



Chatterbox



Alumni Edition | Walnut Hills High School | Cincinnati Ohio | Summer 2020

WHAT'S TRENDING



Walnut Hills High School from the 1918 Remembrancer

WHHS and the Spanish Flu

Geoff Sutton, from the Walnut Hills Historical Society, reminds readers of the Spanish Flu and how it impacted WHHS:

The Last Global Pandemic: Walnut Hills High School, 1918-1919

The Walnut Hills High School yearbook, the *Remembrancer* for 1918-1919, presents a spectacular perspective on the year of the "Spanish" Flu. 1918 was also the last year of the "European War," after the entry of the US known as the First World War. The book opens with a dedication to the memory of "those brave boys of Walnut Hills High School" killed in the war, a list of twenty including some notable Cincinnati names. Alumni must

"AN EPIDEMIC OF INFLUENZA IS STARTED."

have thought it spoke well of the school, in those bygone days, that most of the young graduates had died as officers.

The class of 1919 was also a graduating high school class with all the hopes and "in" jokes and societies and teams the school at Ashland and Burdette sponsored every year. Yet from the beginning the class confronted grown-up difficulties. A poetic "Class History" by graduating Senior **Emma Freericks** recounted the momentous events since the class had started high school in the fall of 1915. In their sophomore year

"The message sped throughout the land. One day, That war had been declared to rid the world Of Prussia's autocratic government."

continued on page 3

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Alumni,

Greetings from High on the Hill.

2020 literally and figuratively has tested all of us. The COVID-19 global pandemic turned our world topsy-turvy. Our faculty and students had to adjust to online learning, a reconfiguration of high stakes testing, an altered college admission policy, and the derailment of end-of-year expectations.

Like all of us, social distancing and masks have become the norm. Spending time with family and friends we normally hold close has translated to Zoom encounters. And yet, I continue to hear from many of you who want to reconnect with former classmates to stay in touch.

I am sure all of us have stories of everyday heroes in our midst. Perhaps this time has allowed us to pause, gain perspective, and celebrate the smallest and happiest moments. Today's challenges have strengthened our resilience, caused us to examine how we work, look at things differently and re-envision a future that looks different but still meets our goals.

This *Chatterbox* will give you an idea of what the end of the school year looked like for our students and faculty. You'll read about ways we reached out to help, as well as ways that you helped our students.

This week we will begin the process of determining different scenarios for next year. Of course, we will be guided by what the district decides, but we will have some flexibility on the specifics. As we reflect on the end of the school year, we are assessing what went right and what we can improve upon for the future.

At this point, it looks like we will start the year off with a blended approach, with all students being able to attend in-person instruction 2-3 times per week. The remaining days, students will access their classes remotely. With that said, we must be prepared to go totally online if the situation changes. We are determined to do whatever it takes to ensure the WHHS experience continues for our 3,000 students.

On a final note, in addition to the virus, we all have been affected by the recent social unrest. Walnut Hills High School has always been a beacon of tolerance. As students, your analytical and creative thinking skills were honed, equipping you to draw upon the knowledge of the past, weigh the questions of the present, and envision the possibilities of the future. We believe that intellectual achievement is intrinsically valuable in a democratic atmosphere of mutual respect, social equality, and personal responsibility. To paraphrase **Dr. Ted Silberstein '54** in giving advice to our seniors, "Learn to listen, to never stop questioning the truth of what you learn. Don't just stop at the headlines. You should never assume you know it all on any subject, as someone in the room might well know more." With this in mind, coming together for the greater good is a goal that we as human beings are more than capable of achieving.

Sursum Ad Summum

Debbie Heldman, Executive Director
WHHS Alumni Foundation

WHHS Virtual Learning during the COVID-19 pandemic

HISTORY DEPARTMENT

History Day is a project done in the 8th grade. This is the "Junior" division for the Regional, State, and National competitions. A broad theme is selected each year, with "Breaking Barriers" this year's theme. The kids are allowed to select any topic they wish, as long as it is at least 20 years old. A topic closely related to Ohio is preferred but not mandatory. Students conduct months of research in preparation for completing a final product in one of these categories:

- Live Performances (both individual and group categories)
- Website Creation (both individual and group categories)
- Interactive Exhibits (both individual and group categories)
- Documentary Films (both individual and group categories)
- Papers (individual only)

Their thesis must demonstrate how their selected topic illustrates the broader theme. The final product supports the thesis, and makes an attempt in the conclusion to draw parallels to modern times.

We had 4 projects that won top honors at the state level and are moving on to the National level. One was a documentary about our Olympian, **De Hart Hubbard '21**. Another was a debate between David Hume and Descartes performed as an operetta.

