



Lip Sync 2020

Another hit performance of popular song and fan favorites. Take a look at a recap of the Lip Sync Showcase of 2020!



Teacher and coach

Meet the teachers who also coach some of our sports teams! They put the effort in to have students and athletes excel in their field.



Worth

How much do we base our worth on the college we get in to? What will students do to achieve that worth?

The Zephyr



March 2020

whszephyr.com

Vol 19 Issue 3

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WHS Zephyr

West High Zephyr

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Coronavirus

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Secret tunnel

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Extra

Interested in having your art published by *The Zephyr*?

Email aescalante@tusd.net or stop by MS3 for more information!

We are looking for all art styles to be published on our paper!

Address

Merrill F. West High School
1775 W. Lowell Ave.
Tracy, CA 95376
(209) 830-3370
c/o Alana Escalante

Bringing awareness to mental health

A Recap of the 2nd Annual Prevention Walk

By: Seemani Dash
Copy Editor

On February 22, the community showed up to West High in support of mental health awareness wearing yellow clothes and happy smiles at the second annual Suicide Prevention Walk. Students, parents and local organizations all helped make this event a positive environment where people could learn about the resources around them. Senior Nate Campbell, the student who organized this event, shared his own touching story of losing his uncle to suicide. It led to him wanting to bring awareness to students' mental health, saying, "I took it into my hands to instead of grieving about it to just make something positive out of it." The event started with a



Seemani Dash/The Zephyr

presentation of colors by students in the JROTC program. Then, people were free to participate in fun activities in the sun as groups of students played with humongous beach balls or drew inspirational messages with chalk. A wall of colorful, positive messages on sticky

notes from Project Smile brightened the event while clubs such as K-Pop and the Royal G's delivered outstanding performances. The combined efforts of Leadership, clubs and community organizations made the event successful. When asked about the goal for the

day, Leadership teacher Scott Behnam said, "The biggest thing we want to do is mainstream the idea that if you're struggling, you have support."

The Suicide Prevention Walk is one of many steps toward creating West High's positive atmosphere.

What does the color yellow mean to you?

Kim Thach



Seemani Dash/The Zephyr

"The color yellow means happiness to me. It's a bright, vibrant color and seeing it all around me makes me feel happy."

Conner Durant



Seemani Dash/The Zephyr

"Yellow means happiness, joy and since I've been at West, it's made me think of suicide awareness."

Mariam Pal



Seemani Dash/The Zephyr

"For me, when I see yellow, I think of happiness and things like being in the sun."

Sophia Jones



Seemani Dash/The Zephyr

"The color yellow means positivity and unity, basically coming together and spreading happiness in the community."

Former Lt. Colonel's Return

Ryan Aquino Air Force Reserves



Photo provided by Azeya Gupton

By: Azeya Gupton
Guest Writer

A former cadet who graduated basic training and went into the Air Force Reserves recently returned to Merrill F. West High School with some advice for the new cadets. Ryan Aquino was the cadet squadron commander during the first year of the AFJROTC program at West High. Below is what he had to say to the current and future cadets, as well as an interview between him and the JROTC Public Affairs Editor.

How was Basic Training?

"It was interesting in the way that it wasn't really as daunting as it seems. It's more like they break you, in order to make a better version of you in their eye. It was an interesting ride with a lot of time to think and reflect. You get to learn as an individual as well as in a group."

What made you decide to join the Air Force?

"It was the experience to do something different and become more versatile. The benefits are great and it's an amazing family."

Were there times that you regretted your decision?

"Mainly during training, because it sucks in the moment but there's a greater gain at the end. I regret not pushing myself and putting myself more forward."



Did the AFJROTC program prepare you for the Air Force?

"Yes it did. Drill, cadence, PT, and just knowing basic Air Force knowledge and background as well as knowing military lingo helped me a lot."

Any advice for current or future cadets?

"Don't give up. Don't think anything is ever too hard to accomplish especially when there's other people right next to you going through the same thing. Don't be afraid to put yourself out there and enjoy it — every single bit. Just don't be afraid to put yourself out there."

Congratulations to our very own Air Force Junior Reserves Officer Training Corps (AFJROTC) program!

The Merrill F. West High AFJROTC was awarded the 2019 President's Volunteer Service Award in recognition of a strong commitment to community service.

Meet your ASB president: Briana Mendez



Seemani Dash/The Zephyr

By: Briana Mendez
Guest Writer

For the past 4 years, I have spent most of my summers & outside of school time dedicated to Leadership. Although we have set positions in ASB, everyone puts in work to make each event possible and with each role I've played, it has prepared me for this year as ASB President.

As ASB President, my job is to overlook each task to assure our program is constantly improving, delegate jobs, make sure we are on time & prepared for each event, strive to keep the positive image West High has in our community & update the school board on our progress each month. I wanted to take on the role of ASB President because despite the challenges I would face, I knew I had the strategic ability to run the program in an efficient & organized way. After being apart of Leadership for 4 years, people have already associated my name with Leadership, so I always felt that being ASB President might be fitting for me. I wouldn't be here without the guidance of Behnam, my past ASB presidents, & my family who have demonstrated a good work ethic and have pushed me to be the best leader I can be. This year, I have made efforts to improve every aspect of PL such as school spirit/student involvement, rallies, dances, community service, mental health, etc. I am thankful to have help from my ASB of Activities, Rally Commissioner, ASB VP, and Conflict Management to ease the job. My favorite part about being ASB President is feeling relieved and accomplished after an event is over. As a program, we struggle and stress together so that we can watch our school appreciate the show & have fun. Some of my best memories were made while I was worn out, my feet hurt, & I couldn't wait to go home and I am thankful that to this day, the other "4 years" & I still reminisce about things that happened our freshman year because it shows how well we've come. My advice to underclassmen would

SEE ASB PRESIDENT on PAGE 2

ASB PRESIDENT

From Page 1

be to get involved! Go to sporting events, join Blue Crew, participate in spirit days, go to Winter Ball, get hyped at the rallies, join clubs (especially Project Smile (:), FFA, band, etc. In

order to get the full high school experience, you have to realize that you are NEVER too cool to show spirit and bleed Blue & Gold. After I leave, I know I have great leaders to take the

program over and fill other ASB positions. Within Leadership, I hope the traditions of “Denny’s Night” during homecoming, making freshmen clean the shed, & poking fun back at

Behnam are carried on. For the whole student body, I can only hope that the diverse, spirited, and accepting culture at West High will remain.

