E-cigarettes - the new way to smoke in school without getting caught!?

By Edward Cruz, Jr.

For many years at West Haven High, students have been searching for ways to smoke on school grounds regardless of the consequences. The desire to smoke at school goes way back to a time when students were allowed to smoke outside school doors, in the courtyard and in the parking lot.

But in the late 90’s when it became illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to buy cigarettes and more and more facts were coming out about the dangers of teens getting hooked on smoking, school officials decided to ban all smoking from school grounds by both students and adults.

However, ever since the ban was put into effect, students have been trying to find ways to sneak a puff or two while at school. Many tried smoking in the bathrooms and outside on school grounds, and lots of kids headed up the hill in front of the school, off school grounds just beyond the gate.

Now, it seems a new generation of kids have come along with a new way to try to smoke in school without getting caught, and according to several kids who are doing that, it seems to be working to some extent. The new way for students to smoke without getting caught is a new thing on the market, called Electronic Cigarettes. These Electronic Cigarettes produce a vapor, rather than traditional smoke, and are odorless and colorless so teachers and security often don’t notice them. So while it may seem like the smoking problem has practically disappeared, it still exists, just in a different form.

E-cigarettes contents are made of a nicotine solution that turns into a vapor when lit. The solution contains distilled water, nicotine, vegetable Glycerin, artificial and natural flavors, and citric acid. One company, “Blu,” that sells the electronic cigarettes, advertises their cartridges have “No tobacco smoke, no ash, and no smell.”

One Sophomore, who admits he uses the E-cigarettes said, “It’s quick and easy to use it, just one puff and you’re done.” He said he has even smoked it in class and other students said they actually saw him do it in some classes. Others said they have seen kids smoking E-cigarettes on the school buses. (Continued on next page)
Senior Year- A Time for Tough Decisions

By Lindsay Bazile

It’s the time every student has been waiting for, Senior Year. We are all ending this chapter of our lives and entering an entirely different phase. But along with this new chapter in our lives come a series of questions. Where do we go next? Do I even want to go to college and if so where would I go? What do I want to study, what do I want to be, and what do I want to do with the rest of my life? This decision can be very scary because it is the rest of your life that you are thinking about. Hurrah to those people who have already decided what they want to do. But for those who haven’t figured it out, my best advice is to give those with the unsolved questions regarding their future, would be to talk to a teacher and try to see what they decided they wanted to do in life.

Science Teacher Kevin Dickson said, “The best thing to do is go to a liberal arts college and try everything that interests you so that you’ll get a sense of what you want to do when you get out.” He said college is all about making decision, mistakes and enjoying life’s experiences so don’t stress out over this complex choice of what to study and where to go to do it. You have two years to decide so enjoy your time in college, try different electives that spark your interest and try to make the career choices after you explore all that is out there for you to discover.

(Continued from page 1 – E-cigarettes)

The school has worked hard to get kids to quit smoking offering classes after school to stop smoking. Representatives from Yale University have come to school many times to get kids to sign up for a “Stop Smoking Program.” Studies show that kids who start smoking as teens find it hard to quit later in their lives. And there is overwhelming evidence that smoking causes lung cancer and in many cases leads to death. Even though in some cases, E-cigarettes may help some people quit smoking, it’s still a cigarette and can contain nicotine, said Assistant Principal John DellaCamera. “It’s still against school rules to smoke the E-cigarettes in school,” he said.

The big question is how are kids still getting away with smoking at all in our school at all? The problem is very noticeable to most kids, but when they use the new electronic cigarettes, it appears it’s not so obvious. Some juniors said they have seen kids smoking the electronic cigarettes in the library behind the shelves recently and others said they saw boys using them in their math class and in a science class as well. A paraprofessional confirmed that she also saw kids using the E-cigarettes in classes and the library.

Teacher Larry Vieira said the smoke coming from the girls bathroom next door to his room use to bother, not only him, but also many of his students. “The smoking problem does not happen like it use to before”, he said.

Assistant Principal Patricia Robles said a student was caught smoking an E-cigarette in the halls and was given In-School-Suspension for his action. Assistant Principal Scott Shand said the student could have it back if his parents came in to get it.

The Principals said they have caught at least five students this year with cigarettes in their possession but only one of those five was actually caught smoking in the bathroom. One janitor said he is finding less cigarettes on bathroom floors this year and around the school doors, so whether it’s the high cost of a smoke or the use of E-cigarettes, or strict enforcement of the no-smoking rules in and around school, it appears to be having a positive effect on cutting down smoking by teens at West Haven High.
One of the best experiences of my high school years has been being a member, and this year, a Captain, of the Girls Swim Team. After the culmination of my years on the swim team through my Senior Night and Last Lap earlier this school year and with the boys swim season drawing to a close, I feel a sense of bittersweet nostalgia. It is difficult to think that my time on the WHHS Girls Swim Team has ended after four years. Yet I will graduate high school knowing that some of my happiest moments at this school were created with the team.

