



# WestWord

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## West Word to transition to online publication

**Kathryn Booker**  
Staff Writer

For the first time in 50 years, the school's newspaper dispensers will be empty next fall when *West Word* joins professional publications such as the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* by suspending its print operation in favor of an online-only presence.

Beginning in the 2010-11 academic year, the only place to find articles and photos published by Niles West students will be at www.thewestword.net. Although *West Word* has published online, PDF versions of print issues and at least two dozen "web exclusive" articles per year, next year will be the first in which hard copies of *West Word* will be unavailable.

The first domino in the process fell in February of 2009, when longtime *West Word* adviser and journalism, photojournalism and newspaper production teacher Michael Conroy informed

English department director Sanlida Cheng and Principal Kaine Osburn that he planned to step down after the 2009-10 school year. Conroy will hand over the newspaper to English teacher Evelyn Lauer, who plans to transform *West Word* into an online-only publication.

According to Conroy, he is stepping down from *West Word* for a number of reasons.

"As I have grown older, I just really don't have the same energy I once did," he said. "*West Word* consumes about 40 additional hours per month, which doesn't sound like a lot, but most of that additional work occurs over a four-day span. Not only is it all-consuming, but it takes me another week of additional work to catch up with my other classes. I just want to teach my classes and not have a very time-consuming extracurricular activity."



Lauer

Conroy said that another reason why he decided to retire as adviser is because he has felt for some time that *West Word* was destined to become a web-based publication.

"I was trained as a pre-personal computer print journalist, then became a computer-based print journalist. I am too old a dog to learn a whole set of new tricks."

Senior Amber Rouzin-Moy is disappointed that Conroy is retiring from newspaper.

"He should stay with it," she said. "It is his thing, and he has been doing it for 10 years."

However, Conroy said that he believes Lauer is better suited for the adviser position once the newspaper goes online. In his opinion, it is more logical

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## Staff members debate print versus online publications

### Traditional newsprint more sensible for readers

**Rexly Penaflorida II**  
Editor in Chief

Every day, more and more people use the Internet as their primary source for news; some pundits suggest that the increased popularity of web-based publications threatens the future of hard copy newspapers, a notion to which incoming *West Word* adviser Evelyn Lauer obviously subscribes.

However, a recent survey suggests that print newspapers will not go down without a fight. While it may seem that the country is immersed in online news, the Nieman Journalism Lab, a project of the Nieman Foundation at Harvard, reports that only three percent of newspaper reading happens online.

Martin Langeveld, the author of the article, stated that according to the Newspaper Association of America, 116.8 million people read the newspaper Monday-Saturday, growing to on 134.1 million on Sunday.

According to Langeveld, if the average reader peruses 24 pages a day, which amounts to 84.1 billion page views per month, compared to 3.2 billion page views per month for Internet news sites. Thus, the percentage of people reading print newspapers is about 96.5 percent.

In an age where people are on the Internet constantly, the fact that so many people still read print media speaks volumes.

Others would say that they would prefer online news because it is free. To those who love free news, I ask: How long will that last? The answer: not for long. In a *New York Times* article published Jan. 20, 2010, the paper announced that starting in Jan. 2011, viewers will be required to pay a flat fee to have unlimited access to the news site. If a reader does not pay for content (s)he will only be able to look at a certain number of articles per month.

Undoubtedly, the *New York Times* has been losing revenue due to the loss of print subscribers who have fled to their free online news site. It is only a matter of time before other newspapers with an online presence follow the *New York Times* and start charging for their media. While the intent of charging for content is to increase online revenues, this proposition might just push readers back to print newspapers. After all, who wants to pay a lot of money for viewing a website on a small computer screen when it only costs \$1 to buy a print copy? Given this, scrapping print newspapers seems shortsighted.

Economics aside, one of the main reasons why I am in favor of print newspapers is because of their sentimental value to each and every individual. A great example is the 2008 Presidential election. On that night, everyone was a part of history as America elected its first African-American president. The next day, people weren't printing online pages that showed a picture of Obama at the podium the previous night. Instead they ran to newsstands.

CNN reported that copies of the *New York Times* edition of the election were auctioned off on eBay for as high as \$600. The Washington Post, which regularly prints 100,000 copies a day, printed 350,000 the day after the election due to growing demand. Also, they increased the price from \$0.50 to \$1.50 and people were more than happy to pay for the issue. The Chicago Tribune printed an additional 200,000 copies, the *Los Angeles Times* added another 100,000 copies to their regular number of newspapers and the Baltimore Sun increased its press run by 100 percent.

Newspapers are a way of recording history. It is moments such as the election that call for newspapers. It is a way for us to show that we were a part of history.

Room 2185, Scott Ackman's history classroom, is full of front pages with headlines that were a big part of history, including the John F. Kennedy assassination, the Moon landing, the end of World War II and other events.

Obviously people still love print newspapers. I remember reading a *Time* article on President Obama, featuring a photo of him in his limousine reading the newspaper, not reading the news from his BlackBerry™. Taking a ride on CTA on any work day, one will see businessmen, lawyers and other workers reading the news in print, not their iPhones™.

For all these reasons, I urge the incoming adviser to reconsider the decision to take *West Word* online-only.

I prefer the visceral sensation evoked by holding a hard copy newspaper in my hands. As revealed by the Nieman survey, I am not alone.

### Online-only newspaper to better serve District 219

**Suhail Ansari**  
Viewpoints Editor



Amidst the avalanche of websites offering up-to-the-minute news and real-time data sharing mechanisms such as Twitter™, information is becoming more and more streamlined, going from the source to the consumer in mere minutes or even seconds.

Therefore, it is only logical and inevitable that *West Word* would eventually switch to an online-only format.

*West Word* is merely following a nationwide trend, as professional newspapers and magazines scrap print editions for more accessible online versions. The target audience for this publication encompasses the entire District 219 community, including faculty, parents, students and residents of Lincolnwood, Morton Grove, Niles and Skokie, not all of whom have access to print editions of the paper, but the majority of whom have Internet access.

