



THE WESTMOUNT GAZETTE

Winter Edition

December 2024

Dinner & Jazz: An Evening that Hit All the Right Notes

By Faith Saccomano

Westmount's annual Dinner and Jazz event brought students, families, and friends together for an unforgettable evening of music, food, and talent from our incredible big bands and jazz vocalists. Held at the Michelangelo Banquet Centre, guests enjoyed a delicious meal while taking in the live music of our jazz musicians.

The night featured captivating performances by our Jazz Choir and both of our school's jazz bands: Jazz 1 and Jazz 2. Jazz 2 kicked off the evening with a lively start and was followed by Jazz 1. Made up of audition-selected students from grades 10-12, they impressed the audience with their dynamic setlist which covered a range of jazz pieces. From ballads such as A Child is

Born by Thad Jones, to jazz classics like Soul Bossa Nova by Quincy Jones that featured soloists from each section of the band.

Between Jazz 1's sets, Westmount's jazz choir dazzled the audience with their stunning voices. From classic jazz standards to more contemporary pieces, they kept the audience hooked with their talent, bringing a delightful energy to the evening.

One of the evening's highlights was the silent auction, where attendees bid on a variety of generously donated items, including gift baskets, restaurant gift cards, artwork, and more. The auction items received several bids, raising over \$6500 in total for the school's music department. These proceeds will go toward purchasing new sheet music, music stands, and other resources and equipment that ensure our students continue to have a high-quality music education.

Once again, Dinner and Jazz

exceeded the audience's expectations by creating an outstanding night of lively jazz music, all thanks to the amazing efforts of conductors Mrs. Grant and Mr. Benning and the hard work of all the performers. A big thank you to everyone involved for making this event possible!

The Highs and Limited Lows of High School Football at Westmount

By Lilyanna Colling-Cen

These goal-oriented Wildcats end their season with many outstanding accomplishments to look back upon and to celebrate, with their most recent win at the Southern Ontario Secondary School Association (SOSSA) semi-finals that has allowed them to move on to compete at the Ontario Federation of School Athletics Association (OFSAA) level. You might be asking, what goes into boys' varsity football at Westmount? Coach Pain gives insight towards the successes and inner workings of this highly



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revered team.

According to Mr. Pain, “a strong culture is most important,” and it allows for every member to support each other and invest their best efforts into the team year after year. The sense of community and commitment are readily apparent, shown off by their current title of Six-Time Consecutive City Champions. This season, the Wildcats won 12-0 against the Westdale Warriors at the City Championship, as well as dominating the SOSSA semi-finals with a 41-2 win against the Winston Churchill Bulldogs. For many team members and for Coach Pain, the most exciting and memorable moments of the season would be these big wins for the team, which are both rewarding and a demonstration all the hard work that is put into the season.

In addition to the performance of the players, Coach Pain recognizes the impact that the high-quality staff has on the team, with many volunteers and former players putting their time in to support the success of Westmount’s football program. In previous years for example, Coach Pain has brought in a former mentor of his that he had learned from throughout his coaching at McMaster University. He recognizes and

values very highly the positive influence on the team that these wonderful staff members and volunteers can bring. Parents of players also have an impact by attending games, fueling players before intense activity, and putting in considerable amounts of their time towards the members of the team.

With training in the summer, longer than two-hour practices during the season, and interest in understanding more of the game on their own time, these student-athletes continue to grow to reach their full potential. One of the most rewarding parts of being a part of this football team to Coach Pain is not just a championship, but “seeing them learn about who they are and what they are capable of, and how far they have come.”

HWDSB EcoSummit: A Collaborative Action

Aaron Zhou

Development through industrial power and technological advancement is the foundation for the future of the human species. Over time however, this development takes its toll on the environment, as the Earth is stripped of its land, resources, and health. In realizing this, the EcoSummit came to life, where

students partaking in environmental teams and clubs across the HWDSB come together at the school board’s primary office on a yearly basis. These students are enabled to participate in engaging discussion and are able to voice their opinions and thoughts with speakers and their own presentations at the end of the summit.

