



# Paw Prints

CURIOSITY LIVES IN THE WILDCAT

## Fall Edition

**December 2025**

### Toe-Tapping Tunes at Carmen's

**By Julian Jordan**

On November 17th, Westmount students, staff, parents, and more had the opportunity to experience the 24th annual Dinner and Jazz concert at the classy Carmen's Event Centre. Our very own jazz ensembles, Jazz I and Jazz II, entranced the audience with masterful tunes while the listeners enjoyed a premium dinner. Attendees also had the chance to score some fine items in the silent auction, and some tried their luck in a 50/50 gamble (with the profits split between the winner and the school).

"The event was a wonder," an anonymous commenter said. "The music was excellent. The food was pretty great, too."

The event proved to be a success thanks to the effort of our ensembles and the event's coordinators. Special thanks

are due to Mr. Benning, Department Head of Music, who graciously accepted the opportunity to comment.

"Dinner and Jazz has a twofold purpose," Mr. Benning commented during an exclusive interview, "to provide students with an enriching and worthwhile experience performing...in a beautiful setting, and to raise funds for the music department."

Despite what it may seem to some students at Westmount, who receive instruments and materials for free, keeping the department running is costly business. Of course, the instruments themselves are highly expensive due to the precise craftsmanship necessary in their creation, but the costs of their maintenance can add up to become far more in the long run. Reeds, used for clarinets, oboes, saxophones, and more, are extremely expensive; they are also highly fragile, and replacements are common.

Mr. Benning said, "The fundraising benefits every music student at Westmount. Costs are very high these days, and this really helps us to financially offset those costs and not charge students for materials like reeds."

However, Dinner and Jazz also helps students develop their skills. Besides being a fundraiser, the event is also geared towards the performers and their musical experiences, and the preparation has lent a deep sense of connection to the ensemble. In the words of Shae Bullen, who plays Tenor 1 in Jazz I and performed the upbeat bossa feature Like Someone in Love at the concert, "The sense of community is very strong—it's a band like no other. Everyone's close, and that's a big part of the band."

Breanna Shi, first trombonist and performer of Michael Bublé's Sway at the event, commented on the band's cooperation and



# Paw Prints

CURIOSITY LIVES IN THE WILDCAT

leadership. “It’s a productive environment,” she said, “especially between sections when working together. Mr. Benning is really good at facilitating the band with his passion and patience.”

An event like this one takes copious amounts of both time and effort to prepare. When asked about the preparations, Mr. Benning stated that “[the preparation] begins as soon as the last [event] ends!” Some important tasks include selecting the venue (a banquet hall with kitchen capabilities—a grand piano is a great bonus), soliciting donations for the silent auction, and, of course, working with the band.

Mr. Benning has a unique point of view from the conductor’s platform. He says this about his angle: “My perspective involves working with the band and deciding what material we are going to play. Each year we showcase our Grade 12s in a feature tune or solo; it’s an opportunity for graduating students to have a piece of music they’ve chosen to solo or play the lead part. We’re always thinking about the audience and trying to have a diverse repertoire: swing, funk, rock, Latin, pop, even traditional, and more.”

Dinner and Jazz is an event

that benefits Westmount’s entire music department and contributes to the health of the school community as a whole. Mr. Benning says that the real satisfaction is in “seeing the smiling faces of our performers and audience.”

With its unique aspects of community, musical prowess, and collaboration, this year’s Dinner and Jazz proved to be a highlight of this year’s calendar. The music department’s efforts have been fruitful, and the cycle of preparation has begun anew for the Dinner and Jazz’s 25th anniversary next year.

## Study Tips

**By Julian Jordan**

As exams and other tests approach, students may find it difficult to study so here are seven study tips some may find useful.

1. Keep a clear schedule to dedicate a chunk of time for that subject.
2. Turn on ‘do not disturb’ mode on your phone or put it away completely.
3. Section your studying time following the 25/5 rule. For every 25 minutes you spend working on a subject, take a five-minute break.
4. Do not study on your bed, find a desk or another room to

study. This is because your brain thinks of your bed for sleep or rest and studying on it will make your brain think about sleep.

