way to connect with others as he shared his images with family and friends.

Through posting his photos of parties, football games, and even senior portraits, Kumar eventually became a sensation amongst his WA peers, growing the account’s following.

“I guess, sometimes, it can be kind of awkward, having a camera out in their faces,” Kumar said. “But, after the first couple of times, they just really appreciate the work at the end of the day. And it’s really cool to see that people

can be so happy over me kind of just clicking a few buttons.”

Yet, it wasn’t until he began taking pictures at live concerts that the casual hobby turned into a platform of thousands and a long-lasting passion. Even though it was difficult to put himself out there and get in contact with many of the bigger names, Kumar describes his first endeavors as an exciting experience.



Kumar smiles inside the WA library, camera in hand.

“The first concert I covered, I just rolled my camera and started trying things out. After I got home, I edited all the pictures, made a video, and then reached out to the artist’s manager,” Kumar said. “And, [the manager] was like, ‘Oh, your work is really cool,’ and that was when I started getting appreciation for my work.”

With the help of his friend, junior Ansh Patel, Kumar was able to get in touch with several high profile rappers

and take his camera, a Sony a6000, to other venues around Massachusetts. One of his first posts that gained significant attention were pictures and videos from an Afterlife Presents LLC show, which featured artists like Cheromani, Yvngxchris, Dev Stacks, Jaydes, and Rich Amiri.

“That show just had so much energy and AK [Arnav] captured that perfectly. We made a lot of connections at that concert which led to him ramping up and going to bigger venues,” Patel said. “But the traction from that show was when we really thought we could take this seriously and do the bigger concerts and make the bigger connections.”

Since then, Kumar has expanded the account to star multiple prominent rappers such as NAV, Jay Critch, and Lancey Foux. According to Bhat, the account’s growth was one that came with a lot of recognition throughout the school. And although Kumar had gained the support of his peers, the process didn’t come without challenges.

“Our whole group still knew Arnav as Arnav, our friend who takes pictures, not as AK, the photographer,” Bhat said. “But as Arnav gained presence some people started to stop seeing him as a person almost [...] and it was the name brand people cared more about. But, since then, he’s made a lot of changes, acquiring management,

reaching out to celebrity brands and networking to create more opportunities.”

Both Bhat and Patel point towards Kumar’s immense dedication and passion as the source of his success. While the account started as an outlet for a casual interest, its tremendous growth is the result of Kumar’s consistent efforts to improve his technique and adapt to the world of social media photography.

“Arnav is versatile in all extensions of the world and can adapt to many different settings and styles,” Bhat said. “He is really great at gauging what type of pictures will convey the exact feeling of that moment or event. His editing, cropping and lens choices only complement the moment rather than take away from it [...]. The ones who have supported him from the beginning are excited to see what he does next.”

In the future, Kumar hopes to expand his photography business, producing higher quality works, reaching out to even larger creators, and creating music videos for artists. For the next four years, Kumar is planning to major in computer science, but aims to keep his passion for the camera by his side.

“I am excited for [the] summer because I will have a lot of free time when it comes to working on different projects,” Kumar said. “I want to continue enjoying photography and just keep working my best on it.”

Photo provided by Arnav Kumar

Quinn,



We are so incredibly proud of all of your accomplishments and the person that you have become. You are a friend to everyone and always make everyone around you smile. Always stay true to who you are, the honest, loving, funny, bucket-hat wearing youngest brother. We are excited to see what the future brings for you at Providence College.

We love you,
Mom, Dad, Owen, and Griffin

Congratulations, Zoe



Your hard work and dedication have paid off and we are so proud of everything you have accomplished. We wish you luck on the next step of your journey. May it be exciting, fulfilling, and everything you dreamed of.

Love, Mom, Dad, Alec, and Samantha

Ryan and Baumert excited to take a gap year in Germany

JACK ZWIRN
OPINIONS & BROADCAST
EDITOR

Studying abroad is a dream for many students, and it is a great opportunity to immerse themselves in different cultures. Many WA students take advantage of the exchange programs offered by the school, but only the most dedicated end up going back. After graduation, seniors Charlotte Ryan and Liv Baumert will be taking a gap year in Germany. The friends plan to improve their German and continue to learn about German culture.

Baumert will spend a semester with her exchange partner Elina who she stayed with over the summer starting in August, while Ryan will be taking a full gap year, staying with a different host family than the one she stayed with during the exchange.

Located in Northeim, Lower Saxony, they will attend the Gymnasium Corvinianum (the Corvi), that the same school that WA partners with to orchestrate exchanges. They are not studying anything in particular while there, and will take more general education courses. Their main goal: to speak as close to 100% German as possible.

"I definitely want to get fluent. I think my German skills have improved a ton," Ryan said. "I think just being immersed in their culture is really going to help with my German, and I just love it there."

However, the trip is not

solely focused on academics. Both seniors want to explore not just Germany and its sites, such as Berlin and the German Alps, but also surrounding countries like Italy, Finland, Greece, France, Switzerland, Austria, and

in any of the foreign exchange programs, both Baumert and Ryan felt that their time in Germany was cut short and wanted to return as soon as possible.

"We both made this decision separately to go



Ryan and Baumert smile for a picture in a German room.

Sweden.

Baumert and Ryan made their decision for a few different reasons. The German Exchange left them wanting to return and when they became aware of this opportunity to take a gap year, they decided to take full advantage of it. Just like many WA students who participated

back to Germany, and it just happened to work out because we both went on the exchange together and we had the best time while we were there," Baumert said.

Not every graduating senior knows exactly what they want to do after high school, and not every senior goes directly to college. For Baumert, this

was a way to do what is best for herself, and her academic pursuits.

"I've always been nervous about college and I didn't really know what I wanted to do," Baumert said. "I love to travel so I figured I'd apply for the spring semester and see what happened. And then I got in."

Baumert will return to the United States after the fall semester to attend Brandeis University in the spring, where she will major in accounting, with hopes to study abroad in Scotland or Ireland.

For Ryan, there was a specific moment during the exchange that made her realize that this was the right decision.

"I had this moment where I realized that I didn't want to be there for just a month and I want to come back to experience what it would be like to be a student for a year," Ryan said. "It was the seniors' last day of school and they had a big celebration in the courtyard of their school. That was when I realized: I have to come back here."

Ryan leaves on Aug. 11 and will stay for both semesters before figuring out what the next step for her is.

"I'm not going to college here after my year abroad. I hope I can apply to some European universities. [...] My mom is from Finland, so maybe I can establish residency there before applying to them," Ryan said. "I have a one-way ticket to Europe, and I'll just see where life takes me."

Murphy takes spotlight at Ithaca College

SHAIVI SHAH
STAFF WRITER

For seven years, senior Colby Murphy has had a passion for theater. When he tried out and got in for the Blanchard Theatre Arts production of Grease, that was when the journey started for him.

Although he was only a dancer of an ensemble role, Murphy loved the idea of being on stage, under the lights; he was proud of himself that there was a selected cast and he had gotten a part in it. From there on, Murphy knew that theatre was his forte and decided to major in theater studies.

After being in several musicals and plays during his high school time, Murphy has made his final decision in going to Ithaca College in New York and was drawn to directorial studies and dramaturge, which include interpreting, editing, and adapting musicals and plays, because he wanted to explore the widths of directing big or small productions. He still wants to participate and act in productions, but he wants to focus his interest in directing first.

"Even though I'm going for theater studies, I'd still like to be a part of the smaller productions or even some of the bigger productions," Murphy said. "I've never directed musicals, [but] I would love to. I've directed only plays, which are still fun in themselves."

Continued to page 10

Brendan,



We are very proud of you. You're a great son and a terrific person. The sky is the limit. Wheels up!
Love,
Mom, Dad, Nolan, and Keegan

Nick,



You did it! You graduated high school and we are so proud of you. You have worked hard, learned a lot, and grown into an amazing person. You have a bright future ahead of you and we can't wait to see what you do next.
Always by your side with love!
Mama, Tata, Tom

continued from page 9

Although Murphy applied to seven colleges, he decided that Ithaca was the best for him. He found out about Ithaca through a friend who attended and graduated from there.

“I checked [Ithaca College] out and when I got there I knew I wanted to be there,” Murphy said. “It’s an amazing area and the program is one of the best in the U.S.”

In all of his time in high school, Murphy has participated in eleven WATA productions, including musicals, plays, and Blackbox shows. Murphy’s first breakthrough performance was last year’s *SpongeBob: The Musical*, which the performance arts teacher, Michael Towers, recognizes.

“He had a really, really strong growth run in the summer rising into his junior year. And then he just built right on the back of that with his role in *SpongeBob*,” Towers said.

Towers has been a great influence on Murphy; he has returned back to his theater classes mainly because of the atmosphere Towers has created for all of his theater students.

“Mr. Towers is a great leader and he’s so fun to work with, which makes the room even better,” Murphy said.

Towers has noticed Murphy’s hard work and dedication to theater arts. He has seen Murphy progress in a steady incline throughout his four years at WA.

“[Murphy is] a dedicated theater student, [...] a person who has worked here co-curricularly, and very diligently. He spends much of his time in this school year dedicated to theater [...],” Towers said.

Trethaway drops the mic at Elon University

VICTORIA FARLEY
CO-SPORTS EDITOR

From auditions and play rehearsals to late-night set builds, members of the Westford Academy Theater Arts Program (WATA) spend an extreme amount of time working together behind the scenes, to create long-lasting relationships. These bonds made with teachers, advisors, and peers are what allow for a successful performance on stage to happen.

For senior Lauren Trethaway, the connections she has created through theater have played a huge role in her life for the past twelve years, and will continue when she attends Elon University next year.

Ever since eighth grade, Trethaway has strived to be an excellent performer and storyteller through her art. Her love for theater began at a young age when she joined the Summer School of Performing Arts (SSPA) Junior. Now, Trethaway has been thriving in the world of theater and will continue her journey at Elon University by earning her Bachelor in Fine Arts (BFA) degree in



Photo by Victoria Farley

Trethaway will study theater at Elon.

Musical Theater.

Much of Trethaway's middle and high school experiences have been shaped by the teachers and mentors who have expanded her love for theater. In fact, one of the SSPA's biggest draws for day of theater to my college auditions, and I know I can continue to count on him for advice and support.”

Trethaway has been a part of the WATA program for all four years of her high school career. She is currently

Trethaway when she was a kid was the instructor who ran the program: WATA teacher, Michael Towers.

“He introduced me to many aspects of theater and theater-making, and that's how I discovered what excites me as an artist, what my strengths are, and how to iron out my weaknesses,” Trethaway said. “Mr. Towers has supported me every step of the way, from my first

the president of the WATA Advisory Board and has been a part of it since her sophomore year. Trethaway participates in additional activities outside of school which allow her to feel more comfortable performing on stage.

“I take a lot of dance classes in many styles such as jazz, ballet, tap, street funk, contemporary and lyrical,” Trethaway said. “Additionally,

I take private voice and piano lessons.”

Continuing theater in college and throughout her life has been one of Trethaway’s goals for many years. Although she has chosen a challenging career to follow, she has confidence in herself and knows that a path in musical theater is where she belongs.

“I feel most at peace within the theater. When I picture what a well-spent life looks like, it is creating and sharing my art,” Trethaway said. “I am a performing artist through and through. I want to spend my life doing what feeds my soul, and I know that to be theater.”

Now that Trethaway has reached her goal of being accepted into a college for theater, she is aiming to accomplish more goals during her four years at Elon University.

“I want to learn as much as I can about everything,” Trethaway said. “I want to continue my artistic training in all areas and hone my skills.”

Trethaway looks forward to countless new opportunities at Elon University and is excited to apply all that she has learned about theater to the next chapter of her life.

“[I have learned to] trust my training, trust my preparation, trust my support system, and most importantly trust myself,” Trethaway said. “At the same time, this whole process flew by, so find joy in it.”

Congratulations Abby!!!



We are incredibly proud of you! As you go out there & get the world by the tail & wrap it around, pull it down & put it in your pocket...Be happy, dream big, create lots of memories, but most of all, enjoy the journey.

We love you so much,
Mom, Dad, Emma & the rest of your family

Congratulations, Alanna!



You've juggled academics, art, and athletics and have excelled in each, leading by example and meeting every challenge with curiosity, grace, and boundless spirit. We are so proud of you, and can't wait to see what you do in your next chapter!

