



# WestWord

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## IDOT dumped waste near school says report

**W** Zoe Ljubic  
Editor in Chief

If a recent WBBM-TV report is accurate, Niles West is less than the length of Basrak Field away from a toxic dumpsite.

CBS 2 investigative reporter Dave Savini reported Jan. 5 on the evening newscast and in an article on [www.cbs2chicago.com](http://www.cbs2chicago.com) that for the past eight years, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) dumped toxic chemicals in a variety of residential areas, including a plot of land at Oakton St. and Gross Point Rd. just east of the school and the Edens Expressway.

According to the online article, "State Investigates Dumping of Toxic Sewer Waste," IDOT workers have been ordered to dump toxic waste from clogged sewers near homes for years. Savini reported that an undercover camera "recorded a state truck, designed to clean out sewers, dumping a load of sewer waste right on the ground not far from homes."

In the article, an anonymous state worker expressed the belief that the waste contains toxic chemicals. The article also reported that "this is where [IDOT worker] says tons of the gooey sludge was disposed of for at least eight years."

Savini's piece quoted the worker, who described the smell of the sludge as "very foul, caustic. You would smell gasoline, diesel, oils, antifreeze and any type of cleaning solvents."

IDOT spokesperson Marisa Kollias told *West Word* that IDOT hasn't dumped at the Oakton St. and Gross Point Rd. location in over three years. When asked how long IDOT dumped at that location prior to the three years, she paused before claiming that she was unsure because she has worked for IDOT for only five years.

Additional dumpsites include one near Harlem Avenue and Forest Preserve Drive in Chicago. Kollias claimed the material is "not toxic and didn't contain anything harmful for the environment."

Savini's article revealed that investigators "watched as the sewer sludge allegedly containing toxic chemicals spewed from a truck" and that investigators are still waiting on soil sample results from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

According to District 219 Community Relations Director Jim Szczepaniak, he received a phone call from the Village of Skokie's director of marketing and communications Ann Tessen regarding the investigation.

"I think I got the call from [Savini] before the holidays and [Savini] told me that he was looking into [the story]," Tessen said. "I immediately checked with the village manager, the assistant village manager and the public works director, and none of them knew about [the dumping]."

Tessen confirmed that the dumpsite is, indeed, owned by IDOT. "They don't need permission to go on [that land]," she added.

Szczepaniak added that the district is waiting to see "if there are developments in this investigation; we would like to know what [the waste] is because it is adjacent to our property," Szczepaniak said.

Could this be potentially harmful to students?

According to science teacher Thomas Jodelka, "since the sludge came mostly from sewers along state roads and clogged sanitary sewers, it could contain many different chemicals that could potentially be harmful."

In the meantime, Jodelka expressed confidence that there is "no immediate threat to our local drinking water supply, but it could affect drinking water farther away from here" because the sewers along state roads are mostly designed to carry excess water off roads to prevent flooding. Often, this water is untreated and thus flows directly into local bodies of water such as the Des Plaines River via the Sanitary and Ships Canal, according to Jodelka. The waste then it makes its journey to the Mississippi River via the Kankakee and Illinois rivers.

Even though the toxins do not affect the water supply, they do affect the environment, Jodelka added.

"These chemicals could remain in the soil and disrupt all sorts of interactions amongst organisms both seen (e.g. plants) and unseen (e.g. bacteria and fungi)," Jodelka said.

Senior Advanced Placement (AP) biology student Kiran Nair expressed the belief that the alleged dumping would bring harm to the ecosystem.

"If there is a chance that something as harmful as toxic waste is not recycled back into the world, then it may be hurting some essential bacteria or other earth-dwelling creatures that are parts of the nearby food chain," he said.

Nair said such conditions increase the chance of these organisms becoming poisoned and then fed on by animals, eventually causing the spread of toxins.

Furthermore, the waste potentially affects air quality, according to senior AP environmental science (APES) student Sydney Olund.

"We pulled up [USA Today special report "The Smokestack Effect: Toxic Air and America's Schools"] and read in APES that our air quality is already in the 99 percentile of high schools with the worst air quality," she added. "This will only make it worse."

Fellow APES students expressed outrage.

"It is bad enough that [the toxic sludge] affects the environment, but who dumps waste in front of a school?" Ben Rees said.

Jane Chung echoed Rees' concerns. "We are still polluting what is left of the Earth, and that will affect us in the long run," she said.

Junior Dino Davros agreed and expressed the belief that today's society "does not value the Earth as a whole."

Many students walk past the dumpsite every day on their way to school, including freshman Ivana Ivezic. She said that she is "disgusted" by the fact that the dumpsite is around a residential area.

"A dumpsite should not be around where people walk their dogs, go to school and live," she said. "There are plenty of places that are more desolate that can be used as a dumping ground, but since they are more expensive, [that] is probably the reason why they dump in residential areas."



The dump site sits at the corner of Oakton St. and Gross Point Rd., only yards away from West. Photo by Rexly Penafiora II

Jodelka said that he is more concerned with the "nature of this action," and its long-term ramifications.