What you need to know about the Coronavirus

By: Sarah Marin
Staff Reporter

Misconception of the Coronavirus



Ellie Creighton/Guest Illustrator

If you have any social media such as Snapchat, Instagram or Twitter, you more than likely have seen the memes and discussions on the new coronavirus. Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that are common in various species of animals and cause infections in your nose, sinuses or upper throat, but they are usually not dangerous.

The Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV) are also part of this family. This new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), also known as COVID-19, was first reported in a seafood and poultry market in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. There is currently no known cure or vaccine.

It has quickly spread to more than 20 countries around the world, including Japan, Iran and the United States. According to the CDC, the virus spreads from person-to-person through “...close contact with one another” or “via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.”

The reason this has caused such an uproar is because the virus has spread like wildfire all around the world. According to the World Health Organization, as of March 5, there are 93,090 cases confirmed and the numbers don’t seem to be stopping anytime soon. However, most of the deceased were patients of older age with weak immune systems.

The first few cases in the U.S. had recently traveled to China but were taken to the hospital and are currently under quarantine. All those who have recently come back from China are going through medical examinations and quarantine as an effort to stop the virus from spreading even further. Some cruise ships, such as the Diamond Princess, have also been kept in quarantine after some passengers were reported to be infected.

In order to prevent oneself from contracting the virus, the CDC recommends avoiding close contact with sick people, touching your nose, eyes and mouth, wearing facemasks and washing your hands constantly and thoroughly. Even though we are not likely to catch this new virus, it is better to be safe than sorry.

Why artists are artists

By: Robby Trammell
Staff Reporter

I have been drawn to many art forms. I personally feel I can be most creative through film-making, specifically directing and cinematography. I feel an escape through movies and want to create my own worlds. This led me into falling in love with photography. Shot positioning, editing and color grading sweep me up, and I get lost in it. Recently, I truly connected with music. Losing myself while playing jazz songs for school finally sparked a desire to learn more. I am now learning how to produce music and play drums, guitar, piano and bass. Music is auditory, but it still gives me a feeling I can’t put into words. It is a different vessel to the same escape provided by film. I am now starting to learn about acting, too – trying to control my body language and express myself best in the moment. This passion is another offshoot of film-making. I am



Ellie Creighton/Guest Illustrator

drawn to it from watching great actors like Gene Wilder, Leonardo DiCaprio, Scarlett Johansson and many more.

Art provides me an outlet for what I am feeling. I am an artist because for a long time I hid all of my emotions. I realize now that I was scared of showing who I really am. Initially, I

thought the only way to not bottle my feelings was to talk to someone you trust, but that terrified me more than just staying silent. Talking or writing your thoughts can help, but some emotions can’t be expressed with words. Once I started trying to express my emotions, I found a state of being that I quite enjoy. There are various names for it in different

cultures. Taoism calls it the flow state; it’s when you are so focused on a task that everything else in your life fades away. You are on a mission, fully immersed but embracing it, and sprinting to the light at the end of the tunnel no matter what is between you and that light. It could be anything: a song, a movie, a picture, drawing, writing, etc.

It could even be sports, any passion that fills you with a drive. At that moment I can fully give myself to the natural flow of the universe. I am fully present in the current moment.

Art has helped me in so many ways. Consuming art has helped me feel less alone, to connect with artists and people I’ve never met and to understand yet another person’s perspective. Creating art helps calm my mind by releasing emotions and thoughts so that they don’t control me. Once I can express an emotion or thought, I can look at it from the outside and understand it better -why it’s there and if it’s justified, or if it’s something I should let go of. Usually it’s the latter.

Everyone has a different story to tell and different reasons for telling it. I am an artist because I want to be myself.

Remember to stay inside and wash your hands!

Stay healthy WolfPack!



How to wash hands properly



Starting with wet hands, apply liquid soap and then:



Rub palms together to create a lather



Palms over the back of hands



Rub between fingers



Nails into palms



Thumbs and wrists



Fingertips onto palms

Finally, rinse hands with water and dry thoroughly.

Do colleges truly determine our worth?

By: Puja Patel
Sports Editor

It's that time of the year. Applications have been submitted and students are eagerly awaiting their notification letters. Seniors can finally relax after three long years of hard work and focus on making the last few months of high school memorable. It's the season for prom, senior trip and senior ditch day. But, some students allow their spirits to be crushed by the letters that will decide their future.

However, I believe that students have been blinded by the light that shines upon prestigious schools. When the fateful day of receiving



Angeline Tan/Guest Illustrator

the email to check your portal comes, students often view a rejection as the end of the world.

With the way society has portrayed the idea of an “acceptable” future, many students find it hard to be anything less than what society wants. Along with many other students, I grew up in a household that only accepted the best, nothing less. And if I didn't, I was a “failure” and had ruined my future. However, I have grown to believe otherwise.

I believe that the way society tries to mold people is actually counterproductive and hinders students' abilities. They wake up each day and go to school in fear

of what would happen if they don't get accepted to their dream school rather than the sake of learning. We forget that no matter what college a student attends, we are practically guaranteed to receive a reliable education that will enable us to be prepared for our careers. I know that it doesn't matter whether I attend community college or a private college. Yes, there are benefits to attending private schools, but it's not the end of the world if I don't get in.

At the end of the day, the only name on the college diploma that matters is yours, not the college.

Importance of staying healthy

By: Cristopher Marin
Features Editor

School should not get in the way of keeping our body healthy. Most students who study hard to pass their classes tend to skip meals and deny the respective exercise they need. It's hard for students to balance a healthy lifestyle and the hardship of school. However, it's important that all students get the right amount of nutrients and the exercise they need to stay healthy. As a student athlete, I know how difficult it is waking up early, attending classes and going to practice. But at the end of the day, your body feels great and you feel satisfied. Simple exercises such as a jog every day or a quick workout can have a healthy impact on our life. As I work out and exercise, I feel the satisfaction of being healthy, and I believe that everyone should feel that satisfaction.

