

2009 West Word Senior Survey

The votes have been counted, and the senior survey is in!

SENIOR COLUMNS!

The senior staff members say their farewells, along with senior class president Maddie Dinges and Principal Kaine Osburn

I do the pictures, not the words

Summing up the past four years isn't the easiest task, but to do it on one page makes it all the more difficult. After four years, I am not the same shy freshman walking into my first class, unsure of what to expect in high school. People change, new people are met, good times passed and I can finally say that it has been a memorable time—one that has passed more quickly than I expected. It is now time for us all to move on to the next step, and bring with us the past memories from high school at Niles West.

It has been a tradition done year after year in West Word; each year the senior staff members are asked to write a senior column. After being asked to write my senior column, I wasn't too enthused to write about who impacted me throughout high school, and how I have changed throughout my high school experience. For the most part, I've been a photographer for *West Word*. Although I have written articles featured in the newspaper, this will be the first column I've written in my entire time on the staff. However, I realized that there have been a lot of people along the way that have helped me in one way or another, and they deserve to be thanked for their efforts.

Mr. Conroy: thank you for all the help over the past couple years in newspaper, I've really appreciated your input whether it be help with work in class, or for other classes.

Ms. Cheng: thank you for everything. You've been a huge help in the past couple of years.



Mr. Swider: Swider, I've never had a teacher as strange as you (JTR). You have been a great teacher this past year; your sense of humor has made your class one of the more enjoyable classes I've had.

Mrs. Goodfriend: thank you- for all the help you've given me, from help in your class to college essays, I really appreciate everything.

Finally, I would like to thank all of my friends throughout high school for being there, whether it be for help in school, outside of school, past good times, help through the hard times, and more. You all know who you are.

To me, high school has been a jam-packed time; to balance school work, work outside of school, relationships, cars and everything else one has going on in their lives. I have had a job for three

out of my four years of high school, one of the reasons why my life has been so "jam-packed." One of the main goals I have had throughout my high school career has been something that has nothing to do with school though. After saving until I could afford my dream, I bought an engine swapped turbo Nissan 240sx, then another one, which is the car I'm driving now.

It has been a goal that I've been carrying with me almost from the start of high school, and now that I'm graduating, I am finally able to enjoy the car with all the time I will have this summer.

Now, my next challenge awaits me: school at the University of Illinois in Chicago. I'm sure it will be an experience that I will enjoy, and one that I will remember all of you throughout.

Ian Simon served for three years as staff photographer, operations manager and photography editor. He will attend the University of Illinois at Chicago.

The world needs change, and I am the cashier

Alas, my first and last senior column. Finally, I'll get the chance to clarify and reminisce about the laughs behind four years worth of Facebook photos. At last, my opportunity to say something profound, and perhaps summon tears, has arrived. However, as surprising as it may seem, after 3-years of outlining this column in my head, I can't think of a single sentence that will flawlessly encapsulate my high school career.

I wish I could tell you that I loved every minute of high school. I wish that in hindsight, I could honestly describe the past four years as amazing. But by doing



that, I'd be lying to myself in order to gild my recall of the truth, so that one day my memory will deem high school

as the best days of my life. I'm not sure what the future holds, but for now I can Please see **Mahoney**, page 16.

Through the eyes of a giant

You do not know the trouble I have had in beginning to write this last article. Since the start of knowing that I would have to write a good-bye column, I set out to make it memorable and something that I could look back upon about twenty years from now and truly understand what I was thinking. I wanted people to read it and understand my mindset and what kind of person I truly am, for everyone knows that you cannot judge a book by its cover (which in my case would be A Series of Unfortunate Events covered by a giant question mark), and I have not exactly opened up to a lot of people in my lifetime. It took me some time to realize it, but if I kept freaking out about making this article of that quality, then it would never get done. So in the best way possible, I will sum up my thoughts without being too dramatic and over-thinking it (which for me will probably be a stretch).

The definition of surreal is described as having the disorienting, hallucinatory quality of a dream; unreal; fantastic. Many describe their high school years as surreal, and I wish I could too, but my four years seemed to be more of a series of speed bumps mixed with some nightmare-ish tendencies. This does not mean I am trying to make it sound all depressing and get people reading this to feel a sense of pity. No. Pity is something I do not want. It is just that I have not had the easiest time over the past several years on a number of different levels, mainly dealing with family and the ever-annoying high school social acceptance ladder. A lot of my best moments have occurred during the last four years, but high school to me is more of a test of how developed your social skills are. You need to be able to cope with lots of other people in your lifetime and have confidence in doing so, or it will be a rough road that you tread along for the next sixty-something years. I think I barely passed with a C- in that category.