Since 2002, *West Word* has run its own website (www.thewestword.net) that allows readers all over the world to find any print article online in PDF format and to access "web exclusives." However, the PDF format can sometimes be hard to use, as it is difficult to find a specific article or column, even with a search engine. Often, a reader must go through multiple PDF files to find an article. A strictly online presence with text links would be much more user-friendly. In addition to being user-friendly, an online newspaper would be environmentally friendly also.

Although much of the District 219 values the print editions, the transition to an online-only presence will help the school in its ongoing quest to "go green." Each month, hundreds of issues that go unread and must be recycled. (Ever wonder what helps keep the red newspaper dispensers from moving or falling over? There are hundreds of back issues inside the dispensers acting as ballast). An online newspaper would stop the waste of so much paper.

While statistics show that most people continue to read printed newspapers, I would guess that the average high school student—when and if (s)he reads the news—does not seek out hard copy newspapers. That is not to say that we are uninformed. Teenagers find use in other types of media, especially technology-related media. Most West students that I know get more of their information online.

Let us face the facts: news and information in general are much more accessible online. When I had a project in AP European History for instance, my teacher scheduled a research period in the Information Resource Center (IRC). The diligent IRC staff had a multitude of books and printed material to browse from. Those books contained enough information to complete more than half of the project. However, the majority of the class decided to use Internet resources to work on their projects. That is because online, it is much easier to "Google" information and go directly to a site providing such materials than it is to look it up in a book's index and flip to several different suggested pages. Furthermore, no photo copying of sources is necessary, just a quick click to save or print the article. Students prefer online information over printed information, and the same holds true for newspapers, as evidenced by the fact that *West Word's* websites receives about 800 hits per month.

Not only is online news preferred by students, it is cheaper to produce. According to adviser Michael Conroy, *West Word's* printing budget is approximately \$8,000 per year, money that could be applied to Dance Marathon, Relay for Life or any number of school-related needs.

Faster reporting and timeliness will be another obvious benefit with the new switch. If there is an important school board meeting or sporting event one night, a reporter can be at the meeting or game and have an article up by the next day. Currently, *West Word* publishes once per month. Much school news falls between the cracks, either because it occurs too early in the production cycle ("old news" being the ultimate oxymoron) or because it will occur before the next issue but weeks after the current print edition is published. When staffs were larger in the earlier years of the past decade, online "web exclusives" could bridge the gap. However, with only 13 full-time reporters, such articles have become fewer and farther between.

However, with an online paper, response to school events can be published in a matter of days, or even hours, before or after the activity. This way, articles are timely and therefore more interesting and informative. In the final analysis, an online-only student newspaper makes sense.

# WESTWIRE



**Foreign language testing center offers impractical testing environment**

**w Uzma Ahmad**  
News/Wire Editor

Contrary to popular belief, missing school due to illness or the need of a personal day can often be something a student dreads. When class is missed, we struggle to make up nine periods worth of missing assignments, class work, tests—all while we process the new material with which we are presented.

By far the biggest drawback to missing school is the inconvenience of making up tests and quizzes, particularly foreign language assessments.

While the central testing center is no picnic, the Foreign Language Resource Center is one of the least conducive spaces imaginable for making up work. This small room is not a proper environment for test taking. There are no individual desks on which students can work. Instead, the room has three large tables that make it extremely easy for students to copy the work of others.

Furthermore, the resource center is like Grand Central Station because of the continuous stream of teachers, substitutes and other students continuously coming in and out of room. There is constant chatter and phone use, making it extremely difficult for students to concentrate on their tests. Although some of the same distractions plague the central testing center, at least that room is larger with individual desks that are more spread out. Also the movement of people and phone calls in that room are less disturbing.

Another disadvantage of the foreign language testing center is the fact that it shares a common wall with the English Language Learners' (ELL) resource room. Because the ELL room is intended for social interaction and oral language acquisition, incessant chatter that can be heard in the language testing center. While students in the ELL room are appropriately loud, shouting and playing games, many students find it impossible to concentrate on their tests next door. These two rooms should not be placed next to each other.

Perhaps the greatest inconvenience the testing center for language classes poses is that it is only open after school until strictly 3:45 p.m. This leaves students no more than 20 minutes to take tests that they are usually allotted 42 minutes to take. Oftentimes, students have to write essays on their German or Spanish tests, and 15 minutes is hardly enough time. They are left scrambling to answer the question properly, and it is not a proper reflection of what they have learned.

Although students do have sufficient time to take the test before school, this poses problems for those who take early bird classes, ride the bus to school or carpool with fellow students or parents who do not feel compelled to transport them to school an hour early. Furthermore, students who have full schedules, with neither study hall nor lunch, have no choice but to take the test afterschool.

Something must be done. One solution would be for the language testing center to remain open until 4:10 p.m.—the closing time for the regular testing center. This would allow students the full 42 minutes to complete their tests properly and to avoid the school day cacophony. If this is not a possibility, then students who need to take language tests should be allowed to take these tests in the regular testing center.

## A Day in the Life... Mei ensures stability between teachers and substitutes

**w Zoe Ljubic**  
Editor in Chief

Many students fail to realize the process in which a teacher undergoes when (s)he calls in sick. How do the substitute teachers know where to go and which periods to cover? This important responsibility lies in the hands of teacher substitute coordinator Annette Mei, who ensures Niles West and Niles Central have each gap filled in terms of teacher attendance. After spending a day with Mei, this reporter has come to learn how the teachers benefit from her efforts, along with the personality behind the woman in charge.

Mei begins her day at 5:30 a.m., checking her voice messages. Her first order of business is to enter each teacher's absence and determine the number of substitutes needed for that given day. Then, she calls the teacher substitutes needed by 6 a.m.

Prior to the automatic teacher portal, a system in which teachers can log in to request a personal day, Mei had to manually type in each teacher's absence and fish through hundreds of teacher schedules in order to obtain the correct one. Now, teachers can request days off ahead of time. According to Mei, the teacher logs into the portal and requests the day off. An e-mail is then automatically sent to his or her director in which the director either approves or denies the absence. When the absence is approved, Mei begins her filing process.