The first step to being healthy is eating a balanced breakfast. Eating breakfast helps your metabolism and provides enough fuel for the body to function properly. I believe that all students should have enough time in the morning to eat breakfast. With our school starting early it may be hard to wake up ten minutes earlier, but having that extra meal would benefit both the mind and body. Eating three meals, drinking enough water and having the right nutrients are important tips to have when trying to change your lifestyle.

Exercising can also benefit your sleeping schedule. I think that Every student should get the best rest to pass all their tests. The lack of sleep can lead to high blood pressure, affect metabolism and impact our mental health. As students we must understand that school is important, but what's more important is our health. Finishing homework early, eating healthy, and getting sufficient sleep are all requirements for a healthy lifestyle. Some of the benefits include are: reduced stress and anxiety, enhancement of mental performance and work productivity. With that said, we can ensure we do our best in school with the appropriate amount of sleep, exercise and nutrients. Try it out and see how your body becomes satisfied with this lifestyle.

Balancing the stress load

When is it too much for students?

By: Seemani Dash
Copy Editor

The average American student deals with a boatload of pressures ranging from academic struggles to social stress. For years, I've watched the people around me push past healthy limits in order to pursue their idea of “success.” However, the real pressure now is planning for the near future — that “happy ending” only happens if the present is successful. We live in a society where students face numerous pressures on their paths to adulthood. As a result, many are unable to cope when the stress increases.

It's no secret that teenagers today face



Angeline Tan/Guest Illustrator

high levels of stress. To get to college, students are challenged to maintain a high GPA, stay involved with clubs and sports

and give back to the community whether through a job or service projects. On top of that, most kids attempt to keep a semblance of a

social life while juggling academic achievement. How are teenagers expected to then factor in the time for family, self-care and sleep?

Personally speaking, it's difficult to keep track of all the responsibilities and still think of the people around us. Knowing how to multitask is one thing, but to meet the expectations created by peer pressure, we often take on more things than we can physically handle. Every day, I walk into school knowing that most of my friends survive on little sleep, unhealthy diets and major stress. So, why are habits like these the norm for

simply making it through high school?

Remember when you were a kid and would want to be one of the “older kids”? Now we're still relatively young, but we are expected to act as adults. Although it's healthy to learn adulting skills, it's just as important to keep in mind that these are our fabled “golden years.” Instead of living a life where we're constantly worried about the future, we should instead discover ourselves here in the present. In the words of Kung Fu Panda character Master Oogway, “Today is a gift. That is why they call it the present.”

Ditching the school life

By: Melany Alas
News Editor



Melany Alas/The Zephyr

Senior year: fondly remembered by most as the best year in their high school experience. The memories made, the big events, the firsts, the lasts, the relationships and friendships; it all rounds up the adventure that senior year could be. For this reason, seniors usually decide to get involved and participate in school events or outside activities.

These final memories and fun adventures are vital for many, so it's easy to understand why our students decide to live life to the fullest in their final year. However, whether Senior Ditch Day classifies as one of the rites of passage a senior should experience is up for debate.

Since students go to school for almost 200 days, missing a single day seems insignificant, especially for students who are in desperate need of a break from working hard to fulfill the expectations of teachers, friends and parents. It's hardly fair to blame students for wanting a day off; how-

ever incessant absent calls, missing students who will be receiving hours and extra tasks for the attendance office who have to deal with the consequences of students ditching school show why people are so divided over the topic. Math teacher Karen Evans, calls the “Have your parents excuse your absence day,” which seems silly as it “eliminates the ditch part of the day, which is what is supposed to be the exciting part about it.” While it is true that most students take Ditch Day as an excused day off and this causes more trouble for administration, I believe this is not such a bad thing.

Some students will choose to come to school, some will gather up with friends to enjoy some time together and others will just decide to stay home and relax. Some students will ditch and accept the consequences of it, while others will have their parents excuse their absences. Either way, the memories and experiences that students choose to have are entirely up to them. Seniors will soon be in college or working and will be less no longer dependent of their parents. So why should we penalize them for making their own decisions in their final

year? If students decide a final trip with friends is more necessary for them than a single day of school, we should accept their decision. If a student decides a break is needed and wishes to nap all day instead of doing school work, that day off should be allowed. Most of our students have years of school left after high school and have already been through a long and rigorous school life; let's allow them to decide what they want to do for a day. High school is what you make of it, and your experience should be made solely by you, so decide how you'd like to spend and enjoy it.

The Zephyr Policies

In its 24th year of production, Merrill F. West High The Zephyr is a student publication of the Journalism class. It is designed as an informative link between students, staff, parents and the community. The purpose of The Zephyr is to allow students to express their voice in a professional manner, as well as remain abreast of school activities and pertinent issues. The Zephyr will gladly accept

letters to the editor on any issue that is acceptable and appropriate for a school environment. No anonymous letters will be accepted. Letters may be edited for space or school policy without altering content.

All letters to the editor express the opinions of the writers and may not represent The Zephyr staff. Letters may be emailed to aescalante@tusd.net. Advertisement space

in The Zephyr is available to all types of businesses, exempting those that promote racist or sexist attitudes or activities or that are illegal for high school students. Advertisement prices depend upon size or contract specifics. Information on advertisement can be obtained by contacting Alana Escalante at West High, aescalante@tusd.net.

