



THE WESTMOUNT GAZETTE

February 2023

Westmount Wildcats' High School Musical

By: Lilyanna Colling-Cen

For the first time since 2018, the Westmount Wildcats are back to rock the stage. This year's musical is "We Will Rock You," a story and script originally written by Ben Elton. The audience can expect a concert-like experience, with the music based upon the British rock band Queen. This musical originally hit Broadway in 2002 and was an instant success. The story is set in a dystopian society where everything is controlled, and music does not exist. In this society, we follow the journey of a young man and woman as they attempt to learn more about a past life in which people could express themselves in an artistic way.

Numerous staff and students contribute to this project, including orchestra, stage crew, volunteers (props and sets), and teacher supervisors, not to mention the amazing performers acting on stage. This year's production is led by Mrs.



Charters, the artistic director, and Mrs. Grant, the vocal and music coordinator. The cast of this production is members of the theatre production course, who participated in auditions for this year's musical back in June of 2022. "We really wanted to rock Westmount," said Mrs. Charters. Production began at the beginning of the school year and as the show grows closer, the crew have one designated period everyday for practice.

The opening night for "We Will Rock You" will be on Thursday, May 18th, and will run until Saturday, May 20th in the Cynthia Rees Auditorium at Westmount. The staff involved with this production are hoping to pique the interest of Westmount students about the theatre arts program at the

school. If you are interested in keeping updated with the musical and arts at Westmount, follow their Instagram account @westmountarts. Save the date and come check out this show-stopping musical hosted by our very own Westmount Wildcats!

You Will Never Win the Lottery

By: Nick Minotti

Some of the greatest minds humanity has to offer are dedicated to getting you addicted to gambling. It's a lovely thing to think about during a lovely month like February. I remember when I was working my first real job as a cashier I had to sell lottery tickets. Every week I would see the same people



THE WESTMOUNT GAZETTE



come in, count out the same amount of money, and spend it all on lottery tickets. Even more disturbing were the customers that would penny pinch for every discount just so they could buy that one extra lottery ticket. Maybe this experience was so disturbing for me because I knew I could look at this customer and say to myself, “you will never win the lottery”, and statistically speaking I would be right.

To me these customers always had this gleam in their eyes, this expression of desperation. They could see that green light across the lake in the form of winning the lottery. These customers saw the lottery as their one chance to redeem themselves. Maybe they still hold the desire to fulfill the American dream even in their retirement. The lottery is their one hope of salvation; the one thing that

will split their lives into two halves: one in which they were a failure, and one in which they are a success.

Now my view on the lottery might be a little cynical

and unrealistic, but the horrible odds that back up my views are very real. Most people will hear a statistic like one in 292,201,338 odds and think “well there's always a chance”. No, there is not. And that's my main issue with the lottery; it's essentially a tax for people who don't understand the statistics behind it. However, I would make the claim that this lack of understanding is not their fault. A commonly mentioned argument in defense of the lottery is that organizations like the OLG donate large sums of their profits to schools and other public services. I think it is more than convenient that probability is not taught in the math curriculum until offered optionally in your last year of high school. Probability is a subject most 8th graders could be taught; it is one of the largest fundamental fields of math.

So why only teach it in an optional course in the last year of high school?

Whether it be betting on sports, buying lottery tickets, or even the school valentine raffle, we as people are bombarded by the thrill of chance. We're fed the same ads about the excitement of betting on different things and how great it would feel to win

. The truth of the matter is that these games are just looking to abuse the temptation of adrenaline, and that doesn't sit right with me.

Fatal Earthquakes Damaging Turkey and Syria

By Radiyaa Amir



On February 6th, 2023, a mighty earthquake with a magnitude of 7.8 struck both southeast Turkey and northwest Syria. This devastating disaster has caused the death toll to



THE WESTMOUNT GAZETTE

surpass 40,000 casualties. Aftershocks have rumbled through the area, causing additional damage. About 2 weeks prior to this event, another 6.3-magnitude earthquake hit southern Turkey. Injury rates land in the tens of thousands, and hundreds of thousands have been displaced all over the region.

Syria, enduring nearly 12 years of civil war, has faced severe struggles with economic and political progress. 70% of the population is now in need of humanitarian aid, further suffering from recent natural disasters. For weeks, global search and rescue teams have flooded various areas in order to assist the citizens in their recovery. Reports state that there have been over 87,000 injuries and over 47,000 buildings have been dismantled.

According to the World Health Organization, a jarring number of 26 million people require assistance in both countries, many of whom are infants. Without a doubt, there is widespread optimism and action plans are in the works to address this issue to the greatest extent possible. Whether there is moral support through petitions and social

awareness or organized aid and assistance, the citizens of the world offer their support to those in need.