5. In your study room, keep everything you may need (water, snacks, paper, writing utensils, etc.) to avoid leaving the room and getting distracted.

6. Put on some background music. This music should not include lyrics, distracting solos, etc. Some of my favourite albums to study to are The Pianist (soundtrack), Inception (soundtrack), Echoes of Indiana Avenue (Wes Montgomery), Kind of Blue, Sketches of Spain (Miles Davis)

7. Lastly, don’t be too scared or too proud to ask for help from teachers, friends, siblings or others.

## Westmount Morning News(Paper)

**By Lilyanna Colling-Cen**

\*Cue intro music\*. Good morning, and welcome back to another edition of the Westmount newspaper. As the scriptwriter for the Westmount Morning Show, it is lovely to see the positive reception for the Morning Show throughout



# Paw Prints

CURIOSITY LIVES IN THE WILDCAT

the last year. Our first episode released on December 4th, 2024, with the hopes of optimizing communication in our school and provide a fun aspect to advisor classes. With each episode, we try to make improvements to our production quality, news segments, and scriptwriting. Here is process for making our bi-weekly videos:

First, the script is created during the weekend after the SDL day. We gather our information through student council meetings, dates on the agendas, and from other requests from clubs. Then, the start filming on the following Monday during period 3, and we like to start by getting our Introduction video and outro in the studio. We finish our filming by Friday, so all the clips are ready to be edited during the weekend. The final video must get approval from administration to get posted and shared on the advisor slideshow.

Some of our most enjoyable scenes to film are the 'Talk to a Wildcat' segments, where we have student and teacher interviews about various topics. Hearing from the school community brings life to the show, and we try to think of relevant or fun topics to ask about every episode. If

you ever want to be featured in an interview, our most popular times for filming those clips would be during third period in towards the end of the week.

We would love to hear more feedback about the things that you would like to see on the Westmount Morning Show. If you ever have any suggestions or propositions, then feel free to contact us through our instagram account @wmtmorningshow!

## Ontario College Strike

**By Julian Jordan**

On September 11, 2025, more than 10,000 full-time support staff at all 24 Ontario public colleges including Mohawk College went on strike, continuing for five weeks. "We want job security. We want to keep colleges open for students and we want to be able to return to work without being in fear of losing our jobs and help our students without cutting programs." Said Niki MacPherson of Mohawk College. Students also suffered from this strike by having special programs cancelled. "I was sad and frustrated to hear my robotics

program was cancelled." Said a Mohawk student. On October 15th, 2025, the CEC (College Employer Council) and the OPSEU (Ontario Public Service Employee Union) reached an agreement and service workers returned to work as of October 16th, 2025.

## Remembrance Day

**By Julian Jordan**

At 11 A.M, on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1918, the First World War ended, resulting in over 18 million deaths. Every year since then, on November 11th, we have Remembrance Day, a day to honour and remember all soldiers who served in the military. Remembrance Day is a day to remember all those who gave their life for this country. To many people, Remembrance Day serves as a reminder of the people who served for their country, and the people who continue to serve today. Lest we forget the brave soldiers who fought for this country, and the ones who continue to serve today.

## Scholarships

**By Aaron Zhou**

Today, post-secondary education is more expensive



# Paw Prints

CURIOSITY LIVES IN THE WILDCAT

than ever, costing on average over \$20 000 just for the first year of university in Ontario, including the cost of tuition, residence, and meal plans. As a matter of fact, it may seem to all Canadians that prices for everything are only increasing. The average student loan debt in Canada is \$28 000, more than an entire year's worth of costs. On top of university, students then have to worry about securing themselves work, a place to call home, dinner for every night, and potentially starting a family. How is this generation of young students supposed to balance everything while trying to earn their education?

The challenge of 'figuring it out' has been faced by many individuals in Canada, and the reality is, this is the life of an adult. It is a difficult shift for many, but students shouldn't have to feel fear over what their next steps in life will be; that is what scholarships and many other resources are here for.

