Mr. Westie 2015  By Jared Sandler

The evening kicked off with excitement and laughs courtesy of our West Haven High School senior hosts, Nina Casalaina and Zatrell Lyons. They introduced the Mr. Westie contestants for the night, who swaggered out to their favorite song. Judged by Mrs. Gardner, Ms. Martinez and Ms. Fanelli, the contestants shined in three categories, which included their talents, interviews and modeling of sportswear.

The competition ranged from a dancing trio to a prom-posai to a hyped rap performance. Anthony, Tristan and Ahmad proved they could bust a move to “Uptown Funk”. The audience loved their moves and the boys gave it their all. Chris surprised us all with a memorable prom-posai to his girlfriend on stage. With the one word “Prom?” on the back of his guitar, he sealed the deal. The last performance of the night truly raised the roof. Following a Kanye West persona Iman portrayed during the competition, Iman rapped a piece he wrote himself. He threw some friendly trash talk to the other contestants and excited the crowd.

Meet The Contestants

Sergio Morales
Singing an original song “All For You” on the guitar

Alden Engstrom
Presenting original artwork

John Delgado
Singing “Good Love is on the Way” on the guitar

Anthony Lockhart, Tristan Perez and Ahmad Mohd
Dancing to “Uptown Funk”

Matt Ruzicka
Guitar solo to “Tighten Up” by The Black Keys

Chris Woosley
Playing the guitar

Kevin McDaniel
Singing a melody of songs on guitar

Brendan Serenson
Marine Life Interpretation

Michael Tran
Piano solo

Iman Mounir
Rapping an original piece

1st Place - Kevin McDaniel
Kevin sang a melody of current songs while on his guitar. Kevin’s talent and charisma really pumped up the audience.

2nd Place - John Delgado
John performed “Good Love is on the Way” by John Mayer on the guitar. John amazed the crowd with his vocal ability. He truly lived up to the name John.

3rd Place - Michael Tran
Michael performed “River Flows in You” by Yurima on the piano.

“I’m just glad I get to participate in something that’s so fun and the whole school gets to come and have a great experience. Tonight was really enjoyable.”

Kevin McDaniel

“It was so exciting to perform a song by one of my favorite artists for Mr. Westie.”

John Delgado

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Sleep Deprivation in High School Teens  By Jamie Kelley

It’s no opinion that high school is tough on the good ole’ brain, whether it be in AP Physics or that tedious English class; the stress the average teen goes through during these crucial four years of development is more than they’ll probably ever experience. But it’s not just tough on our craniums, it’s tough on our sleep schedules too! Sleep is vital to your well-being, as important as the air you breathe, the water you drink and the food you eat. Yet every morning the students of WHHS come in carrying sodas, energy drinks, coffees, or something similar, anything to get that sugar kick to make it through the 7 challenging hours we sit in classrooms. Sleep deprivation is real. So many students struggle to get through the rigorous course load that WHHS has to offer, juggling honors classes, APs, complicated academics, electives, extracurricular activities, and on top of all that, somehow manage to maintain some sort of social life; it’s no wonder that many of us are up until one or two in the morning every night to get everything done! Studies have proven that over 90% of high school students aren’t getting the needed 9-10 hours of sleep that is pivotal to make it through the day. The percentage raises by 5% by the time students reach their final year of high school. To fully understand the gravity of sleep deprivation I asked a few students their take on the question at hand, “Are you sleep deprived? And why do you think you’re sleep deprived?”

Senior Sarah Flynn says, “I have always had difficulty sleeping ever since I was a little kid. My need for sleep has grown as I’ve gotten older but the amount of time I actually have to sleep has shrunk. Due to extracurricular activities, working, and taking AP and honors classes, sleep has become a very rare occurrence for me. It sometimes feels like the more I need it, the less I’m able to. Sleep deprivation and stress caused by being over active and carrying the need to meet certain requirements is making students burn out at a young age. It isn’t healthy.”

So many students agree that this statement is true, we are stressed out! I’ve woken up some mornings myself and known that I’m not going to be able to function by the middle of the school day and even when I do get a full night of glorious sleep, it’s never enough because of the numerous nights before that I didn’t! And it’s because of this lack of sleep that so many teens suffer from sleep disorders like narcolepsy, sleep apnea, insomnia, restless leg syndrome. A severe lack of sleep can also trigger extreme anxiety issues, as the body doesn’t have time to de-stress and balance your hormonal levels to keep your body functioning in tip-top shape!