ENGLISH

Jake Riordin's 7th graders continued their study of poetry. The students were given the mission to creatively publish their poetry and they went all in posting poems on telephone poles, taping poems to cereal boxes and reading their work aloud to friends and family. To the right is a work by **Henry Hittle**.

Autumn Light

You sit in the Autumn light soaking in the fresh air.
The red, yellow, and brown leaves fall around us.
Your hands are worn from years of labor.
You look like one of the leaves, tired.
The leaves crunch as squirrels race through it.
The air is cool and sharp leaving our breath steaming through the thin cold air.
Suddenly, a light rain falls.
I wish it would leave so I could finally be at peace.
Jackets soaked to near exhaustion.
The rain is the reaper coming to take you early.
Rain raps on the regal forest.
A clearing, a voice that calms us.
The golden gate that smells of flowers as we walk through.
You suddenly find yourself soaking in the Autumn light no more.

SCIENCE

Katie Sullivan, who teaches Chemistry and 8th grade science, has her own science-teaching YouTube channel and typically does some sort of wildly entertaining science demo on Wednesdays. **Kylie Martinod**, who teaches botany, created a botany blog for her class. Her students took virtual field trips—for instance, while learning about soils she went on a local hiking trail and took some short videos testing the different soil types in different habitats. She also made every Monday Ohio wildflower identification day.

Kathy Noland, AP Psychology teacher, is mixing in activities that on the surface appear to just be for fun or for social engagement. She played an online version of "Would You Rather" with her Psych and Sociology kids. It sounds like they had a great time and the kids got a lot out of the engagement. While perhaps not obvious to the students the underlying effect was the kids got into the psychology and habits associated with human nature.

MUSIC

The Music department's mission is to help each student reach their full potential through music. They will NOT let the COVID-19 pandemic affect the mission! Here are some of their accomplishments this spring:



WHHS Music Department faculty deliver instruments to students

- Delivered over 225 instruments to band and orchestra students
- Orchestra students learned how to tune their instruments virtually in one-on-one sessions with their teachers
- String players explored composing and arranging music using Noteflight, MuseScore, and Flat
- Students learned other instruments and created videos featuring them on each instrument
- The jazz bands took virtual lessons with members of the Jazz Academy which is affiliated with Jazz at Lincoln Center in NYC
- A musical mosaic was prepared by students in Beginning Band through Wind Ensemble that will be combined into one performance of "Don't Worry, Be Happy"
- Choir students uploaded audio clips of themselves singing their parts of music they were working on before school closed (the *Hairspray JR* project)



THE ALUMNI FOUNDATION'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

The WHHS Alumni Foundation jumped in to help the school community by:

SENIORS AND GRADUATION

Assisted in paying AP Fees. Close to 3,000 Advanced Placement tests were administered. There is a fee associated with taking each test. This year a higher number of students applied for assistance due to the financial strains caused by the pandemic. A special thanks to the Class of 1999 for their class gift and several individuals who stepped forward to offset these costs.

Graduation

- On June 13th, we finally had our “drive by” graduation, which had been postponed due to the unrest in the city. It was actually quite festive, and we delivered as much pomp and circumstance that could be mustered. The campus had on its formal attire with manicured grounds, lovely flowers, banners, and balloons. The circle became “Graduation Way.” Our faculty and staff donned blue and gold face masks, socially distanced, and offered cheers and words of congratulations to our graduates. As each car entered, we paused and the counselors read each student’s name. Principal John Chambers handed (with gloves on of course) each graduate their diploma to make it official. We were here from early morning until late afternoon but it was a well-orchestrated steady stream of decorated cars and lots of smiles, laughter and tears.
- We offered our congratulations to the Class of 2020 on digital billboards close to school, that included rotating photos of each senior.
- We have created a special book for each senior that mirrors the format of our actual graduation, photos, speeches, alumni letters etc. It is in the printing stage and we will hand deliver them in a few weeks to all 490 seniors. Thanks so much to all our alumni who heeded our call for letters and notes of encouragement. They will become a special part of this year’s class remembrance. Read two submissions on page 3!
- Special 2020 T-Shirts for each senior were designed and distributed. Special thanks to **Max Elkins '68** for all his efforts in a quick turnaround.
- Cum Laude Initiates—we designed a special box which housed the cords, pin, certificate, and copies of speeches that would have been delivered at our traditional Cum Laude Dinner.
- Daisy Chain/Ushers—delivered bouquet of daisies/spirit wear to all the initiates at their homes.

Scholarships

Awarded over \$300,000 of college/university scholarship to graduating seniors. We created an online application process for our seniors, and the scholarship committee scheduled weeks of numerous Zoom meetings to make our selections. Traditionally the scholarships are awarded at the Senior Awards Night which of course was cancelled, so we gave the scholarships out individually when the seniors returned their books and retrieved their caps and gowns. They were thrilled and most appreciative.

