Mock Election  By Catherine DePino

On Election Day, November 6th, 2012, West Haven High School's Student Government organized a Mock Election for the entire school. Students came to the polling center in front of the Library Media Center with their social studies class to vote for the Presidential and Senate race. First, the students had to show their ID and check in. Next, students were handed a ballot, privately voted, and put their ballot in the box. Last, students received a sticker that read, "I voted today."

Many students were excited to be involved in the election because they were too young to vote in the real Presidential and Senate elections. As classes came in "Team Romney! Team Romney! I'm voting for Mitt Romney!" was heard in the hallway. However, "I love Obama!" and "I'm so excited to vote!" was also heard. WHHS Student Government member Andrea Grillo said, "In the long run Romney will even out the social status.” WHHS Student Government member Michael Morano disagreed by saying, "I think Obama is more popular here because more people in this school can relate more to Obama than Romney.” Overall, the students seemed very informed and happy to be a part of the election.

English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) student Feissal Djoule, a senior at West Haven High School, said, "Some people have no electrical power so it is going to be hard on them.” Hurricane Sandy was a concern for the Obama and Romney campaigns to make sure people in the Northeastern U.S. were still able to get out to vote. Some news outlets predicted that Obama would benefit because of the storm and Romney's campaign would be slowed.

The mock election was also important to E.S.L. student Franny Pena, who just moved to the United States from the Dominican Republic two years ago. Pena said, "I'm excited to vote for Obama because he helps immigrants have a better future.” It was inspiring to hear that Pena was informed about Obama's support for immigrants. Pena also explained that in the Dominican Republic it is easier to vote because voters do not need proof of identification such as a driver's license.

Overall, the mock election was extremely successful and WHHS Student Government will definitely be organizing this event next year. Just before the end of the school day, the results were announced to all students over the loud speaker by Principal Gardner. Obama won the mock election in a landslide by receiving 969 votes, 88% of the total votes. Romney only received 134 votes, 12% of all vote total. Chris Murphy also won receiving 704 votes, 68% of the vote. While Linda McMahon received only 338 votes, 32% of the vote. The Democratic Party swept away WHHS. In the end, the WHHS mock election was successful and mirrored the actual election in Connecticut.
Cellphones at WHHS  By Yingxian Guo

Technology is virtually everywhere. Turn on the television and commercials of the latest smart phones are on. Businesses and hospitals no longer use outdated spreadsheet and filing systems. Instead of reading printed novels, people use Nooks and Kindles. In the center of this enormous technological evolution are teenage students. As the world starts to use technology as their primary means of communication, entertainment, and information, a great debate has arisen concerning whether or not school should allow students to use cellphones or laptops during school.

One main argument in support of the use of cellphones in schools centers is safety. Students and parents alike believe that having phones in school allows students to respond quickly to emergencies. Parents feel a sense of assurance knowing they can easily and quickly communicate with their children while they are in school. Junior Miya Bidon comments, “In case of emergency, you should be able to use your phone. For example, if you have an asthma attack, a phone could be used to dial for help.”

Cellphones and laptops can also be used for educational purposes in the classroom. Pertinent search engines can be used to quickly find information for learning. Instead of applying this information to handwritten essays and assignments, students can then use word processing programs on their laptops and phones and email the finished assignments to teachers. In addition, assignments such as documents or Powerpoints can be shared with a touch of a button and students can collaborate instantly using their smartphones or laptops. Using technology in the classroom can also make the need to carry around heavy textbooks that can be lost or damaged obsolete since students would be able to download textbooks and lectures right to their phones.

Allowing cellphones in school might have drawbacks, however. Senior Abdul Zachariah comments, “Yes, cellphones should be allowed in school, but with specifications. They can only be used in an educational way, and teachers would say when to use them. The consequences could be that when teachers ask the students to put away their phones, they won’t. Also, phones can be used to cheat.” As Abdul pointed out, one concern over allowing electronics use in school is that it would facilitate cheating since a quick text message or Google search would produce an answer in a matter of seconds.