When a teacher calls in sick or requests a day off, Mei first enters the absence into the portal if the teacher already hasn't done so his or herself. Although teachers can do so on their own, they are kicked out of the system 24 hours before the absence. Mei then prints the teacher schedule and attaches the teacher substitute evaluation form. From here, Mei determines how many substitutes are needed and begins calling. This process begins as soon as the teacher is notified as absent.

At 7:30 a.m., the teacher substitutes filed in to pick up their substitute sheet, teacher schedule and key. Mei ensures to review each substitute teacher's schedule then sends him/her on his/her way.

In addition to Mei organizing the teacher substitute scheduling, ensuring each teacher has a replacement, Mei enters the payroll for each teacher substitute. She does this after each substitute is in class. At the end of the two week payroll, she enters the information into the portal and submits it to the district office.

According to Mei, she and teacher substitute coordinator Jane Johnson at North work together to make sure each absent teacher has a substitute.

"We need to make sure the substitute's time working is entered correctly so they are paid the correct amount," she added. In addition to the huge workload of taking in calls, printing out schedules, assigning substitutes and submitting payroll, Mei still finds time to socialize with teachers who walk into the office.

"It is unbelievable how many calls I receive a day," she added.

At 9:30 a.m., Mei finishes up submitting work for the current day and immediately began working on tomorrow's schedule.

After observing her interaction with each teacher, it has become clear that Mei really does connect with teachers on a much more personal level, welcoming each teacher that walks in.

"I really do love this school," she added.

During lunch, which Mei ate at her desk, sharing Nano's pizza, she revealed some personal information.

Mei started her career in the restaurant business, managing banquets and paperwork. For twenty years, her husband George and she ran Villa Toscana. After hearing about an opening at West, Mei applied for the position. She then decided to apply for a position at Niles West. Mei has been working at West as the substitute coordinator for the past 16 years.

"When I left the restaurant business, I wanted to be someplace where hundreds of people were," she added. "I haven't had a bad day yet."

In her free time, Mei enjoys spending time with her three



**Mei prepares ahead for the next day's substitute schedule.**  
Photo by Zoe Ljubic

children and six grandchildren. She also enjoys cooking with her husband George.

"I wrap myself around my children and grandchildren," she added.

This warm and welcoming personality shines at work as well. On the day of *West Word's* visit, Mei wished science teacher Susan Schram a happy birthday when she visited the main office. She then called a former West employee to wish her a happy birthday as well. Her connections throughout the school enable her to be up to date with the current happenings among teachers.

"I am very motherly, because I need to help other people," she said. "If I could put a smile on someone's face, if I could lighten someone's burden, even if it is not financially, if I could listen, help or soothe somebody, I like that."

Along with her warm and welcoming personality, Mei really does lie in the hub of the school. She knows every teacher and administrator in the building.

"People count on me, and sometimes I feel like a miracle worker," she added. "It is very rewarding to me."

At the end of the day, Mei "feels so blessed because I made it work for the teachers if they forget or make a mistake."

Her organization and efficient attitude enable Mei to complete all her tasks in a timely manner. Despite this challenge, she strives to be "accurate and not let things go."

"When you have to do something, you have to do it right away. You have to enter the name when the teacher calls and you have to make the changes when the teacher calls," she said. Mei plans to retire this year.

"I am really going to miss the interaction with the teachers," she said. "I am really going to miss being with so many people, and I do plan to keep in touch with them."

Mei told this reporter upon her departure that she would head home to cook and spend time with her family, leaving her shadow to wonder where Mei finds the energy.

## Students and teachers anticipate annual T-Bay fundraising auction

**w Sofiya Pershteyn**  
Staff Writer

Dance Marathon (DM) will hold its second annual T-Bay fundraiser Monday, March 8-Friday, March 12 during all lunch periods. During this week, students and teachers are encouraged to bid on items donated by the faculty and staff.

"It's such a popular auction that it really helps get the word out what Dance Marathon is doing and who our beneficiary is," DM sponsor Dena Lichterman said.

Although new to West, T-Bay has already become one of the most successful fundraising events.

"It is one of our biggest fundraisers because we don't have to pay anything to get the products because they are donated by teachers," junior DM special events executive Becky Darling said.

Last year, T-Bay raised over \$2,100 for the previous DM

charity, Camp One Step At a Time. Some of the most popular items included prom tickets provided by Principal Kaine Osburn, a bucket of cereal donated by the Literacy Center, and a "Day in Evanston" gift basket donated by English director Sanlida Cheng.

Senior DM special events executive Nicole Sarangay expressed hope that this year, the event would grow to include more participants and raise more money.

"We hope that T-Bay will be more successful this year and [that] we can raise more money for Expanding Lives," she said. "We also wish for more teachers to join T-Bay and get the students more involved with DM."

Lichterman agrees that one of the most important aspects of the fundraiser is to allow faculty and staff to be connected to DM's efforts.

"The key is to have Dance Marathon work closely with faculty and staff," she said. "[The goal is] to raise money for Dance Marathon's charity, Expanding Lives."

Besides introducing the charity to the students and teachers, T-Bay also provides a chance for these two groups to get to know each other better.

"[The goal is] to have students get to know their teachers on a more personal level," student activities director Jessica Ogulnik said.

Some items that students can look forward to include custom made Converse™ sneakers from Ogulnik and cookie baking lessons from science teacher Ruth Gleicher. The Literacy Center is auctioning off a stack of pancakes the same height as the highest bidder. Like last year, DM organizers plan to offer the "super star locker location." The student with the highest bid on the closing Friday will be able to choose where his/her locker would be located next year.

Lichterman encourages students to take interest and bid on the items offered this year. She also advises students to visit the bidding tables outside the cafeteria on the closing bids on Friday.

"There is a lot of enthusiasm, a lot of energy; people are putting in last minute bids," she said. "[In the past] it got really exciting. We had about 50 people last year that came out to watch the closing."