With love, always,
Dad and Mamma,
Savannah, Athena, Gavin, and Orion

Families Congratulate Graduating Seniors

Erin McCarthy
Dad and I are so proud of you! We can't wait for your next chapter! Reach for the stars! Love, Mom & Dad

Joseph Attardo
It has been a long road but you did it and we could not be more proud of you! Your future is bright and full of endless possibilities and we can't wait to see what you do next. We love you so much and are always here cheering you on! Love, Mom, Dad, Michael & Daniel

Hannah Swanson
We love you and cannot wait to see what your future holds! We're very proud of all your accomplishments. Love, Mom, Dad, Elsa, Jubilee & Willow

Cara Dominici
Congratulations on all of your achievements! The best is yet to come! Love, Mom & Dad

Caitlyn Mahoney
We are so proud of the young woman you have grown into, and all you have accomplished! We are so excited to see what the next four years (and beyond!) has in store for you. We love you to the moon and back! Love, Mom & Dad

Meredith Kotary
Congratulations! We are so very proud of you and everything you do! Much love, Mom & Dad

Julia Kyle
Congratulations! We are so proud of you! Love you! Mom, Dad & Ryan

Catherine and William Crane
Keep making us proud. We know that you're just getting started! Congrats! Love, Mom & Dad

Jill St. George
Congratulations, you did it! We love you so much and are so proud of you! Enjoy every minute of this day and look forward to all the great things you are about to do! Love, Mom, Dad & Sarah

Julia Craffey
We are so proud of you! Love you to the the moon and back! XOXO Love, Mom & Dad

Madelyn Haley
We are so proud of you and all you have accomplished during your high school years! Love, Mom, Dad & Rachel

Gianna Bjelajac
We are so proud of you, Gia! We know you will accomplish great things, and we cannot wait to see what joys life will bring you! Love, Mom, Dad & Rocco

Alexander Jewkes
We are all so very proud of you! Here's to brand new adventures! Love, Mom, Dad, Grandma, Grandpa & Uncle Matt (Charly, Gus & Max too!)

Dhruvan Prakash
We are so proud of your hard work and can't wait to see you following your dream! Love Mom, Papa & Geet

Asa Geller
Congratulations on graduating from WA! This is just the beginning of many adventures for you! Anything is possible if you follow your heart and dream big! We love you so much. Love, Mom, Dad, Lily, Will & Maisy

Nathan Bott
We are so proud of you and all of your achievements! You are going to do amazing things in college. Love, Mom, Dad & Morgan

Sachh Luthra
We are so proud of you. Be your best self in college! Can't wait to see what you achieve in the future. Have a fun college experience. Love, Sanvi, Mumma & Papa

Sharayu Tekade
We can't believe you are graduating from high school. Always know that no matter what amazing things you do or where you go in life, you are very much loved. We are very proud of you and hope nothing but the very best for you. Love, Aai, Baba & Anushka

Samuel Steigerwald
We are so proud of you! You are such a hard worker! We cannot wait to see what is in store for your future! Enjoy college! We love you! Love, Mom & Dad

Summer Hart
We had the best seats in the house to watch you grow into the beautiful, strong, smart woman you are! Endless adventures and opportunities await. We couldn't be more proud of you! Congratulations! We love you, Mom, Dad, Nolan & B

Colin Mallio
Congratulations on your high school career! You owned your work and your activities and you were successful. We hope you are as proud of your accomplishments as we are. We love you! Love, Mom & Dad

Erin Blatt
Congratulations! We are so excited for your next adventure. Love Dad, Mom, Jake & Emily

Robert Seraphin
We are so very proud of you and the compassionate, funny, intelligent person you are. We are excited for the next chapter of your life in Boston! We love you so very much. Love, Mom, Dad, Audrey, & Maddie. YNWA.

Noah Ablove
"May your hats fly as high as your dreams." -Michael Scott. Love, Mom & Dad

Olivia Olszowy
You made it 'lil boo! We are so proud of your accomplishments at WA and can't wait to share in your successes and adventures in the next chapter of your life! Love, Mom, Dad & Honey

Gillett prepares for the Army at Norwich University

SRIVAS ARUN
CO-NEWS EDITOR

Standing in front of a massive audience and singing one’s heart out is a daunting feat most students could not even think of accomplishing, but for senior Parker Gillett, few risks are not worth taking in order to follow his passions. Alongside his interest in theater, Gillett has also been passionate about military history for many years. Joining the military is another daunting task that many students do not consider when thinking about their lives after high school, much less the work and education it may take to be prepared to enlist. Gillett, however, has been interested in the field and the history behind it long before entering high school.

For this reason, Gillett will attend Norwich University in Vermont this fall for its War and Peace program and Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) program. Gillett chose these programs in preparation for his time in the service and to earn a commission, or the opportunity to begin from a higher rank when he joins the Army as an officer after college. “Ever since I was five or six years old, I have had an interest in military history, and the studies in war and peace major will allow me to pursue both my interest in military history as well as international studies and political science,” Gillett said. Norwich has the oldest ROTC program in the country. Additionally, it is considered one of the top senior military

colleges in the country for developing leadership skills within students. Senior military colleges are known for their similarities with traditional higher education

the U.S.’s relations with foreign countries, histories of battles, and many more different courses on topics such as language, philosophy, economics, and English.



Gillett poses in front of WA's main entrance.

Photo by Srivas Arun

couldn’t choose a particular year,” Gillett said. “Latin allowed me to really study who we are as people; the way we change, not only how people change throughout

their life as we studied famous figures but also just how society and civilization changes and develops.”

A major difficulty for Gillett and most other seniors was a significant part of their time at WA being impaired by COVID-19. The pandemic began in the second semester of Gillett’s freshman year and continued to affect his experiences at WA partly into his junior year.

“My time and experience at WA have been challenging

to say the least, due to the pandemic,” Gillett said. “Senior year was probably the most ‘normal’ year of my high school experience as well as being by far and away the most enjoyable. I feel as though my time at WA was unfortunately not really what it should have been.”

Nevertheless, Gillett gained a significant amount of knowledge and crucial life skills through his high school

career in large part due to his involvement in Westford Academy Theater Arts (WATA). Gillett participated in WATA during all four years of high school. The head of the theater arts department, Michael Towers, was an especially significant figure during his journey in WATA.

“My favorite teacher, apart from my Latin teachers, of course, would probably be Mr. Towers,” Gillett said. “All the life lessons he gave me were so numerous I probably don’t remember half of them and I could probably only really talk in depth about half the ones I remember – but needless to say, he’s been a guiding light.”

Towers has known Gillett for more than five years and has been a teacher of Gillett’s for all four of his years at WA.

“Parker is a very willing and committed student. And he’s excitable, he feels comfortable in this classroom, which is why he had success in this space because he is somebody who knows that he thrives here,” Towers said.

Gillett was able to achieve success because he was willing to take risks on stage.

“[Parker’s performance was] not only a wonderful moment in the theater arts space, [but also] was a wonderful moment on a human level,” Towers said. “[It shows he was thinking] ‘I trust myself enough. I know myself enough to allow an audience to see who I really am.’ So that was a pretty remarkable moment.”

programs in comparison to that of a federal military academy.

“The ROTC program at Norwich is the big reason why I’m going to Norwich. It provides probably, outside of the federal academies, the best possible preparation for a military career,” Gillett said.

The college’s War and Peace program was a clear choice of major for Gillett as it consists of studies on

Norwich also has the benefit of being the only undergraduate program in the country offering the program.

The histories of civilizations and societies have been interests of Gillett for many years and were fostered by Latin, a subject which had an impact on Gillett throughout his high school experience.

“Latin [was my most impactful class], though I

Ben, Justin, and Alex Jones



Eighteen years of everything times three. You arrived in this world as a team and have stuck together side by side ever since.

You've shared friendships, celebrations, memories, and a car!



In a few short months, you will each head down new and different paths that are all your own. We hope you embrace what's to come with courage and excitement. We are so, so, so proud of you.

We love you x 3,
Mom & Dad

Masterson to take the stage at Emerson College

Murphy donates kidney

Continued from page 5

JAMES FARLEY
CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Ever since fifth grade, senior Audrey Masterson has been intrigued with the world of theater. The wide array of possibilities, including performing, tech, playwriting, and directing all lure Masterson into being a part of what takes place once the red curtains open up. This, paired with her interest in teaching, led Masterson to a future career choice that would combine both of these passions: Theatre Education.

After years of being on the receiving end of learning how to put on a show, Masterson will be attending Emerson College in Boston for Theatre Education next year so that she can one day teach students of her own how to put on the shows that mean so much to her.

“I’ve always wanted to be a teacher for the longest time but I never really knew what exactly I wanted to teach. When I found my passion for theater, I started to do some research and found that I could major in Theatre Education,” Masterson said. “I fell in love with the idea of teaching kids about my passion for theater and teaching them all of the aspects of what it means to make great art on stage.”

The college search process came with challenges for Masterson. She knew that she wanted to stay close, but only a slim number of colleges in New England offer Theatre Education as a major, making the search difficult.

“I applied to four colleges in total, so the hunt for a college with my major and somewhat close to home was a little challenging,” Masterson said.

However, the further Masterson looked into attending Emerson, the more interested she became in the college. She was impressed by the campus and its close proximity home, but above all, the fact that it offers her desired and unique major.

“Emerson has a really good program for Theatre Education, so it drew me in from the beginning. When I toured it I loved the feel of the campus and when I went to “Accepted Students Day”, I got to take a mock class and meet some people who were also in my major,” Masterson said. “After that day, I knew Emerson was where I belonged.”

Another major draw that Emerson offers is its diverse array of opportunities for the entire student body. This will allow for Masterson to immerse herself in any theater project that she wants to be a part of during her time as a student.

“I’m very excited to get involved with different projects. Emerson has great opportunities for everyone no matter the major, so if I wanted to I could start a podcast or help with a film,” Masterson said. “I’m also very excited to continue my love of theater in college and

get involved with Emerson’s theater program.”

Masterson has been involved in Westford Academy Theater Arts (WATA) for all four years of her high school career, developing her desire to keep it as a major part of her life going forward. Over these four years, Masterson has been a part of many productions that have shaped her love for theater.

“I’ve been in three musicals and I’m currently working on my fourth, Mean Girls. I’ve been involved in a Black Box [Production] my freshman year, and I’ve worked on two plays,” Masterson said. “I’m also a member of the WATA executive board and I just finished directing my own Black Box show with my two co-directors, [senior] Colby Murphy and [senior] Todd Bonica.”

Not only have the experiences played a role in Masterson’s love for theater, but also the teachers who have helped develop Masterson as a member of WATA. Both Michael Towers and Maggie Sulka, WA theater teachers, have not only been there as a helping hand, but have also been role models for Masterson.

“I want to teach theater because of my amazing theater teachers, Mr. Towers and Ms. Sulka. They have taught me more than enough to prepare me for a future in theater. They truly care about the well-being of their students and they do

anything they can to help them succeed,” Masterson said. “I want to be just like them when I am a teacher because they truly have shared their passion with me, and that has inspired me to do the same.”

Masterson also credits her parents for being her greatest supporters with not only theater, but in all facets of her life throughout her time in Westford.

“My parents have definitely been my biggest supporters. Last year when I played Patrick in The Spongebob Musical, they made sure to come to every single one of my shows,” Masterson said. “No matter the role I have, my parents are always there in the audience cheering me on and I couldn’t thank them enough.”

Overall, Masterson recognizes theater as something that has developed her as a person. It was not only her favorite activity throughout high school, but also an endeavor that she will carry with her into college and beyond as a theater teacher.

“Theater was something that really broke me out of my shell and allowed me to be my true self. I’ve met my best friends, amazing directors, teachers and collaborators through theater. The overall environment of theater has really changed my life,” Masterson said. “So, deciding to go into theater was pretty easy because I am so excited to stay involved and active in the theater community.”

Tylenol is my new best friend.”

Fortunately for Murphy, over the next two weeks, her biggest issue will be fatigue.

With the fear of something going wrong in the surgical process, Murphy’s family was hesitant to agree with the huge commitment of donating a kidney, but eventually gave in because they knew it was the right thing to do.

“My family all know and love my friend’s son so it was hard for them to come right out and be against it,” Murphy said.

Murphy’s case workers’, surgeon’s, and social workers’ goals were to keep her and the kidney recipient safe.

“I reiterated to many people on the transplant team that my only goal was for him to have a kidney,” Murphy said. “I was okay with a multiple swap as long as he received a healthy one.”

Throughout this process, Murphy has saved the life of her friend’s son, and has been thoroughly educated on her procedure. Now that she is familiar with the process, she will be able to keep her body healthy while recovering. She finds it incredible how the body is capable of so many things.

“I was educated a lot on the procedure,” Murphy said. “My remaining kidney will grow over the next year to make up for the donated kidney. It’s pretty amazing what the human body will naturally do on its own.”

Paul,
We are so proud of all that you've accomplished. Your hard work and perseverance will open any door. Choose the one that makes you happy and enjoy the ride.