The Zephyr Staff

Editor-in-Chief	Natalie Mangskau
Copy Editor	Seemani Dash
News Editor	Melany Alas
Opinion Editor	Sneha Thokkadam
Feature Editor	Cristopher Marin
Sports Editor	Puja Patel
Photography Editor	Jovana Centeno
Video Editors	Jonah Guerrero
Staff Reporters	Robert Trammell
	Adriana Apodaca
	Isaac Baria
	Julian Castro
	Rhi Rhi Deschine
	Veron Hollins
	Sarah Marin
	Anysa Mendoza

Administrators

Principal	Zachary Boswell
Assistant	Steven Wichman
Principals	Holly Hansen
	Anabelle Lee
Secretary	Audrey Harrison
Attendance Clerk	Anne Bassett
Registrar	Edna Riddle

Merrill F. West High School
1775 W. Lowell Ave.
Tracy, CA 95376
(209) 830-3370
c/o Alana Escalante



Features

Synchronizing with the cast

A Wicked West Theatre production of the 2020 Lip Sync Showcase

By: Veron Hollins
Staff Reporter

This year of Merrill F. West High's Lip Sync Showcase, which was held at the theater on January 15th and 16th, was truly a lip sync to remember. The Lip Sync showcased a variety of popular songs, which included the following:

1. "Best of Both Worlds" by Hannah Montana
 2. "Whole Being Dead Thing" from the Beetle-juice musical
 3. "Can't Stop Singing" from Teen Beach Movie
 4. "Damaged" by Danity Kane
 5. "I Can't Do It Alone" from the Chicago musical
 6. "How Do You Sleep" by Sam Smith
 7. "Popstars" by K/DA from League of Legends
 8. "7 Rings" by Arianna Grande
 9. "Mr. Roboto" by Styx
 10. "How To Be A Heartbreaker" by Marina And The Diamonds
 11. "Wannabe" by Spice Girls
 12. "Come Alive" by The Greatest Showman
- From beginning to



Jonah Guerrero/The Zephyr
All the performers in the closing act.



Jonah Guerrero/The Zephyr
Performers dancing to the song, "Damaged"



Jonah Guerrero/The Zephyr
Performer dancing to the song, "How do you sleep"



Jonah Guerrero/The Zephyr
Star from the "Mr. Roboto" song.



Jonah Guerrero/The Zephyr
Snapshot of the finale.

end, the actors who performed these songs did an amazing job of keeping the attention and excitement of the audience. Almost every period that attended the lip sync was engaged and interested in the performances that the actors delivered. In some songs, they sang along, and in others they clapped.

Senior Katelyn Centeno, the main performer of "Best of Both Worlds" by Hannah Montana,

states that the thought of performing in front of a lot of people made her nervous at first, but it got fun later on and she became more comfortable, especially with most of her friends being in the audience. Centeno states that her favorite part about performing was having her techies go on stage with her as her backup dancers. In addition, Centeno says that if she could have performed on stage again, she would have performed

"You're The One I Want" from Grease with her friend.

Senior Osvaldo Limon, the performer of "How To Be A Heartbreaker" by Marina and The Diamonds and partner-singer in "I Can't Do It Alone" from the Chicago play states that overcoming this year's stage fright took some time for him. However, his favorite part of performing was when he was performing "How To Be A Heartbreaker",

and he received a pretzel from his friend in the crowd and had the honor of eating it during the song.

He states that if he could have performed again, he would have performed a Selena Quintanilla song, due to the fact that he wanted to do one this year, but couldn't.

Drama teacher Christine Welk, the mastermind behind the show, and host of drama

for over five years, states that her favorite thing was having the all the children enjoy it, whether be the children in the crowd, or the children involved in it. She states that it delighted her when some children that watched the lip sync stated that they wanted to be included in it next year. Her favorite part in the show was the finale.

We hope to see you at next year's lip sync in the crowd or onstage.

Last year with the 'Pack

Senior athletes reflecting on their final year playing for West

By: Natalie Mangskau
Editor-in-Chief

Everett "Ej" Conner



Natalie Mangskau/The Zephyr

How long have you played basketball?
"10 years. Basketball is the only sport I've taken part in."

How does being an athlete make you a better person?
"Being an athlete makes me a better person by keeping me motivated. When I'm engaged in a sport it benefits my life-style. It keeps me active, keeps me healthy and motivates me to keep my grades up. Since I plan to play in college it makes me want to fit the description of a student athlete."

What is a good team

environment for you?
"Where everyone plays as a team, and doesn't mainly focus on their statistics. This means everyone has the ability to pass the ball, have court vision, shoot at the right time, and not force anything. Teams like this are very strong and successful."

Why did you chose this sport?
"My dad introduced me to the game of basketball as a child one day by signing me up for a camp. I had never played before, but I loved to compete in every aspect in life. Ever since then, I fell in love

with competing to be the best in the sport."

Most memorable moment?
"My best moment was during my freshman year. My team only had 6 players so I had to fight through our subbing by playing the whole game. In doing so, I ended up scoring 37 of my teams 41 points including 7 three pointers. We lost the game by 3 points. I was 3 points away from scoring 40, but it is still my highest scoring game ever."

Advice for new athletes?
"There will be times where you feel like the whole world is against you, but in a situation like that don't give up. Work harder than everyone else and show the world what you have. There have been many times where I want to give up and stop trying because it wasn't worth it at the time, but I didn't give up because my passion was so strong and I broke that barrier."

Kimberly Noriega



Natalie Mangskau/The Zephyr

How long have you played basketball?
"4 years, 2 years at Millennium and 2 years at West."

How does being an athlete make you a better person?
"Being an athlete makes me a better person, because I had to learn how to overcome obstacles and communicate better with others. Being an athlete showed me to be more vocal which pushed me to encourage and lift others more."

What is a good team environment for you?
"An environment where all players feel safe, en-

couraged and motivated. It is important to me for everyone to feel safe on the team knowing that there are no issues, and if there were, then to be able to feel comfortable openly talking to someone on the team about it. Working with a team everyday, players should feel encouraged and motivated to work harder than the day before."

Why did you chose this sport?
"I chose basketball because my friend was the one who told me to try it out. It was new for me because no one else in my family played the sport. Being new to the

sport, I learned many new skills and quickly learned that this is what I enjoy doing."

Most memorable moment?
"When we played Tracy High during an away game. I played good defense that game and put up a few points as well. Even though we lost the game, I gained more confidence in myself and knew I was more capable than I thought."

Advice for new athletes?
"Not to be afraid to ask for help, to not give up and to make bonds early with



Diversifying the melting pot

A look into West High’s cultural clubs

By: Adriana Apodaca
Staff Reporter

Our school is best known for its diversity, cultures and different backgrounds. We understand that each individual at our school is unique and different, so we have plenty of clubs on campus that embrace the multicultural society we live in, creating a fun and accepting environment.