Many also oppose the use of electronics in the classroom because they feel that students will not use them for educational purposes. As junior Brian Clifford notes, “No, cellphones should not be allowed in school, it’s distracting.” Sophomore Nurul Sauffian agrees with Clifford’s statement, saying, “No, cellphones should not be used in school because students will not pay attention in class. SAT and CAPT scores would go down.”

Another troublesome question in the debate over electronics use is how teachers would regulate students’ activity on their phones or laptops. It would be difficult to determine whether a student was on Facebook or truly on an educational website. Juniors Amanda Ewry and Florence Diaz both note that, “There is no way to regulate the use of electronics. Teachers can’t tell whether students are texting or using their phones for educational purposes.”

The world is experiencing a digital turnover. Old forms of obtaining information and communicating have been eradicated by the electronic devices such as cellphones, laptops, and e-readers. It will be very interesting to see just how schools across the nation will begin to respond to the rapidly-changing digital age.
Homecoming Festival: Extra Sweet By Marla Gagne

On September 29th, Westie students could be found dancing, performing, and eating at the annual Homecoming festival. The DJ blasted the YMCA throughout the courtyard and everyone, whether coordinated or not, moved to the center of the field and showed off their dance moves. The festival went off without a hitch despite some cloudy weather and flash flooding the day before. Tons of clubs showed off, competing for students to go to their table and buy their food. The girls’ swim team booth was popular like always, with irresistible fried Oreos, while the Theatre Workshop dressed to impress, having theatre kids walk around in banana costumes to advertise their chocolate covered bananas. The Spanish Club showed their culture with homemade rice, beans, and pork, while A.I.C. (Academic Integrity Committee) sold sweets because they think “it’s sweet when you don’t cheat.” These were just a few of the countless clubs and sport teams there, selling their Westie gear, raffling off prizes, and targeting everyone’s weak spot for delicious food.

Of course, it wouldn’t be homecoming without the countless performances by your very own Westie Art Department and dance teams. The day kicked off with the talented Geordann Daguplo, singer and 2012’s Mr. Westie, accompanied by drummer Kevin McDaniel. After a great performance, West Haven’s Blue Devil Marching Band, dressed in their signature blue polos, impressed the crowd with their Lady Gaga field show music and their take on modern songs like Party Rock Anthem and Dynamite. The cheerleaders came out with the band peppling up the crowd and performing their halftime show. Shortly after, chorus, Camarata, and Bel Canto performed with a follow up show by the cast of the Wedding Singer. Later, West Haven High’s dance team wowed the crowd with multiple dances and last, but not least, the West Steppers performed.

Homecoming is usually a great time with so many performances and clubs, but was extra sweet this year. The West Haven varsity football team beat the rival Notre Dame football team 34-13 the night before, despite spouts of pouring rain and cold weather. Fans, cheerleaders, and the band braved the storm and continued to support the team. In recognition of the band’s dedication and support to the team, football players presented band director Ms. Marcella with the game ball at Homecoming because the band was named MVP of the week. The band was overwhelmed with shock and excitement, as Ms. Marcella proudly showed off the ball. She then made a short speech, referring to the game ball as her proudest award. 2012-2013’s Homecoming was a great success due to all the great students, staff, and community members that showed up and had a great time.

Evaluating the 2012 Elections – Apple Pie By Yingxian Guo

On Wednesday, October 24th, Mr. Consorte’s AP Government & Politics classes took a field trip to Southern Connecticut State University to attend a “Politics and Apple Pie” forum on the 2012 presidential and congressional elections. The keynote speaker was Erin McPike, a political reporter for the website “Real Clear Politics.”

In the unbiased forum, Erin discussed Election Day, deeming it a politician’s, “Christmas Day.” According to Erin, the presidential election is excruciatingly close this year with the “country at the crossroads.” Although the economy is improving, the spending debt is at a staggering 16 trillion dollars. Thus, Erin believes that voters are not sure whether to credit the President for the recovery or criticize him for taking too long. However, the problems with Romney are that he is not specific with his plans and he falls short with his little experience in foreign policy. Voters end up feeling like they are going to vote blindly.