Junior Susannah Beyl says, “Being sleep deprived negatively affects my academic performance, which only leads to more sleep deprivation. It’s a nearly unbreakable cycle.”

Again, so true! It’s unfortunate because there is never any time to make up this sleep, a lack of sleep extremely impacts your ability to focus, when you aren’t focused you are unable to remember/apply the information you are receiving, and then you need to study more, and you have to add that extra study time to time that already isn’t there, so you make time, and then it’s three in the morning and you’ve lost even more sleep!

Senior Sarah Tweedie states, “There's so much only one person can take. There's so much stress on you every day, it's hard to sleep at night because of all those things in your mind like college, the last of your high school experience, tests, loads of homework, and the like. We try to act strong and push through it, but we’re not.”

We’re essentially sleep deprived zombies, shuffling through the day only to powerhouse at night craving the sleep we desperately need to keep going. We need sleep, and we need brains that have had enough sleep! Fully functioning brains! So get to bed, rest your head, and don’t overstress!
Chris Skeens  February 8, 2015  By Susie Beyl

Upon entering WHHS, freshman Chris Skeens had a very typical experience: stress, a full schedule, and a challenging course load. Like his peers, Chris has his likes and dislikes. His favorite courses are 2D Design, Band, and Global Studies. The hardest class he’s in, as he recalls, is Algebra 2. Between rehearsals and homework, he has his fair share of hobbies. Chris loves the TV series Scrubs, even though it’s being removed from Netflix. In his spare time, Chris reads up on animation, paying particular attention to the works of Marvel. He even creates some of his own animations to block out story lines. Aside from the usual activities and hobbies, however, Chris has a particular talent: drumming. Since he was an infant, Chris has been playing the drums. Chris actually went to my elementary school and, for as far back as I can remember, was the featured musical act in the school’s annual talent show. His love for performance has been evident for nearly a decade now!

Chris has always grown up around a strong musical influence. He endlessly heard about his first concert just before he was born; KISS. Chris’ dad is heavily involved in the musical scene and Chris picked it up straight from there. Independently, he polished his natural talent.

When Chris was about nine years old, he went to New York City with his dad to check out the musical scene. Drum sticks in hand, Chris was in search of an open jam night to showcase his talents. Chris and his dad wandered all over the city until stumbling upon a local bar and grille Bitter End. This bar was no joke. Legends such as Jimi Hendrix and John Stamos have graced the stage. The two walked into the restaurant; a dad and his ten year old son. What are the bar owners supposed to say to this elementary schooler asking to play at an open jam with seasoned professionals? So, they let him on the set list. The owners asked, “You sure you wanna play?” Chris and his dad hung out at Bitter End until about 1am, which was when they ran out of age performers to take the stage. Chris went up and, without hesitation, blew the joint away. The audience was stunned. Pretty soon, he was approached by the owners, but for another reason: "Hey, you wanna do another?" The owners asked him to play again, and again, and again. Chris' killed it all night in a notorious NYC hotspot.

Following this, Chris' musical life blew up. Soon enough, Chris was drumming for Alicia Keyes' and Enrique Iglesias' bassists. He says that the best part of playing so many joints is being known and improving as a musician. Now, he can walk down the streets in NYC and have cafe owners greet him; a perk many trained professionals have yet to gain.

Currently, Chris performs all over the Northeast; drumming in Massachusetts, New York, and all over Connecticut at various events and functions. Though drumming is a constant learning process, Chris swears it's worth the time, practice, and money. In the future, Chris plans to major in music in college and perform all over the nation. Chris' passion for music is evident, saying, "When things get hard, music is always behind you. I love it." With such devotion and talent, there is no doubt that Chris' future in music is incredibly bright.

“Music is the universal language of mankind.”
-Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.
Top 8 in the State

By Kharl Reynado

Victory isn’t always winning first place. It’s the achievement and satisfaction of hard work and dedication.