Ogulnik cited a sense of competition as a motivating factor will drive students "to raise money for a wonderful cause."

# WestWord

## Bands come together to showcase talent

**W** Mary Basic  
Business Manager

The annual Showcase of Bands will be held in the Robert L. Johnson auditorium on Sunday, March 7, at 3 p.m.

Three concert bands will perform 11 compositions, chosen to appeal to “four different audiences: kids, teens, parents and grandparents,” band director William Koch said.

The concert band will perform “Sleeping Place,” by Ralph Ford; “Around the World” and “Blues Machine,” by Michael

Sweeney and “Arabian Dances,” by Brian Balmages.

The Symphonic Band will present “Espana Cana,” by Pascual Marquina Narro and “Prairie Song,” “Dreamsong” and “And the Fire Raged,” by Ted Ricketts.

The Symphonic Winds will offer “American Winds,” “On the Wings,” “Armenian Dances,” “Tzirani Tzar,” “Gakavi Yerk,” “Hoy, Zazan Eem” and “Alagaz, Gna, Gna (Go,Go),” all by Alfred Reed.

“I try to tie in music, dance, drama and art which are the fine arts,” Koch said.

The concert band’s “Around the World,” will be played in 80 measures and will take the audience through 18 different countries, including snippets of songs such as the Canadian national anthem (“Oh, Canada”) and



Nicole Fujiwara  
Photo by Irfan Qurashi

others, Koch added.

Soloists will include freshman guitarist Nick Michalesko and freshman trumpeter Nathan Fox on “Blues Machine”; sophomore pianist Karen Torres on “Dreamsong”; and senior French horn player Jeremy Berman on “On the Wings.”

Of the selections, Koch said, “It is serious music yet very tastefully done.”

“There is a lot of thought and time that goes into the concerts,” Koch said. “The [concert features] a variety of music, not all fast or not all slow. Otherwise, it would just bore people to death. I try to find the right mixture of songs so when people go, ‘Wow, that was incredible.’ The highest compliment for me is when audience members come up and ask when is the next concert,” Koch said.

## Portrait: No Words Allowed to leave audience speechless

**W** Mary Basic  
Business Manager

The advanced theatre studio’s annual Theatre Showcase will present *Portraits: No Words Allowed* at 4 and 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 23, in the Black Box Theater.

According to theatre director Andrew Sinclair, the original show is an outgrowth of the group’s study of silent films such as those of Charlie Chaplin, of modern dance and of the slapstick comedy of the Three Stooges. In this piece of experimental theatre, 38 actors will take audience members on a series of

what Sinclair termed “mini-emotional journeys through physical action and instrumental music.” No words will be spoken in the vignettes.

“This will be a performance unlike anything ever done at Niles West High School,” Sinclair said.

Senior chorus member Dominique Forte said that she relishes the challenge.

“I love finding new characters to play and getting things wrong and being able to fix them and grow from that,” Forte said. “I mainly love making the audience feel some sort of emotion; it makes me feel like I have done something right.”

Advanced theatre studio presents an annual showcase of experimental theatre that displays a concept or theme being

studied in the course.

“Each year, we try to present a type of theatre or acting style that is different than what is shown in the normal theatre season,” Sinclair said.

The cast of this year’s showcase includes seniors Ashley Alexander, Harry Behm, Sean Buckley, Olivia Coss, Charlee Cotton, David Fisch, Scott Friedrich, Ali Grabowski, Alyssa Jutovsky, Alicia Peake, Ani Poladian, Fiona Stephens and Philip Wolf; juniors include Leah Hummel, Andrea Lupas, Aleks Krapivkin and Becca Levy; sophomores include Katie Buckley, Rachel Flink, Gabe Flippo, Effie Kalaitzidis, Anahita Karimi, Jin Park, Marina Spasova, Cedes Sifuentes and Zachary Tarnoff.

Tickets for the showcase are \$5.

## Community members boost athletic department funds for students

**W** Sofiya Pershteyn  
Staff Writer

Niles West Booster Club will hold its annual March Madness fundraiser Saturday, March 20, 6:30–11:30 p.m. at Tam’s Fairway Banquets.

Parents of athletes, teachers, coaches, alumni, past booster club members and anyone interested in the athletic program are invited to attend the event.

“It is a social event for the parents,” Booster Club president Eileen Wright said. “We hope we have some relaxation time to sit and talk with the coaches and the other parents.”

The Booster Club plans to use the donated money on athletic equipment that the school does not include in its annual budget

but which will benefit the athletic teams.

“[The purchase] may not be a necessary item for the program, but it is an added benefit,” Wright said.

Purchases funded by past events include a steam machine to the training department to help injured athletes recover more quickly, basketball equipment and timing clocks for the swimming and diving team.

“This year, we hope to start an endowment fund to help purchase a big item that would be needed,” Wright said.

Athletic director David Rosengard attests to the Booster Club’s help over the past years.

“What they do is just vital for us,” he said. “It is very much appreciated by myself personally and by all of our coaches and athletes”

Club recording secretary Vicki Carpenter acknowledges the importance of parent support as well.

“We are dedicated to helping the athletes of Niles West, but we always need more support from parents and the community

to do a better job,” she said.

Rosengard said that he looks forward to meeting the parents, coaches and Booster Club members and he encourages people to come and support the student athletes.

“[The fundraiser] is on behalf of our student athletes and it is really the one major fundraiser that we do on a yearly basis that does that,” he said.

Besides dinner and the opportunity to meet with other parents and coaches, all those attending the event will have a chance to participate in live and silent auctions. Community members will donate the items in the auction.

“I hope people come and support the program,” Wright said. “It is a fun evening and we get to relax with the parents.”

Those planning to attend must be over 21 years old, and tickets cost \$35 per person. All those planning to attend must R.S.V.P. to Wright at (847) 675-6969 by March 15.

Tam’s Fairway Banquets is located at 6676 W. Howard in Niles.