Love,
Mom, Dad, and Leo

Caps off to the

Where will their

ALABAMA UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA Celia DeMarco	DELAWARE UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE Lauren Smith	LOUISIANA TULANE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA Prajna Sajjan	Evan Skolnick	Maliha Parikh Samantha Pellegrino Jason Pillion Anamika Pusalkar Kendra Ruan Vaibhav Singh Isabella Vasiliu Shreeya Vasiraju Yanxin Wang Amelia Warsen Chase Yang Nicholas Yang
ARIZONA ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY Cristina Haraty	FLORIDA ECKERD COLLEGE Ava Lucas Lila Perron	MAINE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE Michael Faia Jeremiah Joyce	EMMANUEL COLLEGE Abigail Butts Isabelle Cohen Anisha Srinivas ENDICOTT COLLEGE Todd Bonica Donald Goodhue Chloe LaPat Katherine Sheehy	REGIS COLLEGE Lily DiRico
UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA Daniel Ottesen	FLAGLER COLLEGE Wesley Cooper	UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND Faith MacDonald Giselle Piedrahita Cassidy Quinton	FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY Oubon Daranikone Benjamin Lordan Chucky McLaughlin	SIMMONS UNIVERSITY Shriya Kareddy
CALIFORNIA CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY (FULLERTON) Avery Braverman	FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY Jonathan Doherty	MARYLAND JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY Yarden Ben-Hayon Rory Li	FRAMINGHAM STATE UNIVERSITY Ezra Berson	SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE Devin Cuzziere
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY (NORTHRIDGE) Valerie Wilhelm	FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY Jack Sullivan	LOYOLA UNIVERSITY MARYLAND Lillian Clark Olivia Olszowy	LOWELL HAIR ACADEMY Allison Goerke Mia Rose	STONEHILL COLLEGE Sydney Brooks
CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY Aditya Bains	NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY Margaret Mantineo	UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND (COLLEGE PARK) Catherine Crane William Crane Manasi Deepak Joshua Gu Keshav Jhawar Justin Jones Anika Kagalavadi Rohita Krishnakumar Ankit Nakhawa Hyungkyu Park Dhruvan Prakash Eshan Singh Daniel Son	MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS Grace Santos	SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY Nate Brown Om Patel Robert Seraphin Ava Sidelinger
SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY Leah Bombardieri	UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA Molly Smith	MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF PHARMACY & HEALTH SCIENCES Julia Donescu Ann Kurian Arwyn Nguyen Andrew Pheng	THE PETERSON SCHOOL Jason Harlow	
SCRIPPS COLLEGE Taylor Bourque	UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI Rylan Chandler	MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY Michelle Sotelo	TUFTS UNIVERSITY Mayha Ali	
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA (DAVIS) Nitish Naik Kirish Raaj Levente Ryll	UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA Danielle Muisse	MERRIMACK COLLEGE Mia Burns Dante Cipriano Charles Dascoli Olivia Dubay Julia Fournier Asianah Long Tyler Murray Owen Schultz Samuel Steigerwald Tyler Treible Trey Wildman	UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS (AMHERST) Alexander Barreto Isaac Bollen Peter Burdin Julia Craffey Olivia DiBiasio Audrey Fletcher Kush Gami Asa Geller Anthony Giuggio Avery Hanrahan Summer Hart Megan Hegarty Mia Ikeda Marzooq Jeje Andrew Kapetanakis Meredith Kotary Aditya Krishnamurthy Avaneesh Mallela Margaret Maloney Amelia Manchester Fatema Mandsaurwala Emily McKeon Arthur Nguyen Ethan O'Connor Zachary Ouellette Ella Perreault Raj Pola Benjamin Rosenthal Liza Ryll Youcef Sabri Benjamin Schaffer Ava Shelgren Benjamin Solari Leah Solari Emerson Stair Graham Stair Sharayu Tekade Remy Towers Hana Usmani Advik Vadicharla Mikayla Wagner Ande Xin Mason Zhang	
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA (LOS ANGELES) Nakul Joshi Andrew Lin	UNIVERSITY OF TAMPA Samantha Borselli Alison Mammola	MASSACHUSETTS ASSUMPTION UNIVERSITY Mia Clark	MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE Phongsak Detnonsang Carson DiRuggiero Connor Hoague Samuel Johnson Megan McCarthy Gabe McKeown Aidan Murphy Omar Saleh Joshua Strong	
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA (SAN DIEGO) Alice Guo Pranav Rajaram	GEORGIA EMORY UNIVERSITY Saketh Amaravai Sabrina Sung	BENTLEY UNIVERSITY Matthew Haggan Amanda Jacobsen Benjamin Jones Tanya Joshi Meredith Lynch Avashya Singh Drew Wilson	MONTSERRAT COLLEGE OF ART Ivy Howard	
CONNECTICUT CONNECTICUT COLLEGE Roman Munichiello	ILLINOIS DEPAUL UNIVERSITY Emilia Rainovic	BOSTON COLLEGE Ridhi Machireddy Paul Vozzella	NEW ENGLAND INSTITUTE OF HVAC David MacLure	
FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY Aedan Curtin Rory Nightingale Fionnuala Stevenson Elizabeth York	NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY Alvin Huang	BOSTON UNIVERSITY Kaushik Reddy Hana Saleh Hayden Smith Chandra Thay Elliana Tweedie Fatema Mandsaurwala	NICHOLS COLLEGE Kyla Felicani	
QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY Joshua Brazinski Anupama Dass Emma McCuin	SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO Suzanne Sawrey	BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY Olivia Baumert Alexander Piwowar Ezra Robinson	NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY Jonas Crocker Yuvraj Gahlaut Chelsea Ge Anirudh Gopalan Justin Huang Andrew Lengyel Eddie Lowney Sachh Luthra Manvi Mehra	
SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY Justin Fitzgerald Ruby Krikorian	INDIANA INDIANA UNIVERSITY (BLOOMINGTON) Noah Ablove William Donovan Akul Gowda Aashi Gurtata Meghna Kumar Vihaan Shah Oliver Yorke	BRIDGEWATER STATE UNIVERSITY Eleanor Cambray Mason Dufault Dimitriy Leskov		
UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT Unnati Bhat Hampton-Edward Ewiah Jack Funaro Abhinav Wadhwa Benjamin Weber	PURDUE UNIVERSITY Abhisar Anand Veronica Cheng Tomas Ho Pratham Juvekar Shivam Patel Siddharth Sriram Connor Sun Nathan Yao	DEAN COLLEGE Alexandra Stanglewicz		
UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAVEN Anthony Rudiman		EMERSON COLLEGE Rachel Dodos Audrey Masterson		

Class of 2023!

adventures take them next?

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS (DARTMOUTH) Owen Boden	Jaxson Jozokos	OHIO	ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY Sarah Strzegowski	VIRGINIA TECH Madhav Jhawar
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS (LOWELL) Isabella Balatka Javi Caraccioli Penelope Caviston-Nelson Vivian Chang Olivia Ely Mathew Fan Francesc Fernandez Austin Hander Aneesh Karri Adam Kazi Christy Kebbe Arnav Kumar Mustafa Leiman Nicholas Loghin Iniya Poovannan Sanjay Sivakumar Christina Tran Himabindu Vadlamani Hari Verma Lilian Whitehead Brendan Whitmore	UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE Ian Anderson Andrew Burke Sean Donoghue Colin Mallio Melissa Miller Alexander Movsessian Lillian Proulx William Roncone	CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY Sanah Chatiwala Kyle Fan	SALVE REGINA UNIVERSITY Abigail Gibson	WASHINGTON, D.C.
WESTERN NEW ENGLAND UNIVERSITY Olivia Emanuele	NEW JERSEY	FRANCISCAN UNIVERSITY OF STEUBENVILLE Aidan Mahony	UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND Gianna Bjelajac Katherine Ciulla Jarod Dantas Madelyn Haley Aidan Hall Erin McCarthy Nathan Mucci Benjamin Mulgrew Mikayla Thompson Abigail Walsh	AMERICAN UNIVERSITY Iqra Khan
WESTFIELD STATE UNIVERSITY Meghan Healy	RUTGERS UNIVERSITY (NEW BRUNSWICK) Justin Chen Austin Leiwant	KENT STATE UNIVERSITY Oliver McDonald	GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY Samrita Murthy	
WHEATON COLLEGE Lindsay Ely Kaiya Morello Lina Sturrock Abigail Williams	NEW YORK	OHIO UNIVERSITY Alyssa Sarantis	WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY Annabelle Arnolds Erin Blatt	
WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE Abigail Herrmann Alexander Jewkes Brian Hall Brynn McElligott George Shi Hemanth Vadlamani Joshua Bearfield Muskan Bansal Owen Walpole Shriya Kulkarni William Owen	BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY Nathaniel Rosenthal Anish Senthil	THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY Shawn Czado	WISCONSIN	
WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY Aria Chambers	CLARKSON UNIVERSITY Timothy Read	PENNSYLVANIA	SOUTH CAROLINA	MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY Joshua Forty
MICHIGAN	CORNELL UNIVERSITY Niharika Chawla Emily Fu Eric Plankey	CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY Charles Lin	COASTAL CAROLINA UNIVERSITY Thomas Cadogan Camryn Fuller Julia Kyle Adam Prato	EMPLOYMENT Joseph Attardo Chloe DeLany Daniel Diaz Brendan Gasper Connor Gleason Michael Picanso Jack Ring
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Logan Boynton Kevin Fitzgerald	HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY Jenna Cafferelli	DREXEL UNIVERSITY Isaac Cho Leighton Fischer Arsh Sharma	COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON Madelyn Spound Morgan Walsh	GAP YEAR Jillian St. George
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN Varun Kaushik	ITHACA COLLEGE Colby Murphy Christina Richert	DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY Jack Reimer	UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA Landon Chwalek	POST GRADUATE PROGRAM
NEVADA	NEW YORK UNIVERSITY Braneeth Dayan Veronika Yanishevska	PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY (HARRISBURG) Zaki Ahsan	TENNESSEE	PHILLIPS EXETER ACADEMY Austin DeSisto
UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA (RENO) Bennet Olander	ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY Aiden Moynihan Daniel Noonan Jaden Xiao Jared Xiao Lenox Center Lia Kemeny Michaela Ireland Zoe Musante	PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY (UNIVERSITY PARK) Krish Chavan Alexandra Jones	VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY Vincent Xu	WORCESTER ACADEMY Matthew Morash Matthew Shea
NEW HAMPSHIRE	ST. JOHN FISHER UNIVERSITY Caitlyn Mahoney	SWARTHMORE COLLEGE Cara Dominici	TEXAS	INTERNATIONAL
KEENE STATE COLLEGE Vincent Florek Megan Strzegowski	STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY Spoorti Tadakamalla Madison Walsh	TEMPLE UNIVERSITY Nadya Payeur	UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS (AUSTIN) Aviral Agarwal Tanush Kaushik	AUSTRALIA Savannah Tremblay
PLYMOUTH STATE UNIVERSITY Henry Snowdon	ST. JOHN FISHER UNIVERSITY Caitlyn Mahoney	THOMAS JEFFERSON UNIVERSITY Mairead Ouellette	VERMONT	GYMNASIUM CORVINIANUM (NORTHEIM, GERMANY) Olivia Baumert Charlotte Ryan
SOUTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE UNIVERSITY Brady Cypret	ST. JOHN FISHER UNIVERSITY Caitlyn Mahoney	UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA Sophia Keang	CHAMPLAIN COLLEGE Samuel Bergeron Cole Jordan Alan Kemeny Cameron Metters	INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY (TOKYO, JAPAN) Seiji Nakanishi
	STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY Spoorti Tadakamalla Madison Walsh	UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH Courtney Dupre Dedee Surampudi	MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE Alanna Saunders	UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO (TORONTO, CANADA) Nathan Bott Sophie Williams
	SUNY COLLEGE COBLESKILL Colin McKeon	VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY Beverly Wang	NORWICH UNIVERSITY Lenox Dailey Parker Gillett	WESTERN UNIVERSITY (LONDON, ONTARIO) Satjit Jagathjayan
	THE COOPER UNION Shreyas Sanikommu	RHODE ISLAND	ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE Luke Fremault	UNDECIDED Brian Baumgart Abigayle Bogdahn Aidan Brady Brendan Connell Dhruv Iyer Malena Piana Emily Waterman
	UNION COLLEGE Erik Vian	BROWN UNIVERSITY Alison Chen	SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY Zachary Mantenuto	
	NORTH CAROLINA	BRYANT UNIVERSITY Alexander D'Amato Ashish Rella	UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT Ryan Bellemore Camden Douglas Elena Gibbons Meghan Hall Caroline Newark Michael Perrone	
	EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY Nicole Bryant	JOHNSON & WALES UNIVERSITY Trevor Reid	VIRGINIA	
	ELON UNIVERSITY Lauren Trethaway	PROVIDENCE UNIVERSITY Hannah Kennedy Quinn Schwab Kaitlyn Walpole	JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY Keegan Connell	
	UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA (CHAPEL HILL) Kiersten O'Connell			

Haley takes to stage and spotlight as 2023 class speaker

KATE KELLY
CO-FEATURES EDITOR

Within the next month the class of 2023 will come together, draped in gowns and caps, to reminisce about their years at WA. No amount of time in a classroom could have prepared them for the global pandemic at the beginning of their freshman year, and yet, they persisted through it all.