Erin believes that “debates put candidates through the ringer.” The reason she provided is debates are sometimes the only time voters get to see the candidates for an extended period. Along with debates, the media is also crucial for candidates according to Erin. In fact, she believes that it was an article she and a coworker wrote that indirectly led to Rick Perry running for president. In addition, Erin also believes that Obama printed over three million pamphlets about his second period agenda in response to public scrutiny via the media. Erin also notes that media, has changed, “you can get involved.”

After Erin’s presentation, a panel of experts, which included Neil Levesque, executive director of the New Hampshire Institute of Politics, and four political science professors from Southern Connecticut State University and Sacred Heart University, opened up the forum to questions. One particularly intriguing question was concerning what type of Supreme Court Justices, federal justices wielding immense power, each candidate appoint if elected to president. According to the panel Obama will appoint pro-choice, liberal justices, while Romney will most likely appoint strict constructionists and conservatives.

The day was extremely rewarding for the AP Government classes. All of the students walked away with a much greater understanding of the importance citizens hold in the nation’s decisions and the 2012 elections. West Haven High School would like to thank Southern Connecticut State University and the panelists for their time and for inviting us to partake in a fantastic educational experience.
Lights! Camera! MKM!  
By Marla Gagne

Michael Kiaunis’s passion for filming began at the young age of eight when he received his first camera. Little did anyone know then that the first radio that Michael filmed in his friend Kevin McDaniel’s basement would lead to the creation of a successful film company. He recalls Michael coming over with a “really bad camera” and then making their first movie, “Mormor Magic.” Fast-forward a few years and the boys had their own YouTube channels and were using their friends to carry out their crazy but unique ideas. The boys still make homemade videos of their original scripts but have turned their hobby into a business.

They can be seen together performing with the school’s marching band, filming in the AV room, or just hanging out. The dynamic of this friendship can be described as a dysfunctional couple or even as the next Abbott and Costello. This slightly dysfunctional and very entertaining pair of friends has enhanced their great friendship and love of filming, starting their own successful business.

Last year, McDaniel and Kiaunis started MKM Event Filming. The young entrepreneurs film everything from parties to weddings to local events. In the past, Kiaunis has filmed Board of Ed. meetings, taped recruiting videos for the Blue Devil Marching Band, and made senior videos for the school’s baseball team. The boys love the experience they’re getting and are willing to film any local events.

Starting a business is hard enough, but being young and working with your best friend can be disastrous. Luckily, Kevin and Mike have a dynamic that works itself out. Michael can always see the “big picture” and wants to get everything done, going crazy when he has to handle all the details. Fortunately there’s Kevin, a guy of great patience, who according to Michael is able to “sit there and edit for hours straight.” Despite their great dynamic, having a business is still difficult. The boys agree getting jobs and then settling on prices can be the hardest part of MKM. While having fun filming, the work is demanding and you can’t make mistakes. When filming their own videos, if they mess up or forget to film something they can just start over and film again. When filming a wedding, you can’t make mistakes. If you forget to film the couple’s first dance or wedding speech you can’t stop the wedding and ask the bride and groom to repeat. It’s definitely a daunting task but can be an adrenaline rush when successful.

MKM Event Filming definitely can be challenging but has great rewards. Both looking to pursue some sort of career in film, Michael and Kevin love the experience they’re getting with filming, editing, and directing. Michael also adds when applying for colleges, I can show I’m already making videos. Mike hopes one day to fill his dream of filming his own movies, while Kevin likes all aspects of the industry: writing scripts, directing, or scoring sound tracks. Both Michael and Kevin can be seen as great examples of determination and success at a young age. For other young entrepreneurs with a dream or passion here’s some advice from Mike: “Just do it, just start.” Agreeing, Kevin recalls the hardest part of anything is just starting.