Going to Lane Tech. for my freshman and sophomore years was decent in my opinion. Freshman year of course was hard to settle into right off the bat, but by the middle of sophomore year I had a pretty good groove going. I had friends that I really connected towards and still talk with to this day, and although I still felt uncomfortable in that setting at times, I still enjoyed some moments in that school. Transferring over to Niles West was pretty hard move. It took me a while to settle in again, and this was even more difficult because I was a junior and my time in high school was winding down.

Now here I am, a senior no more, and having been here two years I honestly do not know which high school I enjoyed being at the most. I have met people here as well that I have really connected with, and putting all four years together, I believe that my experiences could have been a lot better, but on the other hand they could have been a lot worse.

This is the part where the seniors say their thanks to friends and other random people, but I do not think I should give thanks. Rather, I believe that there are factors in my life that I should give appreciation towards, for thanking people makes it seem like they committed to a service instead of being there in your life out of the goodness of their hearts. First, the small family of my mother and sister. Mom, I appreciate how hard you have worked over the past 18 years of my life, especially when I have been in high school to make sure all the family and money problems did not drive me off the right path that you know I am able to walk upon, and for always trying to instill confidence in me. I also know how both of you guys have had to put up with me all of my life, so it is really cool that you stuck it out without having your minds explode.

Dad, I honestly know that you have been a lackluster father-figure over the recent years, but you have taught me everything I know about sports and are probably the only person I know who is willing to talk about it for hours, so I appreciate it greatly. I also will take your advice on having patience towards the future, for I also think that what I have learned recently will eventually pay off (hopefully).

For my two best friends, Jean and Andres, we have never been anywhere near the same high school, yet we all stayed in touch over the years. You guys are the reason I was able to adapt well since I moved here from Kansas when I was 13, and – although this part sounds more sappy than it should – you have always been there to support and help me through the many screwed up moments of my life. Although the sarcasm you guys have and jokes makes me want to beat the



snot out of you sometimes, I appreciate both of you for getting to know the real “Big Dan” and choosing to remain my brothers.

Last but not least, Mr. Conroy. I appreciate you for all you have done over my senior year to help me succeed in your classes and in learning to appreciate myself. Not many teachers really try to understand certain problems or take time to further improve a student, but you helped me gain some confidence academically and in dealing with certain life situations, and I really do appreciate it.

Although I have regretted a lot about the past years and wished I was a lot more confident in dealing with the many situations that were thrown in my face, I think that it took me until now to realize that it may have given me the experience I need to do well in life. Of course I cannot stretch this to the point where I can sound dramatic and say “the future is clear! I know I can do well in this life, and I now have the confidence to do so!” That is pretty much bull. What I do know is that I managed to survive and that maybe college – as terrifying as the concept of accepting the tons of responsibility is – will go along a little better. Having said that, I leave this long memo on two random notes. One, sports are the greatest things on the planet to have an interest in, and two, the Cubs will win the World Series soon, and I will laugh in the face of all the non-believers when they do. Hahahahaha.

Dan Blazek served for one year as staff writer. He will attend Elmhurst College.

Principal Kaine Osburn reflects



Adios Muchachos!

Seniors, I can't imagine writing anything that at this point in your high school career would hold you in rapt attention, nor do I have anything new to offer because you have heard it all from me before. The short version:

Thank you for all you have given to Niles West. Be thankful to everyone who has tried to make a positive contribution to your life – family, teachers, staff members, coaches, friends and community members.

Know that you are only as gifted as Mr. O

those gifts you give back to: your family, teachers, staff members, coaches, friends and community members. Don't waste what you have, return it to the world!

Be patient. Life is long.

Serving as your principal is the honor of my life, and I do my best every day because each of you inspires me to do my best. Discovering the source of your inspiration is the single most important discovery you can make.

Best of luck. I'll miss all of you.

A note from the class president...

To the Class of 2009:

It has been absolutely amazing getting to know you over the last four years... I'll never forget that first day when I was so nervous to walk down the hallways with you!