"It is yet another example of people thinking only of themselves and not of other organisms on Earth. Rarely does one stop to consider the consequences of actions and how they affect other people, let alone how they may affect a plant or animal," he added.

Nair echoed Jodelka's sentiments.

"If one thing is offset, then it could mean calamity for the entire thing, especially if toxic waste comes into play," he said.

Readers who seek more information or who want lodge complaints or concerns may contact the EPA at (800) 621-8431 or visit the agency's website at [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov).

## Skokie comes together to honor diversity

**W** Sofiya Pershteyn  
Staff Writer

Starting Saturday, Jan. 23, Niles Township District 219 joined other local organizations to kick off the inaugural Coming Together in Skokie initiative.

District schools are partnering with the Village of Skokie, the Skokie Public Library, the Indian Community of Niles Township and Oakton Community College "to celebrate a different culture every year in every way possible," Information Resource Center (IRC) coordinator Penny Swartz said.

This year's focus will be the culture of India and Pakistan. "The goal [of Coming Together in Skokie] is to celebrate and create an understanding on the part of our entire community," Swartz added. "We have such a diverse community here in Skokie and [at] Niles West, and what could be better than having everyone learn as much as they can about that particular culture?"

The IRC will take an active role in this project, coordinating various activities before, during and after school through the rest of the year. On the opening day, the IRC hosted a celebration of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of India.

According to Swartz, one of the main goals of this event was to provide students a unique opportunity to experience a different culture "through the food, through the dress and the entertainment."

Along with celebrating and learning more about the cultures, all residents and students of Skokie-based schools are encouraged to read *Motherland* by Vineeta Vijayaraghavan as part of the program's "one book, one village" campaign.

"This book can speak not only to the experiences of India but also what it means to be a first generation Indian living in this country," English director Sanlida Cheng said.

*Motherland* follows the journey of an Indian-American teenager who is sent to India after she gets into a car accident with her boyfriend. There, she learns more about the Indian culture and reconnects with her roots. According to Cheng, this coming of age story was chosen for its ability to relate to many

experiences of the Indian community.

"We were looking for a book that could appeal to a wide variety of audiences, and because the cultural group that we are focusing on this year is Indians and Indian Americans, we decided to try to find the text that could speak to some of those experiences," Cheng added.

Cheng, who has read *Motherland*, stressed that although the book deals with deep issues, it will still be an engaging and fascinating read for students.

"It was accessible, it was a fast read and you can get into it and you can read it in a few hours [or] over a weekend," she said.

Other related events include:

- Indo-Pak Day in the IRC on Wednesday, Feb. 10, in which students will be able to learn more about the culture of India and Pakistan through culinary treats, choral performances and henna paintings;
- theatre students' examination of the performance aspects of the culture with "Hollywood vs. Bollywood" skit;
- Superintendent Nanciann Gatta's reading of excerpts from *Motherland* on Thursday, Feb. 16 at 7:15 a.m. in room 2040;
- the Cultural Round Table's highlighting of the Indian and Pakistan experience here in the United States in the Student Commons on Tuesday, Feb. 16, starting at 3:45 p.m.;
- the film club's \$1 presentation of modern Indian films on Tuesday, Feb. 22, 3:45-6 p.m. in room 2040;
- the cricket club's match against a team of Rolling Meadows students starting at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 22, in the Field House; and
- Vijayaraghavan's address to all interested West students in the Robert L. Johnson Auditorium during periods two and three, followed by a program at Niles North during the later periods and one at the Skokie Public Library at 7 p.m.

In addition, the IRC will hold a book discussion on Friday, March 12, at 7:15 a.m. and provide a light breakfast for those who attend. Students are encouraged to read the book prior to these events.

The IRC plans to have multiple copies of the book for interested students. A number of English teachers will incorporate the novel in their courses as well.

# WESTWIRE



## MSRC Eulogy

**Uzma Ahmad**  
News/Wire Editor

This year, students witnessed the closing of the beloved math and science resource center (MSRC). Although it was replaced by the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) lab—which is, no doubt, a more comprehensive resource for students who are interested in scientific research—the MSRC is dearly missed by so many of its past inhabitants, including this columnist.

In the absence of the MSRC, students are relegated to the dreaded study halls, the Information Resource Center (IRC) and the Literacy Center (LC).

In many study halls, talking is completely prohibited, and thus the study hall tends to feel more like a detention in the BAC than a time to relax and get work done—both of which were attractive features of the MSRC.

Another great facet of the MSRC was that there were always computers ready for student use. Although study halls in the Oakton Lobby offer the use of netbooks, these devices can be difficult to manipulate because of their miniature size and bulky keypads. Also, the netbooks lack a wide variety of software.

Speaking of the IRC, while the center has an ample supply of computers, they are apportioned on a first come, first served basis. Although IRC rules prohibit video games, fantasy sports, instant messaging and social networking, the reality is that many students use IRC computers for personal use, denying others the opportunity to conduct school business. In the MSRC, regular visitors respected the unwritten rule that the few computers were reserved for those who desperately needed to type or print something for an upcoming class. In the cases in which students were using the computers to visit Facebook™ or to play computer games, they relinquished their privileges when the need arose.

