

# WestWord

## Students seek military career after high school

by **Zoe Ljubic**  
Editor in Chief

As upperclassmen begin to collate all academic achievements and search for colleges to attend after graduation, many students here at Niles West have chosen a different post high school route: the United States Military.

According to college and career counselor Daniel Gin, many students have gone into the college and career center with military as an option.

"Each year, we have about 10 or less students coming in [to the college and career resource center] with questions about the military," Gin said. "Most kids say they want to join because of their money situation. Students want to go to college; however, through all the different options, military is the route they consider to go down to get the money they need to go to college."

Gin's duty in the college and career center is to make sure all students are aware of their options post high school plans.

"When students come in and say they are thinking about joining the military, I always tell them the positive and negative sides," Gin said. "I make sure they understand the commitment down the road, and that is an honor to serve our country."

According to Gin, four students enlisted in the military last year. This year, while many students may be considering the military, some students have already made that decision to pursue the military as a career.

"I have enlisted," senior Samantha Watson said. "This was something my family and I have been talking about last year, and last September I went in for my physical and completed the long process of enlisting."

Watson has chosen to enlist not only because of her financial state, but because of her call to serve our country.

"My grandpa was a master sergeant when he retired, and every guy in my family has been in the military except my dad. I thought it was about time a girl served," Watson said. "The benefits are just amazing. [The military] is giving me a full ride to Stanford Medical School."

Senior James Suk has enlisted as well.

"I have already enlisted in the army reserves, so that I can go to college after all the basic training," Suk said. "Right now my military occupational specialty is 45 Bravo, which means I work on small arms and artileries."

Like Watson, Suk has family who served in the military.

"My dad served in the army, and my brother is currently a unit supply specialist," Suk said.

Watson and Suk are one of the few students here at West who have enlisted, or are planning to enlist in the military. Junior George Davros is planning to take a different route in the military, and plans to attend the Naval Academy.

"When I graduate high school, I do not plan on enlisting. Instead, I plan to apply to the Naval Academy and graduate as an officer. Basically, you go in with rank, which means you are assigned to a group of men or women to command," Davros said. "I am not going straight to the military right out of high school, people who enlist right out of high school have a higher mortality rate. I want an education, and need something for me to do after the military. I do not plan on making the military my career."

Davros has shared a passion for the military for years.

"Ever since I was a little kid, joining the military has been something I have really wanted to do. I do not think that shooting a gun is cool, but I want to fight for my country," Davros said. "I want to help fight for what our country believes in, whatever that may be."

Like Watson and Suk, Davros had an understanding conversation with his parents about his future in the military.

"My parents have been very supportive of my decision. They want to make sure I am going in

with a clear mind," Davros said. "Whatever my decision will be, as long as I am not questioning myself, they will support me. But, I need to go through ROTC first."

Senior Jesus Blanco expressed optimism for his future serving as a medic.

"I chose to pursue a military career because it was something that caught my attention. [It allows us to] explore the world, learn so many new things and meet new people. I enlisted as the infantry, but hope to switch to the medical field," Blanco said. "This is an amazing experience waiting to happen. I am so excited to [report on June 11]. It will be for the best."

Students may be unaware of the former military personal close to home. Dean Mark Rigby served in the military post high school. He expressed enthusiasm for the students who plan to go down the military route.

"Although my unit was never deployed, I learned a lot about going through the entire experience. First, you learn a lot about yourself. It is physically, emotionally and mentally draining at times," Rigby said. "Second, you learn self of service, and that things aren't always about you. You are able to see the bigger picture. Serving in the military, or any type of commitment of serving your society is important."

Rigby broke away from military life and reentered civilian life after five and a half years of service.

"My father was a parole officer, and was not around when I was little. When [my wife and I]

decided to have kids, I decided it was time to get out so I can be around for my kids," Rigby said. "It was an interesting transition from military life to civilian life, but it was not difficult."

Rigby also offered a bit of advice for those students who hope to pursue the military career.