I'm happy that I finally conquered my fear and was able to spend time with you. Our four years together have been filled with laughter, tears, screaming, hugging and just about everything else. You never failed to keep me on my toes! We have been together through a lot, and I am so glad that we have remained close.

Let's see, we go way back to orientation that hot and smelly gym is something I will never forget. Then, of course, there were pep assemblies, football games, spirit weeks and college nights that brought us back together once again. I could try and highlight all the great memories that we have, but I just don't think that there is room!

As much fun as we had, we definitely had some rough days. How about that day when there were seven inches of snow outside...and we still had school? Sorry I was so angry, but come on that

was a bit ridiculous. Despite those days, I'll always remember when you had me rolling around laughing or when I would be happy just to know that we had a late start coming up.

Well, I don't want to take up too much space, so I'll end by saying that these last few years have been great! I wish you well in whatever path you have chosen and I cannot wait to hear about all of your future success.

Stay Classy Class of 2009.

Your Class President,
Maddie Dinges

Mahoney, from page 14.

only relish in what memories—good or bad—I can keep.

All of these memories couldn't have been made possible on my own. If I didn't have fabulous friends and family to help me experience life, I'd have nothing to write. I am more than grateful for every friend who has been there for morning pancakes, afternoon projects, and late night adventures. My flashbacks wouldn't be the same without the inside jokes and codenames. Thanks go out to all of my teachers, especially when you accepted late work, and rounded up semester grades. Though I might not always remember the curriculum, I can't forget you. A special thanks goes out to my family who put up with my messy room, attitude, and started cooking less meat when I decided to stop eating it. All of you contributed so much to molding the person that I am becoming and I'll never forget the amount of support and encouragement you all have provided. For those who didn't always believe in me I owe thanks, because you've made me work harder than I would have on my own. This wouldn't be my senior column without giving thanks to my *West Word* buddies: I love this group of people even

when it seems like I don't. We worked so well as a group and our camaraderie will never fade away. Conyeezy! First off, thank you so much for not strangling me. I know I'm the reason you pull your hair out and you have no idea how much I appreciate your tolerance and understanding. You have provided me with so much confidence as a writer, and I will never forget the difference between 'further' and 'farther' because of you.

I know I wasn't always the perfect student, but I know the amount of potential I possess. In the future I hope to take advantage of every opportunity in my reach. Even if, I'm apprehensive about the year to come, I've never been more convinced that I was born ready and I'll be fine. I am aware of my ability to communicate with people, and will use my talents to earn my success. As Drake would say I'm "transitionin' from fittin' in to standin' out." It's my time now.

As I advance to the next juncture in my life's path I can only hope that those who I encountered will wish me well, as I will wish them the same. I hope that one day in years to come while strolling down the frozen food section at Whole Foods, I'll have the opportunity to see fellow alum and exchange a 'hello' if not more

meaningful words. As classmates we've shared so much more than just pencils and loose-leaf paper. We have shared secrets, laughs, hugs and our lives with one another, so it only feels right to continue this journey together. I remember the night preceding the first day of freshmen year. I was nervous about what friends I would or wouldn't make in the years to come. Now as I make my exit, my worry is about how many friends I'll be able to carry to the next stages of my life.

While, I definitely won't miss nap-inducing Power Points, musky pep assemblies or the slow kid walking in front of me that I am so desperately trying not to trip, it is quite unnerving to think that next fall I won't be walking down these familiar halls at West. This becomes even more surreal since high school seems to have been my whole life since that first sunny fall day of freshmen year.

Since the first day of senior year I've been so excited about leaving and moving on to college. Now that it's here I'm not sure I want to leave. Usually I don't want to get out of bed for school in the morning, but the last day I didn't want to get out of bed because I didn't want it to end. What more can I say?

Christine Mahoney served as staff writer for three years and will attend Columbia College.

SENIOR SURVEY!

After hours of voting and more hours of counting, the final winners have been determined.

The seniors you selected are ...