Advocates of the closing of the MSRC might cite the availability of the IRC and LC, but these areas have restrictive rules that stand in sharp contrast to the relaxed atmosphere of the MSRC, including the opportunity to work in groups. Like those in study halls, the IRC rules demand quiet study.

Although the LC also offers a great atmosphere, it cannot be used as a study hall or for a group study session. It is specifically designed for students who require help or feedback on their homework or studies on an individual basis.

Perhaps the best feature of the MSRC—missing from the LC model—was that it was by far the best place to receive assistance from teachers. Students had ready access to all their own math or science teachers or others equally qualified.

Although the new room adjacent to the math and science department office ostensibly serves the same purpose, it lacks the MSRC's homey quality—the room feels like a crawl space, and when it is filled, it is extremely difficult to concentrate one-on-one with a teacher. Also, once the conference with the teacher is over, students are prompted to leave and usually cannot work further on their homework there.

For many of my fellow students and me, the most appealing aspect of the MSRC was that it always had a friendly, casual and comfortable atmosphere for all of its students. The left side of the center's whiteboard always offered the "Riddle of the Day" for students to ponder. Fresh and ample copies of easy, medium and hard Sudoku puzzles were printed every day for anyone who had extra time to kill. Most importantly, the dearly missed MSRC clerk, Andrew Erickson (AKA the "MSRC guy") was always there for a friendly chat on books, Star Wars, current events and countless other topics.

The closing of the MSRC has left a void and placed a damper on the hearts of all those who frequented this resourceful abode, a place that will not be easily forgotten and is sorely missed. For the good of all underclassmen, school administrators should seriously consider resurrecting this hub of productive yet congenial activity.

## A Day in the Life... Pope inspires students to pursue post-high school education

**Zoe Ljubic**  
Editor in Chief

Many students have a real sense of direction when they first begin the college planning process and are looking for additional guidance, insights or information that college and guidance counselors might provide. Some students are, frankly, clueless when it comes to the logistics of college selection and application.

Although each District 219 school provides important college information via the College and Career Counseling center, these services are augmented by district-wide college advisor Jerry Pope, who ensures the school district is in partnership with many colleges and universities around the nation. After spending a day with Pope, this reporter has come to learn how the students benefit from his efforts, along with the personality behind the man in charge.

Pope graduated from Illinois Wesleyan University with a political science degree and received his masters' degree in school counseling from Lewis University. He started his career at Illinois Wesleyan working as a recruiter in the admissions office. He moved his way up from admissions recruiter to dean of admissions. After serving as director of admissions for 25 years, Pope became director of admissions at St. Olaf (MN) College. Two years later, he returned to Chicago where he was offered a position at District 219. He has worked for the district for the past two and one-half years, and he is currently pursuing another masters' degree in school educational leadership at Concordia University of Chicago.

Pope began his day at 7 a.m. at Niles West, checking emails and voice mails in his office. His first order of business was a meeting with Assistant Superintendent of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services Pete Marcelo at 9 a.m. for their bi-weekly meeting. At the meeting, the two discussed Dec. 1's English Language Learners (ELL) parent meeting he attended and other workshops and college recruitments that Pope would support, keeping in mind that reaching out to the diverse community, to ensure that college is affordable and possible.

Pope also reported on a corporate college fair that was being marketed to area students. "We want to make sure [every college or financial aid workshop] is legitimate, because a lot of organizations that sponsor college fairs might be really promoting a product," Pope explained. "No legitimate scholarship service will ask for money to get a scholarship."

According to Pope, he and college and career counselors Daniel Gin at West and Jodie Faltynski at North must remain "proactive" to make sure the district is not "endorsing college fairs or test preparatory companies that we think will take advantage of our students," he said.

At 10:30 a.m., Pope traveled to North, the place where he would spend the rest of his day. When we arrived, he guided this reporter around the school, greeting students and faculty members along the way.

Although Pope runs from his West to North office each day, he says he "loves the rich diversity."

"I love the fact that we have 93 languages spoken in our school district and [that] six out of every 10 students speaks a different language at home," Pope said.

After lunch, in which Pope dined in North's student cafeteria, he returned back to his office to check his emails and voice

mails and prepare for his meeting with Faltynski. Part of his responsibility includes communicating with college and career counselors and guidance counselors from both schools on a regular basis. Pope sat down to discuss the ELL parent meeting, the importance of fulfilling the National Collegiate Athlete Association requirements for student-athlete interested in playing division one sports in college and confirmed meetings and workshops in the near future.

Pope's expertise from being on the college side for 27 years expands to multiple levels. He currently serves on multiple committees in school district and the state, including the Board of Director on the Illinois College Access Network and as the State Chairman of Human Relations on the Illinois Association



Pope prepares for upcoming meeting with North's College and Career counselor Jodie Faltynski. Photo by Zoe Ljubic

for College Admission Counseling. Both committees primarily focus on helping low-income, first-generation students go to college.