Think, where would Kevin and Mike be if they weren’t inspired by others that had a dream and ran with it? One of Mike’s filming inspirations from a young age was YouTube star, Dom Fera (youtube.com/DominicFear). Mike has been watching his videos for years and loves how he makes such great movies. Now, both Mike and Kevin don’t just follow Dom Fera’s channel but follow his example, making their own movies. The boys also get their inspiration from directors and movies. Mike can’t get enough of Back to the Future while Kevin favors Jaws, Spiderman and Ferris Bueller’s Day Off. As for directors, Mike is inspired by Joss Weldon and Robert Zemeckis, while McDaniel gets inspiration from Marc Webb and Kevin Smith.

Recently the boys have come out with more work, which can be viewed on their YouTube channels-YouTube.com/BagBoyTim and YouTube.com/Stupidsmirk. Kevin and Mike have been very successful as friends and film makers and have not even graduated high school. They both have great talent and, more importantly, a love for what they’re doing. I would not be surprised to see these boys as famous film directors one day, fulfilling their dreams.

MKM Event Filming Information:  
Films: parties, weddings, sporting events, and more  
Who: Michael Kiaunis and Kevin McDaniel  
Phone: 203-934-4991  
Cell: 203-507-9720  
Email: MKMeventfilming@gmail.com

West Haven Theater Workshop  
By Stacie Hurley

When people think of school theater, they usually imagine a small stage, a few kids dressed up as trees, and the simplest sets they can find. At West Haven High School, the time, effort, dedication, and hard work that goes into our theater productions is unrecognized. For the past four years at West Haven High, theatre workshop has become much more than an extracurricular for me. Being on stage crew, I get the full effect. Every light, every costume, every set piece, and every prop takes time until it is perfect. There have been times I have taken my dad or a friend back stage and they are shocked to realize how much activity actually goes on. The best part of theatre is working together with many other dedicated people. Everyone is striving for the same goal: to have an amazing show. Every hour that is spent on a production is well worth it when the curtain closes and the audience shows appreciation for commitment and hard work.

Closing night is always so bittersweet for all involved. It is usually someone’s last show. Part of our theater family will be soon be graduating. When so much time is spent every night with the same people for three months, the cast and crew come together. After everyone show, all are usually hysterically crying. We try to remember the quote by Dr. Seuss; "Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened."

Our latest production "Little Shop of Horrors" took place November 15, 16 & 17. The show was a huge success and once again, West Haven High School Theater Workshop cast and crew came together for some glorious performances.

Little Shop of Horrors directed by Margi Maher, Musical Direction by Phyllis Silver, Choreography & Set Design by T. Sean Maher, Costume Design by Peg Maher, Lighting Design by Anthony Amato, Jr.

Pictured above, Stage Manager Stacie Hurley.  
Pictured below Howard Powell and Jordin Gargano.
What’s Happening?  By Marla Gagne

In such a fast pace world, things are constantly changing, evolving, and happening. There are over seven billion people in this world and it’s hard to keep up with everyone and everything. Here’s a quick recap of what you might have missed.

Local News:

-Congresswoman Rose DeLauro from the House of Representatives visited West Haven High to talk to students, faculty, and community members about the recent national budget that passed the House of Representatives. DeLauro stressed the negative impact cuts to financial aid may have on West Haven High and other local schools.

-The West Haven High varsity football team defeated Notre Dame rivals with a 34-13 victory.

-West Haven High held its annual College Fair on October 3, housing a variety of colleges for college bound juniors and seniors.

-Homecoming-Students showed their school spirit this month on spirits days wearing pink for breast cancer, crazy clothes for wacky tacky day, and color wars against each grade. The annual pep rally, open to all students, was held on October 27 followed by a win against Cheshire at the Homecoming game.

-Hurricane Sandy rolls into the Northeast, closing schools and forcing residents to stock up on supplies. Many school districts, including West Haven, will have to make up 5 days of school or more as a result of Sandy and a snow storm on November 8th. We made up one day on Nov. 6th, election day, and a second on Nov. 21st the day before Thanksgiving. A third make-up day was scheduled for Nov. 28th, which was supposed to be a day off for students to allow parents to meet with teachers, but was designated as a make-up day after the snow storm.