Official Goodbye

We are planning a December Reunion (or whenever safe) to welcome them back to campus to officially say goodbye.

FACULTY/STAFF

- In lieu of our traditional summer sendoff ice cream social we sent Graeters gift cards with a note to all faculty/staff members. Special thanks to **Rick Graeter '82** for his assistance in this endeavor.
- T-shirts for their return to campus

REUNIONS AND EVENTS

- No surprise most of our reunions are rescheduling for future dates. We are in the throes of getting out notices, checking dates for next year, negotiating deposits, issuing refunds etc.
- Rethinking our 125th year celebration which will be rescheduled for future date.
- We are considering other events that could be held virtually.
- Most importantly, we are staying in touch with you. Many of you have called for contact information of classmates that you have been thinking about.
- Updating you on social media/web page of things we think you might be interested in learning about.

SUMMER ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

- We are working on various scenarios for our end of the summer programs: *Ready Set Go* and *Ready Set Review*. We have completed our for credit summer classes switching it from an in class environment to a virtual environment. Who would have thought you could have a virtual PE class!

We do not know what the future holds. We do know the challenges will continue and we are determined to do whatever it takes to ensure the WHHS experience continues for our students. Your support along the way has been invaluable, knowing you are in our court has allowed us to be proactive and nimble in filling the gaps or finding solutions. We offer our sincerest thanks for your past support and appreciate your continued support as we move forward.

SOME GOOD NEWS

Perfect ACT Scores

Eleven Walnut Hills students have earned the highest composite ACT score of 36 during the 2019-2020 school year. According to ACT, “Fewer than half of 1 percent of students who take the ACT earn a top score.” Congratulations to these exceptional students!

That’s not all, twenty juniors and one sophomore earned an outstanding score of 35!

Students Appear in French Publication

Two of our French students will be published in French in the spring edition of the “ELan,” (a publication for teachers of French). Their essays were selected by the Société Honoraire de Franais for their 2019 Creative Writing Awards. Of note, they are fourth year students and competed against fifth and six years students.

JETS Rankings

Final State Rankings are in and our 2020 Walnut Hills JETS Engineering Team finished strong. We took four teams of eight to regional and state. The students prepared and submitted a research essay before competition day, and practiced their engineering computation and problem solving to be completed on site. Our teams took 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 6th place in the engineering computations and 1st and 4th in the essay. Three of the four teams qualified for Nationals but of course the completion has been cancelled

National Latin Exam

Highlights include :

- 106 Gold Summa Cum Laude Medal Winners (many were near perfect papers)
- 77 Silver Maxima Cum Laude Medal Winners
- 48 Magna Cum Laude Winners
- 34 Cum Laude Winners
- 9 perfect papers from our 8th grade Latin 2AA students
- 4 perfect papers from our 9th grade Latin 3AA students
- 1 perfect paper from AP Latin
- 2 perfect papers from Latin 5 (graduating seniors who have taken the NLE two more years after their last Latin class!)

Cappies Announced

Big kudos to our theater department! It has been another record breaking year for our production of *Urinetown* and our school critic team. We garnered 31 Cappie nominations, surpassing our record of 27 nominations for *Into the Woods*. The Cappies (Critics and Awards Program) is an international program for recognizing, celebrating, and providing learning experiences for high school theater and journalism students and teenage playwrights.

Listed below are some of the nominations.

- Marketing and Publicity
- Hair and Makeup
- Sound/Props/Lighting/Costumes/Set
- Orchestra
- Choreography
- Creativity
- Stage Management and Crew
- Ensemble in a Musical
- Featured Actress/Actor in a Musical
- Female/Male Dancer
- Female/Male Vocalist
- Comic Actress/Actor in a Musical
- Supporting Actress/Actor in a Musical
- Best Song
- Best Musical
- Critic Team



Jack Giglia as Officer Lockstock and Molly Munn as Little Sally perform in *Urinetown*

The department was in the midst of practicing for the junior high play, *Hairspray Jr.*, when the school was closed. Delaying the play was not an option, so they were able to capture a brief piece of the show to perform for the public, which we have entitled *The Hairspray Jr project*. We are proud to share this with you—a glimpse of what could have been with this talented cast of kids. The link is provided below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6qAUawbZBnw&feature=youtu.be>



WHHS and the Spanish Flu
continued from page 1

A Calendar for the Senior year includes comments about the ways in which the larger world impinged on student life. October was dominated by a single event. Beginning on the 2nd: "An epidemic of influenza is started." On the 3rd, "The flu is getting worse." On Monday the 7th we read "Whaddya know about this? Schools shut down on account of the flu!" On Friday the 11th we learn "No School all week. Shows are closed too, alas—also soda water and churches." After that, every Friday through November 8th we see the note "No school all week." That fifth week, the Calendar added the remark "This won't last forever." Monday November 11 contained a still more startling notation: "The Germans throw in the sponge and peace there is. Grand blowout downtown. Parade and superfluity of noise and confetti." This, I suppose, is what comes of a classical education abridged by five weeks at home with neither church nor soda water.