Four years later, there are still so many words left unsaid, sparked from the mix of emotions on such a momentous day. Senior Madelyn Haley will step up to this challenge, and the podium, microphone in hand.

On the evening of Friday, June 2, WA's turf will fill with this year's graduating class as Haley takes on the responsibility of class speaker. The role was not easy to obtain, but comes with a great honor.

Haley, a well-spoken, active student of WA has spent the past four years participating in a variety of extracurriculars. From sports, to student government, to community service, she decided to live a high school career with no regrets.

"It was really important to me to get involved in a lot [of activities] throughout high school, and I feel like I did a pretty good job," Haley said.

The events leading up to Haley's new role started with her decision to take a public speaking course offered by Theater Arts teacher, Michael Towers.

"When my friends and I heard [Towers] was back [from his sabbatical, we were just like, 'we have to take this class.' We had already heard such great

things about it," Haley said. However, taking the class still didn't warrant any interest in applying for class speaker. It wasn't until Towers assigned the speech as a project that Haley began to take this opportunity into consideration.

"Public speaking is a course that exercises the

confidence they gained. Haley decided, having to already write a speech for the project, she would give it a shot and apply.

"I actually wrote [the speech] at 5 a.m. the morning it was due. So I mentioned that in my original speech when I gave it to the class, but I cut that part when I submitted it

what you want to be, but who.' "Maddie articulates very well the question that she is posing to her classmates. It is centered on the idea of building the person that you want to be, not allowing yourself to be defined by the 'what'," Towers said. "Her speech is clear. It is universal. It is important. And,

Once again, Haley faced this deadline at the last minute.

"It's actually funny because I also missed my time slot," Haley said. "And so I ran in and asked them to let me go, and thankfully, they did."

Haley's late arrival did not take away from her heartfelt speech, as she was later chosen to be a finalist amongst two other seniors.

In the last process of selection, applicants were encouraged to meet with a trusted staff member to revise their writing. Haley turned to both English teacher Russell Coward and Towers, keeping her message clear and persistent.

"I feel like high school is a lot about grades, GPA, and things like that," Haley said. "But in the real world, it is more about who you are. That is what is important."

When the decision was finally made, Haley was excited to be the recipient of such a role. She remarks that she is not particularly scared, as she is speaking alongside her good friend, senior class president Mia Clark.

With days slipping by in the countdown to graduation, Haley pursues dreams of majoring in nursing at the University of Rhode Island. While Haley is no longer in courses at the Academy, she waits only to finish her high school journey with her speech.

"I think [being class speaker] is a remarkable achievement for someone," Towers said. "To stand there on the day of graduation and be someone who was selected to speak for [you] and to you is a very special thing."



Madelyn Haley smiles in her nursing scrubs outside of WA.

single most important skill in every human being's life," Towers said. "And that is the ability to communicate through some form of speech with the world around them, on both a personal and professional level."

The course granted students the ability to communicate and reflect, and the product was not the speeches but rather the

for the actual application," Haley said.

Despite the last minute urgency of its production, Haley's vision for what she wanted to include in her speech was focused. She looked for a message to encompass their four years at WA. Something that speaks to the class but also in favor of them. In the end, she came up with the theme: 'It's not about

Maddie shares some very nice insights."

Submitting her writing to Dean Dan Twomey was just the beginning to Haley's application process. From there, the handful of seniors who applied were assigned time slots.

It was during this given appointment that they were able to present their speech to an audience of staff members.

Keegan,



We are very proud of the person you have become. You are a great son with a bright future. We are looking forward to what lies ahead. Take the over!

Love, Mom, Dad, Nolan & Brendan

Audrey,

We are so proud of you!
You will slay at Emerson
#LikeAGirl



Love, Mom, Dad, Grace & Sean

Rose to pursue nail art at Lowell Academy

GRACE HSU
CO-FEATURES EDITOR

Senior Mia Rose sits on her bedroom floor with a computer propped open and nail polish in hand. Guiding the brush in precise motions, she smiles and creates an intricate design. When all ten nails are colorful and shiny, she takes a bottle of nail polish remover and removes the polish. Then she repeats the process for hours on end.

For Rose, it was after she learned to do beautiful manicures through YouTube that she turned this newfound hobby into a career path. Since February, Rose has attended Lowell Academy Hairstyling Institute to major in hair, skin, and nails to pursue her dream of becoming a nail technician at her own salon. Through dual enrollment, she will graduate in December and jump into the new year with her new skills.

Lowell Academy Hairstyling Institute is a cosmetology school that prepares students for the cosmetic industry, whether it be in a salon or spa.

According to Rose, she found the school after doing some research on cosmetology schools nearby. She chose it for its close proximity to her house and good reputation. After a tour and an interview, Rose knew it was the place for her and committed to the college in December of 2022.

At the academy, she learns nail care beauty techniques and the proper uses of professional nail care products. However, the school does more than teach how to give a manicure, as it goes into the anatomy,

physiology, and pathology of nails and skin. Students also have the opportunity to practice their skills with clients. Rose admires the learning style of the school, where students get informational packets to learn techniques on their own and instructors are there to assist.

“[The school] is pretty self-paced. So whatever you need to work on, you work on that day, and you get a new packet every time you complete a certain amount

of hours,” Rose said. “Every Friday you have a test that you can study for whenever you want throughout the day, so it’s very relaxed. It’s not crazy hard, but it’s a lot of fun.”

Rose has already partially started her own business from her house’s sunroom. She has had some sporadic clients ever since places started to reopen after the pandemic. Her Instagram account (@nails.by.mia.rose) dedicated to her nail designs has over

four hundred followers. Throughout her posts over the years, her style shifts are clear. “I used to be really into super long nails and crazy colors and I still enjoy those colors and stuff. [Now,] I’m not so much of a long nail person,” Rose said. “I’ve been trying to embrace my natural nails more recently, just because it’s more convenient with everyday life.”

While the style of her nails has changed, Rose sticks to acrylic nails and acrylic

practicing acrylics in 2020, Rose has improved in many ways. Not only has she refined her nail shapes and technique, but especially improved her nail art with practice, since many clients gravitate towards the same designs and trends.

Rose notes that her success has come from a lot of practice and the people that helped her on her journey to becoming a better nail artist. She acknowledges that her first client, Jordan Krauss, a WA graduate from the class of ’23, was a big help because Krauss stuck with her since she started, despite the fact that Rose was inexperienced and her nails took five hours to complete.

“My mom was a great help as well. She provided me with the sunroom, which was huge. My sisters were a huge help because they let me practice on them all the time,” Rose said. “They were there when my nails were horrible and fell off. Now I try to do their nails whenever they ask as a thank you.”

Rose has come a long way since her first nail design during quarantine. As she continues her business and develops new skills, Krauss is sure that Rose will succeed.

“[Rose] is amazing at nails and better than any salon I have ever been to,” Krauss said. “I think she will continue to be successful because of her go-getter attitude and I am so proud of her for following her passions and going to cosmetology school.”

Mia Rose’s nail designs can be viewed on her Instagram @nails.by.mia.rose



Mia Rose poses for a picture in the flag lobby

Photo by Grace Hsu

Plankey

Continued from page 1

Additionally, Plankey was able to get the April Board of Education meeting moved to Westford. Plankey is upholding the longstanding tradition of the April or May meeting being held in the district represented by the student member, a practice that has not been done since before COVID-19.

Plankey’s hope for the future is that he will be able to not only work in education reform, but also in labor and economic reform. He hopes to work towards making the country more affordable for the average American worker through unions, worker co-ops, and large-scale political reform. In addition, he will be attending the School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY in the fall. Through Cornell’s connection with labor organizations, Plankey believes that this will be the best place for him to accomplish his goals.

English teacher Kimberly Hart has been involved in Plankey’s journey with education reform since his junior year. Hart believes that if anyone is to take this on, it is Plankey.

“I think Eric is both a deep thinker and a person of action,” Hart said. “I have great admiration for the passion he brings to the issues that interest him because he has taken steps to try and address problems he perceives in this world. I think that he is going to be someone who continues to make an impact on a small scale and a larger scale.”

To My Eric,

Thank you for all of the hugs and cuddles over the last three years. You are my favorite human in the whole wide world!

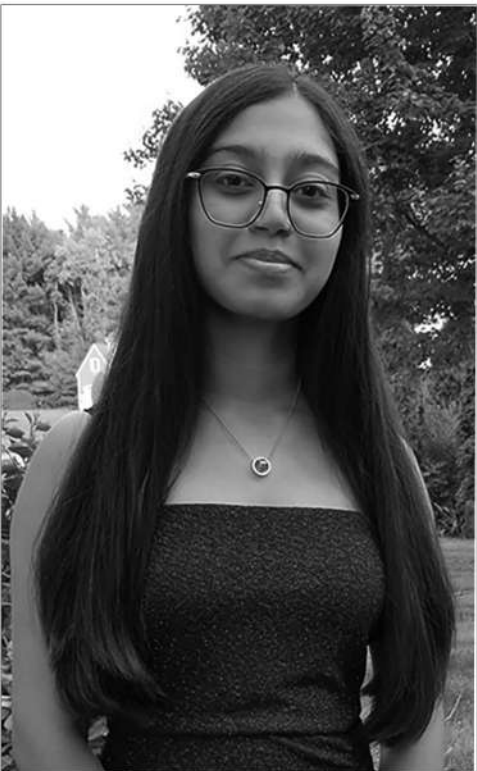


I don't want you to leave in August, but I know you must. Show this picture to all of your new human friends so they will know that I am the best and most important cat ever.

Love,
Your Chiki (aka Chickie)

P.S. Congratulations to all of your WA friends, too!

Congratulations, Anamika!



We are so proud of you. Semper ad meliora!

Love, Mom & Dad

23 Questions with Class of 2023 valedictorian

PRAVAR MUKKALA
Co-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Q: What was your favorite subject?

A: Definitely math.

Q: Who was your favorite teacher?

A: Mrs. Gartner, who I took BC [Calculus] with.

Q: What was your hardest class?

A: Probably also [BC Calculus]. There was definitely a huge learning curve at the beginning.

Q: What was your easiest class?

A: For me, I think it was art just because there was a lot of flexibility when it came to doing artwork.

Q: What was your most worthwhile class?

A: Calc or physics

Q: Where are you going to college and what is your major?

A: I'll be going to Brown [University] and I'm concentrating in applied math and [economics].

Q: What made you realize this is the perfect college for you?

A: For me, I've always been interested in a lot of different things, from STEM to humanities, and Brown has an open curriculum where I'll be able to sort of dive in to all my interested which is definitely what I wanted.

Q: What is your favorite ice cream flavor?

A: Coffee Oreo.

Q: Where is your favorite vacation spot?

A: I really liked Seattle when I went. I was a lot of nature-y things and hiking, which I like.

Q: What is the best book you have



Alison Chen smiles for a photo.

read recently?

A: I've been re-reading Pride and Prejudice which is one of my favorite books.

Q: What is your biggest hobby?

A: I like to bake in my free time.

Q: What is your biggest pet peeve?

A: I don't like people who are slow

walkers, but I've also been told I'm a fast walker, so I don't know if that says anything.

Q: What was your favorite school lunch?

A: Honestly, I never really ate school lunch, but maybe the cookies from the

snack bar.

Q: If you could spend a day with one person, living or dead, who would they be?

A: Maybe Taylor Swift. I'm a huge Swiftie.

Q: What is your favorite TV show?

A: I really like Anne with an E.

Q: Who is your favorite Disney character?

A: I like Belle a lot, because she likes to read.

Q: Where was your best study spot?

A: I liked to study in my room because I like being by myself and it being quiet.

Q: If you could be famous for anything, what do you want to be known for?

A: Doing something that helps other people.

Q: What is your funniest high school memory?

A: I think this year at the beginning of the year when I was doing cross country, on the bus ride back from DCLs all of the senior girls started crying out of nowhere because we were all so sad that it was our last meet together. Looking back, it was really funny but in the moment I was really sad that cross country was ending.

Q: People think of being valedictorian as being a great achiever. When is a time that you didn't succeed?

A: When I first came to WA freshman year I was new, and I didn't really know anyone so it was definitely hard for me to get more involved in the WA community. I think that that was definitely a learning experience for my next years in high school and to make sure I was putting myself out there.