On Dec. 5-11, Pope traveled to Israel to attend the MASA study trip to Israel. He was one of the 25 selected from candidates around the world to attend this all-expense paid study trip for college counselors. The focus of the trip was to inform high school college advisors of the wide range of post-secondary opportunities available in Israel. Some of these options include internships, gap-year programs (one-year respites from college to work and/or study in a foreign country), community service projects and academic study opportunities. On the day of *West Word's* visit, Pope met with the vice president of the Jewish United Fund Paula Harris to discuss the trip. Harris gave Pope a map of Israel and a brochure containing historical information on the land.

After returning, Pope said he was elated by the trip. He described his experience as one that "blew him away" and said that he looks forward to running an evening presentation on gap year programs sometime this spring.

"I saw first hand how kids are so mature and can articulate a greater sense of self-awareness," he said. "They know what they want of themselves."

Overall, he would highly recommend students engage themselves in a gap year programs.

"I know that some are very expensive but there are also programs that are affordable," Pope added.

Pope's day continued with meetings with students, regarding college essays and admissions questions. He said that he always has a full schedule.

"I have never had a day when I didn't look forward to going to work," he said.

A fitness enthusiast, Pope told this reporter upon her departure, that he was headed "to the gym" for his daily workout, leaving his exhausted shadow to wonder where Pope finds the energy.

## Curriculum and Activities Night undergoes minor presentation changes

**Rexly Penaflorida II**  
Editor in Chief

The annual Curriculum and Activities Night will have a few new wrinkles when it is held throughout the school on Tuesday, Feb. 9 at 7-9:30 p.m., according to student activities director Jessica Ogulnik

The event, which introduces eighth grade students into the many classes and extracurricular activities in which they can

participate, has been modified somewhat from previous years.

"Every year, the students are introduced to the [department] directors, and each director gives a speech. Sometimes that can get drowsy, but that is not happening this year," Ogulnik said. "[The directors] recorded themselves [on DVD], and there will be a PDF version of the activities list on the disc as well," she said. "We put the activities list on the DVD because we are being green-friendly and list is more organized."

While most of the directors might not be present that night, college and career counselor Daniel Gin and assistant principal of Pupil Personnel Services Jason Ness will still make their yearly

appearance in the auditorium to inform students about colleges and handouts regarding test scores.

North will also hold a Curriculum and Activities event the same night. Thus, District 219 will employ the Internet to connect the two buildings.

"Because the directors will be spread out between North and West," Ogulnik added, "parents [who] would like to talk to a director who is not at West can talk to them using Skype™ (a software program that allows parties to communicate telephonically over the Internet) stations that around the building."

# WestWord

## Jazz ensemble to team up with professionals

**Uzma Ahmad**  
News/Wire Editor

The Niles West Jazz Ensemble has an upcoming performance on Wednesday, Feb. 3 at 6 p.m. in the Robert L. Johnson Auditorium. The concert will also feature performances by Tom Matta Big Band, an up-and-coming Chicago-based jazz group.

The ensemble will perform three pieces including the "Haitian Fight Song" composed by Charles Mingus, "Mood Indigo" by Duke Ellington and "Cubano Chant" by Ray Bryant.

According to jazz band director Ryan Adamsons, the ensemble is "extremely excited about this particular performance because The Tom Matta Big Band will also be playing."

Senior jazz band member Sam Greene (piano) agrees. "I am very excited to play with the group of professionals who are coming in to help Niles West. We get the opportunity to experience what a professional jazz band sounds like," Greene said.

According to senior president Sergio Loubriel (bass trombone), the concert will be "a time to socialize and also learn about jazz music."

Ensemble members also expressed enthusiasm for the

addition of a member from Tom Matta Big Band in one of their performances. "Mark Colby, one of the professionals from The Tom Matta Big Band, is going to sit in on one of our songs. We are going to get the experience of what it feels like to play with a professional," Greene explained.

The full band consists of seniors Ryan Mok (alto saxophone), D.J. Musolf (tenor saxophone), Joey Gattorna (drums), Kyle Torres (trombone), Mitch Balke (lead trumpet), Zlaltko Goricki (trombone) and Alfred Hegyes (trumpet); juniors Kevin Maciuba (alto saxophone), Mark Bandemer (baritone saxophone), Kevin Treiu (trumpet) and Erik Michalesko (baritone); sophomores Deena Kahn (vibes and auxiliary percussion) and Vikram Shah (tenor saxophone); and freshmen Nathan Fox (trumpet), Kyle McHugh (bass) and Nicholas Michalesko (guitar).

Throughout the year, the jazz band will perform in numerous festivals and competitions. They will participate in the Evanston Jazz Festival on Feb. 6, the Rolling Meadows Jazz in the Meadows Festival on Feb. 27 and Mundelein Jazz Festival on Mar. 14. Adamsons believes that the band's "main goal is to perform very well at the upcoming competitions."

Loubriel agrees, hoping that the group can "take home some awards from the competitions."

Greene believes that ensemble's performances will leave a positive impact on West's students. "The main purpose of jazz

band is to open our ears to jazz, which is a style of music that is not really present in pop culture these days," Greene said.