There are millions of dollars within scholarships that are left untouched, meaning there has not been a single individual who even applied for said scholarships. In fact, even if someone does not necessarily fit the criteria for the scholarship they applied

for the scholarship they applied for, if they are the only person that did apply, then they are legally entitled to that scholarship's award. As with everything, effort goes a long way. Making sure that students apply for as many scholarships as possible, even if it seems out of reach or an insignificant amount of money, adds up. Brute forcing your applications for scholarships is certainly effective and a great thing to consider, however, it is not the only way.

Certain programs have scholarships automatically applied for once you have accepted, which are based off several factors such as your background or your grades. Merit based applications take time, but they are valuable for both the money and the person themselves. The first step starts in school, where focusing on your grades and extracurriculars where you are in a leadership position help make for a well-rounded profile, expressing yourself as someone who is capable academically and taking initiative. Additionally, contests are a great way of earning yourself some money, even if it is a few hundred dollars. These two methods, however, require time and

effort, meaning keeping a strict timeline is crucial. Missing a deadline for certain applications could lose you thousands of dollars, so it is important to start looking even during the summer and into the winter of your graduating year. On top of everything, certain circumstances can be difficult. Financial needs-based scholarships are an excellent choice in this case, focusing on your family's overall income and requirements.

The Westmount Guidance here at Westmount are excellent sources for finding everything students need, with volunteering opportunities, the scholarship report, and more. Now, everything is on the internet, with websites such as [ScholarshipsCanada.com](http://ScholarshipsCanada.com), [Scholartree.ca](http://Scholartree.ca), [yconic.com](http://yconic.com), and more. All in all, there are hundreds if not thousands of amazing people and organizations who want to help, and that includes everyone, so make sure to be thorough and attentive to detail as every dollar counts, especially in these years of your life which are the most important.

**Inflation and**



# Paw Prints

CURIOSITY LIVES IN THE WILDCAT

## changes in pricing practices

**By Ben Ireland**

Why is everything so gosh darn expensive these days? Does it really cost more to make my bread today than it did two years ago? Why does it feel like I am constantly being bled dry for every single penny I have?

There are a few main reasons.

The first is the least satisfying. It truly does cost slightly more to make everything right now. From additional governmental taxes on gas contributing to higher transport costs, to high inflation reducing the buying power of each individual dollar, your daily necessities cost more to make and ship to you today than they did 10 years ago. This isn't even mentioning the fact that nearly every industry is still recovering from COVID-19 and the supply chain issues it caused.

The next reason everything feels more expensive is the shift in pricing strategies across Canada. There are 5 main ways to price a product, but I will only discuss two of them, those being cost-plus pricing and value based pricing. Cost-plus pricing is

when a product has all of the cost to make, transport, store and sell said product added up, then a profit percentage is added so the company can make a profit. Cost-plus pricing is the pricing scheme that I and most other consumers expect retailers to use. However, there has been a gradual shift towards value-based pricing in recent years. Value based pricing is when the price of a product is not at all related to how much it costs to produce it, but rather the maximum possible value that a retailer can convince a consumer to buy it for. An example of Value based pricing would be a luxury good such as an iPhone, where the price is not based off the production cost, but the value consumers give the product.

Value based pricing is fine if it is confined to luxury goods, but it has been slowly creeping into the realm of daily necessities. Loblaw Companies Limited and its parent company, George Weston, have been found guilty of fixing the price of bread for over 14 years just this past September. Executives of the company (which includes Dempster's and Maple Leaf foods) were found guilty of choosing to increase the price of bread

since 2007. Their price increases worked out to be an extra 1.50\$ a loaf of bread just from backdoor agreements. I would like to emphasize this fact. YOUR BREAD COSTS 1.50\$ MORE FOR NO ACTUAL INCREASE IN PRODUCTION COST. In fact, other major retailers like Sobeys, Walmart, Giant Tiger and Metro are currently under investigation by the Canadian Competition Bureau for price fixing.

So, while it is more expensive to produce things right now, many larger companies are using that expense to shift to value-based pricing even on daily necessities, which does not give me hope for a fair distribution of wealth.

## Westmount History: Sports, Clubs, and the OAC Hall!

**By Ben Ireland and Keegan Massie**

Hey Wildcats, it's Ben and Keegan back again with another Westmount history article! Today we are going to talk about some old clubs that seem to have gone the way of the dodo, as well as the logic and construction of the OAC hall.