"You should make sure you know what you are doing before you get into anything. Ask questions, to not only recruiters but to other people who know about the military. Recruiters will not lie to you, but they do have a certain status quo they need to fill," Rigby said. "Also, remember that the military is a spring board for so many things. You can be anything because there are so many branches of the military you can go into. You need to be aware of what you are going into before you join, and not just enlist because you want to be in the military."

Watson expressed excitement on reporting to boot camp June 30.

"I am so excited, and cannot wait to leave," Watson said. "[Students], join the army and use me as your referral."

Suk concurred. "I am pretty excited. Not scared at all," Suk said. "It is going to be crazy and fun."

Davros looks forward to his future.

"Ronald Reagan once said that 'some people go through their lives wondering if they had made a difference, but the marines don't have that problem,'" Davros said. "I want to make a difference in the world."

## Thoroughly modern musical set to entertain

by **Morgan Quilici**  
Staff Writer

The theatre department will present the new musical *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, Mar. 12 -14, at 7 p.m., in the Robert L. Johnson Auditorium.

*Thoroughly Modern Millie* centers around a small town girl from Kansas named Millie Dillmount in the year 1922. Millie sets out on a journey to New York to become a Roaring '20s "flapper." While in New York, Millie stays at the Hotel Priscilla, which is a boarding house for young actresses. Along the way, Millie meets some new friends, pursues a love and learns a little about herself.

Theatre director Andy Sinclair expressed enthusiasm about the production. "It is different than some of the big musicals that have been done in the past few years. It models the classic '30s, '40s and '50s musicals, but it definitely has a modern spin to it. Since it is set in the 1920s, every song has a jazz root to it, so Millie is one of those shows that when one leaves the theatre, all the songs are in one's head. It has the feel of a classic Broadway musical," Sinclair said.



Junior Alicia Peake, who plays Millie, agreed with the production's classic but modern feel. "The cast and I loved working on this show because even though it has old style jazz numbers, it still has a very recent and relatable feel to it," Peake said.

Other featured roles include: Jimmy Smith (sophomore Aleks Krapivkin), Miss Dorothy Brown (freshman Lauren Langer), Trevor Graydon (senior David Chervony), Mrs. Meers (junior Fiona Stephens), Muzzy Van

Hossmere (junior Ashley Alexander), Ching Ho (senior Owais Ahmed), Bun Foo (senior Jason Suran) and Miss Flannery (senior Becky Lang). The girls at the Hotel Priscilla include: Ruth (junior Ani Poladian), Gloria (junior Alyssa Jutovsky), Rita (junior Dominique Forte), Alice (junior Sean Buckley), Cora (sophomore Becca Levy), Lucille (senior Carrie Goldberg) and Ethel Peas (senior Roxie Zeller). The ensemble includes: seniors Benjamin Cormalleth and Nicole Leftakes, juniors Jeremy Berman, Clark Finkelstein and Aly Grabowski and freshmen Nick Behm, Katie Buckley, Rachel Flink,

Ashley Pagett, Aaron Ruderman, Zach Tarnoff and Julia Zasso.

A performance for the community will be held at 10 a.m. on Thursday, Mar. 12, in the Robert L. Johnson auditorium.

For ticket information, call the theatre box office at (847) 626-2633.

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# WESTWIRE

## Short Circuits

### Chamber music festival provides students with intimate musical experience

w Hillary Lindwall  
News/Wire Editor

The Niles West orchestra will host its annual chamber music festival on Thursday, Mar. 19.

"The chamber music festival is a lot of fun because we get a chance to work together and hear each other's opinions about our music," senior symphonic orchestra violist Drew Studer said. "We have to know our parts very well, and it is a really good musical experience."

The symphonic and philharmonic orchestras will be divided into small ensembles consisting of four to five students including two violins, a viola, a cello and a bass.

"I am very excited about the chamber music festival because it is a good chance for us to interact with other students and because we get to go into more depth in our music," junior philharmonic violinist Michelle Ouy said.

The festival will take place in the band and orchestra rooms beginning right after school and continuing into the night. Everyone is welcome to attend.