API Club



Asian Pacific Islander club, also known as API, is also a club that opens their culture with the community. An important cultural aspect that they explore is with a dance called Tinikling. Tinikling is done with two bamboo sticks and dancers jump in and out of the sticks in a rhythmic pattern. Along with dance, API

K-Pop Club



Korean Pop Club opens the school up to Korean pop culture. This club draws attention by dancing to Korean

music. The members bond through the songs they like. They like to do an activity called “random dance” in which they play different Korean songs and dance if they recognize it. Not only do they learn how to dance in this club, they have lots of fun. These workshops contribute to the closeness of the club. K-Pop likes to put the members in groups

after they learn choreography to help each other perform comfortably. The club says, “Our club is unique because our members are diverse. Our message to anyone is that anyone can learn about a culture and express their fondness of the world”. This club will make you feel comfortable and welcome. If you have an appreciation for Korean music and culture, then join K-Pop.

M.E.Ch.A



One of the biggest cultural clubs we have on campus is M.E.Ch.A, which stands for Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán. They view themselves

more as a family than a bunch of club members. M.E.Ch.A is very active on our campus as they participate in many activities and do as much community service

they can. They perform in Tracy’s Mexican Independence Day festival, Cinco de Mayo celebrations, and the Festivals of Culture at the Grand Theater. They also like to share their Latino culture with the school by celebrating Mexican Independence Day and Cinco de Mayo during lunch where they perform with live music. This big family likes to plan events throughout the year such as M.E.Ch.A movie night,

Posada, a Great America trip, and at the end of the year, their Carne Asada to celebrate their advisor Mr. Gomez. This club has a lot more in store. They perform in the rallies and have practice on Mondays. They like to give a lot of attention to the music and dance aspects of their culture, performing Folklorico and other types of Mexican genres for the rally. Pedro Casillas, M.E.Ch.A’s club president states,

“What makes M.E.Ch.A unique is that we treat each other as if we were one big happy family. We welcome absolutely anyone to join our club whether you are Latino or not. Our club treats everyone with equality and kindness.” M.E.Ch.A has made a big impact on our community and school by expressing themselves proudly and sharing their culture in such a confident, happy way.

Poly Club

Polynesian (Poly) club is one of many cultural dance clubs on campus. This community exposes a variety of traditions through the way they speak and dance. Their

performances tell a story through Ote’a dancing, Sivas and Hakas. Their dance tells us what their ancestors went through and all the troubles and feelings they felt. However, this club does more than just bring culture; it’s a welcoming

and safe environment for anyone who wants to get out of their comfort zone when it comes to dancing. Other than dance, they like to bond during their practices. Ariel Medina, Poly’s club president says, “Being in Poly helps you

grow as a performer and as well as a person. It shapes the way you see traditional dances, and it widens the way you can express yourself. It helps you understand the culture.” She ensures a safe and comfortable environment. Poly per-

forms during rallies and has club meetings after school. They also will have instances where they perform for parties. If you are looking to join a club that makes you feel comfortable with expressing yourself, join Polynesian club!

An evening of the undead is an evening indeed

One act performances

By: Rhi Rhi Deschine
Staff Reporter

On February 27 and 28, the Wicked West Theatre held An Evening of the Undead. A fitting name for Dracula, The Attic, Lighthouse, and 10 Ways on how to Survive the Zombie Apocalypse. Each play was, respectively, directed by Senior Isabelle Bunezes, Junior Jennifer Penaloza, Junior Raevyn Kaigler, and Senior Alexa Hernandez.

Dracula was a dramedy play about an unfortunate man’s encounter with Count Dracula. Starting with being kept prisoner to ruining Dracula’s plan.

On a more serious letter, The Attic was about a dark secret in the disguise of a Victorian Era tragedy. A couple trying to pack so they can move houses ends up being ghosts trying to move on. In the end, it’s a choice between never forgetting or to always remember.

The Lighthouse left the audience with a feeling of “what just happened” and “what really happened.” This play has



Rhi Rhi Deschine/The Zephyr

surely stayed on many people’s minds as they think of different reasons that could explain what happened. You can pick the happy ending where everything is happily ever after or the more dark, depressing ending.

10 ways on how to Survive the Zombie Apocalypse is a great parody on cliché zombie apocalypses. It gives amazing tips on sacrificing the weak and romancing the zombies.

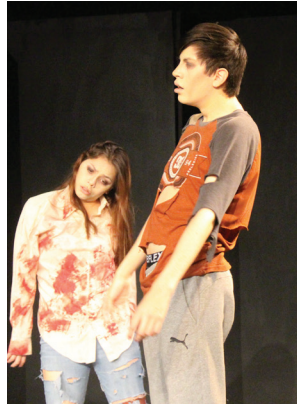
An Evening of the Undead was an evening indeed.



Rhi Rhi Deschine/The Zephyr



Rhi Rhi Deschine/The Zephyr



Rhi Rhi Deschine/The Zephyr



Rhi Rhi Deschine/The Zephyr

The hidden tunnels of Tracy

By: Sneha Thokkadam
Opinion Editor



Sneha Thokkadam/The Zephyr
Outside view of the building holding the tunnel.

Tracy was founded in 1878, over 100 years ago. Most of Downtown Tracy was built in the 1920’s to capitalize on the railroad business. I found Tracy’s history interesting, as I live in Mountain House, a city that’s barely 20 years old. Although most of Tracy’s old buildings from the railroad era are demolished or renovated beyond recognition, I still wanted to explore the downtown area to see if any of that history was left behind.

A friend who built a cabinet for the Environmental Alternatives Foster Family Agency for the Space and Engineering senior service project told me that sealed tunnels lay beneath the building. I visited the building, which was formerly a bank, with a camera in tow, expecting a labyrinth of sorts, a secret waiting to be discovered. Sadly, the tunnels were sealed with concrete, the only remnant of a tunnel just barely the length of an average classroom. I still wanted to know the purpose for underground tunnels spanning the entirety of the downtown, so I turned to the internet. Most of the articles were baseless speculation, theorizing the tunnels were used to smuggle alcohol during the Prohibition era and other “nefarious purposes.” However, it isn’t disputed that similar tunnels have been found in the nearby cities of Stockton and Pleasanton. Were they all leading to the same place, or places? What was going on in this underground world? Even though I couldn’t uncover the answers to all my questions, these mysterious tunnels gave me a new perspective on Tracy. It’s not just where I go to school, but a city that’s lively with old-world charm.