This year, on October 24th, workshops where guest speakers and organizations provided a perspective and a thought on topics of concern, such as global warming and bringing solutions such as the utilization of heat waste from industrial buildings to heat homes. The question remains, is there really a big rush for these things? The answer is yes.

The state the world is currently found to be in a climate emergency with environmentally aware people begging those who care not just for the world, but themselves, to take action. This was a relevant and reoccurring theme within workshops, focusing on global warming and pollution. There is undoubtedly a significant number of initiatives that are taking place to help both humans and the Earth. However, can we consider this to be enough to save the world? No, not at all.

For the future, these



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students from schools all over the world, as young advocates for what is to come of the world, are the ones who need to be exposed to the harsh reality and to be invited to change. Despite this, it is easy to turn a blind eye to what needs to be done. Distractions from the internet, the security and comfort within everyday living, and the ideal thoughts created by the human mind result in the false illusion that all will be well, and that all will stay that way.

Life can be busy, but taking a fraction of the time in one's daily life to put garbage where it belongs and to use more natural light is no big challenge. It is only a collective effort that will bring this world's environment salvation. The Westmount's EcoNinjas aim is to help students be a part of this united front, through collaborative efforts such as the EcoSummit, as well as fun films such as the 1972 Lorax movie in the school cafeteria, and a soon to come winter runway show featuring members of the EcoNinjas club. In this collective effort, every individual has to step up and do their part to keep the school clean, the outdoors tidy, the waters clear, and the inevitable future out of harms way.



Westmount History: Mystery Posts, a new Recreation Center, and more!

By Keegan Massie and Ben Ireland

Westmount Secondary School has undergone many intriguing changes throughout its history. In this Westmount History article, we will discuss some observations about the grounds and surrounding area of Westmount and how it got to this point.

Around a year ago, the writers of this article noticed something peculiar in the field past the office entrance parking lot. There were six fairly large concrete and wood post stubs in the grass.

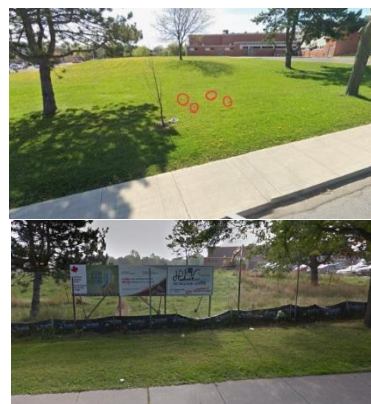
Photo 1. One of the Post Stubs



A few months ago, the writers decided to find out more about these stubs, so they decided to look at historic Google Street View. At first, they saw nothing in that location, so they concluded that the posts dated further back than the Street View could display. This

led the two to talk to many different people, such as Mr. Potvin, Ms. Papalia, and Mr. Maki. They then went to multiple libraries, including the archives of the Central Library of Hamilton. However, it wasn't until they had booked a visit to the archives of HWDSB that they realized a major oversight they had made. In the years of 2011 and 2012, a large amount of construction was underway for the school, and in the very same place where the post stubs stand today, there were three signs detailing the new renovations.

Photo 2-3. Post stubs circled and construction signs for the new recreation center



This leads us to the next question: what were these renovations about, and what did they change about Westmount?

Well, one massive change was that of the Recreation Centre. Originally, the Recreation Centre was attached to Westmount and was much



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smaller. It came right off of the office entrance parking lot and housed a large pool.

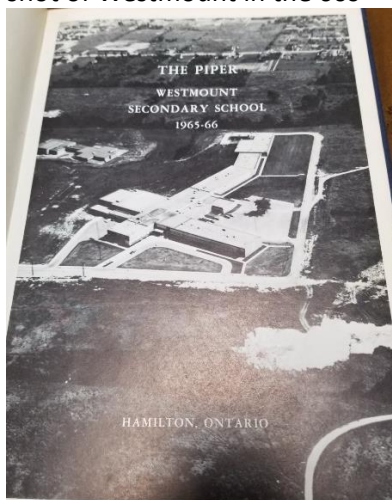
Additionally, at this time the field down the road from the parking lot was much larger, and sports were often played there. In the 2011-2012 renovation, the old Recreation Centre was torn down, and the current one was constructed on the other side of the field.