"[The festival] develops a lot of strength in their playing wherein each student is responsible for their own part," orchestra director Steven Katz said. "They become much better counters, they work better in a group and it is not directed by a conductor like a full orchestra is. This is a lot more collaborative, where the students decide together in a group how they want the music to be performed."

### College night prepares students

w Mary Basic  
Staff Writer

The third annual Junior College Information Night, "Exploring Colleges," was held on Feb. 24 at Niles North to prepare students for the college fair coming in the spring.

According to college and career counselor Daniel Gin, sponsors from universities came and provided information about different colleges throughout that state.

"[Each year] we try to get different speakers from different colleges to get different perspectives," Gin said.

According to Gin, around 250 juniors and their parents came last year. This year, the turnout was the same.

"Juniors and their parents come to learn about different universities and what [these schools] can offer to students," Gin said.

Four new colleges visited this year, Arizona University, Liberal Arts College, Washington University and Knox College.

"These are highly selective schools," Gin said.

There were two other college nights this year, "Putting the Pieces Together" in October and "Careers Night" in January.

Students should look ahead for the college fair in the spring.

"On Wednesday, April 15, there will be a college fair," Gin said.

The college fair will be beneficial for students and parents to look into colleges, and explore their choices.

"Having a basis of what kind of schools the students want to look at will be helpful [in the college selection process]," Gin said.

### Spirit week shows students' pride

w Nikki George  
Staff Writer

This year's Spring Spirit Week (SSW) will be held March 9-13. SSW will be split into five themed days this year.

"Monday will be mismatch day; Tuesday will pajama day; Wednesday will be twin day; Thursday will be movie star day and Friday will be red and white day," student activities director Peter Geddeis said.

In addition to Friday March 13's red and white day, the annual spring spirit week assembly will kick off the new sports season.

"At the assembly, we will introduce the spring athletics, which [include] baseball, softball, boys volleyball, girls soccer and boys tennis," Geddeis said.

Geddeis expressed enthusiasm for the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)'s basketball game.

"The CEC will host a basketball game, and it will be the highlight of the assembly," Geddeis said.

According to Geddeis, the Orchestis Dance Company will perform at the assembly.

"Orchestis is our dance group that spends the whole year practicing dances, [such as] ballet, jazz and hip hop. In substitution for poms and cheerleading, [we hope] to increase spring spirit with the Orchestis performance," Geddeis said.

SSW will allow students to actively participate and introduce spring athletics, but also celebrate the coming of a new season.

"SSW is a celebration to get students excited about spring sports and the beautiful weather," Geddeis said.

## A Day in the Life...

### Cadre substitute connects with students while filling in for teachers

w Zoe Ljubic  
Editor in Chief

All students are familiar with substitute teachers. It is common to see students jump with joy when they see that their teacher is out for the day. Sometimes, the same substitute comes into their classroom enough times throughout the year, and the students begin to learn his/her name. Nevertheless, cadre substitute teacher Thomas Bentle is one substitute everyone knows.

Although Bentle has only served as a substitute at Niles West this school year, students in each grade and level recognize him. It is no surprise to see students acknowledge Bentle as he walks down the halls of West. After spending an entire day with Bentle, this reporter understands the personality behind this man.

Bentle begins his day by hanging up his coat in the English office promptly at 7:35 a.m., and walks down to the main office to see substitute clerk Annette Mei. While in the main office, he receives his schedule and classroom evaluation forms for the day. His schedule includes the classes he will be substituting for and the evaluation sheets are for him to fill out a classroom behavioral report.

Bentle received a degree in English with a masters in secondary education from National Louis University last June. He immediately applied for a job at District 219 in hopes of receiving a full time English teaching position.

"Having just graduated in June, I didn't get hired for a full time job," Bentle said. "But late August, I received a phone call from the district office with this job offering."

Before Bentle decided to receive his English degree, he graduated from Illinois State University with a communications degree. Just out of college, Bentle worked as a manager at TGI Fridays for four years.

"[Working at TGI Fridays] was not what I wanted to do for the rest of my life," Bentle said.