1. Who was the first African- American to run for president.?

- A. Barack Obama
- B. Barack Obama
- C. Barack Obama
- D. I don't know
- E. Jesse Jackson

2. Who is the first African American millionaire?

- A. I don't know
- B. Oprah Winfrey
- C. Whoopi Goldberg
- D. Whoopi Goldberg
- E. George Washington Carver

3. What does NAACP stand for?

- A. I don't know
- B. I don't know
- C. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- D. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- E. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

4. Who is the first African American to win an Oscar in the best actress category?

- A. I don't know
- B. I don't know
- C. Whoopi Goldberg
- D. Whoopi Goldberg
- E. Halle Berry

5. Who was the first African American to break the color barrier in sports?

- A. I don't know
- B. Jesse Owens
- C. Jackie Robinson
- D. I don't know
- E. Jackie Robinson



A. Freshman - Mohammed Hakeem



B. Sophomore - Blake Helton



C. Junior - Richard Daniel



D. Senior - Nisma Khan



E. Faculty - Jessica Ogulnik

# WESTWIRE

## Orchesis dancers leap into new performance

**w Hira Malik**  
Around Town Editor

Orchesis will stage its annual performances Thursday-Saturday, March 11-13 in the Robert L. Johnson Auditorium.

After a 10 a.m. community performance on Thursday, March 11, the dance troupe will deliver 7:30 p.m. shows Thursday-Saturday.

Orchesis members include senior officers Sabriah Wiedeman, Danielle Thompson, Deanna Hano and Melanie Demos; seniors Jayson Viray, Alex Bedoya, Caroline Majerczyk, Kristin Griffin, Earvin Ortega, Marck Schmidt and Irfan Qurashi; juniors Kirstie Beck, John Chae, Nicole Delort, Eric Kim and Kyla Marie; sophomores Nicole Bonner, Casey Mahoney-Muno and Keerati Jinakunwiphat; and freshman Evangeline Alpogianis.

According to director Mindy Slutzky, while a number of the dance pieces are choreographed by professional choreographers, there are also dance pieces choreographed by the students who participate.

This year's Orchesis performance will be a bit different than those of previous years, explained troupe member Thompson.

"This year's show is different from previous shows because it includes more acting. There are many more pieces in which we need to become a certain character to add to the story of the piece," Thompson said.

The finished product will be the result of nearly a year of preparation, according to Slutzky.

"I hold auditions [the previous] May, and I hire outside choreographers to come and teach the [students] different pieces," Slutzky said.

Slutzky added that Orchesis is promoted at sender junior high schools to allow students who love to dance the chance to audition for the show during the summer prior to their freshman year, an opportunity of which Thompson took full advantage.

"I knew I wanted to be a part of Orchesis when I was in eighth grade and saw fliers for the show at my school," Thompson said. "The reason I chose Orchesis was because I have been taking dance classes all my life and I knew orchesis would be a great opportunity to meet new people, learn more styles of dance, work with different choreographers and improve as a dancer."

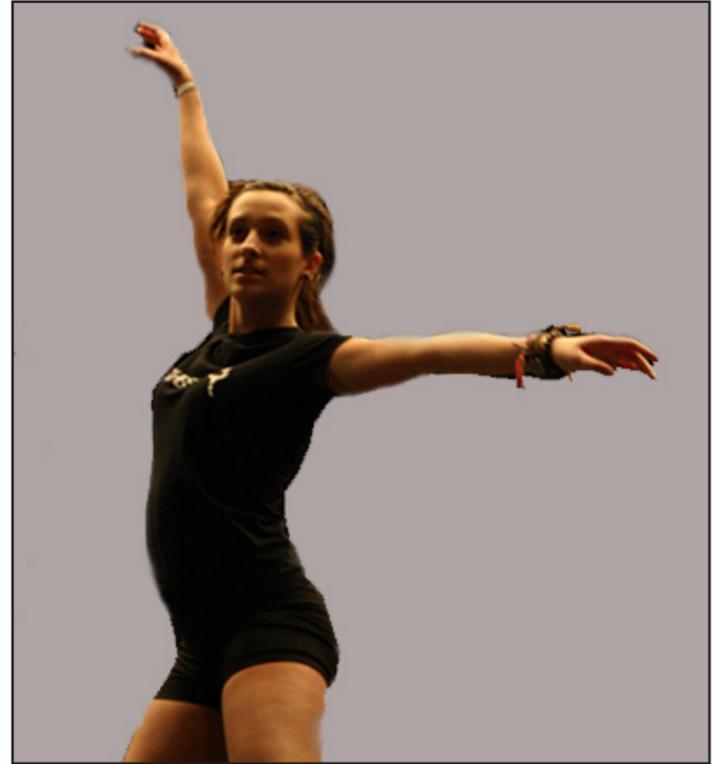
Wiedeman shares Thompson's view.

"Orchesis is one of the most rewarding ways to be involved in school. After the show, you can look back at all the hard work you have done and just take pride in it. As a choreographer especially, you choreograph the dance, pick out costumes, and design lighting," Wiedeman said. "It is such a cool experience to watch your work come alive. Even if you aren't a choreographer, just being in the dance numbers [is] a blast. You still work very hard and get to perform in front of the whole school, which is also an amazing experience."

The troupe members' responsibilities don't begin and end on the dance floor.

"The responsibilities that I have are important to maintain. I am required to raise a certain amount of money through donations and fundraisers," Alpogianis said.

The annual performance received the endorsement of student activities director Jessica Ogulnik, who called



Junior Orchesis member Kirstie Beck practices for the upcoming performances. Photo by Irfan Qurashi

Orchesis' production "hands down, one of the best performances that we have here at Niles West."

## Peer mediation spreads peace throughout student community

**w Morgan Quilici**  
Copy Editor

Senior Peer Mediators Hillary Lindwall, Antonio Mladenov, Damaris Rodriguez and Nadia Sarnecki provided a peer mediation workshop for 15 sixth, seventh and eighth graders at Lincoln Junior High in December.