Do you know any hidden gems of restaurants, locations, or mysteries in Tracy?

Let The Zephyr staff know for the next issue!





Photo provided by Samantha Anastasio

Bringing ‘Pack pride to London

By: Natalie Mangskau
Editor-in-Chief

Over winter break, senior Samantha Anastasio participated in the London New Year’s Day Parade as a cheerleader in part of the All American Cheer Team. Anastasio, who has devoted over eleven years to the sport, was selected to be part of the team during a summer camp that the West cheer team attended. She learned a cheer and dance routine and performed it with seven other cheerleaders during the camp. Out of

the seven in her group, Anastasio was the only one to be selected to join the All American team.

During her trip to London, Anastasio recounts the cultural differences between British and American ways of life. “Here everything is fast, but when you’re over there, you’re expected to take your time; meals can last hours long.” For her performance in London, Anastasio learned a new routine

to perform during the parade.

Anastasio has been part of West’s cheer team for all four years and is also a softball player. She’s passionate about cheer and especially enjoys performing routines for the community. “I like the dance sections... I get really hyped doing it and trying new stunts.” Anastasio’s advice for new cheerleaders is, “It can be hard at first, but keep trying. You’ll eventually get it.”

Athlete of the issue

The ‘Pack want to congratulate our hard working student athletes who excel in their sports!

By: Natalie Mangskau
Editor-in-Chief

Female Athlete:
Kalila Shrive



Name: Kalila Shrive

Grade: 9th

Birthday: 6/20/05

Height: 5’8”

Sports and years played: First year of water polo and wrestling

Position: Wing (water polo)

Plans after high school: To stay healthy, continue sports and possibly get a sports scholarship for college

Favorite part of the sport: The challenging workouts, amazing people I meet and the new friends I make

Motivation: The new friends and amazing coaches I met make me want to work hard during practice. Shout out to Jesse Ramos who is my teammate/coach and has helped me through all the moves I struggled with.

What you learned from the sport: It showed me what it’s like to be on a team and push myself for improvement

By: Sneha Thokkadam
Opinion Editor

Male Athlete:
John Paul Patague



Name: John Paul Patague

Grade: 12

Birthday: 4/23/02

Height: 5’10”

Sport(s) and years played: Has played basketball since he was just 4 years old

Position: Point guard

Plans after high school: Hopes to attend college and play basketball there

Favorite part of the sport: How competitive it is

Motivation: His hard-working mother

What he learned from the sport: The importance of teamwork

From lesson plans to training plans

Coaches who teach on campus, working with students both in class and on the field, court or pool.

By: Seemani Dash
Copy Editor

Mr. Dell’Aringa



Seemani Dash/The Zephyr

English teacher Mr. Dell’ Aringa is a varsity baseball and JV football coach at West High. His love for baseball started when he was young, and he played throughout his youth, high school and college years. Following college, he started his career as a coach around

six years ago, working in local high schools. While being a substitute teacher, he found that he enjoyed working with students and decided to pursue an education in becoming a full-time teacher. On the field, Dell’ Aringa teaches his players to apply the lessons they learn to

real life. When asked about what he teaches his athletes, he said “We talk about themes in English; it’s no different out here in the baseball field. Every game, every situation, there’s a theme involved; there’s a lesson to be learned.” As for the athletes in his classes, Dell’ Aringa notes that

the dynamics of the classroom are different due to the respect between the student and teacher. Though he as a “teacher-coach” deals with a busy schedule just as any other student athlete, he finds the job enjoyable.

Ms. Waters



Seemani Dash/The Zephyr

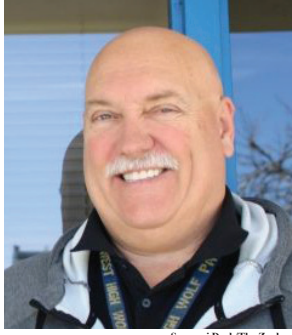
Ms. Waters, also known as Coach Waters to many of our swimmers, has been a driving force behind the training of the West High Aquatics Program for several years as well as becoming a new English teacher. She started as a swimmer herself at age thirteen, and swam

on recreational, club and high school teams. Waters started coaching with a small group of students, then took off from there, saying, “I started [coaching] when I was 16, and I just fell in love with it.” As she attended West High, she also felt inspired by some of the well-known

English teachers, deciding to choose a career in teaching because she could continue working with kids while still coaching swim. Working the jobs as both a teacher and coach gives Waters a different perspective on her athletes as she recognizes that sports aren’t always the

main focus in a student’s life. “I have an interesting advantage I feel, being here and being able to interact with the students throughout the day, and then see them at 3:00...” How she balances the workload, Waters says that time-management have been a huge asset for her

Mr. von Stade



Seemani Dash/The Zephyr

Mr. von Stade is both a Special Education teacher and Boys Basketball coach for West High. This is his fifteenth year teaching, but he has also coached various sports because of his athletic children. Von Stade became interested in teaching after working as a substitute teacher, and he found that teaching Special Ed classes

was an environment he really enjoyed. He supports his athletes as they learn to play as a team, saying “Every life lesson is on the court: your discipline, your structure, following rules and confidence.” Coaching basketball is something that comes naturally to von Stade now since he loves the experience of working with students.

Additionally, he realized teaching was also one of his passions after getting hired at a high school. “It really dawned on me when one of my students said, ‘Thank God it’s Friday,’ and I thought about it and I didn’t even know it was Friday.” Von Stade is passionate about both his jobs as they challenge him to help the students

and athletes improve both in education and as people. With the game schedule, he feels that he juggles his time among being a teacher, coach and part of the family. Some of the lessons he’s learned over the years have stemmed from teaching students of all backgrounds, and he finds it rewarding to see his old students visit.