The West Haven High School Mock Trial Team is one of the top 8 teams in the state of Connecticut, competing with schools like Choate, Trumbull and Hamden. As a senior member of the Mock Trial Team, there is a special place in my heart for the sport. It has taught me teamwork, research skills, communication, confidence, dedication, and determination. Yet, despite the long hours of studying, this team still manages to laugh, celebrating all the little victories in between the larger ones.

The Team

Student Members Pictured Below: Katerina Mazzacane, Susie Beyl, Jay Silver, Jamie Kelley, Andrew Gordon, Kharl Reynado, Evelyn Fabian, Alexis Severino.

The team won against both Hamden High Mock Trial teams during the regionals. Moving onto the quarterfinals, we were victorious against a formidable team from St. Joseph’s. In the third round of the quarterfinals, we faced Trumbull High School. Both teams showcased their talent, preparation and skill, but Trumbull beat West Haven by mere points. We are proud of the performance we showed that night and we will not let that experience discourage us, but we use it to fuel our future plans for success.

The Mock Trial Team is open to all, the best and the brightest. We encourage actors, aspiring attorneys, and everyone who is interested in practices at Starbucks to give Mock Trial a chance. It could be the best thing you do in your high school career.
Sophomore US History Honors Classes Perform Skits for Black History Month

Mr. Kirck and Mr. Trenchard’s West Haven High School honors U.S. History classes recently performed skits about information they researched from a project they learned for Black History Month. Both history classes sang, read poetry, showed films and paintings and danced about the Harlem Renaissance. The two history classes each put on cabarets in The Little Theater. They focused on key figures and artwork from this time period that they learned about in class. The first class told the story of the Harlem Renaissance through the eyes of a high school student who goes back in time and visits a speakeasy, movie theater and jazz club. The second class, demonstrated a passionate rendition of different types of song, dance, film, poetry and paintings that defined the Harlem Renaissance while the main theme was a young man trying to impress his girlfriend. Four judges, including Assistant Principal Mrs. Martinez, teacher Mrs. Bruneau and Sikorsky engineers announced the second class won the informal contest and complimented both groups on their use of creating entertaining features from what they learned in class. All the students put on an outstanding performance. Below are pictures from the performances.

"We are drawn to the Renaissance because of the hope for black uplift and interracial empathy that it embodied and because there is a certain element of romanticism associated with the era’s creativity, its seemingly larger than life heroes and heroines, and its most brilliantly lit terrain, Harlem, USA."

— Clement Alexander Price, Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance
West Haven Students Honored  By Rostrum Staff

Two West Haven High students were recently recognized for outstanding involvement in their school and community. Kevin Armstrong and Stephen Osei were honored and applauded by about 400 people in attendance at the 29th Annual Carroll E. Brown West Haven Black Coalition Awards Dinner held at the Fantasia Banquet Facility in North Haven on February 28th. The two students received certificates, gift cards and medals.

Kevin, a junior at our high school, is a member of the football team, Sikorsky Mentoring Group and Developing Tomorrow’s Professionals (DIP). Seven minority teens from our school were chosen for DIP. The teens are shown how to develop the skill-sets and personal principles necessary to graduate from a four-year college. Kevin plans to enter the field of Sports Medicine when he graduates in 2016.

Stephen, a junior, is also a member of Developing Tomorrow’s Professionals, the Chess Club and Science Club. He is an honor Student and plans to go to college and pursue a career as a Pharmacist when he graduates in 2016.

Assistant Principal John Della Camera, who is West Haven High’s Advisor to Developing Tomorrows Professionals, accompanied the young men to the banquet. Della Camera said, “I am very proud of these kids. I really see a lot of growth in them since joining this group of kids selected for the program.”

The two young men along with five other Westies were chosen along with other minority students from city schools to attend a 10 week program at Southern Connecticut State University to improve their speaking, writing and other skills that would better prepare them for college, Della Camera said.

The other five students in the DIP program who did not attend the dinner, include Senior Thomas Brim, Junior Adrian Jaynes, Junior Kevin Mercado, Senior Claudio Quezada and Junior Andres Pacheco.

Brim said he would like to enter politics or become a lawyer after graduation and Claudio said he hopes to teach at a high school some day in the future.