Greene expressed hope that many students and parents would come to attend the performances. "Jazz is something that most people do not get the chance to listen to during high school, and this is a great way for them to experience this style of music," Greene said.

Tickets for the jazz performance are \$15, and proceeds will go towards the Niles West jazz band fund.



The jazz band practices for its next performance. Photo by Sarah Espinosa

## Art department hosts informational junior high Art Festival

**Sofiya Pershteyn**  
Staff Writer

The fine arts department will welcome junior high art students, parents and administrators to the fourth annual Junior High Art Show on Thursday, Feb. 4 in the Atrium Art Gallery above the Robert L. Johnson Auditorium starting at 6 p.m.

Fifteen dry paintings and five sculptures created by selected students from Lincoln, Lincoln Hall, Culver, Park View and Fairview junior highs will be presented.

According to art teacher John Zilewicz, the history behind this extravaganza is that he was "looking for a way we could create a bond between West and the junior highs," he said.

Although not exclusive to eighth graders, the show aims to

introduce next year's freshmen to artistic opportunities at West. Half an hour prior to the start of the show, junior high school students and their parents will be offered a tour of the studios, galleries, and the workspaces. The tours will be conducted by Advanced Placement and honors art students who will answer questions and distribute information on future events.

"[I hope] to open dialogue with teachers and their students," Zilewicz said. "[It can also be] a recruitment tool for our program to get kids to see what high school is about [and] what it is going to be like when they get here."

Visitors should expect music, appetizers and a chance to meet with both junior high administrators and West teachers. The show will provide a gallery setting to showcase all the art pieces. Awards will be provided at the end of the night.

Zilewicz said that he considers it important to give students a proper venue for their artwork.

"Most of all its to give students a venue for them to show their work and share [it] with not only us, but with the community and their parents," he said. "I want to give the teachers who teach these students a chance to show their kids off as well what they do in the classroom."

Zilewicz added that he hopes to invite private schools in the area to future events as well but that he expects a good turnout this year.

"All of the past experiences so far have been really positive," Zilewicz said. "I think the students enjoy it, the teachers that are teaching these students are more than ecstatic at [the students'] opportunity to show their work."

## Student and faculty discuss diversity issues at Cultural Round Table

**Hira Malik**  
Around Town Editor

The next Cultural Round Table, organized by the International Relations Council, will be held Feb. 16 at 3:45 p.m in the student commons.

In keeping with the Coming Together in Skokie celebration detailed on the front page of in this issue, the topic of the event will be the novel *Motherland*, by Vineeta Vijayaraghavan, which examines the Indian-Pakistani culture.

"The Cultural Round Table's purpose is to discuss the diversity of Niles West. We talk about differences and similarities and how we can use that to our advantage," co-sponsor Margaret Glaubke said.

Fellow sponsor Jasminka Jukic became involved with the round table after her first year when she attended as a participant.

"I enjoy seeing how many students participate in the round table. The [round table] really helps the kids learn about different cultures," Jukic said.

Principal Kaine Osburn moderates the round table, and hopes that the students who attend will realize "that they share challenges as members coming from different communities, such that they understand themselves as members of the same community as their peers."

Glaubke stressed the importance of the round table. "[The round table should] bring the school and community together to discuss how diversity affects our everyday life," Glaubke said.

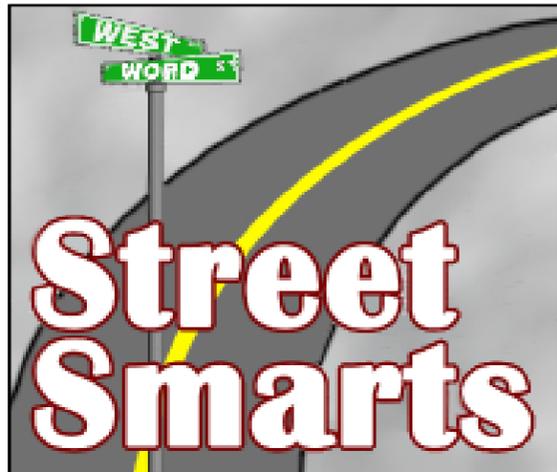
Osburn agreed.

"I think the round tables give us an opportunity to talk about challenges that occur as a result of us living in a diverse community," Osburn said. "We can truly embrace our diversity only if we listen and accept everything that makes up that diversity, not just the celebratory aspects."

With a growing influx of Indian and Pakistani community members, District 219 administrators decided to join in the Coming Together in Skokie initiative to honor students and families of Indian and Pakistani descent.

Jukic expressed hope that students have an epiphany after attending this event.

"[By attending the round table] students will know that they are not alone in this school," Jukic said.



