



Weston High School

Trojan News

January/February 2021

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Beginning March 15, all students may attend school every day regardless of their cohort. We will continue with the current bell schedule, with classes running from 7:45 AM to 12:20 PM and extended learning hour (ELH) daily from 1:30 to 2:30 PM each day. Students may access ELH, either in person or remotely. Bus transportation will be provided at 12:20 PM and 2:30 PM. If your child needs bus transportation at 12:20 PM, kindly fill out this form by Friday, March 5: <https://forms.gle/uySvKP2oupZZTysv6>. We will monitor this new change to our schedule in the hopes of extending to a full day class schedule (classes 7:45 AM - 2:30 PM, with full lunch service) after April break. This plan was designed after an analysis with feedback from parents, students, and staff, as well as the Weston Westport Health District.

Preparation has begun to ensure a successful transition for our eighth grade students to Weston High School. On February 25, all eighth grade parents were invited to a ninth grade transition Q&A program. Prior to the meeting, a video was created and shared that helped explain all the different course options. For these students, placement in science, math, and English is available via the parent portal in PowerSchool. Students and parents have been asked to complete the course selection via the PowerSchool [Parent Portal](#) at their convenience by March 15. [Click here](#) for a link to the recording of the Q&A session.

As a reminder, all families are encouraged to bookmark the Weston High School [homepage](#). Our Calendar of Events is there and you may subscribe to the WHS calendar also. Cohort days and periods are listed for quick reference.

SCHOOL COUNSELING

As of the beginning of March, Ms. Green, our College and Career Counselor, has met with 55% of our junior families. We encourage those families who have not yet scheduled their initial post-secondary planning meeting to reach out to their counselor and or Ms. Green to make an appointment. This fall, the School Counseling Department hosted Jeff Selingo, author of *Who Gets In And Why*, to present to WHS families. College and Career Counselor, Ms. Green has been facilitating a bi-weekly book group for 25 sophomore and junior parents to discuss the details of this book. These meetings generate some thought-provoking conversations among the participants.



ACADEMICS

In February for Holocaust Remembrance, Mr. Mark Schonwetter shared his story of survival during the Holocaust with 10th grade Modern World Studies students, as well as members of the Social Justice Advocacy Group. Mr. Schonwetter's experience living in a ghetto, and hiding in the homes of neighbors was a vivid reminder of the suffering endured under Nazi occupation.

His story illustrates resilience in the face of persecution, and surprising expressions of goodness in the most difficult circumstances. It is also a reminder of the need to stand up against injustice, and never to forget the millions of victims of the Holocaust. In addition, students heard from Mr. Schonwetter's daughter, Ann S. Arnold. Mrs. Arnold shared her unique perspectives on learning about her family's experiences during the Holocaust. She documented these important events in her book, entitled *Together: A Journey For Survival*. We thank Social Studies Curriculum Instructional Leader Mr. Torres for organizing this program.



Students in Mrs. Klein's Facing History and Ourselves class had the opportunity to meet with 96-year-old Holocaust survivor, Judith Altmann, via Zoom. She recounted her experiences growing up in Czechoslovakia, her time in Auschwitz, and her experiences working in German factories where she was at the end of the war. Her story emphasized the resiliency of the human spirit and her belief in the importance of Holocaust education. The Holocaust is the main case study students explore in the Facing History and Ourselves class, and students said that this experience of interacting with a survivor was invaluable to their understanding.

Environmental science classes at WHS continue to partner with *Trout in the Classroom*. 600 Trout eggs arrived at WHS on January 7 and hatching began January 19. The trout are now about 1.5 inches long. Students will release the trout into the Saugatuck River in late spring.



The Writing Center continues to hold conferences and make class visits to support students with all of their writing needs. Appointments are available during Extended Learning Hour and the regular school day, and can be made [here!](#)

Four students in Honors Science Research participated in the virtual CT STEM fair February 6, entering their research proposals for competition and feedback from the judges. The participants and their projects are:

- Madeleine Clough: The effects of *Stropharia rugosoannulata*, *Clitosibe nuda*, and *Hypsizigus ulmarius* spores on the rate of decomposition in household compost bins [these are species of mushroom].
- Alexander Colman: Testing PFAS levels in drinking water located near potentially contaminated site a Connecticut case study. In addition, Alexander took third place in the Environmental Science Research Proposal.
- Myles Lehrman: The relationship between the change in pH of acidic rain and varying height differences of *Nymphaeaceae odorata* and *Matteuccia struthiopteris* [freshwater aquatic plants].
- Alexander Olsen: The growth of crickets' exoskeletons through the catalyzation of chitin synthesis by the supplementation of UDP-N-Acetyl-D-Glucosamine.

Over the past month, Company finished its first ever "Sock Puppet Theatre" video called *2020, The Musical* which was written, filmed and edited by members of Company. This month,

Company will prepare for the school musical, which has been moved to the weekend of June 3 - 6.

Our acappella group has been very busy working on new arrangements and created a "Thank You" video for the volunteers of Person to Person in Darien, which was featured at their Zoom get together.

On the weekend of January 15, 12 of our very talented music students auditioned and participated in the CMEA Western Region High School Festival. This year, the festival was held online and students were offered various workshops with conductors, choral groups and musicians over Zoom. Participants were - Band students: Maya Kallins, Keona Patel, Matthew Morrison and Gabe Paknia. Choir students: William Berger, Kennedy Boehme, Brooklyn Boehme, Tejal Dhiman and Konstantins Gotouhidis. Orchestra student Jessica Li and Jazz students: Karl Schulz and Matthew Schreder.