"The whole goal [of Peer Mediation] is to make the school a place where people can be respected and feel comfortable and safe," Peer Mediation sponsor Yvonne Miller said. [Where students don't] have to worry about being ridiculed, minimized or bullied."

Peer Mediation is a program in which students are trained to sit down with their peers in hopes of resolving conflicts. The mediators run the session to peacefully resolve the conflict at hand. Through mediation, both the mediators and students involved brainstorm a solution and then create a written contract. Students at Lincoln Junior High School were taught this process by mediators from Niles West with the goal of creating a Peer Mediation program at Lincoln Jr. High as well as to familiarize the students with mediations before entering high school.

"I think people get into conflicts because they don't understand where the other person is coming from," Peer Mediation sponsor Ann Alegnani said.

Miller concurred, saying that the "most important feature of mediation is that it helps students learn the life skill of hearing out where another person is coming from."

"Not only do we learn how to become excellent conflict resolvers but we get to understand both sides of the disputant's stories," Sarnecki said. "We learn a sense of understanding among our peers that most people might not ever experience in their lifetime."

Sarnecki reflected on the experience at Lincoln.

"We did not expect that so many students wanted to be peer mediators. It gave me the goose bumps when I first walked in and saw so many students that looked up to us," Sarnecki said.

The Peer Mediator not only works with students to dispute arguments but they also strives to create a much more peaceful environment at West.

"This year, we made a peace chain project with Lincoln Junior High students where we all wrote down things we would to make the world a more peaceful place," Sarnecki said.

Miller and Alegnani hope to expand this activity throughout

the school.

The mediators hope to organize the creation of a peace chain. According to Alegnani, a peace chain is where students can "write down ideas that [they] can do to act peacefully in the building and contribute to a peaceful school environment." The mediators hope to begin this process during lunch periods and in freshmen homerooms, according to Miller.

Another way the mediators contribute is by creating a peace project each year. This year, the students worked with Seminars for Scholars and Friends of Amnesty to host a two day fair trade bazaar in the student commons.

Ten Thousand Villages, a shop in Evanston that sells goods crafted by artisans from other countries, provided the goods that were sold at the bazaar. The profit the shop receives is given directly to the artisans who created them. According to Miller, the bazaar was a success, providing enough products to make a fair living wage for five people in different parts of the world.

Alegnani and Miller, along with all mediators, hope to spread the word of their cause, according to Alegnani.

"The more students we get involved in the program, the more peaceful our school will be and, eventually, our whole community," Sarnecki added.

## Choir begins preparations with high expectations for spring concert

**w Kathryn Booker**  
Staff Writer

The various choir ensembles will perform their annual spring concert on Wednesday, March 24, at 7:30 p.m. in the Robert L. Johnson Auditorium.

According to choir director Amy Branahl, the theme of this



Choir rehearses for the highly anticipated annual spring concert. Photo by Hira Malik

concert is Diversity and Equality. All the choirs will perform, including women's choir, men's choir, chamber choir and master singers. Extracurricular groups Guys & Dolls, Echo Effect and High Fidelity will perform their competition sets. All the sender junior high schools' choirs will join the choirs for a finale number "A World That Says Yes" written by Michael J. Miles.

Selections include "Wedding Cantata," by Daniel Pinkham featuring Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Anne Roloff, "Come to me, O My Love," by Alan Robert Petker, "Voice Dance III," by Greg Jasperse, "Season of Love," by Shiny Toy Guns and "Somebody to Love," by Queen.

The set list was arranged by the choir classes, senior master choir member Fiona Stephens explained.

"We have a lot of contrasting pieces and a whole bunch of different genres and styles of music. There is something for everybody," Stephens said.

Branahl agrees that the song selections will please all audiences.

"The concert will have a taste of lots of different styles of music," she explained, adding that the spring concert "usually has the most challenging music and the most diverse music."

Senior alto master choir member Jane Chung finds the diversity of music and choirs a positive addition to the concert.

"We sing all different types of music, from choral to pop, jazz

to a capella," she said. "We have a few guest singers coming in to sing with us as well as the junior high choirs."

Senior master choir and Guys & Dolls member Jorge Quiroz finds the song "A World That Says Yes," in which all the levels of choir and the junior high choirs will sing together, one of his favorite selections in the concert.

"We are singing more songs than we usually would in a regular concert, and we are adding a pop song for every level of choir," he said. "It is going to be a really awesome concert."

Senior Guys & Dolls member Sam Greene enjoys the song selections as well, stating, "Ms. Branahl always picks really cool music. Even the classical pieces she chooses are awesome, not to mention the popular songs."

Greene said that he particularly enjoys audience participation during any performance.

"Having a large, responsive audience makes the experience so much better for everybody," he added.

Stephens encourages everyone to attend the choir concert. "You can support the music program and the school, but also have a good time listening to some great music," she said.

Chung echoed Stephens' sentiments.

"People should go see the concert because it is our last big concert this year," she stated. "We always look forward to the last concert because of all that goes on in the different choirs."

# WestWord

## Short Circuits

### West to host Heritage Festival

W Sadia Ansari  
Staff Writer

High school band, orchestra and choir students from the United States and Canada will compete as Niles West once again hosts the annual Heritage Music Festival, which will be held on successive weekends, Friday-Saturday, March 19-20 and 26-27.

Performers may choose to perform in competitive or noncompetitive brackets.

Although no West students will perform, band director William Koch said that a number of musicians will be on hand to assist in the logistics of hosting the festival.

"The students will start practicing at 4 p.m. and start competing at 4:30. The jazz bands compete on Friday night and the choirs and the orchestras will compete on Saturday," Koch said.

During the Heritage Festival, three judges award first, second, third and fourth place honors and gold, silver and bronze winners. After the award ceremony the bands and orchestras go to Medieval Times in Hoffman Estates.

The school hosts the annual event to raise funds that "help us run the band program," Koch said, particularly to buy equipment for the marching band, color guard and drum line.

As for the participants, Koch said that the festival gives the [students] something strong to work for. Competition gets the best out of us," Koch said.