Best Personality



Christy Koulouris



Peter Nickell

Best Sense of Humor



Edelynn Cayas



Nate Biser

Most Likely to Complain About Not Being Mentioned in *West Word*



Jasmine Ramahi



Jose Rodriguez

Best Car



Kyriaki Ades



Darek Krolczyk

Most Attractive



Bobbie Dawood

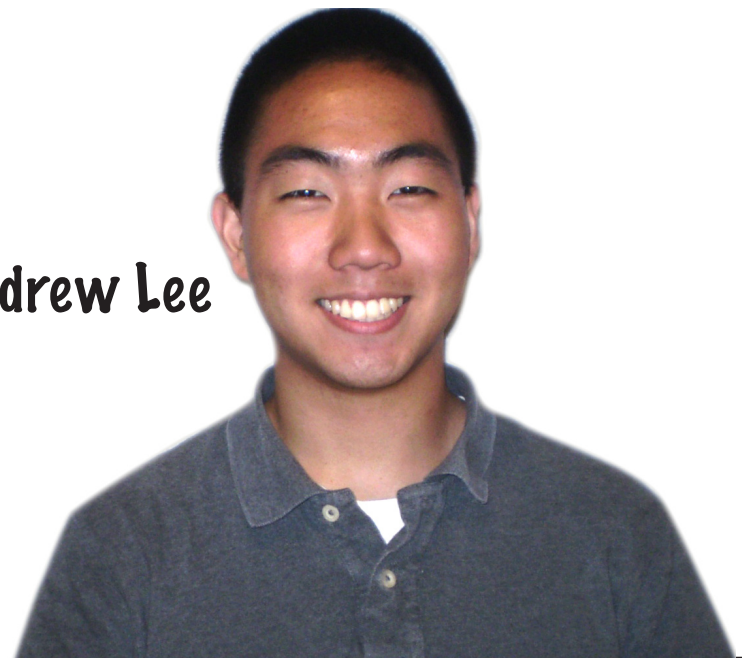


Jamar Forest

Most Intelligent



Manju George



Andrew Lee

Most Opinionated



Morgan Yates



Calvin Klint

Most Likely to be a YouTube Celebrity



Andrea Valle



Stephen Small

Favorite Teachers



Dana Kanwischer



Matt Weatherington

Thinks He/She is Favorite Teacher



Tricia Brown



Andrew Roche

Most Likely to Live in their Parents' Basement



Becky Lang



Matt Scheler

Cutest Couple



**Krystal Mangulabnan
and Jorian Micor**

Most Likely to Succeed



Morgan Yates



Alex Zasso

Most Likely to Win an Olympic Medal



Molly Gstalter



Andre Chen-Young

Most Likely to Clone Him/Herself



Andrea Valle

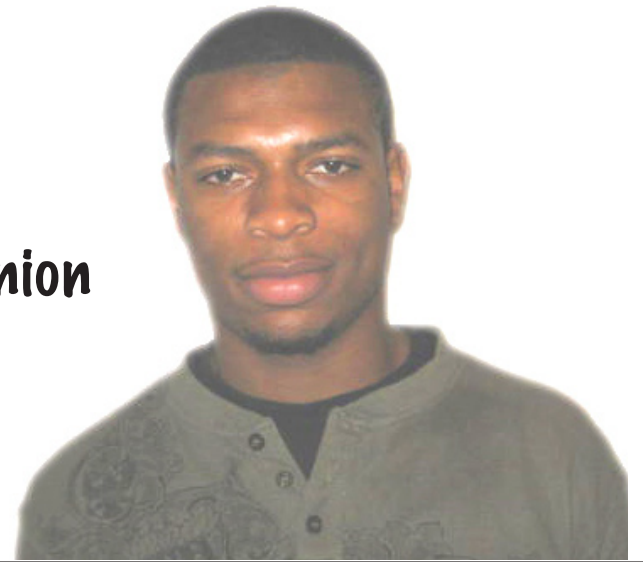


Calvin Klint

Shortest Attention Span



Steffani Christiansen



Leonard Panion

Tanorexic



Jessica Rodriguez



Matt Hutchison

Most Likely to be a NW Teacher



Molly Gstalter



Chris Wright

Biggest Flirt