Q: Do you prefer Dunkin' or Starbucks? What's your order?

A: Starbucks. I always get a Strawberry Acai Refresher or a Chai Latte.

Q: If you could have front row tickets to any event what would it be?

A: A Taylor Swift concert.

Q: Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

A: Working internationally. I lived in Taiwan for three years in middle school so I think I'd definitely want to go and work somewhere outside the U.S. in the future.

Photo by Pravara Mukkala

LAUREN,

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR GRADUATION!

WE ARE SO PROUD OF YOU AND ALL YOU HAVE ACCOMPLISHED! A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL THAT SUPPORTED YOU ON YOUR JOURNEY SO FAR. WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT LIES AHEAD!

LOVE, MOM, DAD, ELLA, TEDDY & BEAR TRETHAWAY

Dear Alex,

We are so proud of you! You have grown so much as a student, and we love how driven you have become. Keep growing, learning, and enjoying life. We cannot wait to see all you accomplish at Bryant University!

Love, Mom, Dad, & Emma"

23 Questions with Class of '23 Salutatorian Charles Lin

JAMES FARLEY
Co-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Q: What was your favorite subject?

A: My favorite subject was either chemistry or math, I enjoyed them both and they really stimulated my mind. They are really interesting and solving problems is really fun, so I really enjoyed those two classes.

Q: Who was your favorite teacher?

A: Ms Gardner, she is my Calculus BC teacher right now. The class itself is really famous for being hard, but I think she did a really great job breaking it down in class and making it easy to understand. [Also], she answers questions really well.

Q: What was your hardest class?

A: Calculus BC. It was really a struggle at first, and definitely one of the most humbling experiences of my life. Before I took it I thought I was pretty good at math, but when I was taking it I realized I was not as good. It was definitely a really challenging subject, but I learned a lot in the process.

Q: What was your easiest class?

A: German came pretty easily to me. Unfortunately I couldn't take it this year because I didn't have any room on my schedule, but when I did, it was a really nice class, and it wasn't too strenuous.

Q: What was your most worthwhile class?

A: AP Statistics, I think that

class probably has the most real word application out of all the classes I have taken. It was really interesting while I was doing it, and I am sure I will be using a lot of the concepts that I learned in that class in the future, as well.

Q: Where are you going to college and what is your major?

A: Carnegie Mellon University, and I am majoring in Finance.

Q: What made you realize that was the perfect college for you?

A: I knew going into the college application process that I wanted to study business, but I also wanted to pick a school that was really well balanced in a lot of other areas as well. Carnegie Mellon has a really good business program but it also has a lot of STEM and technical fields. I knew I wanted to get that balance because I really like science and technology, so I wanted to integrate those two together, and Carnegie Mellon provided that perfect balance.

Q: What's your favorite ice cream flavor?

A: I'm kind of boring, I would



Charles Lin in the library.

have to go with chocolate.

Q: Where is your favorite vacation spot?

A: I like hiking a lot, so I would say the Badlands.

Q: What is the best book you have read recently?

A: Fahrenheit 451, I read that last year and I thought it would be a really tough read, but it was really interesting and it really makes you think

a lot.

Q: What is your biggest hobby?

A: My biggest hobby is playing table tennis.

Q: What is your biggest pet peeve?

A: [People] not being humble, arrogance rubs on my nerves a lot.

Q: What has been your favorite school lunch?

A: We had dumplings recently as a school lunch and I never had that before in school, so that was a really interesting experience.

Q: If you could spend one day with a person, living or dead, who would it be?

A: Probably Bill Gates, he seems like a really chill dude. Also, he is very smart so I would like to pick his brain with a lot of stuff.

Q: What is your favorite TV show?

A: I don't watch TV that often but I really enjoyed watching the Big Bang Theory a couple years ago.

Q: Who is your favorite Disney character?

A: I watched Tangled recently, so probably Flynn Rider, he is pretty cool.

Q: Where is your best study spot?

A: I just study in my room at home. I can focus the best there and I have everything I need so I like the comfort there.

Q: If you could be famous for anything, what would you want to be known for?

A: I would say just helping other people, I think that is the epitome of the human experience, taking what you are good at and applying it to helping other people. That is what I would define as true success.

Q: What is your funniest high school memory?

A: At cotil last year, I played mini golf with a group of friends and it was a ton of fun [with] a lot of really funny moments.

Q: People think of being named the salutatorian as a great achievement. What is one time when you did not succeed?

A: I do DECA, and DECA is my biggest club commitment. In my sophomore year I did really well so I had a lot of expectations going into junior year. I really wanted to qualify for the international competition because that was going to be the first time in person that I could have gone since COVID, and I didn't, so that hurt a lot. I think it definitely showed me that you do not always have to succeed and you can have some setbacks because you can always come back stronger the year after.

Q: Do you prefer Dunkin' or Starbucks?

A: Dunkin. I live right across from Dunkin', and it is so much better.

Q: If you could have front row tickets to any event, what would it be?

A: Probably a concert, I really like listening to Green Day, so that would be a really fun experience.

Q: Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

A: I want to have created a start-up and be running it. I think that would probably be the ideal future.

Photo by James Farley

Luke,



Congratulations! We are so proud of you and all your accomplishments! St. Michael's is lucky to have you!
Love, Mom, Dad, Raegan & Mia

Aidan,

Congratulations - we are so proud of all your successes and the young man you've become! We know your spirit, humor, and integrity will take you far...URI is lucky to be getting you!



We can't wait to see all the amazing things in store for you!
Love,
Mom, Dad, Meghan, Katie, and Lucky

Ely sets on creative writing path at Wheaton College

GRACE HSU
Co-Features Editor

The quiet tapping of fingers on a keyboard fills the room. While the bedroom is mostly silent, senior Lindsay Ely’s head is loud. Filled with ideas, plot lines and characters, Ely sits in front of her computer, ready to share stories with the world.

This fall, Ely will attend Wheaton College in Norton, Mass., majoring in creative writing and literature to pursue her dream career of becoming a creative writing professor and author. Although Ely’s love for writing started before she could even remember, she only decided on her majors after she took two semesters of Creative Writing at WA.

Though Ely applied to many schools, Wheaton was an

easy decision for her. Located nearby Westford, Wheaton is a liberal arts school with an in-depth English program. The college has classes dedicated to specific genres of writing, rather than the general poetry and media writing classes at other schools.

According to Ely, what made her ultimately decide to study the unique Creative Writing major was her love of writing, which followed her throughout her childhood. As a kid, Ely always looked forward to creative writing projects in school and wrote her own imaginative stories at home.

“I used to daydream during my soccer games, [...] in class, at home, all the time,” Ely said. “I would daydream entire original world concepts and scenes in my mind,

imagining them in vivid detail.”

However, Ely has expanded the types of pieces she produces, having written not only a fantasy novel but also songs and reflective poems inspired by emotional and traumatic experiences.

“These kinds of pieces are ones full of passion and vulnerability,” Ely said. “Writing and art are all about expressing yourself to be vulnerable.”

For Ely, it all started in ninth grade, when she began writing serious poems during a hard time in her life. During this time, she struggled with self-worth and connections with other people, but poetry helped her express complicated emotions in a healthier way.

“A lot of what I write is

based on things I know and I have lived through. My best motivation comes from strong emotions, positive or negative,” Ely said.

Although Ely has been writing on her own for a long time, she lists her creative writing teacher, Jason Humphrey, as one of her biggest supporters. According to Humphrey, Ely is a creative person with a lot of dynamic energy in both her writing and interactions with the people around her.

“She really writes from her experience and feelings. She puts her heart on her sleeve,” Humphrey said.

Ely’s strength in writing is her ability to accurately portray her emotions in abstract ways. When she strongly feels something, she can articulate it in a way most

people can understand through imagery and symbols that come naturally to her.

However, Ely’s talent for writing is something that she has had to work for. She compares writing to learning a sport or playing an instrument, stating that good writing takes a lot of time to learn. With this practice, Ely’s writing has become more imagery-based and technical, which is something she hopes to improve upon during her time at Wheaton.

“I’m excited to form new connections and see who I evolve into. Hopefully I will learn just as much about myself as I will about my craft,” Ely said. “I would like to grow as a person and become more knowledgeable about the world around me. “

Three WA students win free summer trip to Germany

JACKIE CLAY
Club Manager

Every year, the foreign language teachers offer national language exams. The exams cost a few bucks and are seen as low stress. When the results come back, participants can get a bronze, silver, or even gold medal if they score high enough. Then they usually forget about it; it doesn't go any further. Unless they are a German student.

When German students achieve the 90th percentile in the National German Exam (NGE), they are eligible for the experience of a lifetime. Indeed, three WA students, sophomores Maggie Burrows and Brady Burrell, and junior Pravar Mukkala, earned the American

Association of Teachers of German and Pädagogischer Austauschdienst (AATG/PAD) National German Exam Scholarship.

The scholarship is provided by the Federal Republic of Germany, through the German Foreign and the Pedagogical Exchange Service.

"The German government gives a lot of money to this stuff," German teacher Tim Welch said. "There are always these types of opportunities for teachers and students which is really cool because not every country has a thing like this."

In order to be eligible, applicants must not live in a German speaking household or have visited a German speaking country for more than two consecutive weeks.

Burrows, Burrell, and Mukkala filled out an introductory application in German once they learned of their NGE placement. The students then participated in an interview completely in German.

Once they had passed the interviews, these WA students had to take the STAMP test, the same test that students take to receive the Seal of Biliteracy. After the exams, the final scholarship recipients were announced.

"It's like our short-term exchange, but all expenses paid. We haven't had winners in a while and now we have three in the same year, which is amazing," Welch said.

Mukkala won the Internationales Preisträgerprogramm (IPP)

award, which allows him to stay for four weeks in Germany while Burrell and Burrows will be traveling with the Deutschland Plus program for a three week trip.

"I think it will be cool to see how people live in a different part of the world," Burrows said. "We get so used to our everyday lives that sometimes we forget that people live differently."

Like many WA exchange programs, Burrows, Burrell, and Mukkala will be staying with a host family. None of the students have been matched with a family yet, but Burrows and Burrell will be staying in the town of Kiel, close to the northern border between Germany and Denmark.

This program is meant to enrich the process of

learning German for students and immerse them into the language with time spent in school and traveling.

"I think [the school] will help me with my speaking skills and my cultural awareness will also improve," Mukkala said. "You need both to learn a language."

The prospect of the trip is very exciting for the students, as it offers an opportunity to continue with the German language over the summer, as well as travel. When faced with the prospect of going on this amazing adventure, the winners expressed great interest, excitement, but also nerves.

"Hopefully I will improve my German skills and make some nice memories there," Burrell said.

Austin,



It is hard for us to believe the time has come already for you to take the next step in this journey of life. We are proud of the young man you have become.

Love, Mom and Dad

Will,

Life is a journey...live slowly, travel lightly, care deeply...and do one thing every day that scares you!



Love you Cubby!

Mom, Dad, Sacha, Elvis & Remy

Donescu leaves last mark at WA with Ghost murals

Continued from page 1

“Myself and the Mock Trial team are extremely appreciative of Julia for creating our logo,” Mock Trial Club co-captain and junior Nikhil Singh said. “The fact that clubs across Westford Academy now have access to an incredibly talented artist like my friend, Julia, to create custom logos for their clubs is valuable. The versatility of the logo is going to be a huge asset for the future of WA.”

While not all student organizations have reached out to Donescu to create a design for them, many have taken Donescu’s design and created their own. Organizations such as the Gender and Sexuality Alliance have already incorporated the new mascot into their merchandise.

Donescu’s initial thoughts on changing the school mascot were indifferent. She wasn’t usually a student who would express her opinion on controversial topics but decided to submit a mascot design anyway because she thought it would be a fun project to do in her free time while also contributing to the Westford community.

“Originally, I didn’t have a huge opinion on changing the mascot,” Donescu said. “I knew it was happening but I wasn’t really involved in it. But I realized that this year would be my final year at WA and wanted to leave my mark somehow.”

Many students and faculty were worried that changing the mascot would eliminate the “intimidating” factor of the mascot with its crossed arms and ambiguous facial expression. Thus, Donescu took this concern into consideration when designing the new mascot. Keeping the element of the ghost, she wanted to ensure that the school’s identity remained “intimidating”.

“I know that I didn’t want the new mascot to look like the old one,” Donescu said. “I thought that if we were going to change the mascot, we might change it as much as we can but stay true to Westford’s culture and identity... Though, for our sports teams, I also wanted to

mascot. This process continued into the summer as well. With college applications and spending time with friends and family, fortunately for Donescu, she did not find the mascot project too strenuous, but found the outcome rewarding. “Even though it was a lot of

she would see me the next day, and she would accept the feedback and she agreed with the feedback and made changes. I am extremely proud of Julia, and I am sure she received both negative and positive input. The negative input can really take a toll on someone, however, Julia has stood strong and is proud

thick skin throughout this whole process because I knew that there would always be people who didn’t like my design. I just had to focus on the good.”