Photo 4. The old Recreation Center in 2009



As well as the different recreation centre, the region surrounding Westmount was quite different in the 60's. Today, the school is located within a large suburban neighbourhood, stretching many kilometers in every direction. While there are a few fields around Westmount, they pale in comparison to what the area was like previously. At that time, there was little urban development surrounding the school, mostly fields and forest. Along with this, there was originally a drop-off lane right outside the school that stayed until 2011, and a road across the field in the back.

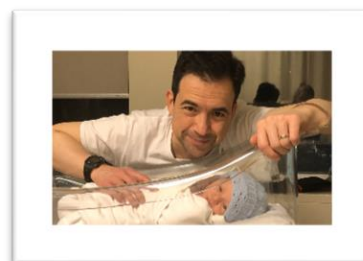
Photo 5. Inner cover of the '65-66 yearbook, showing an arial shot of Westmount in the 60s



In conclusion, this dive into the history of Westmount helps us understand why things are the way they are today. It demonstrates how a relatively old school can stay modern and maintain its integrity through the years, removing outdated structures and replacing them with ones that benefit the needs of today. So much was learned in the making of this article that you can expect to see a second issue of Westmount History in the next news article. It will talk more on the interior changes of Westmount, including the creation of the LC, the introduction of the tech wing, and some fun details you may have never known!

Parental Leave and Mr. Trink's Experience

By Ben Ireland and Keegan Massie



A child being born is an incredibly happy time in people's lives. One Westmount teacher, Mr. Trink, was lucky enough to experience this joy last school year. In the pursuit of being a good dad, he navigated the complexity of parental leave in Canada in order to spend time with his child in the first months of it's life, and was even kind enough to explain this process to Gazette interviewers.

Parental leave is a period of time after the birth of the child when one or both parents are home to take care of their child. The federal version of parental leave has two branches, standard parental leave, and extended parental leave. One can choose between the standard or extended parental benefits, each coming with their own pros and cons. Both choices are per child and are shared by the parents, and it is possible to have a



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maternity leave followed by a paternity leave (for the mother and father respectively). Standard parental leave entitles you to a maximum of 668\$ a week. The other option is to take extended parental leave. Extended parental leave entitles you to a maximum of 401\$ a week and lasts much longer. Mr. Trink's family chose to take the standard parental benefits.

On top of this Mr. Trink had benefits that come from being an Ontarian. Parental leave in Ontario must be done consecutively, and once an employee returns to work, the employer is no longer obligated to provide parental leave benefits. Employees need to provide employers with 2 weeks notice before starting parental leave, and 4 weeks notice before returning. The provincial level benefits keep parents' access to employer benefit plans and prevents employees from being penalized for taking parental leave. This includes parents continuing to receive credit for length of employment, length of service, and seniority while on parental leave. For Mr. Trink, he said that the hardest part was giving 4 weeks' notice for the planned return to work. He needed to try and predict where they would be in 4 weeks, and he chose to come back to school this semester as it seemed like the best choice to support his family.

The last level of parental leave benefits are the employer

benefits. It is always possible for a given employer to provide more or less of these benefits, as they are not obligated to. Employer level benefits are often given on initial offering of employment, or through union negotiations. HWDSB provides access to OTIP (Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan) during parental leave. HWDSB provides parental leave days for the time around the child's birth as parental leave cannot start until the baby is physically born. In HWDSB, a teacher's role in a school is secured for parental leave, but general leave only protects your position for two years. Overall, Mr. Trink had to navigate a very confusing and tangled mess to understand what he is entitled to and make the best choice for him and his family.

Coming back to school after a child has also shifted Mr. Trink's worldview. He has had to learn to say "no" to have the time he wants to spend with his child, but he also feels bad for cutting back on some of the things he could be doing at work. He feels like he should be doing more both for his family and his job, and that he doesn't spend enough time with his child. In essence, no matter what Mr. Trink does, he must sacrifice something else which leaves him with some guilt no matter what he does, and he is more conscious of the trade-offs in what he does now.