Two of our talented Choral students, Paige Bjerke and Tejal Dhiman, will participate in the NAFME All Eastern Festival in early March. Music students from the Eastern Region of the US will participate in online rehearsals and workshops and will record the first ever All Eastern Virtual Ensembles!

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As our WHS English teachers continue to work towards their goals of engaging students in social justice study and action, the English department participated in a professional learning session with Dr. David Nurenberg this winter. Dr. Nurenberg is an English educator with experience at both the secondary and college levels and author shared some of his research and best practices, which included cogenerative dialogues, collaborative teaching with students, and reciprocal teaching. The English teachers are looking forward to enriching their collaboration with each other as they continue to support all learners.

Shout out to Jessica DiBuono for Tech Tip Tuesday. Ms. DiBuono compiles technology tips from staff members and shares them with staff weekly.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

The sophomore class held a SOUPer bowl fundraiser to support Person-to-Person in Norwalk and the senior class hosted their annual Gillespie Center food and supply drive to collect non-perishable foods, toiletries, and household supplies. The freshman class organized valentine's for the senior citizens at the senior center. They created a slideshow with over 50 written messages from students in addition to a few photos. The seniors were delighted to see such a connection between generations and were grateful for the sweet messages.



Congratulations to Weston Against Cancer for exceeding \$3,500 in their fundraising efforts thus far this school year. In addition to their Halloween Trick or Treat Fundraiser, committee and board members collected donations through personal outreach to friends and family; they also

held a social media campaign to collect donations on Valentine’s Day. WAC has raised almost \$2,500 in less than 2 months (since the start of 2021)! If you would like to contact Weston Against Cancer, you can reach them at westonagaincancer@gmail.com. To support Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center through Weston Against Cancer, you can donate at this link: <http://mskcc.convio.net/goto/westonagaincancer>.

Our WHS seniors kicked things off with a virtual shave held on Sunday, February 21. St. Baldrick’s Team Weston is planning to hold their in-person head-shaving event the weekend of June 5/6, when hopefully restrictions will ease and they can hold an outdoor fundraiser in accordance with health restrictions.

CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS

Despite being online, the Debate Club has had quite a successful season thus far! The team of 27 students has attended monthly virtual tournaments over Zoom since October. They also have had a handful of team members win awards! Congratulations to the Debate Club; keep up the great work!



The Weston High School Student government is working hard to make this year as normal and fun as possible for our school community. Student government officers have been making morning daily announcements in an effort to stay connected. They kickoff second semester with decorations outside of the school, as well as deck the walls, to welcome students back from February break.



The Social Justice Advocacy Group faculty and students continue to collaborate in planning initiatives, providing resources, and identifying opportunities to promote equity and inclusion in our school community. For Black History Month, SJAG created a hallway display featuring important cultural figures, launched a reading group to discuss Zimbabwean writer Tsitsi Dangarembga’s classic novel *Nervous Conditions*, and created a series of picture book read-a-louds for the younger members of the Weston Public Schools. Faculty members helped coordinate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training with Dr. Nurenberg for the full faculty and English department.

With generous support from the PTO, SJAG is now planning two more youth leadership sessions, in addition to the one in December, with Dr. Elizabeth Bishop, curriculum director for the nonprofit organization Global Kids and youth studies professor at CUNY.

ATHLETICS

Over 200 student athletes participated in our winter season. Boy's and girls' basketball played in 12 regular-season games. . Boy's and girl's indoor track and wrestling continue to focus on individual strength training, stamina, and conditioning. Even on remote days, many of these athletes are self-disciplined and focused and find ways to incorporate training into their daytime learning environment. Boys swim has some emerging talent in our younger athletes and our ski team is loving life on the slopes. Our JBWA Boys Ice Hockey and our Milford Co-op Girls Ice Hockey teams are in full swing and our one gymnast has joined the Fairfield Ludlowe program as a team of one. This month our Athletic Department invited ten athletes to participate in the CIAC Class Act Conference with a focus on Sportsmanship.



RECOGNITION

Congratulations to junior Jay Evans, first-place winner of WHS's second annual Poetry Out Loud (POL) competition, held virtually on January 27. Jay will represent WHS in the regional competition. Congratulations also to freshman Shea Frimmer, our runner-up. We would like to congratulate all our students on their amazing performances!



Congratulations to our Weston High School Mock Trial teams for an incredibly successful competition season thus far! Weston's three teams all won their third rounds of competition, and the A-Team is headed to the State Championship against the Westhill/Stamford/AITE team! Also, a special shoutout to Senior A-Team attorney Knox Watson for his recognition as one of 11 top attorneys in a tournament of 150+ high school attorneys from all over CT. The virtual State Championship will be judged by a panel of Connecticut Supreme Court judges on March 16.

Congratulations to the winners of the 2021 Hudson-to-Housatonic Scholastic Writing Awards. "A panel of professional novelists, editors, teachers, poets, librarians, journalists, and other literary professionals selected these works from 1700 works submitted this year. Noteworthy past recipients include Joyce Carol Oates, Stephen King, Sylvia Plath, Truman Capote, Robert Redford, John Updike, Lena Dunham, and many more." The Weston High School English department would like to celebrate this year's recipients:

- Gold Key: Catherine Xie, class of 2022, "Red Snappers" (dramatic script), Catherine Xie, class of 2022, "Preachers" (personal essay/memoir)
- Silver Key: Dylan Schwartz, class of 2024, "Broken Connection" (flash fiction)
- Honorable Mention: Maya Albright, class of 2022, "Smog" (flash fiction), Catherine Xie, class of 2022, "Tanghulu" (short story)