This fall, Donescu will be attending Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (MCPHS) for a degree in Public Health Services. She chose MCPHS for its excellent physician assistant program. Donescu has always had an interest in healthcare due to her frequent visits to the hospital as a child due to multiple ailments including appendicitis. She also has fond memories of rushing stuffed animals to imaginary hospitals as a child with her older sister.

“[My interest in the medical field] has always been part of me. I can’t think of a specific point in time when it started,” Donescu said.

For her senior capstone project, as her last impact on WA, Donescu took on the ambitious task of painting her new Ghost design in the gymnasium and other places around the school where the previous logo once was. Donescu knew that much of WA’s community had a connection to the old mascot and was determined to inspire the same feelings within students with the new mascot.

Unlike her initial efforts to incorporate the new Ghost into the murals of the school, Donescu’s mural in the main gym has had a largely positive reception. According to Donescu, painting the Ghost in the gym has felt like a redemption from the backlash she received when she originally began her project.

“I know that a lot of people really liked [the old mascot]. So, in my head, I was like, okay, so if I put a cooler version of mine on this wall, like in the same spot, people will like it more,” Donescu said.



Photo by Srivas Arun

Donescu adds the final touches to the new mascot in the gym.

keep the ghost intimidating.” Other factors Donescu wanted to keep were the school colors — white, grey, and maroon. She didn’t want the mascot to lose too many “traditional” elements that contributed to the culture of WA and Westford as a whole.

The design process started back in April 2022. Donescu’s involvement in this project included attending meetings with administration and endless hours revising to perfect the

work, it was all worth it in the end,” Donescu said. “I’ll know I’ve made an impact at WA.”

Donescu mentioned that the administration had a tremendous impact on the new design. However, WA Principal James Antonelli is grateful that he had the opportunity to work with a student like Donescu during a tough process.

“Julia is a very talented artist,” Antonelli said. “She was open to any suggestions... Whenever I would email Julia,

of her work. I admire Julia and appreciate her perseverance.”

With the new adjustment for everyone in the WA community, Donescu also received both positive and negative feedback from students and faculty. She had heard the mascot compared to a tissue, a bat, and even a curtain.

“Because a lot of people didn’t realize I drew the mascot, people often talked about my design in close proximity to me,” Donescu said. “Still, I kept

To our favorite vegan eating, volleyball playing, Taylor Swift loving superstar!



*Taylor, We are so proud of all you have accomplished at WA and look forward to all you will accomplish at Scripps and beyond!
We love you so much!!*

*Love, Mom, Dom, Julia
and Daisy Doodle*

Congratulations Josh!

We are so proud of you and look forward to watching your story unfold.
We love you!



Love,
Mom, Dad and Emma.

Navigating Westford Academy as a South Asian & Muslim student

SIMRAH AZMI
STAFF WRITER

Walking through the halls of WA as an Indian-American student, I see a lot of people who look like me; Westford's significant South Asian population is reflected clearly in the student body. My connection with my fellow South Asian students goes beyond just physical appearance; being raised as part of a specific region's culture means we have likely been exposed to similar beliefs or expectations growing up. Alongside our shared experiences are differences that exist beneath the surface—differences that do not have to be at the forefront, but that exist regardless. These are important to acknowledge, because without them, the South Asian community would not be nearly as vibrant and diverse as it is.

One of the major aspects at the core of South Asian culture is religious diversity. Not only is this region the birthplace of numerous ancient world religions, but even in the present day, it is filled with adherents of many different faiths, such as Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, Christianity, Jainism, and many more.

No matter how religious someone is—whether extremely devout or more moderate, like me—religion most likely played a role in the way they were brought up. This includes the ways they were taught to behave, the holidays they celebrate, and so much more. Being such a key factor in so many people's lives makes it a topic that can often be difficult to discuss, as there is a fear that it might result in uncomfortable conversations about personal beliefs. To avoid

this, differences in religion are often brushed over or forgotten about, not even taken note of until specific moments. Unfortunately, this can end up doing damage, as people can feel erased or forced to blend in.

Being Muslim is a part of me that is often hidden. To the average person, my name does not sound stereotypically "Muslim," and I do not wear the hijab—the head covering worn by many Muslim women.

Also, the reality is, many

Nobody should feel guilty for making this connection—it is inevitable considering the circumstances, such as the fact there are not a lot of visibly Muslim students at WA. However, speaking on the experience of being one of the Muslim students that is here, it is not easy to often be painted over and forgotten about. I have had conversations with South Asian peers where we were supposedly "connecting" over our "shared culture," but these ended up being conversations primarily

and blend in. It's not easy to walk the line between making this part of me known and making it my entire identity; although the WA community is very accepting and open-minded, there is always that fear deep down that people might look at me differently if I openly state, "I'm Muslim."

Rather than that, I allow people to figure it out naturally; for example, many of my friends learned I was Muslim only when they saw me fasting during the month of Ramadan. They initially

expressed a bit of surprise, but quickly moved on from it. By not making it a huge deal, I prevented it from becoming a defining factor of who I was, but rather just an ordinary part of me. This feels comfortable for me; however, I do think we need to change the fact that "Hindu"

Photo by Katie Fonden



Muslim and South Asian students juggle both Ramadan celebrations and schoolwork.

people associate South Asia with India. And as India is a country where a vast majority of the people are Hindu, people also often equate "Indian" with "Hindu" (a person who adheres to Hinduism). As a result, seeing a visibly South Asian person who is not visibly Muslim translates for many people as, this person must be Hindu.

centered around aspects of Hindu culture and holidays. Everyone assumed I could relate, and I simply went along with them, pretending I could.

Once again, this is no fault of my peers'. But with Hinduism seeming to be the default for South Asian students, it can be difficult to speak up about being different, and a lot simpler to just try

to be the default and "Muslim," as well as adherents of other religions, often seem to be "exceptions" when it comes to South Asian students.

WA's South Asian Student Association (SASA) took a wonderful step in the right direction with their social media posts and club meetings this year centering around Ramadan and Eid as well as

holidays celebrated by other religions, showcasing the diversity of South Asia and recognizing all the different faiths on an equal level.

This kind of representation of different religions definitely needs to continue throughout the school going forward, as it removes a lot of discomfort or misunderstanding that exists around the topic of religion and that might be hindering important conversations. It creates an environment in which being part of a certain religion is something that neither has to be hidden, nor become a big deal that completely changes others' perception of someone—but rather something that can help people learn more about classmates who have had different experiences from them, while also taking note of all their similarities.

As a Muslim student, my everyday life might look a bit different from yours. I put on a hijab and perform salat (the five daily prayers, one of the pillars of Islam) as soon as I get home; I read a few pages of the Qur'an each day, trying to strengthen my Arabic pronunciation; I recite brief supplications known as du'a before doing things like stepping out of the house, taking a bite of food, and going to bed.

But in the end, I stress out about the same tests and assignments as you, I laugh at the same jokes as you, and I, too, am trying to make the most of my four high school years while making friends and performing to the best of my ability. In the end, I am just another student like you. Our differences exist alongside our similarities, and it is important to acknowledge the beauty in them both.

Congrats, Michaela!



*You've worked so hard to be where you are today, so don't forget to celebrate all that you've accomplished!
We're so proud of you and excited to see where your ambition and creativity take you on this new adventure.*

<3 Mom, Dad, and Adrienne

Meghan,



Congratulations - your hard work, dedication, and commitment has paid off! We know your future will be filled with joy, success, and all the good things you deserve...UVM is lucky to be getting you! Remember to always keep learning, growing, chasing your dreams, and having fun!

Love,
Mom, Dad, Aidan, Katie, and Lucky

Burns swims her way to Merrimack College

SOPHIA MULGREW
STAFF WRITER

Being able to take part in a college sport is a dream most athletes strive to achieve, and now, senior Mia Burns has achieved this goal as she will be swimming at Merrimack College. After years of hard work and dedication in high school, Burns now plans on majoring in human development services for the next four years in college.

Ever since she was young, Burns has had a passion for competitive swimming, starting out at Westford Swim and Tennis Club when she was four. Since then, Burns has swam at North Shore Swim Club and Patriot Swim Club, and now currently swims at Crimson Aquatics. She has also been a member of the WA Swim and Dive team throughout her high school career.

Throughout the numerous clubs she has participated in, Burns has the greatest passion for her current team, Crimson Aquatics. According to Burns, the bond she shares with her teammates and coaches is unbreakable, as it allows her to thrive in the pool and value swimming every day.

“Crimson [Aquatics] is my favorite because of my connections with my teammates and coaches,” Burns said. “They make me love swim more and more everyday.”

Even though she takes part in many swimming events, Burns is most drawn to backstroke and

butterfly due to the length of the events.

“My favorite event is the 200 butterfly and the 200 backstroke,” Burns said. “I like that they are longer than the sprint events but shorter than the distance events.”

Starting out as a freshman, Burns was a distance and Individual Medly swimmer. However, as her swimming career progressed, she

DCL All Star again this year. She will be missed as she heads off to swim in college.”

Although she loves the water, swimming wasn’t something Burns knew she wanted to do at the collegiate level until her freshman year in high school. But after years of hard work and time she has spent in the pool with her teammates, it is hard for her to imagine her life without it.



Photo provided by Mrs. Burns

Burns signing her commitment.

made her way to find higher passions for different strokes which led to some incredible achievements.

“As an athlete, she is fun to coach because she is so versatile. As she moved to senior year, she filled in at the strokes for us, racing breaststroke and butterfly for the team at states this year,” swim coach Caitlin Klick-McHugh said. “She swims at a high level, being named a

“I have known since around freshman year that I wanted to swim in college. I can’t remember a time in my life where I didn’t want to swim,” Burns said. “I can’t picture my life without having a team around me.”

As a team leader and captain, Burns really knew how to make each individual teammate of hers feel proud by acknowledging their accomplishment after each race. Apart from that, Burns

was recognized for organizing fun team bonding activities.

“Having grown up with many of the girls on the team, Mia’s love for the team shines through,” McHugh said. “As captain, she organized positive shout outs for teammates, as well as fun outings like Boda Borg, sleepovers, and Fire and Ice. She really understands that a happy, close team can make the difference.”

According to Burns, one of the greatest things about being an athlete is the proud moments you feel when you achieve a great accomplishment. Burns strongly believes one of her proudest moments was when her hard work paid off during the States meet.

“Winning states with the WA team felt like all our hard work had paid off,” Burns said. “Making states was a huge goal of mine.”

After consistently putting in work in and out of school to become a college athlete, Burns has seen a welcoming and friendly community at Merrimack. Burns knew that Merrimack was where she belonged and the perfect fit for her.

“I chose Merrimack for the friendly and welcoming community. From the first moments I met the team I knew it was the environment I wanted to spend my next four years in,” Burns said. “The team and environment were very noticeable from the very beginning and I knew it was a team I wanted to be a part of.”

Saunders to continue all pursuits in college

SOPHIA KEANG
GRADUATING
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Senior Alanna Saunders has achieved academic, athletic, and artistic feats most students could not even imagine. From being an award-winning artist to a dedicated and passionate multi-sport athlete, Saunders’ hard work and talent have culminated in her commitment to Middlebury College as part of the class of 2027 where she will be studying studio arts. In the words of her Track and Field shotput coach Bill Bowen: “I’ve got two words to say: athletic freak.”

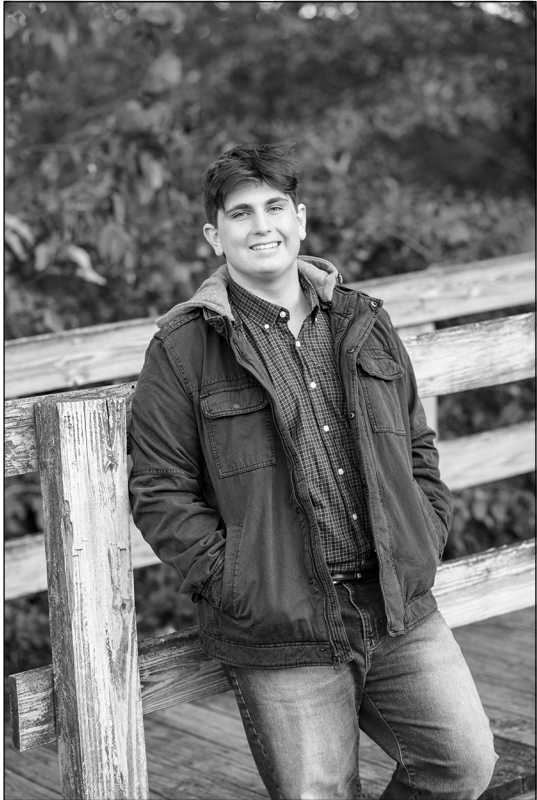
Saunders is one of the most involved students in the Westford Academy community. Her schedule features participation in all sides of the athletic, academic, and social spectrum: captain of the girls’ basketball and track and field teams, member of the girls’ volleyball team, Student Council representative, peer counselor, student member of Westford’s DEI Committee, a member of the Dean’s Council, member of the MIAA Student Advisory Committee, and of course, artist.