# Paw Prints

CURIOSITY LIVES IN THE WILDCAT

One of the most interesting clubs to disappear from Westmount was the library club. The library club was a student run club that worked in the LC (see previous editions to learn how the LC changed over the years) before modern renovations. It was composed of several smaller sub-committees that were responsible for running and maintaining the library. However, with the advent of digital media, Westmount's physical library catalogue has shrunk considerably, and there is no longer a need for a library club.

Continuing, another club that has been lost to the sands of time is the Bruce Trail club. The members of this group would help conserve and maintain the section of the Bruce Trail that runs through Hamilton (the whole trail stretches over 900km!). There also seemed to be a number of trips planned for the club, including an overnight hike north and some other treks along the Bruce Trail! Clubs like this show how different the extracurriculars were at Westmount over 60 years ago, and the difference in culture at the time, with over 20 members in a relatively niche club.

On the topic of sporty and

outdoorsy things, there have also been many differences in Westmount's sports teams over the years, and several teams that no longer exist. To start, before the addition of the detached Rec Centre back in 2012, there used to be a large field north of Westmount, which is where our sports teams would practice. This can be seen in the photo below of the football team playing there. Moving on to sports teams that no longer exist, in the 60s there was a weightlifting club that practiced lifting in what seems to be the modern health ed room. Along with this, there was the Westmount Curling team, students competing in the Canadian figure-skating championship, and a ski team, completing a well-rounded array of Westmount winter sports.

To continue with the theme of sports, we will now mention the history of the OAC hall. The OAC hall (the one beside the gym) was added in 1962. The reason for this addition was to provide direct hallway access to the newly added PLP gym. If you go in the OAC hall, you can actually see the outer Westmount brickwork to the left above the lockers, showing that it was essentially tacked on to Westmount's

already existing exterior walls.

The current entry to the OAC hall was originally part of the staff room (now the math science office), which extended to the stairwell that is to the right of the hall. This change is visible in the photo at the end, which depicts the floor to the left of the stairs to the OAC hall.

After the construction of the OAC hall, there were still many changes to come to this part of the school, such as the PLP and the girls' change room. They were built at the same time as the old rec center that was attached to the school (check out our first article to learn more about the rec center). The PLP was originally constructed as a girl's gym and is much smaller than the main gym as a product of the sexism of that time. In 2011 when the new rec center was built and the old one demolished, the door from the school to the rec center was just patched up with bricks.

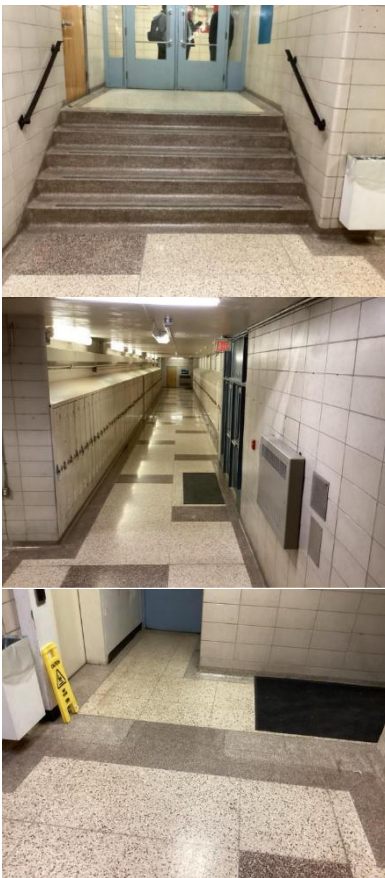
In conclusion, there have been a lot of changes around Westmount over the years, both physically and socially. However, even though so much time has passed, some kind of Westmount newspaper has survived, keeping the student body up to date on



# Paw Prints

CURIOSITY LIVES IN THE WILDCAT

events and stories of the day. Stay tuned for our next article where we will cover ancient Westmount newspapers from the 1960s and what they reveal about Westmount traditions!



## Magician: Apprentice: A Review

By Ben Ireland

MAJOR SPOILER

WARNING!!!