### Poetry Out Loud finalist qualifies for state competition

W Adriana Zalloni  
World Editor

Sophomore Sam Chao earned second place at the Poetry Out Loud regional competition at the Sulzer Library in Chicago on Feb. 16.

Chao recited "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd," by Sir Walter Raleigh and "Hate Poem," by Julie Sheehan. Chao qualified to compete in the state contest on March 18 in Springfield.

"It felt amazing [to win] second place," Chao said. "There were [many] good competitors there."

Chao won first place in the school competition held on Feb. 12, besting 43 other competitors. Sophomore Julia Zasso took second place, and there was a tie for third between freshmen Khadijah Cheema and Rachel Kossy. Zasso recited "Switchblade," by Michael Ryan, Cheema recited "Phenomenal Woman," by Maya Angelou and Kossy recited "Hush," by David St. John.

To prepare for the state competition, Chao will get a poetry coach.

"[My coach] and I are going to work on perfecting my recitation skills for the competition," Chao said.

The sponsors for Poetry Out Loud are English teachers Tamara Jaffe-Notier and Paul Wack. The judges for the West competition were English teacher Dana DesJardins, English department chair at Hoffman Estates' James B. Conant High School Elizabeth Kahn and professional poet and social studies teacher Janet Kelsey.

### Students cheerful for Spirit Week

W Sadia Ansari  
Staff Writer

Student government will sponsor its annual spring Spirit Week March 15-19.

Monday, March 15, will be Hippie Day; Tuesday, March 16, will be Men in Black Day; Wednesday, March 17, will be Junior High Day; Thursday, March 18, will be Superhero Day and Friday, March 19, will be Red and White Day.

The week will culminate with a pep assembly at the end of school on Friday.

Student activities director Jessica Ogulnik explained the purpose of Spirit Week.

"[Students] get into the spirit of being a Wolf," she said.

She added that the week is designed to contrast with the serious side of school, including tests and homework.

"People get dressed up, get excited and get riled up for the spring season; then, we have the assembly in the afternoon on Friday," Ogulnik said. "You are supposed to have fun while going to school."



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that a person with a new-media background teach a class in which a web publication is produced.

"I think that she is going to bring a lot of new, fresh ideas for how to do things online," Conroy said. "I have full confidence in her because I know that this is something she is really committed to doing."

After being *West Word* adviser for 10 years and a newspaper adviser for 20 years, Conroy stressed that he appreciates his time on *West Word*.

"It was not an easy choice for me to decide not to continue," he said. "It will be sad next year because there will be things about it that I will really miss, but it really seems to be an appropriate time."

Lauer brings significant experience to her new role, both in print journalism and new media publication. She was the editor of her high school newspaper and majored in journalism at the University of Iowa. While there, she was a reporter and then managing editor for *The Daily Iowan*, her college newspaper. Later, she worked as an intern and correspondent at the *Des Moines Register* and worked with the staff of *The Statesman* as a student teacher at Stevenson High School.

"When I was in college, I bled journalism," Lauer said. "I was on the cusp of change in the field, but nothing was as magical as working for my college newspaper."

In 2005, while earning her Master of Fine Arts at Texas State University in San Marcos, Lauer founded an online literary journal and became the managing editor.

When Conroy decided to retire as *West Word* adviser, Lauer jumped at the chance to succeed him. There was not much competition for the position, she noted.

"There is really not a lot of interest in the English department for this position because it is a lot of work, but is something I have always wanted to do."

She did have one condition, however.

"When the opportunity was presented to me, I basically said I would only do it if it went online," she said, a request granted by the school board and administrators upon her assignment as adviser.

The idea of drastically changing any longtime institution such as *West Word*, which has been in print since 1961, does not come without controversy. Some students reacted strongly to the decision to take *West Word* exclusively online.

Senior Lauren Shimanovsky expressed the belief that *West Word* should remain a print newspaper.

"I understand entirely why they want to go online, but I don't think there is anything better than getting to hold a paper and read it," she said.

Junior Farah Siddique and senior Alexa Edinburgh asserted that *West Word* will lose popularity with just a web presence.

"It is a waste of time if it is going to be online because I feel like no one is going to read it," Siddique said. "If it is in your hands you can read it, [such as during] passing periods."

Edinburgh agrees that the physicality of *West Word* is imperative to its readability.

"I feel like people would read it, but they wouldn't read it as much because it is not physically in their hands," she said. "They would read it more if it is in the red boxes, not just online. A lot of people don't want to go on the school website because they don't want to be associated with school outside of school."

Freshman Melanie Berman agrees that students would not go online to read *West Word*.

"I think that more students would read it in print because it's more accessible to them," Berman said.

Conroy dismissed such notions.

"If *West Word*'s print readership were booming, I could

understand the resistance," he said. "However, I have seen a steady decline in circulation over my 10 years. In fact, as the school's enrollment has grown, the number of issues we distribute has shrunk. When I started in 2000—when the enrollment was in the low 2000s—we would order 2500 issues from the printer, and they would be gone by the end of the following week. We now order 1800 issues and end up 'eating' about 400 copies a month, despite the fact that enrollment has spiked. Meanwhile, our website averages 800 hits per month."

Lauer has several reasons for bringing the newspaper online next year, stemming from her own experience in the journalism field.

"The main reason I took it online is the idea of what we are preparing students for," she said. "[Print] journalism is unfortunately a dying art, and newspapers all over the country are folding. The goal is to try to teach students how to write the same way but also realize that the medium is changing."

Lauer's view of print journalism is illustrated by the recent plight of several major newspapers, including *The Rocky Mountain News*, which suspended operations last year, *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, which is now an online-only publication, and local dailies, the *Chicago Sun-Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*, both of which filed for bankruptcy in the past year.

According to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, as many as a quarter of all newspaper jobs were lost last year.

"It is possible that eight of the nation's 50 largest daily newspapers could cease publication in the next 18 months," reported Time magazine in an article titled "The 10 Most Endangered Newspapers in America." According to the article, print newspapers such as the *Boston Globe*, the *Sun-Times* and the *New York Daily News* are expected to stop printing by 2012.