Spring sports overview

By: Anysa Mendoza
Staff Reporter

Baseball



Anysa Mendoza/The Zephyr

Baseball is back with another competitive season. Ready for the season, Junior Ryan Villena is showing his skills playing for varsity. When asked about the sport, Villena stated, “A very competitive and mindful game. You need the skill to overcome any situation whether it’s good or bad.” The hard work and the excitement of the game brings the team together ready to dominate. Motivated by his peers, Villena is ready for the upcoming season.

Softball



Jocelyn Estrada/Yearbook

Softball is welcoming new and returning players for this years upcoming season. Hoping to get on base as much as possible, Senior Samantha Anastasio feels excited for spring to start and ready to play every game in her favorite position: defense. “My favorite part is playing defense because we have to work as a team to get out of the inning,” Anastasio expressed. Players are ready to come together and dominate the season.

Boys Tennis



Anysa Mendoza/The Zephyr

With many new players competing for a spot on the tennis team, the rankings got intense according to Junior Simon Gonzales. Gonzales is ready for his love for tennis to shine throughout the season. “I’m looking forward to seeing me and my teammates improve and grow this season. My personal goal is to get a chance to play at TCAL this year since I nearly missed my chance last year.” Gonzales is ready to stay active and in shape to pursue his tennis playing.

Track & Field



Anysa Mendoza/The Zephyr

Getting prepared for the new season, Track members are training hard and staying dedicated to their team. Senior Jenelle Mendoza describes track as her while having a lot of good memories with her teammates. “My team motivates me to never give up and I’m hoping to improve on my 1 mile and 2 mile times this year,” Mendoza expressed. The high energy from the relays keeps the members of track alive and determined.

Swim



Anysa Mendoza/The Zephyr

Although swim is an individual sport, the team comes together to support and cheer each other on for the upcoming season. When Junior Courtney Cunningham was asked about her sport she stated, “Swim has benefited me in many ways. It helps strengthen my body, and it gives me a family that always supports me when I push myself to new goals.” Cunningham is ready to keep swimming to improve her strokes and time.

West at its Best



Arts & Entertainment

Button: A Modern PROMetheus

A satire story

By: Jovana Centeno
Photography Editor

Ah yes. The prom dress. One of the necessities of every girl attending high school prom. What makes this piece of cloth so magically expensive? Truth is, no one has done the prom dress's creation justice. It is quite wondrous and like most great things in life, it began with a man.

Obviously this man started out as a boy, a boy named Derby Button. The Button family was sweet and all of them took interest in their family business, running a mechanic shop. However, Derby was different. He didn't long to spend his days fixing a random person's car. No, he wanted to spend his days creating a random person's dress. When Derby was eighteen, he decided to tell his family of his contrasting desires. The Buttons responded with warmth, but Derby saw it as mockery and proceeded with his interest by plotting to create a new dress, unknown to man, for which all would worship him for its creation. Derby moved out within that day, slashing all of their car tires, including his, with contempt for his family's business. He felt it would be more impactful if his journey were on foot. And so, Derby Button's endeavor began.

Two paths set before him: a beautiful meadow and a treacherous forest. No one knows why Derby had to walk through nature to begin his creation, he lived in New York after all, but the story rings true and he chose the eerie path through the dark forest. Derby walked and walked, experiencing hunger and thirst with nothing to quench his survival needs but his will to create. Derby began to break down towards the end of his journey. His muscles were fatigued, mouth dry and his stomach ached of hunger. Derby persevered for what felt like months until he grew uncomfortable and tried to adjust his jacket zipper. The zipper got caught on a rogue thread and Derby pulled on it forcefully until the jacket ripped and the zipper broke. This pushed him over the edge. He began breaking twigs and throwing rocks, yelling things

like "Curse you faulty zipper!", until he turned to his left and saw what

big rats!" and only using thread if it had been blessed by the gods.

Derby spent days executing these rituals, so much so that he did not even respond to one letter from his loving family. They sent him letters, but he did not read them. Derby would not stop working until his creation was finished with the guarantee of being worshipped by lifelong followers.

Alas, everything must come to an end, and though Derby desired the rewards of his creation, he wanted to indulge in the exhilaration he experienced when performing each ritual. With this in mind, Derby decided to create a final ritual more complex than all preceding it to ensure his success. He waited until a night where the full moon was accompanied by thunder and lightning. Derby laid in his cottage, until he finally heard the heavy rumble he had long waited for. Derby paced back and forth with only a candle

to light his way upstairs. When the clock struck eleven thirty, Derby ran—well, stumbled, up to his roof, tripping over the stairs. With a bruised knee and busted lip, Derby held the dress up to the moon and cried "Behold, nature, brush your hand upon this dress and all will be finished!" Within that second, lightning struck the dress, sizzling off the last bit of thread needed to finish his creation. Derby collapsed to the ground convulsing into fits of manic laughter and was never to be heard of again.

No one is sure how Derby's creation got into stores or why it is called a prom dress. Many speculate it was an anagram for his Chihuahua's name, "Morp Button" or that it is short for the "promise" he had broken when leaving his family's business. Whatever the name's origin, the societal impact Derby Button desired had been granted. He gained worshippers for his almighty, all expensive prom dress, happily collected by teenagers for hundreds and thousands of dollars. Inevitably we seek the sacred, high priced prom dress and though expensive, its creator has gone through such a long and strenuous journey to make such perfection that all of our purchases are completely justified.



Angeline Tan/Guest Illustrator

he had been longing for. All it took was a fifteen minute walk of pure agony to have the fabric store, his true inspiration, finally reveal itself to him.

Derby purchased some materials from the heavenly store and proceeded to find a secluded area to begin his creation of an original, never before seen dress. He found an ominous cottage on a hill and in this cottage, Derby created rituals. Dousing the fabric in purified water, drying it with feathers of a bluebird, dancing around it chanting obscene things like "Chihuahuas are just

Ranking the Top 10 of the Decade



By: Isaac Baria
Staff Reporter

Entertainment may be claimed to be the biggest thing regarding happiness in life. It could mean a variety of things from plays to movies to music, etc. However, one thing is for certain; the last decade was full of some things to smile about. With that in mind, let's go over some of the main forms of entertainment from the last decade! (Disclaimer: Please remember that this is an opinion article if you don't agree with some of the topics listed, that's perfectly fine.)