Magician: Apprentice is a

nice little book set in a Medieval Fantasy era. It has your standard Elves, Dwarves, Dragons, and Humans but for once these forces are not gathered against Demons or Orcs, but against aliens. Yes, you read that right. This story has the forces of Midkemia fight the invading Tsurani aliens.

As it is the first entry in Feist's aptly named Riftwar saga, it starts off nice and slow. The protagonist Pug starts off as an orphaned kitchen boy that meets the court magician in the woods, and we begin to see a hint of what his actual power will be. We then get a gradual introduction to how the world is set up with Duke Boric of Crydee and his children, and how the world of Midkemia is ruled (No slavery, which is always appreciated). We see the life of Pug and his best friend Tomas as they grow up and get chosen as apprentices to craftsmen, which I find an interesting way of passing down skills to the next generation. To no one's surprise, Pug is chosen as the apprentice to the court magician Kulgan, but despite an amazing understanding of the theory of magic, Pug is unable to perform any spells, and we get some wonderful

foreshadowing that Pug's way of doing magic will be unique and powerful.

But now here about 100 pages in, the story takes a swing out of left field, and we have a boat from another world crash into the island of Crydee. There are no survivors, but a magic emergency letter nearly pulls Kulgan into a different world, and Duke Borris, in recognizing how undefended they are for an invasion, takes Pug, Kulgan, Tomas, and 50 unnamed soldiers to beg the king for help. Can you guess what happened to those 50 unnamed soldiers? That's right, they all died on the way there, and Tomas got lost in underground mine tunnels and now lives with the Dwarves. Also, the king is insane and only gives them control of the army after they receive a message that Crydee is being attacked by the Tsurani. So, we get a 4 month time skip and Pug and Kulgan are about to stake out how the Tsurani are entering their world, but Pug gets kidnapped, and we never see him nor learn anything about what happened to him for the last 150 pages of the book (which is also only 480 pages long). The entire rest of the book could be summarized as



# Paw Prints

CURIOSITY LIVES IN THE WILDCAT

both sides fight for 4 years and a lot of people, elves, dwarves, and tsurani die.

All in all, I liked the story, I enjoyed how Pug was a very calm and mature protagonist while still feeling like a teenager, I loved the world building and magic system (Which works via objects, talismans, and focuses, which is part of why Pug is so unique because he does not need these to do magic). I do however find it incredibly irritating when the protagonist just disappears from the story, and how beyond a few hints we have no clue what the "Hidden power" inside Pug is. Most of my grievances however are explained with the fact that this is actually the first part of a much longer book that Feist's publishers made him split into two, so if you want to give it a read, check out Magician: Apprentice by Raymond E. Feist, just don't forget to pick up Magician: Master at the same time to get a (Very satisfying) conclusion to the story.





# Paw Prints

CURIOSITY LIVES IN THE WILDCAT

**Horoscopes presented by resident Astrologer, M. Balthazar Charle-Lattin.**

## **ARIES - ♈**

You may feel an intense burst of motivation, which evaporates spontaneously upon your sitting down to work. How unfortunate.

## **TAURUS - ♉**

You should take the opportunity to relax whenever possible. Procrastination is a worthy tactic, assuming you have enough chocolate to deal with the aftermath.

## **GEMINI - ♊**

Your insatiable curiosity will lead you to places. The stars do not tell me what sort of places those will be.

## **CANCER - ♋**

I often sympathise with the difficulties of crabs. I would recommend the tactic of not being boiled alive.

## **LEO - ♌**

You would do well to bring your ego down a notch. It would certainly emphasize your “natural charm”. I think that whoever defined this sign was born in it...

## **VIRGO - ♍**

The stars foretell an especially bad cup of coffee, but I suppose that is part of life.

## **LIBRA - ♎**

I think you have it rough, being the only inanimate objects of the zodiac. However, it is very easy to achieve your famous balance when you do not move at all.

## **SCORPIO - ♏**

However mysterious you may be, you are not fooling anyone with an aloof demeanor. It would benefit you to set foot on the earth and use your “emotional skills” outside of your head.



# Paw Prints

CURIOSITY LIVES IN THE WILDCAT

## **SAGITTARIUS - ♐**

In your quest for knowledge, you may have come upon the belief that the stars have no effect on your life. That is quite untrue. Why, just look at the astronomers!