Having been a well-rounded student, Saunders never intended to continue her athletics at the collegiate level.

Continued on page 26

Congratulations Ollie!!

We are so proud of you! You have so much to look forward to and we can't wait to cheer you on in everything you do. We love you so much! Have a blast in college!



Love,
Mom, Dad, your bros

Hannah,



We are all so proud of you!
Love, Mom and Dad

Fremault commits to St. Michael'sDeSisto sprints to 5th year

Fares Osman
Opinion & Reviews Editor

Ever since he was young, senior Luke Fremault has always had a love for sports, trying out different things to see what he was fit for. But it was not until third grade that Fremault truly became interested in lacrosse. Many games and practices later throughout his elementary and middle school days influenced him

and grow on the years of effort he put in.

“My biggest challenge in lacrosse was me being very good when I was little, but I didn’t put in any work outside of practice so when I got a little older and everyone had got just as good it taught me to work more off the field on my lacrosse skills,” Fremault said.

Fremault said.

Before he officially committed, Fremault had an overnight stay at Saint Michael's in order to see what it was like to go to a school in Vermont and be a part of the team. This allowed him to see that Saint Michael's was clearly the right choice for him and his future.

“The kids there are very nice and down to earth, which usually you don’t see too much in lacrosse where there’s a lot of kids with very big egos,” Fremault said. Although Fremault is a multi-sport athlete, he decided to play lacrosse after he lost interest in other sports, including baseball. He saw lacrosse as a more entertaining, exciting, and challenging sport on a mental and physical level than baseball. Football was another one of Fremault’s top sports which he found interest in going to college for as an alternative if

lacrosse did not work out. He has been playing football since he was five years old and believes that he would have made it far in college. However, Fremault loves to challenge himself and look for adventures so he decided to choose the sport he did.

“Lacrosse has taught me a lot about life, mainly through what I have learned from coaches and that not everything is just handed to you,” Fremault said. “You need to work for every little thing you want.”



Photo by Katie Fonden

Fremault plays lacrosse against Chelmsford.

to be the player he is today. After playing the sport all of high school, Fremault’s passion grew, which ultimately lead to his commitment to Saint Michael’s College.

According to Fremault, while he spent most of his childhood playing sports, as he grew older, he began to take these sports more seriously. He always tried working harder than the kid next to him because he knew that is what he needed to do to get to the next level. This is what motivated him to work hard

After years of practicing and playing lacrosse, Fremault received five offers to different schools but chose to attend Saint Michael’s. Fremault felt that Michael’s was different than all the other schools and was special in many ways.

“Saint Michael’s was an easy option for me because of how beautiful it is up there in Vermont. When I met the team and all the coaches I knew that it was the right place for me,”

Katie McDermott
Social Media & Graphic Design Editor

Running across the track, passing his opponents, and crossing the finishing line is something senior Austin DeSisto has gotten used to over the past ten years. Now, after his time at WA, he has chosen to continue his running career next year at Phillips Exeter Academy.

At the age of eight years old DeSisto was introduced to track and field and quickly fell in love. The more he participated in it, the more he wanted to continue, putting other sports aside.

“I started track when I was very young, probably eight years old because my dad and brother both competed,” DeSisto said. “I was just thrown into it and over the years got less interested in other sports like lacrosse, basketball, and soccer, so I stuck with track and field.”

DeSisto has had an amazing high school track and field career, competing at an elite level year after year. While his vision has always been to graduate from WA and head straight to a college where he can run at the division one level, he has felt unsatisfied with his collegiate opportunities. This has pointed him in the direction of Phillips Exeter. DeSisto believes Phillips Exeter can give him opportunities that will help him accomplish his goals.

“I wasn’t getting what I believed to be the fullest

opportunities athletically and academically this year from colleges. When talking with the track coach at PEA, I fell more in love with the opportunities that PEA would give to me,” DeSisto said.

“Having an extra year to build my resume, get stronger, get faster, and get smarter was a no brainer,” DeSisto said.

As a WA Track and Field Boys’ captain, DeSisto has shown his teammates and coaches how focused he is. In addition, DeSisto is very organized and

always checking in with the coaches to make sure all athletes are in the right events.

“[Philips Exeter] is getting someone who already knows how to compete very well and is very fast,” Boys’ Track and Field Head Coach Philip Archambault said. “He will physically mature over a year and this will allow him to be entering college a lot stronger than he currently is.”

Not only will a post-graduate year help DeSisto athletically, but it will also give him more chances to try new things, as he feels academically comfortable and does not feel like that will be his main focus.

“I’m most excited to have a fresh start where I can meet new people and make new friends,” DeSisto said. “Also, because I have already graduated high school, I have very few requirements, so I’ll be able to explore other classes that I didn’t have the chance to take during my time at WA.”



Photo by Noah Brown

DeSisto running the mile.

Congratulations Liv!

“There’s a fire inside of you that can’t help but shine through.”



We love you to the moon and back!



Love,
Daddy, Mommy, and Tess

Spound ready to chase her equestrian dreams into college

ELITSA KOLEVA
CO-MANAGING EDITOR

A straight-backed, elegantly dressed rider grips the reins of their horse, intuitively guiding their companion forward. With every gallop, the pair exudes confidence. Indeed, equestrianism is a majestic, beautiful sport. But for senior Maddie Spound, who cherishes the bond she shares with her loyal friend, horse riding is so much more than that.

For Spound, Chip was the special horse who led her through last summer’s competition season. Notably, she won two classical dressage events at the Vermont Summer Festival and Fieldstone Show Park, where her riding form was judged. In addition to that, she won a number of ribbons in the jumping events at the Wellington International Competition in Florida. Ultimately, her success that summer and bond with Chip solidified her love for the sport, leading to her commitment to the University of Charleston, where she will join the Division 1 equestrian team.

According to Spound, what makes equestrianism so special to her is the connection she shares with horses. From her first horse Beau, who helped dip her toes into the sport, to Chip, with whom she was able to compete on a greater scale, horses have helped Spound grow into the person she is today.

“It’s really just great to have a bond with a horse and having all your hard work and everything you put into that horse and your relationship pay off,” Spound said. “[The best part is that] you have a partner to do it with.”

After doing this sport for 12

years, it has been incredibly rewarding for Spound to see how much she has improved. What started out as casual lessons at a barn when she was seven years old riding ponies turned into something more serious after she moved to her current show barn, Holly Hill Farm, in Harvard.

“I’ve been doing it most of my life and I’ve grown a lot, confidence-wise,”

biggest supporter. Through lessons three times a week and practice runs for the rest of the week, Grady helped Spound build the confidence she needed to refine her equitation and smoothly transition into the more challenging jumping competitions.

“We’ve always been really close and she’s always the one who comes to the ring with me and helps me out a lot,”

been crucial to her growth through the years. The bond she shares with her horses has also helped her overcome her anxiety, making this sport stand out to her.

“[Equestrianism] is basically my whole life. I’ve always struggled with anxiety and it’s always been my safe place,” Spound said. “I love being with the horses after school after a hard day, so it definitely

persevere through challenges and follow her sights.

“Maddie has learned to handle her challenges, some of them being difficult, [but her] understanding of hard work and perseverance pays off,” Grady said. “She understands that nothing comes from luck, only from hard work. She has set high goals for herself and has to work on them daily.”

Aside from training in the ring, Spound worked part-time in order to pay for the competitions she went to over the summer. Whether it be caring for the horses at Holly Hill or getting to shows early in order to prepare the horses for the ring, it felt good to see where her hard work led her.

“For me, it’s definitely really exciting. I haven’t had as many opportunities as other people because it’s a hard sport, money-wise,” Spound said. “It felt amazing last year to do all these big competitions and win some of them.”

Although Chip will no longer be staying at Holly Hill, having returned to his original owners in Florida, Spound plans to pay him regular visits. As of now, Spound is set to ride her new horse named Maisie over the summer, with whom she is excited to bond with. In the future, she hopes she can bring Maisie to Charleston with her to ride with the team.

“Currently, [I am not on a team], but in college, I will be joining their team and trying out for that in August,” Spound said. “I would definitely love to keep horses in my life and keep showing [doing competitions]. I’d love to have a career out of this.”



Senior Maddie Spound performs at a jumper competition with Chip.

Photo provided by Jess Winhurst Photography

Spound said. “I showed in something called equitation, [an event focused on the form of the horse and rider], for most of my time being a junior. I just recently switched over to the jumpers, [which involve jumping over rails of varying heights].”

According to Spound, her trainer of seven years, Cathy Grady, has always been her

Spound said. “I can call and talk to her whenever because she’s always been there for me and knows me very well. So she knows how to train me, and [knows] what my horses need.”

According to Spound, confidence in herself has always been something she has struggled with, so having a trainer that supports her has

means a lot to me.”

According to Spound, getting to go to the prestigious horse riding competition in Wellington, and earning two classic dressage awards in a row at the Vermont Summer Festival and Fieldstone Show Park last summer was a culmination of years of hard work. In fact, one of Spound’s best qualities is her ability to

Congratulations Nadya!

From a little toddler holding our hands to a grown high school graduate, the ride has been an adventure for the books. Your greatest adventure is about to begin. We are so proud of all your accomplishments.



Love,
Mom & Dad

Saunders to continue with athletics at Middlebury

Continued from page 23

However, in her junior year of high school, the head coach of Middlebury College’s Track and Field team reached out, and Saunders reconsidered the opportunity.

“Middlebury itself is academically rigorous and had the liberal arts aspect of the school I was looking for,” Saunders said. “I hadn’t really thought about continuing sports at the professional level in college, but the school offered both academic and athletic opportunities. They also have a really good art program which I find myself taking advantage of.”

With Middlebury’s athletics being a part of Division III, Saunders’ athletic commitment is not just limited to track and field. The division allows for student athletes to compete in more than one sport as long as they are in good standing with their studies. Thus, Saunders’ current plan is to play on both Middlebury’s track and field and basketball teams.

Her love for basketball began in the fifth grade when she joined the Westford Youth Basketball Association, and the rest was history. A part of both recreational, travel, and middle school and high school basketball teams, Saunders has been a devoted athlete to the sport.

“I really started to love basketball once I became a part of a team that met regularly,” Saunders said. “During travel

season, my team met almost every day for the entire winter season [...] We became a family, working with each other for two to three hours a day, six to seven days a week, for nine months of the year.”

Saunders has played forward since joining WAGB

further confirmed her athletic abilities.

“Alanna has been a league all star, and college-level player for us [WAGB] for three seasons,” Coward said. “She has one of the quickest first steps to the basket we have had on the

during middle school but found it to be a more social event rather than an athletic event.

However, as her high school schedule became more busy and once COVID-19 hit, Saunders decided to take a break from track and

I absolutely love throwing,” Saunders said. “Since it’s an independent sport, you’re able to completely focus on your own performance in a way that other activities don’t let you. Every shift in technique provides visible results, and it’s really satisfying to see your own strength presented in a measurable way.”

Moreover, Saunders suffered a torn right labrum due to multiple shoulder dislocations while playing basketball during her junior year. Despite this setback, she continued to pursue the spring track and field season where she began her shotput journey. With her dominant arm injured, Saunders used her left arm for shotput and turned out to have overthrown the entire team.

“I can’t even eat food with my left hand, never mind throw something,” Bowen said referring to Saunder’s quick ability to learn. “She’s an athlete and has those abilities, but is a lot more than that. She has social skills and looks at sports as something that’s fun, which is a crucial mindset for college athletes.”



Senior Alanna Saunders (right) playing defense during a game against Dracut High School.

and has been a crucial role to the team’s success since her freshman year. To her WAGB Head Coach Russell Coward, Saunders has proven to be an athlete able to play at the collegiate level, and after earning the title as a DCL-All Star, her talents have only

team in a while. She is also a phenomenal rebounder and shot blocker.”

Additionally, unlike most college athletes, Saunders was never a part of a club track and field team outside of high school. Saunders had started her track and field career

field for her sophomore year. Ultimately, she returned for the spring track and field season in her junior year of high school.

“Since I’ve never been fond of running, I decided to focus more on throwing shotput and discus and realized that

Her plan is to continue partaking in the shotput event at Middlebury.