Lauer considers the loss of print newspapers an indication that *West Word* should change its format as well.

"Considering this climate, the Niles West journalism program needs to prepare its students for the 'real world,'" she said. "Training kids solely as print journalists will do them a disservice in college and beyond, as more and more publications move online."

Conroy agrees.

"Part of my growing dissatisfaction with my role as adviser and instructor of journalism, photojournalism and newspaper production was the sense that I was teaching discrete information that kids would never use."

Executive Director of the Illinois Journalism Education Association (IJE) Sally Renaud shares the belief that students must be taught new media journalism due to the lack of jobs in the print journalism field.

"In this day in age, all of our journalism students should be trained in multimedia storytelling, [as well as] how to use cameras and the recorders," she stated.

However, Renaud believes schools should not completely abolish print newspapers in lieu of website reporting.

"You don't need to do away with one and not the other," she added. "You still have to learn the basics of news, but I would hope it wouldn't be either/or. It would be nice to have [a print newspaper] as a supplement."

Their capitulation to reality aside, like Shimanovsky, Lauer and Conroy lament the loss of the "paper-in-your-hands" feeling that hard copy newspapers provide.

"I have always liked how you can put the newspaper together so that it not only has interesting information, but it is also interesting and attractive visually," Conroy said. "[In an online publication], the reader sees a home page with a bunch of text links and accompanying photos. I would find that unsatisfying to produce."

# WESTWIRE

## IDOT trucks spotted in suspected toxic dumpsite



Last issue, *West Word* reported a story on the dumping of toxic chemicals by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) near residential areas. One of these areas is the corner of Oakton St. and Gross Point Rd., just east of Niles West. According to the report, IDOT has dumped toxic waste at this site and others near residential areas for the past eight years. Both West students and faculty agreed that the dumpsite is an immediate threat to the environment. These pictures, taken on Feb. 22, show IDOT workers at the Oakton St. and Gross Point Rd. location in what appears to be a cleanup of the area. Photos by Rexly Penaflores II

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Similar to Conroy, Lauer was taught print journalism in high school and college, and she finds it disappointing that print journalism is dying.

"[In web journalism], the romanticism of waking up in the morning and reading a paper is gone," she said. "I was trained as a print journalist, and my heart breaks that [online publishing] is [becoming] the status quo. However, it is what is happening in the field and to do anything else is to hold our students back and set [them] up for failure."

Renaud agrees that the sentimentality of a print newspaper is a disadvantage to switching online.

"The whole idea of a paper coming out is going to be gone with your online edition," she said. "There's something about distribution day, when everybody gets the paper and you are sitting in the classroom reading the school paper, and the feedback you get from watching and communicating with your readers in that way. Now your readers will be sitting at a computer."

As a historian, Renaud expresses the belief that the lack of historical documentation is one of the main cons of complete online publications.

"The biggest problem we see is for historical documentation," she said. "Librarians at [Eastern Illinois University] say that the newspapers and yearbooks are the most valuable tool that we can research about our school. In theory, you could say that every online paper is archived, but it is harder to retrieve [information online] as opposed to having old copies of a newspaper in a binder that you could thumb through."

Another benefit of the newspaper's switching to an online publication is for cost efficiency. An electronic newspaper will save money because there will be virtually no publication costs. Similarly, in accordance with Niles West's embrace of "Going Green," a web newspaper will eliminate hundreds of recycled newspapers every month.

Senior Janet Ro believes that this is the most positive reason for switching to an online publication.

"If [*West Word*] is online, it saves a lot of paper," she said. "That is a good thing, as well as saving money."

Conroy and Lauer both cited the immediacy of an online newspaper as another major advantage.

"Right now, we have a two-day lag time between when we send the newspaper to the printer and when we get it back and publish it," Conroy acknowledged. "In October of 2005, the staff sat in room 3160 until 1 a.m. on a Tuesday, waiting to see if the White Sox would win the extra-inning third game of the World Series so that we could feel confident about our front page, which was entirely devoted to their championship. If we were online-only, we could have just written an article the night they clinched and published it immediately. [In a web publication], as soon as the staff can get the articles online, they can publish them. The immediacy and freshness are two positive aspects."

Lauer explained that daily coverage will be a main goal of *West Word* next year.

"We no longer have to wait a month to cover something," she said. "We can cover stuff daily, and we are going to. [If] something happens, we [will] cover it."

Renaud's experience has taught her that daily coverage is significant in a web publication.

"Instead of doing a monthly wrap-up [of a sports game] as a feature story, you are literally covering every single game," she explained. "It is a great opportunity for a teacher to teach kids about real journalism."

Another goal of Lauer's for the web publication is to allow *West Word* to create interactive social networking, including video and discussion boards. She is currently arranging the details of the web publication's format with sophomore *West Word* business manager Mary Basic, who will become editor in chief next year.

"Readers can comment easier, there can be video and readers can comment online," Lauer said. "There will probably be more blog-like columns and [features similar to] Street Smarts and West Opinions. The goal is, if you are quoted in the paper, you read the paper and your friends read the paper...and the more people that you can get in the paper which is now online, I am hoping more people want to read it."

Senior Inna Olinevich agreed that the idea of a social networking *West Word* "would be a much better way to get involved since we are always on the computer." She affirmed that she would read the publication online.

Freshmen Froilan Usman and Aaron Trevino concur that they would read a web publication as well because it is easier to access news from a computer.

Lauer said that her main objective is to make *West Word* more public and democratic in the sense that more students can be involved. Writers and correspondents do not necessarily need to enroll in the newspaper class to contribute.

"Anybody who is interested in any capacity, from taking pictures to being a reporter to writing, should come see me," Lauer said, adding that students who care about the school and desire a method of voicing their opinion should join the newspaper staff next year. "I am still going to teach people how to report and write, and those are important skills that you can take with you in life no matter what you do for a living. *West Word* is a place for you to say what you have to say."

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