- When is Martin Luther King Jr.'s actual birthday?
  - Jan. 15
  - Jan. 15
  - Jan. 14
  - Jan. 18
  - Jan. 15

- Feb. 2 is the date of what holiday?
  - Groundhog Day
  - Groundhog Day
  - the beginning of Black History Month
  - Groundhog Day
  - Groundhog Day

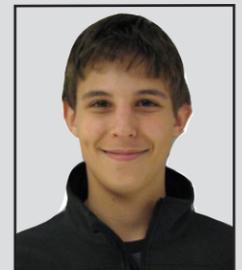
- After whom is the month of January named?
  - I don't know
  - A king
  - I don't know
  - I don't know
  - the Greek god Janus

- What happened on Feb. 14, 1929?
  - I don't know
  - I don't know
  - the massacre of Al Capone
  - Cupid was born
  - St. Valentine's Day Massacre

- What sporting event was first held on Jan. 15, 1967?
  - The Super Bowl
  - The Super Bowl
  - The Super Bowl
  - The Super Bowl
  - The Super Bowl



A. Freshman - Lois Le



B. Sophomore - Natan Ostro



C. Junior - Muhammad Ul-Haq



D. Senior - Kristie Jurkovic



E. Faculty - Michael Graham

# WESTWIRE

## Thespians prepare for (Peloponnesian) war

**w Kathryn Booker**  
Staff Writer

The theatre department will perform the ancient Greek comedy *Lysistrata*, Friday-Saturday, Feb. 19 -20 at 4:00 and 7:30 p.m. in the Black Box Theater.

Written by Aristophanes in 411 B.C., the play centers around a woman's mission to end the Peloponnesian War through uniting the women of Greece. Together they refuse to go to bed with their husbands in a "love strike" in exchange for peace negotiations.

"This is a comedy about women saying to men you cannot get the one thing you really want unless you listen to us," theater director Andy Sinclair said. "It is a little bit edgy for Niles West without being inappropriate."

According to Sinclair, this play is very different from others this year mainly because it is a classic Greek text. The stage crew has worked to create an authentic Athens setting, and actors will be wearing togas and sandals to bring the story to life.

"The professional designers have started to give us homework of sorts, such as doing some research about Greek architecture and interior decorating," senior head carpenter Scott Sheffield said.

Sophomore Julia Zasso (Myrrhine) expressed the belief that this play will be exciting for the audience.

"I think a lot of people will be sitting at the edge of their seats, wondering how far we are going to take the jokes and subtext," she said.

Senior Fiona Stephens (*Lysistrata*) stated that while the play was written in ancient times, "a lot of the themes are still relevant today, like war and men holding women in a lower place in society."

Sinclair added that the play's message will translate powerfully to the audience.

"*Lysistrata* says a lot about war and women's rights, which is kind of amazing to me because this was written 2,400 years ago, and still to this day we are wrestling with these two concepts," he said.

Cast members agree that *Lysistrata* holds a strong, universal moral.

"The main goal of the play is to get the audience thinking about the role women have in society," Zasso said. "Even if we do have more rights now than we did 2,000 years ago, things are still not equal."

Sophomore Kyle Resurrecion (male chorus) added that the play's moral can be understood by all audiences.

"Although the play is very pro-feminist, its moral applies to anyone in general," he said. "It reminds us that humans are funny creatures and that it is okay to laugh at ourselves once in a while."

Resurrecion affirms that this play is more adult-friendly than family-friendly.

"Small children might not be the best choice to bring along, but that is based on their parents' decision," he said. "As long as you have some sense of humor, you can definitely enjoy the show."

Zasso concurs, stating that "the play is for a more mature audience."

Other members of the ensemble include sophomores Quinn Lawson-Hall (Kinesias), Rachel Prale (female chorus), Gabe Flippo and Alex Wood (male chorus); juniors Leah Hummel and Lauren Langer (female chorus) and Aleks Krapivkin (male chorus); and seniors Sean Buckley (Kalonike), Ani Poldian (Lampito), Ned McElfresh (Commissioner), David Fisch (Koryphaos [Male]), Alyssa Jutovsky (Koryphaos [Female]), Charlee Cotton, Dominique Forte, Jin Park and Morgan Quilici (female chorus) and Jeremy Berman, David Schwartz and Philip Wolf (male Chorus).

Joining Sheffield on stage crew for the performance are junior

stage manager Becca Levy, sophomore assistant stage manager Katie Buckley, senior costume head Olivia Coss, sophomore lighting Zachary Tarnoff, sophomore paint lead Ashley Pagett and senior prop master Dan Machalinski

"The audience will laugh a lot," Sinclair said. "The best thing about this play is that it is a classic Greek text but it is universal, and it is always fun to watch a Greek play that is not a tragedy."

Tickets cost \$7 for students and \$9 for adults. Audience members may preorder tickets through one of the cast members.

Proceeds will help to finance the thespians' trip to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival next summer.



*Lysistrata* cast members rehearse for the upcoming play. Photo by Sarah Espinosa

## Cultural clubs kick off International Weeks

**w Kathryn Booker**  
Staff Writer

The annual International Weeks will take place Tuesday, Feb. 16-Thursday, Feb. 25. According to Cultural Round Table sponsor Margaret Glaubke, cultural clubs will participate in several events. The three main events are the feast, the festival and the Cultural Round Table.