Spreading Warmth and Joy at Westmount's Winter Concert

By: Lilyanna Colling-Cen

On a cold winter evening, Westmount's musical students gathered together to host a heartwarming winter concert that provided its attendees with lots of joy and entertainment. After a hiatus of three years, the performance was highly anticipated, receiving an audience that filled up the auditorium. Inside the venue, there were many festive decorations, including lights that were donned on the instruments.

The performance began with an upbeat tune titled, "March Del Mar", that was played by the concert band. Afterwards, we were graced by other musical talents that included Concert Choir, Jazz One, Jazz Two, and the Wind Orchestra. There was a wide variety of

songs that evoked many feelings, such as happiness, thoughtfulness, and inspiration.

Prominent organizers of this event include Mr. Benning and Mrs. Grant, who dedicate a great deal of time to the music program at Westmount. Recognition also goes out to the hardworking administrative staff, the caretakers at our school, and to the students at Westmount.

During the intermission, the guests were provided with light refreshments. To accompany this, there was an interesting feature that displayed more artistic talents at our school. Multiple pieces of visual art created by students were featured along the English Hall and inside a few classrooms. It was a wonderful sight to see, and it highlighted the amazing skill that is present at Westmount.

For the last song of the night, a member of the audience was able to conduct the song "Sleigh Ride", which was performed by the Wind Orchestra. After an auction for this opportunity, one person who donated forty dollars stepped on to the stage to give a whimsical performance that ended the



THE WESTMOUNT GAZETTE

night on a high note. The proceeds from this auction went towards the Breakfast Program at Westmount.

Overall, it was a beautiful night that was a pleasure to attend. The event was a great way to fill our school community with winter spirit and provide great anticipation leading up to the winter break. Come springtime, look forward to the Westmount Spring Concert that will be held on June 1st, 2023!

World Cup Fever

By: Radiyaa Amir

After an astonishing record of 172 goals and 64 total matches, the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar has finally come to an end. Argentine-born football player Lionel Messi has now added yet another accomplishment to the charts. Due to the lengthy wait between the 2022 World Cup to the 2026 World Cup, Messi stated that this would be his last. With millions of supporters, doubters, and a six-year title of the world's best men's soccer player, the stakes were high. Nevertheless, with thrilling penalty kicks after a 3-3 tie,

he led Argentina to victory against France.

With a global viewing audience of millions, the support from football fans all over the globe played a large factor in this grand experience. A large uproar of support was found in this very school, as matches were broadcasted in the cafeteria. As students pulled up chairs and closely watched each match, the cheering and anticipation were unmatched. However, that isn't to say that it all ended there. News of the World Cup circulated throughout the school as students gained permission to silently watch during classes, proving how large of an event this was. With certainty, the FIFA World Cup 2022 proves that support uplifts others greatly, and common interests can bring many people together.

Double Duty – An Interview

By: Arjun Ram

Daniel Stepaniuk, or Mr. Stepaniuk as Westmount students often refer to him as not only serves as a Vice-Principal of Westmount Secondary but a Lieutenant-

Colonel for the Canadian Army Reserves.

Preparing for his next volunteer trip, Mr. Stepaniuk will be travelling to Germany to aid Ukrainian military officers.

“The people in Ukraine need a lot of help. I was asked to work with a team of people in order to focus in the area of professional military education,” he told the Gazette.

Mr. Stepaniuk explained the worldwide help for Ukrainian military officers, primarily from western nations.

“I believe that there is this push, this desire of western nations in order to provide this level of professional military education to senior Ukrainian military leaders.”

His journey as a member of the Canadian Army Reserves began when he was only 18 years of age, looking for an adventure and a challenge.

“I joined the Canadian Army Reserves when I was 18 years old. As a young person, I was seeking adventure, challenging myself physically and mentally.”

It started off with Scouts, and as Mr.



THE WESTMOUNT GAZETTE

Stepaniuk's interest in the forces grew, so did his responsibilities.

"I spent a lot of time in Scouts when I was a young person... That type of adventure appealed to me. I would go off to the armouries, [learning] infantry skills, camouflage and concealment."

But as his career has evolved, so have his focuses within the Forces.

"As I got older, I really started to focus on the surface aspects of Canadian Forces and how we can serve our community, serve our country, and make a difference in the lives of vulnerable people around the world."

And with this trip to Germany, Mr. Stepaniuk wants to focus on the future of Ukraine and how it can grow as a nation, despite the Russian invasion.

"Think of it in terms of post-conflict. What does the Ukraine of the future look like? What are some of the skills and attributes that they're going to need in the future?"

But a trip like this requires many attributes, including bravery and sacrifice. For Mr. Stepaniuk, these traits are of immense importance.

"Hopefully, in my current role...I won't require too much bravery. Certainly, I can tell you, my colleagues and arms around the world demonstrate bravery every day."