Memos

1. We Are Number One (Stefán Karl)
2. Patrick Warburton characters (Kronk, Joe Swanson etc.)
3. PewDiePie vs T-series
4. "E" (Markiplier)
5. Creeper, Aww Man
6. (CaptainSparklez)
7. Megalovania (Sans Undertale)
8. Loss (Web-Comic)
9. JoJo Reference
10. Keanu Reeves (...just Keanu Reeves)
11. Bee Movie (Jerry Seinfeld)

Movies

1. Avengers Endgame
2. Joker
3. Get Out
4. Avengers Infinity War
5. Deadpool
6. Thor Ragnarok
7. Logan
8. Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse
9. Bohemian Rhapsody
10. Guardians of the Galaxy 2

Video Games

1. Resident Evil 2 (Remastered)
2. God of War 4
3. Spider-man PS4
4. Minecraft
5. Subnautica
6. The Last of Us
7. Castle Crashers (Remastered)
8. Call of Duty: Black Ops 3
9. The Legend of Zelda: Breath of The Wild
10. Elder Scrolls: Skyrim

of the modern rock albums today, its proof that old bands "losing their touch after so long", isn't always true. Some top hits from this album are "Feet Don't Fail Me", "Domesticated Animals", and "Villains of Circumstance". Music is a very special creation. It brings people together; it can cause or trigger emotions like anger, joy, and excitement, and it's a creative way to express yourself. Instead of arguing over what genre is best, or what band is best, etc, we should all take a step back and just appreciate music for what it is.

Spirit or Slander

Where do we draw the line?



Angeline Tan/Guest Illustrator

By: Puja Patel
Sports Editor

Cross town rivalries are some of the biggest games that we have each year. The student section is always filled with chanting and cheering for their classmates in hopes of winning bragging rights. They hold up posters cheering on the star player, sport the school colors and smear paint on their faces as they scream with every addition to the scoreboard. However, sometimes, as fans, we are blinded by the desire to win that we stop rooting for our team and begin insulting the other players.

People trash technique, poke fun at players' names and even throw out racial slurs in hopes of distracting the other players. This unacceptable "distraction" has been tolerated for far too long. If someone

were to directly say these things to another's face, it would be deemed unacceptable. So why does this change on the field or the court?

Some may argue that players should be able to block out these distractions and focus on the game, but we're all human. Every jab at who we are is heard. Players aren't immune to the words that we say simply because they are on the court. These words run constantly through their minds as a remembrance of their "worthlessness" and how they "suck" at the sport they spend hours upon hours to improve on.

Despite rivalries, we should keep in mind that rival players are still people. We shouldn't downplay their work and realize that they've worked hard to reach the place they're at.

Listing my 10 Favorite Heavy Rock Albums

By: Julian Castro
Staff Reporter

To start the year 2020, many media journalists made their own lists for the best of the decade, such as games, movies, and music. So, I decided to make my own personal list of my top 10 favorite metal albums of the decade. If you enjoy metal or heavier music, be sure to give some of these a try. They just might be your favorites too.

1. *Avenged Sevenfold: Nightmare* (2010)
2. *Avenged Sevenfold: Hail to the King* (2013)
3. *Avenged Sevenfold: The Stage* (2016)
4. *Five Finger Death Punch: American Capitalist* (2011)
5. *Five Finger Death Punch: The Wrong Side of Heaven and the Righteous Side of Hell* (2013)
6. *Ronnie James Dio: This is Your Life* (2014)
7. *Iron Maiden: The Book of Souls* (2015)
8. *Queens of the Stone Age: Villains* (2017)
9. *Trivium: The Sin and the Sentence* (2017)
10. *SlipKnot: We Are Not Your Kind* (2019)

Heavy Metal:

• SlipKnot, Avenged Sevenfold, Trivium, Five Finger Death Punch These bands are of the heavy metal genre and are awesome to listen to when you're in the mood, and when you're low on energy.

It's surely enough to get you pumping with energy. Some top songs from these albums are "Nero Forte" (We Are Not Your Kind), "Shepard of Fire" and "Hail to the King" (Hail to the King), "Nightmare" and "Welcome to the Family" (Nightmare), "The Heart From Your Hate" (The Sin and the Sentence), and "Under and Over It" and "The Pride" (Five Finger Death Punch). Despite its genre, known for its heavy nature, many of these bands go for a softer tone on specific songs such as "Acid Rain," "Crimson Day," and "Fiction" by Avenged Sevenfold or "Snuff" by SlipKnot, which isn't from this decade but is still worth a listen.

Metal:

• Iron Maiden, and Ronnie James Dio These names are definitely classics and are huge icons in the metal genre. They were even claimed the first of the New Wave British Metal movement (Iron Maiden) and even the father of metal (Ronnie James Dio). The Book of Souls (Iron Maiden) is a bit softer than its older albums but they still maintain the identity and quality of some of their best albums from the 80s. After the death of Ronnie James, many

bands came together in remembrance of him and covered some of his most memorable songs throughout his 68 years of life. This goodbye letter came in the form of the album "This Is Your Life", titled after the song of the same name by Dio, featured in the album. It featured big names such as Anthrax, Tenacious D, Corey Taylor, Mötörhead, Scorpions, Killswitch Engage, Glenn Hughes, and Metallica. Some top picks from these albums are "Empire of the Clouds", "If Eternity Should Fail", and "The Red and the Black" (The Book of Souls) and "Holy Diver" (cover by Killswitch Engage), and "Catch the Rainbow" (cover by Glenn Hughes). Ronnie James was a lead singer for many bands such as DIO, Black Sabbath, and Rainbow, and each of these are worth listening to, as they are part of a great legacy.

Rock:

• Queens of the Stone Age Despite Queens of the Stone Age not being metal, it is rock, and I thought it was worth adding to the list. Their newest album, Villains, is one of the best rock albums released this decade, in my opinion. Made with a very funky and unique tone, it stands out from many