Andrea Valle



Chris Oliveres

Thinks He/She is the Biggest Flirt



Andrea Valle



Chris Oliveres

Most Likely to be Late to Graduation

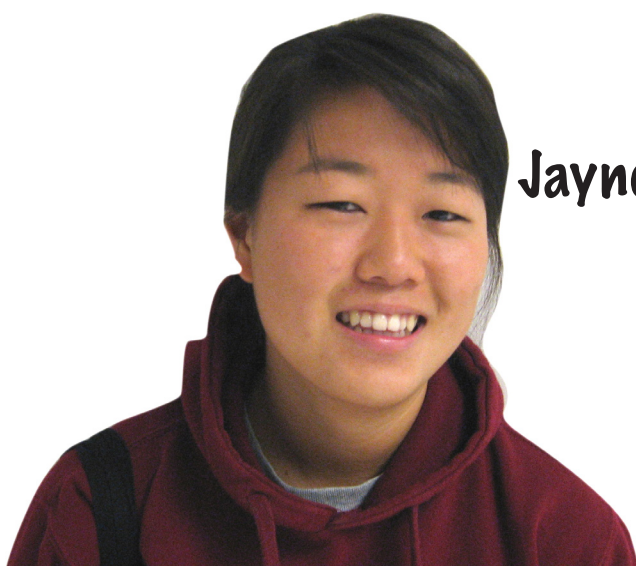


Sharreese Hunt

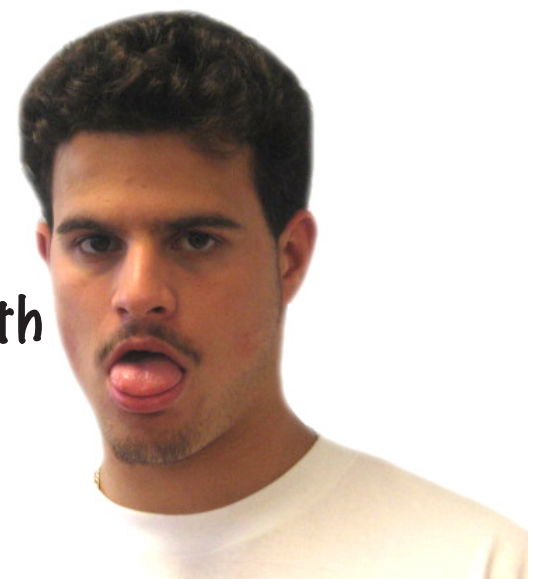


Jestin Alfarez

Most Likely to Commit Tax Fraud



Jayne Kim



Robyn Cormalleth

Most Likely to Walk into a Glass Door



Jaclyn Peterson



Leonard Panion

Best Smile



Jasmine Rahmahi



Peter Nickell

Best Hair



Napalia Shamasa

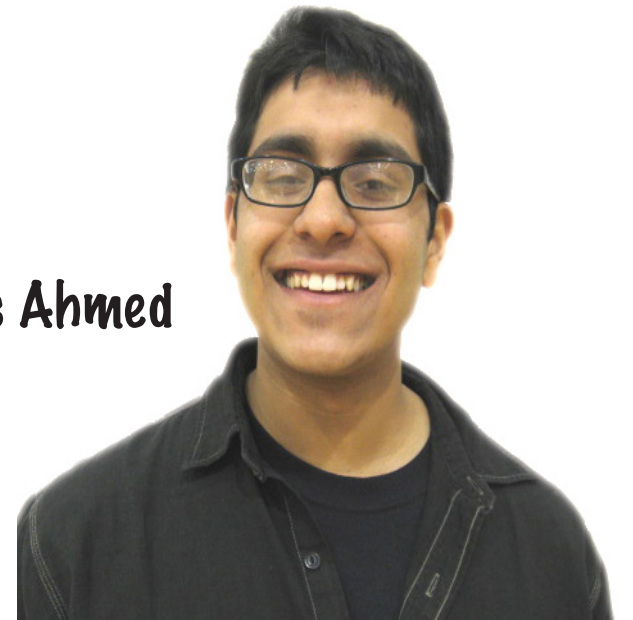


Matt Scheler

Most Likely to be a Starving Artist



Julia Bard



Owais Ahmed

Most Likely to be on American Idol



Jorian Micor



Becky Lang

Most Likely to Vote for Her/Himself in Every Category



Andrea Valle



Jose Rodriguez

Most Likely to Backpack through Europe



Benjamin Cormalleth



Amy Klein

Most Likely to Appear as a Guest on Jerry Springer



P.J. Mao



Nicole Wehbe

Most Likely to Have More Than 10 Kids



Jose Rodriguez



Christine Mahoney

Homecoming

First graduating class of 1962



COLLEGE PICKS!

These losers think they are too cool for Illinois



COLLEGE PICKS!

These losers need to stay home so mommy can do their laundry



Homecoming Graduating class of 2009