Bentle then pursued a real estate license and became a broker. For the next four years, he worked in the real estate field consulting firms and completing industrial projects. Eventually, Bentle looks forward to pursuing a full time teaching career.

Bentle now works as a permanent substitute teacher in the English department. According to him, there are currently three substitute teachers who report to West each day and are paid regardless of the number of classes they sub. In addition, cadre substitute teachers are assigned to classes first.

"Typically, I sub for English teachers. There are 30 English teachers and someone is [usually] out each day," Bentle said. "If not, then I sub wherever they need me."

On the day of *West Word's* visit, Bentle spent first period in the Literacy Center. There he spent the 42 minutes interacting with teachers and students.

"I love the environment of the school, the students and the staff. I have [been given the opportunity] to meet so many staff members around the school such as the Literacy Center's

**Sliwinski** from page 1.

said.

However, some do not believe that Sliwinski's punishment would have been efficient if prolonged to a life sentence. DesJardins believes that serving life sentences in "our jail systems, which are overcrowded and do not offer proper rehabilitation, education or therapy" are just a way to "destroy a life."

Sliwinski's original punishment was lessened because of her good behavior and her lawyer's claims to her mental illness. Yet, many believe that this should not enable her early release from jail.

"Mentally ill or not, she is too dangerous to be out of jail and on the streets," Nissan said.

According to DesJardins, an early release from prison can be harmful. "I may be jumping to conclusions here, but if she was unstable 10 months ago, then she is unstable now. We have done nothing in this interval that has so radically changed [Sliwinski's] life."

"I understand that she should be released earlier for good behavior, but the length is debatable. It is unfair that three deaths is equivalent to 10 months, regardless of her depressive state," senior Nimra Elahi said.

Elahi also believes that Sliwinski's time in prison was not an illustration of justice.

[Patricia] Ference," Bentle said. "It is fun to come to work with all the English teachers, because they all think of me as a part of their department."

Prior to each class, Bentle made sure to visit the teacher's desk. Here, the teacher has specifically laid out the plans for each class. During class, Bentle makes sure to introduce himself (sometimes it is never necessary because the students already know him), then write the assignment on the board. On some days, Bentle is stuck giving students tests from teachers. In his free time, Bentle likes to spend this time reading and checking his email.

"I do not want to disrupt the students [while they are taking tests], so I do not spend much time checking [my email]," Bentle said. "To keep quiet, I read. I am spending a lot of time catching up on books I have been waiting to read."

Currently, Bentle is reading a couple of different short story compilations, including a nonfiction book by David Sedaris and *2008's Best American Short Stories*.

Right before he received his masters last summer, Bentle substituted at Stevenson High School, and served as the full time newspaper advisor.

Bentle says he likes the engaging student life rather than sitting at a desk staring at a computer screen all day. He enjoys walking down the halls throughout the day because he is able to watch the students interact with one another.

Bentle spent fourth, sixth, seventh and ninth periods with Sharon Swanson's English classes. After he took attendance and read off instructions, the students went straight to work. Bentle says he really enjoys how so many

students know him. He understands that the students he subs for have the same comfort level with him as they do with their regular teacher.

"A feeling of safety and comfort is important for students," Bentle said. "The most positive thing about my job is that I am able to bring that to many of the classes I sub."

Bentle is the sponsor of the Hellenic Club and teaches the English/reading ACT preparatory course each Tuesday and Thursday.

"Each activity I engage in is a way to help me get to know more students," Bentle said.

When Bentle is not spending his time overseeing Hellenic Club or instructing students, he enjoys his time at home.

"I come from a very large family, and I just love to hang out with my family. My wife and I spend a lot of time together," Bentle said. "We love to get together with friends and go out to dinner. During the summer, we play tennis. Year-round, we take our dog for walks around the neighborhood."

Bentle's little accomplishments at West go beyond just helping the students as a whole, but rather target each student individually.

"I am most proud of my little successes. The little interactions with students that I have, is success to me," Bentle said. "When I motivate others throughout my life, that is success to me."

"I definitely see both sides of the story and I feel that compromise was not equal. She got the longer end of the stick," Elahi said.