And although Mr. Stepaniuk will be sacrificing a lot at home for this trip, he understands it is a necessity.

"This mission, I will be away from my family for seven months...missing all manner of family celebrations so that I can be in a place where I can help many people and that is a great honour." What an honourable sacrifice indeed.

A Formal for the Ages

By: Arjun Ram

The bright lights and vibes were immaculate at Westmount Secondary's 2022 Winter formal at Michelangelo's Banquet.

And this was no measly little dance. Not this one. This was Westmount's First formal in three years, having to put the dances on hold due to the pandemic.

"I was really excited to go," said Cadyn Cimba, a grade 11 Wildcat. "It was the first one in years so there was

a lot of anticipation going into it."

The show had to go on, and Westmount's two presidents Harry Wang and Jason Xie collaborated extensively with the student council to set a date, sell tickets, book a banquet, and get a DJ.

"My friends and I got our tickets pretty quick," said Cimba. "We couldn't wait."

The night began with slow songs and casual discourse, as students seated themselves and passed the time with beverages. The banquet slowly became full of Westmount students, and so were the stomachs of many Wildcats - at least that's what many thought.

"I must admit, the food was not the greatest," Cimba said. "But I don't think many people thought about it too much; we were focused on getting on the dance floor."

Although the food was not a highlight of the night, the actual dancing was. From hype songs to slow, leisurely music, the energy remained consistent. Westmount Wildcats definitely showed off their moves from regular grooving to backflips on the dance floor. Needless to say, it was a good night.



THE WESTMOUNT GAZETTE

“It was fun and a good way to connect with people I haven’t met,” said Drew Simpson, a grade 11 student.

In fact, the music was so loud that some couldn’t even hear or walk after the dance.

“I could barely get across the dance floor,” said Cimba. “Some of my friends couldn’t even hear.”

And to cap the night off, it was a pop classic. The DJ set his speakers to the maximum level, blasting Taylor Swift’s “22” as the whole crowd sang at the top of their lungs.

“I had such a good time, and I can’t wait for the next formal,” Cimba said.

January

By: Sofia Lessa Fratini

As the clock turns midnight it turns to the first,
People celebrate and shout as the fireworks burst,
Millions yell “new year, new me”.
They create resolutions and goals to achieve,
Some will follow through and they will succeed,
Others will stop and soon be displeased.

But soon enough we will once more realize,
That this year is the same as every other like a reprise.

The month starts unusually hot,
But soon that’s all forgot.
The layers come out,
And on the ground,
Is a freezing white blanket.
The snow falls heavy in this climate,
The weather wavers all month though,
It is cold and warm and then it’s snows.

Soon the break is over,
And our days of endless nothing reach closure.
The school year continues,
We’re almost halfway through.
Semester one is nearing an end so we decide it’s time to cram,
But first we must survive the final exams.
Days of long studying approach,
As big projects come to a close.
Notes help students perfect different equations,
While flash cards assist in memorization.

But not to fear we’ve almost made it,
We’re so close we can not quit.

We’ve done all the work and learned all the material,
We will succeed at finals and the world will feel ethereal.
Soon January will go up in dust,
And February will come leaving us all gushed.
All in all January has flown by us.

MARCH HOROSCOPES

By: Jessica Leitch

ARIES- MARCH 21 TO
APRIL 19
QUEEN OF PENTACLES
REVERSED

Self-care is important and should be your priority for March. Focus on what you enjoy and explore your passions. Exam season has just ended, and students often feel overworked. Focus on recharging yourself. There is often a school life/home imbalance, so work on providing yourself with time to relax this month.

TAURUS- APRIL 20 TO
MAY 20
FOUR OF PENTACLES
UPRIGHT

This month, it’s important to reflect on what you value and what you choose to invest your time into. Are you



THE WESTMOUNT GAZETTE

investing too much time and thought into the wrong things? Could you be spending more time doing the things you love/that positively impact your life? Overall, you should let loose and ultimately devote time into doing the things that bring you joy. You may feel inclined to micro-manage certain areas of your life, such as school, so make sure you focus on your overall goals in order to avoid stress later.

GEMINI- MAY 21 TO JUNE 20

SEVEN OF WANDS UPRIGHT

You may find yourself in situations that make you uncomfortable, or situations that are meant to bring you down. Surrounding yourself with people that make you feel confident and lively will benefit you this month. Don't be afraid to stick up for yourself or feel like you must endure uncomfortable situations; focus on avoiding negativity and remaining in environments that radiate positivity. You may have a goal in mind but may feel like something is blocking you from achieving it. March is your month to achieve your goals and make your dreams a reality.

CANCER- JUNE 21 TO JULY 22

THE LOVERS REVERSED

You risk feeling "out of sync" this month, so focus on respecting how your body feels! Dedicate time to doing the things you love in order to rejuvenate yourself.