Colleges’ Top Ten List.
(This is what they are looking for admission)

1. Ability to master a challenging curriculum.
2. Grades that represent strong effort and an upward trend.
3. Solid scores on standardized tests.
4. “Passionate Involvement” in a few selected activities.
5. High quality community service activities.
6. Work or out of school experiences.
7. A well-written essay.
8. Teacher recommendations that describe special characteristics.
9. Supplementary recommendation from adults who have had significant contact with the student.
10. Anything that makes the student stand out.
I figured it would be more or less a lot like Cub Scouts, but I was quickly proven wrong. Five years later, when I crossed over from Cub Scout to Boy Scout and joined Troop 202, I learned so much about so many important tasks and character building responsibilities. I learned the basics of first aid, how to be a better citizen, and many more skills. My ultimate goal to be an Eagle Scout like my dad and grandfather became stronger each year. Five years ago I went to my father and informed him of my goal. “Dad, I’m going to make Eagle one day; just like you and grandpa,” I told him. He looked at me a little bizarrely, but agreed to support and help me through the long, tedious process. I had no idea how complicated and difficult the process would be, but I never gave up on the idea. I ended up working towards earning many badges on my own. Many badges may be obtained independently while following strict guidelines the Eagles Scouts provided for me to follow.

In August of 2012, while on a camping trip with my fellow scouts, I was called to a cabin where my scoutmaster and two other scouting officials offered to work with me to complete a proposal for my Eagle Scout project. This included presenting my project to a Scouting Board of Review, set up to decide if scouts are ready to move on to the next rank, and then on to work for an Eagle Badge.

For the next year, I focused on the last few badges I needed to advance to Eagle and then I became faced with the toughest decision, choosing what my Eagle project was going to be. I focused so intensely on my badges that I had forgotten all about my service project, the one thing that keeps many boys from making Eagle. I searched around wondering what to do until I got a great idea for a project from Ed Quirk, a substitute teacher working at our high school. Mr. Quirk told me that the local military museum, was looking for boys to do some work there. I called Ed Kasey, the curator for the museum and we came up with a project.

The project was simple. It consisted of the needs the military museum was looking to complete. Build a flowe r box in front of the museum. Paint a display case. Fundraise for a new sign. I figured this was an obtainable project and committed to completing it immediately. What I did not know is that it would take close to $600 to complete this fundraiser. It took months to do and a total of 3 days at Stop and Shop selling. But I succeeded in May of 2014. The project took nine months, and was finally finished and turned out to be one of the most memorable accomplishments in my life to date.

As I was about to hand in my paper work, describing this project in detail, I realized I had missed one badge. So in May of 2014, I met up with high school science teacher Kevin Dickson, who helped me earn the badge I needed to obtain for Eagle. Afterwards, I handed in my paperwork and on July 31st, learned my project was approved by the Board and would be getting my badge on November 2nd 2014.

Earning this rank is my most important feat. This badge means so much to me. It has been a long and tedious journey. It is also one completed by almost every male in my family. I know deep in my heart my family is proud of me for joining ranks of Eagle Scout.
A Journey to Eagle Scout  By Jay Silver

One of the best moments of my young life was earning my Eagle Scout Badge last year. Just the thought of earning the badge meant so much to me, not just a symbol of many years of hard work, but also because in my family it was a much treasured tradition.

On the night I was presented with my Eagle Scout Badge, I knew my dad, Scott Silver, and grandfather, David Silver, who earned their badges many years ago, and would have their badges with them when I got mine.

My dad had his badge, which he earned in 1981, out for all of us to see, but I noticed my grandfather’s badge, which he got in 1952, was not visible. To my complete surprise and thrill, after I got my badge, my grandfather took out a blue case out of his pocket and handed it to me. The case contained his Eagle Badge, a little rusted, but still in very good condition. I can’t explain the feeling of pride and emotion I felt when he handed me that badge and told me I could keep it forever. I was surprised, honored and proud to receive his badge and told him I would treasure it forever.

My journey to Eagle Scout took a total of 10 years to complete. It began in 2005 when I joined Cub Scout Pack 288 at Our Lady of Victory at the age of six. I loved scouting from the first time I earned a badge and was eager to learn all the basic essentials of scouting, eventually crossing over the bridge into Boy Scouts. Scouting teaches us everything from being a good citizen to how to hike safely in the woods. I had no idea of the vast number of things I would learn by being a Boy Scout. (Continued on page 7)