All in all, Mr. Trink is fairly satisfied, and he is very grateful that he is lucky enough to live in a

place where he is able to make choices between good options for his new child.

The Santa Claus Parade

By Hunter Ost



The Santa Claus Parade proves yet again to be a magical time for Hamiltonians of all ages. The first parade took place in 1949 with the route going from Maple Avenue and Gage Park where they would follow Maple to Sherman, then head west on Main to James Street, and ended at the Robinsons department store. As Hamiltonians lined the streets for the parade, they experienced the excitement of seeing the amazing events and floats in the parade. Amongst them was the band, local dancers, businesses, Hamilton Cadets, various magical characters from well-known fairytales, and finally the main event for last, Santa Claus riding on his float through the streets waving out to all Hamiltonians whilst spreading holiday cheer. However, this beloved tradition has had a sudden change. It was



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announced that this 2024 parade was going to have a different route than the previous years. The route was adjusted due to upcoming work in downtown Hamilton for the LRT. The parade was located on the mountain this year, where it began on Upper Sherman and Acadia Drive and then proceeded north on Upper Sherman to Limeridge Road, and ended west at Limeridge mall. The time of the parade was also changed to November 16th, 2024, at 2:00 PM, this new time was set for the parade organizers so they could work with Cadillac Fairview to have parade related events held at Limeridge mall. Since this is a traditional event that has been going on for many years, this new route, time, and added events were a big adjustment for Hamiltonians. To get a better take on the parade this year I interviewed someone that partook in the parade, Cadet Sergeant Elyse Maclean. She exclaimed, "it was very fun to be in the parade, however I would have definitely wanted more things in the parade and a lot more of a route, and other than that I thought it was pretty good." In closing, the parade was fun, but it happened to be shorter than usual, making Cadet Maclean wish the route was not changed in the first place.

Throughout the parade, there seemed to be a gap in the Cadets section momentarily that made the experience a bit more confusing and less exciting. This insight helps show the good and bad aspects of the parade, but I leave it up to Hamiltonians to decide whether the parade was as magical and exciting as it once was before.



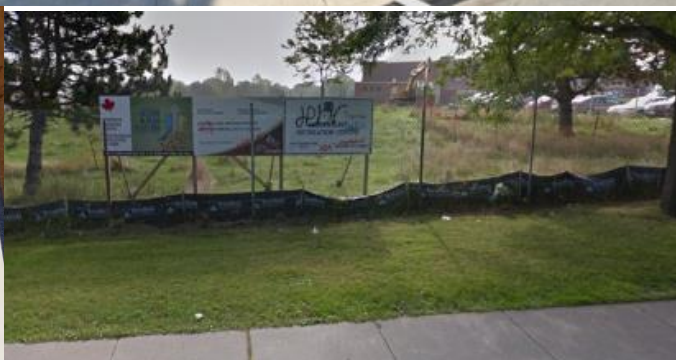
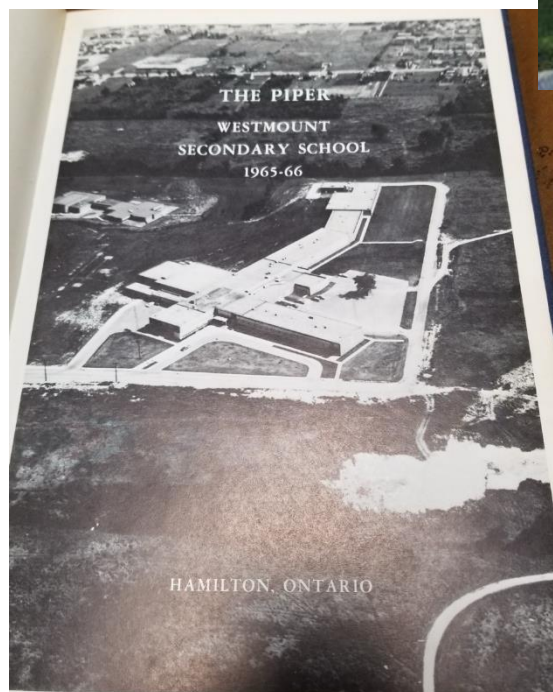
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Life at Westmount





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