Honour what is best for yourself. Be mindful of your actions this month. Could you be doing things that bring you stress or sadness? Reflect on your actions and mindset and come up with a plan to combat simple things, such as how much sleep you're getting each night, in order to become your greatest self!

LEO- JULY 23 TO AUGUST 22

FOUR OF WANDS REVERSED

March is the time to celebrate! This month, expect your hard work to pay off. Every achievement is a good achievement, so be proud of your progress even if it feels minor. Avoid getting involved with other people's problems as it risks exposing you to negativity. March will be a month filled with important and beneficial changes. Whatever they may be, make sure you have a plan!

VIRGO- AUGUST 23 TO SEPTEMBER 22

SIX OF WANDS UPRIGHT

March brings success, confidence, and focus. You may have previously faced challenges, but you will learn to navigate them this month. Be proud of what you achieve, as your milestones are important. March will be a time of progress, so don't let fear stand in your way! The journey is as equally important as the finish line, so hold your head up high while striving to achieve your goals.

LIBRA- SEPTEMBER 23 TO OCTOBER 22

THE HERMIT UPRIGHT

Find your light and shine it ahead. Understand what you need to achieve, but do not rush to achieve it. Take it one step at a time. This exploration may cause you to re-evaluate your goals, so reflect and determine what you desire and what caused you to make this change. Take some time to explore your authentic self and to truly understand who you are!

SCORPIO- OCTOBER 23 TO NOVEMBER 21

KNIGHT OF CUPS UPRIGHT

This month, creativity will thrive for you! You may be struggling with an art project, or an English essay, but March will be a time of



THE WESTMOUNT GAZETTE

creative accomplishments for you! Your imagination will thrive, and your heart will lead you through the month. Emotions may run high, so express your love and gratitude you may feel towards the people around you. Goals will be prevalent, but don't feel like you must achieve them right away. Your true imagination feeds on action. Without action, your dreams will not become your reality!

SAG- NOVEMBER 22 TO DECEMBER 21

**PAGE OF WANDS
REVERSED**

Throughout March you will feel new ideas forming within you! You may not know how to execute these ideas, so don't be afraid to ask for help. Things often don't go as planned, so if something does not turn out how you hoped it would, do not worry. One negative thing does not mean everything else will end negatively. Do not be afraid to keep trying! You may feel indecisive and unable to decide what to work on, so it's important to split up your time equally so all your passions receive the love and progress they deserve!

**CAPRICORN-
DECEMBER 22 TO
JANUARY 19**

**FOUR OF CUPS
REVERSED**

This month, you may feel the desire to stay inside and be alone. Alone time is important, so don't feel ashamed if you decline hanging out with others!

Make sure you carefully examine all your options as you may be inclined to instantly say yes to an offer. Choose what is best for you!

Do not force yourself to do things you do not want to do, as it will make you feel worse than you may already feel.

Retreat is the best option, as recharging yourself will set you up for success later on.

**AQUARIUS- JANUARY 20
TO FEBRUARY 18**

**THE MAGICIAN
UPRIGHT**

The tools and resources you need to achieve your dreams will be available this month. However, you need to make sure you properly utilize them! It is the perfect time to move forward with your plans and dreams, as your previous efforts have brought you everything you need to achieve your dreams.

Establish a clear plan and ask for help if you feel stuck!

Focusing on one thing at a time will make sure you can follow your plan. You may begin to procrastinate, so set

a steady and realistic plan to ensure you get back on track.

**PISCES- FEBRUARY 19
TO MARCH 20**

**QUEEN OF PENTACLES
UPRIGHT**

You previously worked hard to maintain some sort of stability, so make sure you maintain it this March. This month, express your gratitude towards the important people in your life! However, make sure you express gratitude for yourself as well! Focus on creating a calm and balanced life for yourself, as it is easier to adapt to unexpected situations when they arise. If you find yourself in a stressful situation, make sure you think about the most straight-forward way to resolve the issue. If you do not feel like you can resolve it alone, ensure you reach out to someone you trust because you cannot resolve every situation on your own!



THE WESTMOUNT GAZETTE

Westmount Life in Photos





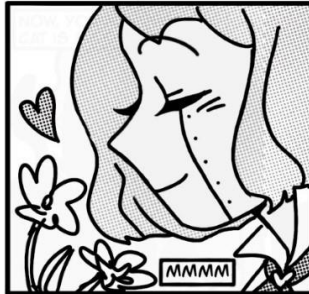
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Comic

By Areej

Shah

FLOWERS



SPECIAL SOMEONE?



UNEXPECTED GIFT :)



**GLITCH THE
ROBOT WITCH**
♥ HAPPY VALENTINES! ♥





THE WESTMOUNT GAZETTE

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