However, Elahi does not support Sliwinski's return to prison.

"I do not believe in returning someone to prison if they are leading a healthy life. However, I do think that there should be some commemoration of the three victims and some consideration should be given to their families. Maybe she should take some effort to apologize and show her sincerity," Elahi said.

DesJardins also agrees that there must be some act of retribution from Sliwinski's side.

"I think she would have to spend a significant amount of time in community service. She would have to do some hard core work with other people who are seriously depressed, such as volunteering on a suicide hotline," DesJardins said.

Many at West are mourning for the families of the victims.

"I feel really terrible for the families of the victims, as well as for victims themselves. They were innocent, and their lives were unjustly taken away from them. It is truly a horrible thing," Nissan said.

"Tragedies and accidents like these happen to the best of us. I just want to console [the victims' families] and remind them that in times like these, anger and revenge is never the best answer," Elahi said.



**Bentle swipes in student during study hall.**

**Photo by Zoe Ljubic**



# WestWord

## Student teacher Mukai creates hybrid of mentor teachers' styles

**Hira Malik**  
Staff Writer

Not all teachers at West knew what they wanted to be straight out of college. In fact, many teachers tried something, did not like it and started over in the educational field. Some enter different professions and then realize their passion is really teaching. A prime example of a former student who went on to discover his devotion to teaching is student English teacher and West alumnus Keith Mukai. He entered his current occupation as a teacher nine years after graduating from Princeton University.

Mukai hopes to gain experience in teaching as a student teacher in English with David Klingenberger and social studies Matt Weatherington while simultaneously helping students here at Niles West.

Mukai grew up in Skokie, Illinois, and graduated from Niles West in 1995. He enjoyed being a student here just as much as teaching here.

"High school [at West] was really good for me. [I randomly] wandered into the gymnasiums room. Through gymnastics, I learned how to be a competitor and a leader. Gymnastics really shaped me. I was also a very good student, and took almost every AP class taught here. This school did an amazing job preparing me for college," Mukai said.



Mukai

After Mukai graduated from college at Princeton University, he became a professional programmer and continued in that profession for nine years.

"I discovered programming during college. My freshman year in college, I decided to be an economics major. I took Econ 102 and I hated [economics]. I happened to fall into a class that talked a lot about programming and what it is doing to society. An easy way to explain programming is when [anyone] goes to a website and registers, that information needs to be stored somewhere," Mukai said. "Some programmer needs to structure where it is stored, how it is stored, how it can be retrieved, how the user can see it again and hook up all the technology in a code to make that all happen. [Programming] really taught my attention and I just fell in love with it."

Although professional programming was Mukai's first career, he fell in love with the teaching profession after he came to visit the West gymnastics team a few years back.

"I was on the gymnastics team when I was a student here. I came back to see the team about five years ago, and I did some coaching while

I was here. I had just flown in for a week and a half and I had such a great time coaching. I was good at it and the kids enjoyed working with me," Mukai said. "I was talking to [science teacher Steve] Foerch, the head gymnastics coach, and he said that 'you should think about becoming a teacher if you love working with the kids so much.' I thought he was crazy. I came back the

next year and did some more coaching, and I loved it even more. Then I began to observe a few classes. I thought it would be so much better than being a programmer."

Mukai expressed excitement about student teaching at the high school from which he graduated.

"It is great teaching here. West is just an amazing place to teach. The atmosphere can be very antagonistic. The best thing about teaching at West is definitely the students. The students are smart, and they believe in school. I have been in schools where students do not believe that school will ever benefit them. At West, for the most part, students believe school will benefit them in the future," Mukai said.

Mukai is currently the assistant girls' gymnastics team coach here at West.

"I think coaching gymnastics is awesome. It is so different when you work with a teacher in the classroom versus in the gym. In the classroom, I am giving students structure and direction. In the gym, coaches and gymnasts work together, side-by-side," Mukai said.

Aside from student teaching and coaching gymnastics Mukai has developed interesting ways to spend his time such as being a professional photographer and going to Los Angeles, CA.