Politics:

-2012 elections took place November 6th. After numerous heated debates and nasty commercials by candidates (D) Chris Murphy and (R) Linda McMahon, seeking the U.S. Senate seat vacated by Joe Lieberman and President Barack Obama and Mitt Romney running for President of the United States the two Democrats both won their races. Murphy, a U.S. Congressman will move to the U.S. Senate and President Obama will begin his second term as President in January.

Entertainment:

-After being criticized for gaining weight, Lady Gaga has started a “Body Revolution” that inspires everyone to accept their flaws and love themselves. The “Born This Way” singer has battled bulimia and anorexia since she was fifteen years old.

-Though we thought we would never see the day, Snooki is a mom. The “Jersey Shore” star and fiancé Jionni LaValle welcomed son Lorenzo on August 26.

-Jersey Shore star Jenni is engaged to boyfriend Roger Matthews. The couple can be seen on the new and last season of “Jersey Shore”.

-Royals gone wild-Recently Prince Harry and Kate Middleton have captured the media through nude picture scandals. While on a tour with her husband in Asia, a French tabloid magazine captured shots of Princess Kate sunbathing naked at a house. Prior to that scandal, nude pictures from Prince Harry’s wild night in Vegas were released.

-American Idol has a new panel of judges-Mariah Carey, Keith Urban, Nicki Minaj, and the old favorite, Randy Jackson.

-“The Price is Right” welcomes first male model Rob Wilson.

-Beyoncé announces she will be performing the halftime show at the Super Bowl.

-Actress Jessica Biel and singer/actor Justin Timberlake are taken off the market, recently getting married in a secret wedding in Italy.

Music:

-Country star Taylor Swift has released a new album, Red, featuring songs “We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together” and “Red”.

-Grammy winner Adele released new hit “Skyfall” weeks before welcoming a baby boy.

-South Korean rapper PSY has gone viral with hit single, “Gangnam Style” Most watched video ever.
Teenage Life  By Kailee Mastracchio

It’s 6 AM and the alarm goes off. You force your eyes open, hesitantly drag yourself out of your nice warm bed, and your day begins. After a long six hours at school, it is either off to sports practice or work. By the time that’s over, you manage to find time to eat and shower and before you know it, it’s 10:00 PM.

As tempting as it is to just collapse into bed knowing the alarm will be going off again in a matter of eight hours, you can’t. There’s homework to be done, essays to be written and tests to study for. You manage to sit in bed and do some homework with your eyes half shut and your brain basically already asleep. You drift off and the next thing you know, that alarm is going off and the whole process repeats. Sound familiar?

This is just a typical day for most high school students. In today’s world, teenagers spread themselves so thin between classes, sports, clubs, jobs and time to spend with friends. In fact, most would agree that it is really difficult to do well in school while still maintaining a social life without being sleep deprived.

Although high school is supposed to be the “best years of our lives,” it is not as easy and laid back as some might think. High school is downright stressful. With college or a career right around the corner, there is no time for slacking. Sports teams and clubs look great on a resume. Work is a must if you want to save money. And any time left over from that, if any, should be enjoyed because after all, we are only kids, right? Shannon Card adds, “I’m just so overwhelmed and tired all the time. It’s hard to find the right balance between school, sports and friends. I think the most important thing high school has taught me—how to prioritize different things going on my life.” Megan Tottenham said, “Although it is difficult, I find it helpful to look at life 15 years from now. Knowing that all my hard work will eventually pay off, reminds me why I try so hard.” Although life seems busy, overwhelming, terrible at times and stressful, try to look at the big picture. No one said it would be easy, but they did say it would be worth it!

The WHHS Newspaper, The Rostrum, is always looking for writers and photographers. If interested, see Mrs. Lynch in the Library Media Center or Mrs. Brackenbury in Room F10.