“I’m really excited for what’s to come in my future,” Saunders said. “I’ll be able to study what I want, play the sports I want, and just start a new chapter in my life.”

Congratulations Ruby!!



We are so proud of the fun-loving, independent and amazing person that you are. The future is bright and we can’t wait to see what’s in store for you at Sacred Heart University. Keep working hard and believing in yourself, we love you very much!

Love, Mom, Dad, Ella, Luke, Blake and Rosie

Congratulations Tomas!



You have accomplished so much. We are so proud of you. We are so excited to see what comes next.

Love you! Mom and Dad

Senior Mia Clark slides into Assumption University for softball

ELLA DiRUGGIERO
STAFF WRITER

Playing sports in college is a very memorable and exciting experience. Many college athletes spend a lot of their childhood training and working hard so they are able to pursue their sport in college. WA senior, Mia Clark, has played softball since she was nine years old and is finally living out her dream of playing in college.

Clark has recently committed to Assumption University in Worcester, MA to play D2 softball. Throughout her childhood, Clark has played a variety of sports. Collectively, she has played softball, basketball, and soccer competitively. However, in her 11 years of playing softball, Clark has preferred softball over basketball and soccer.

For Clark, softball has offered more of a fun side than other sports. At the same time, she also got to meet long-term friends and coaches through these experiences.

“I spent so much time playing on club tournament teams ever since I was 9, so I have just loved the time I’ve spent with my teammates on the field over the years,” Clark said.

Clark has played varsity softball since her freshman year, and has met many friends along the way. Clark’s

teammates and coaches have expressed the positive impact she makes on the team.

A friend and teammate of Clark’s, junior Sarah Kirby, said that Clark is one of the most passionate players she has ever played with.

“She is one of those

coach, Gina Mustoe, has also seen Clark’s skills, passion, and positive attitude improve throughout her years of coaching her. Mustoe noted how Clark has been a great player and teammate over the years, mentioning how she never gives up and is extremely supportive of her team, even in difficult situations.

“She has a really good ability to work hard but still make it enjoyable, which is hard to do, especially when it’s hot outside and you’re sweating and there are 100 other things you’d rather be doing,” Mustoe said. “She’s just great at making the best of it and making hard work fun.”

Besides softball, Clark was also attracted to the location of Assumption as well. Her family, friends, and coaches have expressed how deserving Clark is of this opportunity.

“I can’t think of a more deserving player to continue their softball career than Mia,” Kirby said. “She has put so much time and commitment into softball and Assumption is beyond lucky to have her.”

players that you immediately look up to and admire. She has helped me grow not only as a player but a person,” Kirby said. “Mia is the epitome of a great teammate and captain.”

The varsity softball head



Clark runs to first base during a game.

Photo by Jack Zwiirn

Mahoney scores at St. John Fisher's University

SOPHIA KEANG
GRADUATING
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

From tap shoes to cleats, the moment senior Caitlyn Mahoney picked up a field hockey stick and hit the field, she fell in love with the sport.

After years of dedication and training for the sport, Mahoney has developed a passion for field hockey, and after years of training, she will attend St. John Fisher University this fall to play field hockey at the D3 level.

Prior to field hockey, Mahoney had ten years of dance experience under her belt, but she wanted a change. Thus, she began playing on the field in the fall of sixth grade for Stony Brook Middle School, and everything after that was history.

After her first season, Mahoney began playing for Strikers Field Hockey, and then transferred to Northeast Elite in high school. Mahoney mentioned that being a part of Northeast Elite gave her more opportunities to meet with college coaches and recruiters.

“My head coach helped me a lot through the recruiting process,” Mahoney said. “I also ended up reaching out to other coaches by sending out my game highlights, but SJFU ended up reaching out to me from one of the tournaments I played in during my sophomore year.”

Many student athletes begin the recruiting process early in their high school

career, but Mahoney never knew she wanted to play at the collegiate level until the end of her sophomore year. That year, Mahoney had made the varsity team and was a starter towards the end of the season. While this was one of her many accomplishments, Mahoney finds pride in the “little things”.

“In my time as a field hockey player, I’ve found my successes in the little things,” Mahoney said. “Times where I’ve made a good pass or doing a newly-learned skill correctly honestly make me proud because those little things add up to my athletic goals.”

At SJFU there are many opportunities and activities for students to get involved in, so Mahoney is excited to experience the school spirit in addition to her academics.

“I’m excited because college is full of opportunities and creating new memories,” Mahoney said. “It’s a scary time but I’m excited to meet new people from both my classes and the team.”

For aspiring student-athletes hoping to continue playing at the collegiate level, Mahoney advises to be open to the unknown, especially as opportunities may arise that one may never expect.

“Keep an open mind,” Mahoney said. “Having a narrow mindset for anything in life only closes opportunities rather than opening them. This can be applied to schools or any other life experiences one may face.”

Congratulations, Lily!

We are all so proud of you! I wish you laughter and success in everything your future holds!



I love you always,
Grandma

Murphy lands her spot at the University of Maryland

KATE KELLY
CO-FEATURES EDITOR

Four hours, Monday through Saturday. Six hours in the summer. The same walls and the same events. Yet somehow, junior Maggie Murphy finds the same thrill in the intricate flips and skills that come with gymnastics. This sport soon turned into a process much more than a hobby, one that usually takes another year to finalize.

Finishing her junior year, Murphy has officially committed to the University of Maryland as a division one athlete in pursuit of her love for gymnastics.

Participating in a camp hosted by the college over the previous summer, she immediately took an interest in the campus. Both the location and atmosphere of the state was enticing to Murphy, and after a second visit back, she had nearly made up her mind.

“Just meeting the coaches made me realize that’s where I wanted to be because they were so amazing,” Murphy said. “After that, they offered me [a spot] and I spent a week there with my parents. It was like I was ready to say yes, right at that moment.”

Having both sisters and a mother who were gymnasts, Murphy was entered into classes at a young age, joining Brestyan’s

Gymnastics club as soon as she could. Brestyan’s has a history of Olympic medalists as well as countless

partially, she says, from the level of variety when it comes to events in the gym. “Just seeing all the skills

She has been noted in publications such as the Lowell Sun and Boston

the reins as a junior and I am excited to see what she brings to the team as a senior captain,” WA gymnastics coach Stephanie Coburn said. “It’s been exciting every December to see what new skills she has learned since the previous season.”

However, things haven’t always been easy in Murphy’s career. Growing up, she had three elbow surgeries which severely impacted her ability to compete and train. Yet still, she worked hard to regain her skills and get to where she is today.

“For me, Maggie stands out in the fact that she is always happy with her performances. Her smile in the gym just shows that she loves this sport with so much heart,” Coburn said. “If she has a rough event, she gets back up with the ‘I know what to fix next time’ and an ‘it’s alright’ attitude.”

Looking forward to a relatively stress-free senior year, Murphy is excited for what the future holds at Maryland and where she will meet a new community of gymnasts.

“You’ve just got to keep working hard. Obviously there are gonna be your down moments, but those are just what make the good days even better,” Murphy said.



Senior Maggie Murphy practices for her upcoming meet at Brestyan’s Gymnastics.

championship titles, and Murphy performs here as a level ten gymnast.

While she’s tried other sports and even plays field hockey for WA, none have ever resonated with her the way gymnastics has. This is

that I’ve learned on bars especially, like my upgrades with releases and dismount, and getting to learn them was just so much fun,” Murphy said. “They’re definitely hard at first but then once you start to do them, you get the hang of it.”

Globe for her talent and record winning performances. Also participating in the WA Gymnastic Team, Murphy will become a captain going into her senior year.

“Maggie has evolved in skill and leadership over the last few years. She took on

Photo by Katie Fonden

Schwab dives head first into Providence

KATIE McDERMOTT
CO-SOCIAL MEDIA & GRAPHIC
DESIGN EDITOR

Finding a college can be one of the hardest things for a student to do. It can be even harder for athletes who want to pursue their career at the collegiate level. On October 8, 2022 senior boys’ swim captain Quinn Schwab made his commitment to Providence College.

Schwab has been swimming since he was three years old. He started as a club swimmer at Chelmsford Swim and Tennis and then began high school swim in his freshman year. According to Schwab, swimming all these years has taught him a lot about how to enjoy doing what he loves now, before it quickly comes to an end.

“In general, being a part of CS&T helped prepare me for being a part of the WA team. It helped me realize that the team as a whole is the most important part,” Schwab said.

Schwab has a very unique situation at Providence because both of his older brothers attend there. By the time he arrives there his oldest brother will have graduated, but being at college with even just one of his brothers will be a great experience.

“I had schools reach out to me, and I reached out to a bunch of other schools too. But knowing my brothers love Providence, and being there often to visit them, it was a place that already felt like home before deciding to go there,” Schwab said. “When I took an official visit there, the team was

extremely welcoming, and just made me feel like it was the right place for me.”

Schwab had a huge impact on the WA Boys’ Swim team this year as they won first place in the State Championship. He gave it everything he had and tried to make his team and his lifelong coaches proud.

“Quinn has the ability to raise the bar, not only for himself, but also for his teammates,” WA Swim & Dive Coach Caitlin Klick-McHugh said. “Success breeds more success, and this domino effect is evident when Quinn is in the pool.”

High school sports can cause a very different feeling for athletes as it can be a completely different experience compared to club. A lot of high school sports focus mostly on the team aspect whereas swimming club is a very individual sport.

“At high school, the team is the most important. All I cared about in high school was beating the people I was racing, so I got the most points possible for my team,” Schwab said.

Even though Schwab’s high school swimming career has come to an end, he is very excited to continue it at a college level for the next four years and fulfill the goals he has made for himself.

“To be the best version of myself I can be, and hopefully help my teammates to do the same for them,” Schwab said. “And of course try my best to help my team do the best we can to win.”

Smith misses Men's Open by single stroke

JAMES FARLEY
CO-EDITOR IN CHIEF

After shooting a 70, good for two under par, at a one day local qualifier for the Men’s US Open at Lebaron Hills Country Club on May 3, senior Molly Smith came within one stroke of qualifying for the US Open. The US Open is one of the four major tournaments for the Men’s Professional Golf Association (PGA), making it a challenging and nationally awaited sporting event across the United States. With only the greatest golfers in the entire country competing in the event, Smith coming within one stroke of qualifying as just an 18-year-old is an incredible feat.

With great poise over the course of her round, Smith played an outstanding 18 holes of golf, making for a performance that she is proud of.

“I feel like I played well that day, and I was in control of my golf ball which is always something I’m looking for. I was swinging pretty well and my putter felt solid,” Smith said. “Obviously I’m a little disappointed to miss by one stroke, but overall there were a lot of positives from the day.”

After Smith’s incredible performance at the qualifying event, she immediately received a great deal of national attention. Since the event, Smith has been interviewed by ESPN, the

Golf Channel, and Golf Week.

“It has just been super crazy,” Smith said. “I was totally not expecting this at all.”

Heading into the day, Smith knew that she was walking into a tough match. The event consisted of an all-men’s field aside from Smith, meaning that she had to play longer holes than usual.

“I knew that participating would definitely turn some heads. When I tried to sign up, they asked me if I was trying to sign up for the Women’s

there is still a way for me to play well, even if things are not going well, which is extremely helpful to not get worked up,” Smith said.

Another factor to Smith’s success is the strong support system that is by her side throughout her golf journey. Her older sister Morgan, who will be attending Georgetown University for golf next year, and Maddie, who is a freshman golfer at WA, are her constant supporters. Both of her parents are strong golfers, as well.

“My family has helped me tremendously,” Smith said.

“I come from a super competitive family, so we are always trying to get better and beat each other.” Smith has an important summer schedule coming up, with the US Four Ball tournament with Morgan, the qualifying round for the Women’s US Open, the US Women’s Amateur Golf Championship, the US Girls Junior

Amateur, and the Massachusetts Women’s Amateur approaching.

Smith will be attending the University of Central Florida (UCF) next year, where she will continue her golf career.

“I’m looking forward to the competitiveness of the tournaments at [UCF]. Every tournament we play in is going to have a super talented field with a lot of the best college players and teams, so to be able to play in really high level events more often is going to be awesome,” Smith said. “I chose UCF because it just fit perfectly for what I was looking for both on and off the golf course.”



Senior Molly Smith follows through with her swing.

US Open Qualifier and I had to explain how I wanted to try out for the Men’s US Open,” Smith said. “So, they had to recalculate my women’s handicap to a handicap from ‘men’s’ tees. But, I have played men’s events before so it wasn’t really a super strange experience for me.”

Part of a reason for Smith’s great success is her ability to stay mentally focused as she plays, regardless of the conditions of the course, who she is playing against, or how well she is playing that day.

“Over the last year or so I feel like I have made great strides in my mental game. I never believe that I am out of a round, and I always believe

Photo by James Farley