"I spend my summers in L.A., and everyone I know there is either a stunt man or an acrobat. There is an outdoor gymnastics park where [my friends and I] hang out, and basically all the crazy circus people are there. I also love beach volleyball," Mukai said.

Overall, Mukai feels that he is lucky to have Klingenberger and Weatherington as his mentor teachers.

"I am just super lucky to have two phenomenal mentor teachers to be learning from. They are two very different teachers with very different strengths," Mukai said. "They both give me very different advice. I get to pick the brains of two people who see things from their own unique perspectives."

## Festival of orchestras to celebrate diversity of skill levels

**Helen Salamanca**  
Staff Writer

The Niles West orchestra will perform at its annual Festival of Orchestras in the Robert L. Johnson Auditorium on Thursday, March 19, at 7:30 p.m.

The festival will be a celebration of all levels of orchestras, including the beginning strings, concert, philharmonic and symphonic orchestras. According to orchestra director Steven Katz, the orchestra will save its most difficult pieces for this upcoming concert, its third performance this school year.

Senior soprano Nicole Leftakes, the orchestra's concerto

award winner at last month's Washington, D.C., Heritage Music Festival, will be performing a solo piece the *Aria Recitative, Lascia: Chio Pianga (Rinaldi)* by George Frederic Handel.

"The pieces are just great. I love this music and I am sure the kids will enjoy it as well. It is our most symphonic music of the year," Katz said. "The music is really big and bombastic."

The symphonic orchestra will perform *Lascia: Chio Pianga* by Handel, *Symphony No. 8* by Anton Dvorak and *Russlan and Ludmilla* by Mikhail Glinka. The philharmonic orchestra will perform "Scherzo" from *Symphony No. 6* by Ludwig van Beethoven, "Danse Bacchanale" from *Samson and Delilah* by Camillie Saint-Saens, "Rondo" from *Horn Concerto k.417* by W.A. Mozart and "Valse" from *La Perichole* by Jacques Offenbach. The beginning strings orchestra will perform *Mythos*

by Soon Hee Newbold and *Aztec Dance* by Michael Stoy.

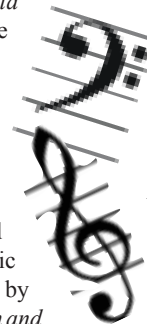
Senior philharmonic violinists Jennifer Koval and Celeste Borjas added that they eagerly anticipate *Danse Bacchanale* by Camillie Saint-Saens.

Senior violinist Chris Tabamo shares their excitement.

"I am really looking forward to the Festival of Orchestras because this is the chance in which the audience can see the pieces that we have been working hard on. Orchestra performances are great, especially since I get to challenge myself with music," Tabamo said.

Katz added that during his selection of the pieces, he was mindful of what the students would want to play as well.

"It is such a wonderful celebration of orchestras especially with these pieces," Katz said.



3. What planet is named for the most powerful of Roman gods?

- A. Jupiter
- B. Pluto
- C. Jupiter
- D. Neptune
- E. Jupiter

4. What body of water is named for its calmness and tranquility?

- A. Pacific Ocean
- B. Dead Sea
- C. Pacific Ocean
- D. Lake Michigan
- E. Pacific Ocean

5. Pete Best was the original drummer for what famous group?

- A. Nirvana
- B. I don't know
- C. The Beatles
- D. The Who
- E. The Beatles

6. Who won the 2009 Academy Award for best actor?

- A. I don't know
- B. Sean Penn
- C. Sean Penn
- D. Brad Pitt
- E. Sean Penn

1. What magazine recognizes Person of the Year?

- A. Time
- B. I don't know
- C. Time
- D. People
- E. Time

2. Who are the only two Presidents whose fathers were also Presidents?

- A. Bush and Roosevelt
- B. Bush and Kennedy
- C. Bush and Adams
- D. Bush and Adams
- E. Bush and Adams



A. Freshman - Willy Nicolas



B. Sophomore - Sam Stein



C. Junior - George Curran



D. Senior - Henoke Tekeste



E. Faculty - Patricia Moir