There is something incredibly satisfying about being a part of an athletic team—the demanding physical training, the camaraderie, and the feeling of family. Below are thoughts from West Haven High swimmers: a few who are leaving the team they’ve loved for four years and a new swimmer who experienced being a part of a sports team for the first time.

Jessica McClure (Senior, my Co-Captain of the Girls Swim Team):
“My favorite thing about the swim team was the family feeling you got from the swim team. The swim team was and still is my second family!”

In reference to how being a swimmer has influenced her, Jessica responded, “Swimming has honestly made me a better person. Swimming has taught me how to achieve my goals and truly work for something I truly want.”

Geordann Daguplo (Senior, Co-Captain of the Boys Swim Team):
“As a senior, looking back on my four years on the boys swim was nothing short of an amazing experience. My favorite part of being a part of the boys swim team was being so close with different groups of friends from all grades especially during my freshman year.”

“Being a swimmer has influenced me because it has taught me to have patience with myself and to work hard every day to see the results. This translates with my everyday activities and future goals.”

“As captain of the swim team I'm proud to say that even with only 2 wins of the season, that doesn't even begin to describe the hard work each swimmer has put in to become a better swimmer for the team. Each swimmer had their own goals, beat their best times, and sacrificed what they were for what they would become.”

“I'm very proud of my team and will miss them.”

Georgienna Driver (Senior):
“My favorite part of being on the Girls Swim Team would be how I’m able to make everyone feel welcomed, pasta parties, and the feeling of competing to better my times.”

Tyler Degroate (Sophomore, New Swimmer):
“It was a really great experience, I got to meet new people in the school that I am now friends now with. And they all welcomed me and it was like a second home. All of the members taught me how to swim. We cheered each other on even though we may not have swam well. The team had that sense of, ‘Yes, we are a team.’ The swim team made me more open. I started taking honors classes and looking into college. After I went in the swim team, I felt like I could do anything.”

Pictured above WHHS swimmers, top Sophomore Max Padro. Bottom picture Senior Geordann Daguplo.
You know it, you’ve played it, and you most likely hate it Flappy Birds the game that’s swept the nation with leaving screams, tears, and laughter in its wake. It was released last year on May 24th and taken down February 10th, but whether this was a good thing has left people divided.

Despite its popularity Flappy Birds has never received many favorable reviews with many notable critics such as the Huffington Post saying its insanely irritating, boring, and difficult and their not wrong. You’ll never find one person who will say they never had a bad moment with Flappy Birds. It’s physically impossible with the game. However one thing the game has going for it is being addictive. There are plenty of outrageous stories of people whose social lives have been ruined by their addiction to Flappy Birds. On top of that there is always competition between people when it comes to the game. Students who have the game or have played it are always comparing scores whenever Flappy Birds becomes the topic of conversation. You can also bet that they’ll share stories about friends with ridiculously high scores.

Even when Flappy Birds was taken down it still makes the news. Traders on Ebay put several phones up for auction with some bids going up to ninety-thousand dollars. A host of new games with the title “Flappy” have sprung up as well such as “Flappy Bee”, “Flappy Fish”, even “Flappy Cat.” So even with Flappy Birds removal from the app market there is no doubt that it will continue to be a talked about topic. And for all those hardcore Flappy Bird players out there try playing it side-ways.
**Chorus- A Great Place to Sing Along**

By Jay Silver

One of the great opportunities to show your talent is to sign up for one of the many fine arts classes offered at WHHS – and if you like to sing and would like to perform in front of an audience, then the Choral Department is looking for you.

The choral department offers students an outstanding opportunity to sing. Currently there are over 100 students enrolled in one of the three programs offered for singers.

For anyone who wants to sing and wants to get a start in singing: chorus is the proper place for you. You can join the Chorus as a beginner with no previous experience belonging to a group or come with many years of lessons or exposure to signing in a group. If you join the chorus, taught by Mrs. Phyllis Silver, you will get a chance to sing in concerts and learn musical techniques for harder pieces to come. If you do really well in chorus, you will have an opportunity to audition for one of the two honors choirs: Camerata and Bel Canto.

Camerata is an all-female ensemble that focuses on pieces designated for female voices. Bel Canto is a co-ed choir that focuses on much more difficult pieces, but also provides students with more opportunities to perform in public. If you are interested in learning more about the Chorus, please see Mrs. Silver in E54 for more information.

Editor’s note: Mrs. Silver is Jay’s mom.

**Calling All Artists!!**

**Science Mural Contest**

- Sketches must be science themed.
  - Mural will be on F-Basement wing wall. (7’ tall x 14.5’ wide)
  - All entries must be submitted to Mrs. Poffenberger, F18 by April 30th.