## **CAPRICORN - ♑**

Your patience and perseverance would be admirable, if only you used them.

## **AQUARIUS - ♒**

You may soon encounter a very large rat.

## **PISCES - ♓**

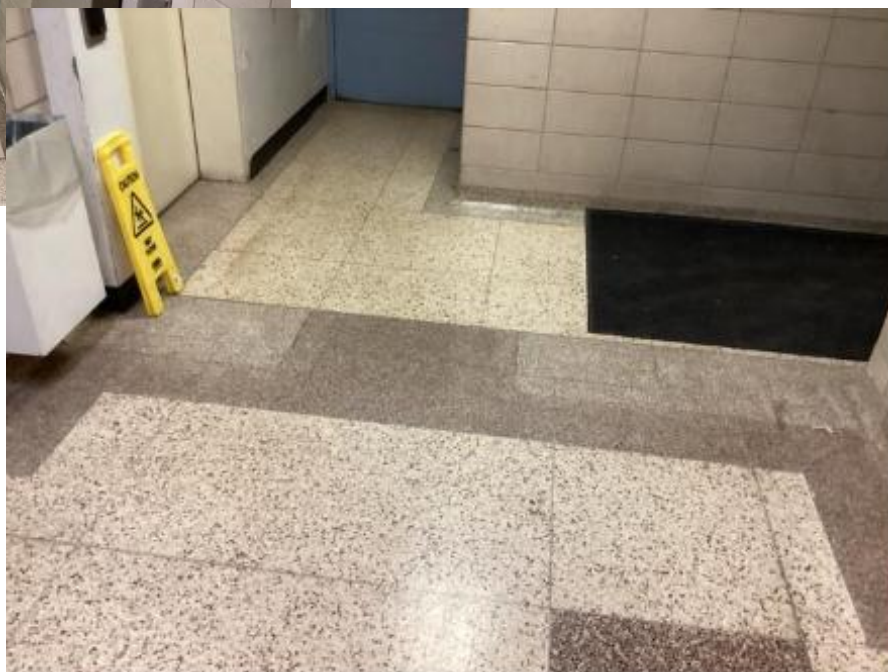
Your extraordinary psychic abilities must grant you the ability to predict your future for yourself. Thank you for saving me the work.