Emma Freerick's Class History a bit more elegantly recounted

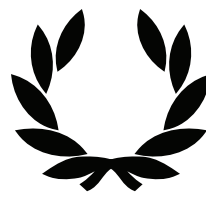
"The world went mad with joy, 'flu' was forgot
For exhibitions of unbounded bliss.
The doors of school again were opened wide;
Once more we started in to gain success;
But just before Thanksgiving Day, the 'flu'
Broke out again, and we were quarantined
Until the last days of the waning year."

In Walnut Hills as in the wider world, the tremendous disruption of the flu, closing the high school for practically all the 1918 part of the school year, took a back seat to the news of the Great War. Somehow, Armistice Day seemed not only bigger news, but also a more momentous liberating influence.

The authorities threw open the doors of social isolation. The new virus, however, paid no heed to political news and 11/11/1918 invited a resurgence.



Emma Freerick's 1919 Senior picture



Sursum Ad Summum

We asked alumni for their help in writing letters to our seniors which are to be included in a special book for the Class of 2020. You responded with heart, soul, practical advice, words of wisdom and even humor!

We thought we would share a few for you to enjoy also.

Ashley Trotter '04

To graduating Seniors:

This will end up as just a blip on your life story, though more memorable than for many others. Remember where you were, and how you spent your time in this moment, and use it to move forward and to make the world around you better. This is a big step, but not the only step. Continue to choose your courses wisely and seek not just success but fulfillment. Congratulations!

Irwin Weil '46

To the WHHS Class of 2020

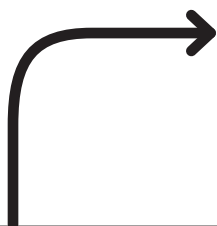
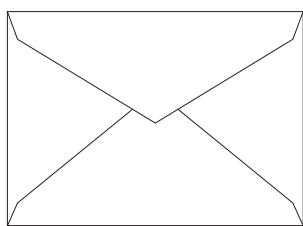
I was in your shoes 74 years ago. One would think you would achieve wisdom in that time. Whether or not that's true you can decide in the year 2024.

With your required years of Latin you can develop good respect for the ability to handle the ideas and feelings of a good language.

After the years of torture mastering mathematics, you can learn to think clearly in a lineal way.

After years of imbibing history you can muster the strength to deal with human stupidities and with a more than equal amount of human understanding.

In every case you will be fortified by an excellent high school education. Here's wishing you genuine achievement together with the pleasures that can bring.



Make an envelope!

(And support the WHHS Alumni Foundation)

For some crafty fun, cut out the envelope following the solid lines. The dashed lines indicate where to fold.

Complete the form including payment information, or insert your check, make the folds and tape in the indicated spots. Add a stamp and drop the envelope in the mail.

Thank you!

Enclosed is my gift (make checks payable to: WHHS Alumni Foundation).

To donate online visit: www.Walnuthillseagles.com

Amount \$ _____

Charge to: Visa Mastercard American Express Discover

Credit Card # _____ Security Code: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Signature _____ Phone _____

Donor's Name _____ WHHS Class of _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Note: If you would like to donate stock, please contact Barbara Bates at 513-363-8437 for more information.

Please send me information about Endowment/Planned Giving gifts.

My gift is in: Memory of Honor of

Please notify: Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Address service requested.

REUNIONS UPDATE

As you can imagine, the COVID-19 pandemic and related government directed public health orders have modified the planning and execution of our 2020 reunions and events. What is not altered is our commitment to our alumni, celebrating our shared Eagle pride, and our mission to provide support for Walnut Hills High School. Please check in periodically for reunion and events additions and/or updates.

- 1 Go to www.walnuthillseagles.com
- 2 Click on the Alumni tab
- 3 Click on Reunions and Events



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Have an idea for a story or need to contact the Alumni Foundation? Here is how:

Debbie Heldman, Executive Director
513-363-8496
debbieheldman@gmail.com

Connie Ring, Annual Fund Director
513-363-3502
connieringwhhs@gmail.com

Jenny French, Director of Engagement,
Reunions & Events
513-363-8501
jennyfrenchwhhs@gmail.com

Barbara Bates, Bookkeeper
513-363-8437
batesba@cps-k12.org

Carolyn Gilman, Special Projects
Coordinator
513-363-8503
cgillmanwhhs@gmail.com

Jane Stephens, Assistant to the
Director
513-363-8568
janestephenswhhs@gmail.com