**The Rostra**

“The Rostrum!!” The name of our school newspaper for more than 80 years, comes from a place in Rome where magistrates (leaders) stood on a large platform; “The Rostra.” It was used to make announcements, read death notices and address the Roman people on important issues. The original Rostra, now more than 2,000 years old, once looked like this picture but only pieces of that Rostra remain including a large section of the front wall bearing an official sign, “The Rostra.”

**Rostrum Box**

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The Girl with the Violin

By Marla Gagne

When you see her around WHHS, she may be playing her flute in the band, running to a National Honor Society meeting, or warming up for practice on the tennis courts. She devotes hours upon hours a week to her honors and AP classes, keeping her ranked in the top five of the senior class, and any extra moments of her time are spent editing pages for the Blue Flame Yearbook, volunteering around West Haven, or even going skiing in Vermont. Although her academics and extracurricular are important to her, she has another side that exists outside of school. This side of her loves songs like “Hungarian Dance No. 5” and “March Slav”, foreign to many, and spends her days not only fangirling over her favorite boy band, One Direction, but arguing about her favorite classical pieces and the best renditions of these songs.

WHHS student, Miya Bidon, is this girl with a love for the violin and anything classical. Now a senior, Miya has been playing in the Greater Bridgeport Youth Orchestra (GBYO) since eighth grade. She plays the violin in an orchestra built around 32 first and second violins and various other string and wood instruments. The GBYO is known for its high expectations and great music ability and travels internationally, playing famous venues around the world. Miya said being part of this orchestra has allowed her to be “surrounded by really amazing musicians who inspire and challenge you to do better.” The experience has greatly influenced and improved Miya both as a musician and as a person.

Miya said she loves to play the violin because it “gives me more freedom to express myself”, but this was not always the case. Her music journey began, like many musicians, in fourth grade and with the flute. She was on “Cloud 9” with her new instrument and had no interest in learning anything about her sister’s violin, referring to it as “loud” and “obnoxious.” However, Miya’s hatred didn’t last long and her curiosity soon overpowered her dislike for the violin. She started learning the basics of the violin and, after not being able to play the viola at her music school, she decided to give the violin a shot; she now recalls it as a “good decision.”

Making it into the GBYO orchestra was not an easy task. The instructors are “strict and intense”, and Miya refers to auditions as “the scariest thing in the world.” Auditioning for a poker faced panel can be intimidating, especially when having to pick and play the perfect solo piece, play scales, sight-read music (play music you have never seen before), and keep track of tempo. Once one makes it past the audition, the real work begins—playing. All members of the orchestra are placed based on “musical and technical ability”, and Miya said “expectations are higher when you are placed with people who have similar abilities as you.”

Being part of the orchestra can be hard work. It often seems Miya has little time for a social life, and she dreads what every teenager dreads: waking up early on the weekend. However, these negatives can quickly be overshadowed by the experience of being part of a music family. Just like WHHS’s theatre workshop, the GBYO travels internationally, visiting places like Austria, Germany, and this year China. They play at famous concert halls and sightsee, visiting the Terracotta Warriors, Olympic Eagle’s Nest, and more. The GBYO has allowed Miya to play music she is passionate about, meet amazing kids that share her passion and experiences, and realize “practice does make perfect.” Miya is glad to be part of both the high school band and orchestra, using her experience from orchestra and her private lessons to help when acting as flute section leader and holding practice lessons for her section. Then in orchestra, Miya can continue to grow as musician and “learn from my [her] peers.” Miya continues her last year in the GBYO, continuing to challenge herself as a musician before her music career with the orchestra and high school band ends. Miya has not declared the college she will be attending, but plans to continue to play the violin.
A person’s type of music can say a lot about them, whether they are strictly a pop fan, like everything from country to hip-hop, or are still living in the ‘70s. Music serves as the soundtrack to our lives; we remember the songs from our middle school dance, the song you slow danced to at prom, and the song that you scream at the top of yours lungs when you’re in the car and you think no one is watching. As the world is constantly changing, the music follows. So now in the era of British boy bands, Miley Cyrus, Katy Perry, Kanye West, Beyoncé, and many more, what is the music that you can’t get out of your head? I took a “music survey” asking WHHS students what song is always stuck in their heads and on repeat on their iPods; here’s what they said:

“Hesher” by Wallpaper-Michael Morano
“Don’t Say Goodnight” by Hot Chelle Rae or “Something I Need” by One Republic (anything from the album Native)-Miya Bidon
“Same Love” by Macklemore and Ryan Lewis-Florence Diaz
“Gutter Ballet” by Savatage-Amanda Ewry
“Anything Goes” by Ella Fitzgerald-Susie Beyl
“Royals” by Lorde-Alice Obas
“Team” by Lorde-Devin Hickman
“Latch” by Disclosure-Ryan Guzhnay
“Beyond the Sea” by Bobby Darin-Anthony D’Amico

The list above is variety of music that is popular or unknown, from the past and today’s top hits. Next time you’re on your iPod, take a few minutes to listen to some of these favorites and widen your music knowledge.