International Weeks will begin with the Cultural Round Table on Tuesday, Feb. 16, in the student commons at 3:45 p.m.

"The one event that we would love to see everybody come to is the Cultural Round Table that is open to all students, faculty and staff," Glaubke said. "That is a really great way to get involved."

Cultural clubs currently are preparing their performances for the festival and their menu for the feast. To celebrate diversity, students will serve food from their culture in the student commons during lunch periods on Friday, Feb. 19.

Students and faculty are invited to watch the International Festival on Feb. 25 at 7 p.m. at the Robert L. Johnson Auditorium. Club members will perform dances from their culture for the audience.

## West to host annual College Information Night

**w Mary Basic**  
Staff Writer

The annual sophomore College Information Night will be held on Feb. 2 at 7 p.m. in the Robert L. Johnson Auditorium. According to college and career counselor Daniel Gin, the information night is designed to get sophomores and their families thinking about post-high school plans and to introduce many terms and concepts about the application process to college.

No colleges will be at this informational night. Gin and North's college and career counselor Jodie Faltynski will present.

Sophomore Japanese Club member Claire Son said that she believes International Weeks bring positive light on the school's diversity.

"We are going to do little Japanese plays," she said. "[International Weeks] brings culture together so we can share it with people, even if it is not your own."

Throughout the two weeks, cultural clubs will be hosting various events during lunch periods. The Indo-Pak club will be giving Henna tattoos on Monday, Feb. 22. Members from the Skokie Public Library will visit Niles West to write students' names in Chinese letters. A new club participating in International Weeks this year is the Hebrew club, which will celebrate by planting seeds for diversity. On Thursday, Feb. 18, the Filipino club will teach students the *tinikling* dance and will perform a modern hip-hop dance at the festival.

"International Weeks lets everyone in the school experience your culture," senior Filipino Club member Christine Antonio said.

Glaubke invites all students and faculty to participate in International Weeks.

"I certainly hope to see the whole community come together for this wonderful celebration," she said

Gin and Faltynski will help the sophomores find the "right fit" for colleges and help them find what they enjoy doing, Gin said.

"When [sophomores begin] thinking about their post high school plans, [they] will not [have to] be in a complete shock," he added. "[The information night is a] jump start to the application process."

According to Gin, the more planning students can do up front, the better and easier the application process will be once they are seniors.

"We want the sophomores to start thinking about college since they are half way through high school," Gin said.

All District 219 sophomores and their families are welcomed.

## Taylor Swift-themed turnabout dance set to make new love stories

**w Hira Malik**  
Around Town Editor

The annual Spring Fling will be replaced this year by a turnabout dance, Saturday, Feb. 13 at 7 p.m in the cafeteria.

Hosted by sophomore cabinet, the change in the annual dance, one which features girls inviting the date of their choice came about because, according to sophomore cabinet sponsor Jennifer Sipiera, many students did not attend the spring dance in previous years.

"After what we could consider to be the poor showing the last two years, we decided that turnabout would be more attractive because most of the schools in the area have a turnabout," Sipiera

said.

The theme of the dance is "You Belong With Me," a hit song performed by Taylor Swift.

"Most girls can relate to this song, so [sophomore cabinet] thought it would be a beautiful theme to have for this years turnabout," sophomore cabinet secretary Andy Rapoport said.

To entice participants further, black lights will be employed to make the dance seem more "club-like" according to student activities director Jessica Ogulnik.

"It will be a black light dance, [which] will make you glow," Ogulnik said. [Attendees] should wear white and neon colors."

Because the spring dances were not well attended in previous years, sophomore cabinet hopes the new wrinkles will spark participation.

"Hopefully, through our publicizing, the black lights and Boom Entertainment, this will be a better attended event," sophomore cabinet vice president Jambi Evangelista said.

Ogulnik expressed hope that this dance will be better attended.

"The DJ worked out a deal with [Niles West.] We will have a better show depending on how many tickets we sell. So the more people who buy tickets, the more likely it will be [that this dance] will be comparable to homecoming," Ogulnik said.

Tickets will be sold for \$20 per couple and \$12 for a single ticket. Food is included in the ticket price.

"We are not doing anything big with food; we will have simple snacks like chips and pop," sophomore cabinet treasurer Ari Lazar said.

According to Ogulnik, Boom Entertainment will be promoting turnabout in the cafeteria the week before turnabout.

With the change from spring fling to turnabout, sophomore cabinet plans to make this dance a success.

"This dance will be a great way to have fun," Rapoport said.

# WestWord

## Online applications facilitate learning experience

**W** Sofiya Pershteyn  
Staff Writer

At one time in the not-too-distant past, education was limited to the 40-plus minutes of classroom time. However, with the explosion of computer technology in the past decade, the boundaries of the classroom and the time parameters of a class period have expanded.

An increasing number of Niles West teachers have begun to use a various online teaching tools as part of their class curriculum.



Several science teachers, including David Genis, Michael Heinz and Anthony Serafini are participating in a program through Boise State University, which focuses on the use of online tools in and outside the classroom environment.