# Paw Prints

CURIOSITY LIVES IN THE WILDCAT

## Life at Westmount



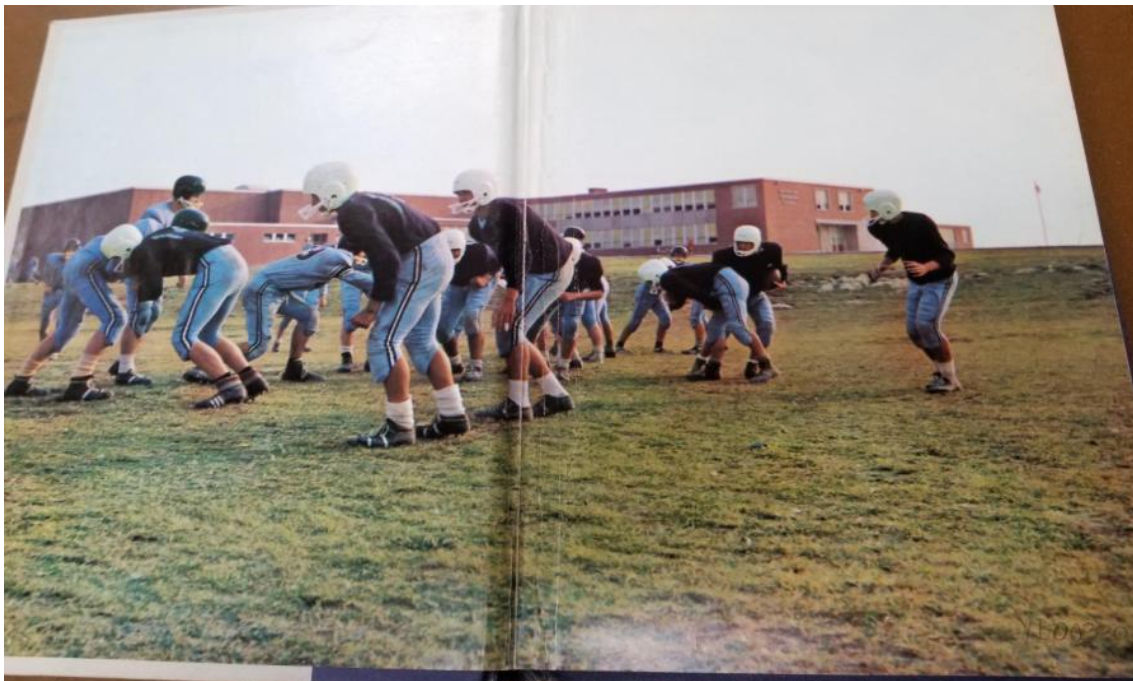
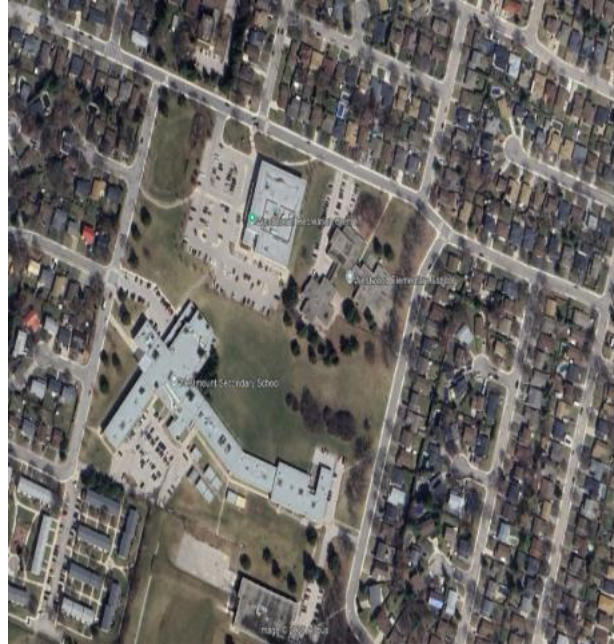
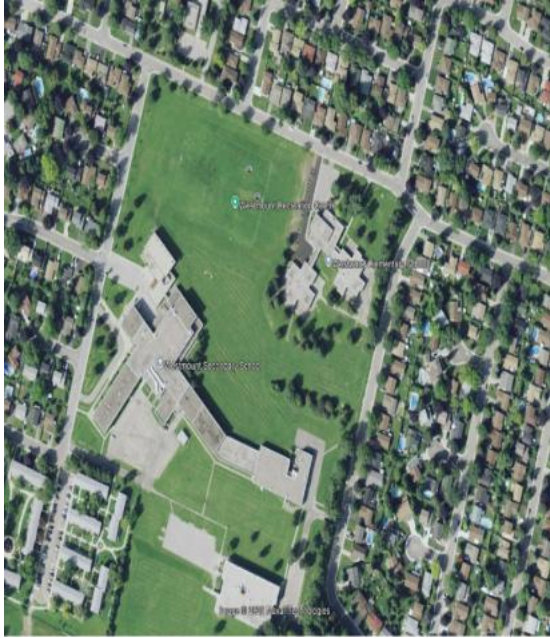




# Paw Prints

CURIOSITY LIVES IN THE WILDCAT

## Life at Westmount





# Paw Prints

CURIOSITY LIVES IN THE WILDCAT

## Life at Westmount







# Paw Prints

CURIOSITY LIVES IN THE WILDCAT

## Student contributors

<b>Writers</b> Lilyanna Collins-Cen Ben Ireland Keegan Massie Aaron Zhou Julian Jordan	<b>Student Council Representative</b> Maple-Gin Benson
	<b>Meeting Notetaker</b> Ben Ireland
<b>Editor</b> Shae Bullen	<b>Advertising</b> Owen Griffin
<b>Layout/Design</b> Ben Ireland	<b>Resident Astrologer</b> Joshua Ricardo Gonzalez

## Unclaimed roles

<b>On Scene Photographer</b>
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