Online applications such as DimDim™, PHET™ and Moodle™ are used by teachers to further explain concepts, help students study and provide a way for students to communicate about school work with each other.

Heinz expressed a particular fondness for DimDim™, an online chat/video conferencing mechanism (see also: WebEx™ and Go to Meeting™) that he uses to tutor interested students on nights before a test. He also uses the school-provided Google Docs™ that help him receive, grade and pass back student papers more efficiently.

"I see kids communicating to a greater depth of knowledge," Heinz said. "I am able to draw only certain things on the board in two dimensions but if they can see it in three dimensions, manipulate it themselves and repeat it and get immediate feedback, that is very powerful for learning," he added.

From her last year's experience with Moodle™ in physics, senior Flo Lee agrees with Heinz that online discussions can often benefit and explain previously misunderstood concepts to students.

"When you go home, and you call people they may not answer their phone, but Moodle™ is mandatory, because you have to help others," she said.

Lee pointed out some of her frustrations with Moodle™ as well.

"It takes longer to type it than to write it by hand and you can't put exactly the right [mathematical] signs."

Senior Ashley Thomas, who is taking Advanced Placement (AP) chemistry with Heinz this year, prefers DimDim™ to other less interactive resources.

"DimDim™ is better than Moodle™ [because] you get to see the teacher's face, and he explains anything you get wrong," she said.

The use of interactive technology is not limited to the science department. German teacher Josef Neumayer uses tools such as Moodle™ and Google Apps™ in his classes as well.

"Online tools often seem to have an appeal that the paper and pencil approach doesn't," he said. "If the end result is increased learning, becoming an independent thinker or becoming better at problem solving, and technology helps better attain that goal, then I am willing to try to learn how to use it or implement it."

Although online teaching methods are still relatively new to West, Heinz acknowledges both the positive and negative aspects of this initiative.

"Maybe [the students] didn't get [the material] in class so they can come back and look again," he said of the positive aspect. "It gives multiple opportunities for success."

Students also agree that online resources come in handy for receiving important information or study guides from teachers.

"[I use Moodle™] when the teachers says to do a homework assignment or when my teacher says that a study guide is up," senior Heena Dev said. She uses online tools in her AP chemistry and AP economics class.

Online tools also help students practice for classes. "Last year in English, we wrote grammar stuff and the teacher could see our work. It was pretty cool," sophomore Amina Bonzai said.

Students are also familiar with seeing graded assignments for them online as well.

"[On Moodle™] you practice your writing, and there are quizzes you can take online about the reading," senior Michael Mani said about his third year honors German class with Neumayer. "Some things are timed. There are set dates and times when you have to turn in everything."

According to Heinz, limitations of online tools are evident

## Poms compete nationally

**W** Dan Machalinski  
Staff Writer

The varsity pom pon squad will compete in the Universal Dance Association (UDA) National Dance Competition on Friday, Feb. 5-Monday, Feb. 8 in Orlando, FL.

The squad qualified for the UDA Nationals by placing third in another competition that was part of a summer camp the girls attended.

"At camp each girl learns three different routines; for each routine each girl can earn a blue, red or white ribbon. Every girl on the team earned a blue (Superior) ribbon for each routine," head coach Christine Selander said.

The squad is led by senior co-captains Melanie Demos, Alex Bedoya and Deanna Hano. Other seniors include Nicole Pantazis, Jane Chung, Tami Gorodtzer, Jessica Strauss and Adriana Zalloni. Juniors Denise Tossi, Teagan Smith, Jenny Menchavez, Kirstie Beck, Mimi Kapechuk, Anne Kim, Jessie Barajas, Nicole Poskrobko, Andrea Martinez and Elizabeth Tountas round out the squad.

In preparation for the competition, the team hired a professional UDA choreographer to construct a routine.

Bedoya is extremely impressed with the "large amount of improvement" the squad has seen.

"Words cannot describe the amount of joy and pride that I feel," Bedoya said. "All the girls have put in a huge amount of their free time sweat and tears into achieving our goal. We deserve this."

The girls will compete in the large varsity pom division, against 17 teams in the preliminary round, 25 in the semi-finals and another 25 in the finals.

While in Orlando, the Lady Wolves will get to spend a day touring Disney World which Hano considers "a great incentive and a great motivation" for the team.

when students are not clear on what is expected of them.

"Mistakes aren't easily corrected from a teaching perspective," he said

AP Chemistry student, junior Aneesh Sehgal, agrees that while online teaching could be beneficial, it does not provide students individualized help.

"Sometimes [the resources] help you out if you need help, but sometimes you are waiting for others to figure out the answer and wasting your time if you know how to do it," he said. "It is not individual and sometimes it takes too long."

Neumayer admitted that online resources don't come without some risks.

"Using technology for the sake of using it is not what I'm about. Technology has to improve the way we do something or increase productivity or efficiency."

As a goal for the future, Heinz hopes that online learning will become more widespread and available to all students.

"My wish would be that every kid would be exposed to learning some concept online because the world is moving to that so rapidly that I believe we ought to give them that [opportunity]," he added.

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