

for the WRECKORD

Staples High School PTA

70 north avenue, westport, connecticut 06880

From the desk of John Dodig

I had a discussion earlier in the year with Coach Petroccio about growing up in New Haven and remembering one area school known for its hockey team. The team seemed unbeatable BUT the price for their success seemed to be that teachers disliked working in the school because of the attitude of the athletes, especially hockey. That image remained in my brain all these years. It was only after I became a principal that I realized it didn't have to be that way.

I now find myself as the Principal of Staples High School in charge of over 1,800 students with about 34 sports teams, a renowned arts program, and an academic program most schools would love to have. Our teachers love working at Staples. One might ask, after reading the beginning of this piece, how we can have a winning sports program occupying the time of hundreds of student athletes and still have a tranquil, supportive, and caring school environment? There are many answers to that question. One is that you send us athletes who appreciate theater and the arts. You send us artists and musicians who also play sports. You send us young people eager to become well educated and who spend hundreds of hours each year involved in sports, the arts, volunteerism, clubs and other activities. They are well-rounded young people.

Another reason requires that I go back to my opening statements and say something about our athletes. Over my seven years at Staples, I have watched hundreds of games, gotten to know many athletes, and spent time getting to know many of our coaches. I have listened to Coach Petroccio talk to his boys on all levels of his football team. I have heard Dan Woog speak to his soccer players and Cathy Schager talk to her Lacrosse girls. All of them send the same message to their players. They always talk about their responsibility to academics and to fair play on the field. Team members are reminded that because of their special athletic talent, they are required to make a contribution to their school community. They hear from us over and over again that they are role models, and they accept that responsibility.

If you were to spend time in the cafeteria during lunch as I do and watch the interactions of our athletes during season and off season, you would notice that there is NO swagger. Even when some of them wear their FCIAC medal and ribbons or their State Championship medals, they do not strut around showing off. I have never heard a single complaint from a teacher about members of a team trying to run roughshod over classmates or their teachers. They continue to be respectful, positive members of the student body. Much of that comes from what they learn from their coaches.

As you know, I often speak to my students about caring for others, accepting difference in others, and treating each other and adults with respect. The hard-hitting message I shared with them in December about the use of hurtful words to demean minority groups could never have been delivered if not for the respect we have for one another. In some high schools even I would never attempt to deliver that address to the entire student body.

I chose this topic because it is February and I thought I should find something to say that fits into the theme of Valentine's Day. What I have been talking about, really, is love and respect for one another. I see that every day at Staples, and not just on Valentine's Day.

Thank you!

Thanks to your participation in the third annual **Holiday Book Fair**, the PTA made \$3,002.64 to support various school programs including the Wrecker Mini Grants Program. That is a 23% increase over last year's book fair! These are fantastic results and we want to thank all of you who shopped and remembered to mention "Staples" at the registers. These results confirm that Staples parents are the best!

We have lots of additional thanks to spread around for all the coordinated efforts that helped make these stellar results possible:

- ◆ To the **moms and student volunteers** who did a beautiful wrapping job for customers.
- ◆ To **Bill Plunkett** from Guidance and his students from the **Student Ambassadors Club** who came after school and enthusiastically wrapped customers' purchases.
- ◆ To **Justin Miller** from the Music Department for arranging the **Orphenians** to perform, creating an enjoyable atmosphere in the store.
- ◆ To Freshman, **Amy Perelberg** who designed our eye-catching flyer.
- ◆ To **Mr. Honeycutt** and **Mr. Zito** for helping to get the word out in their clever ads on Good Morning Staples and Wrecker Radio.
- ◆ To the students from the **ABC House** who dedicated their time to help greet and gift wrap.

Thanks again to everyone who participated.

Jill Haymes and **Julie Beitman**, Co-Chairs

The PTA's extensive array of programs and fundraisers cannot happen without the support of many, many dedicated volunteers throughout the year. **We wish to thank each of you** and our apologies for any that we ever miss in the Newsletter. Please know we appreciate everyone's efforts! With that said, we would like to thank **Clay Andrews, Pam Collins, Kumi Goto, and Christa Panny** for contributing baked goods to **Cookies and Cheer**.

SHS PTA Nominating for 2012-2013

SHS PTA NOMINATING COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS

The SHS-PTA Nominating Committee is beginning work on identifying candidates for next year's PTA Board (2012/2013). If you have an interest in serving on the Board in any capacity or have any questions, please contact someone from the Committee list below to let them know. Descriptions of all positions can be found on the Staples High School website at <http://shs.westport.k12.ct.us/pta>. Please inform us of which positions you would be interested in as soon as possible to ensure that your name is included in the list of potential candidates.

Nominating Co-Chairs: Joanne Heller (203) 256-0507 jgheller@optonline.net
Ellen Lautenberg (203) 454-9505 e.lautenberg@gmail.com
Past President: Sandy Rappaport (203) 227-3693 slrapp@optonline.net
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From the Music Department

The weather has been calm, but the Music Department has kept up the heat in February with many exciting events and excellent music learning!

On January 13th and 14th, twenty Staples students participated in the **2012 Western Region Music Festival Band and Orchestra**, and performed with other fine student musicians from all over Western Connecticut at Darien High School. They are: **Katie Hickson**, Flute (also Piccolo); **Jason Lustbader** and **Jackson Ullmann**, Trumpets; **Ari Teicher**, French Horn; **Chris Clark**, Percussion; Violinists **Judy Feng**, **Devon Foggio**, **Chaihyun Kim**, **Sarah Lavy**, **Monique Medina**, **PJ Syrrist**, **Danlei Wang**, **Dominica Wardell**, and **Katie Zhou**; Violas: **Jason Karlen** and **Kevin Xiang**. **Max Lieben**, Cello; Double Bassists **Freddy Hertan** and **Olivia Kapell**; and **James Bell**, vocal Bass. Congratulations to them all!

The following Staples Regional participants were selected by score to audition on February 4th for the **All-State Music Festival**. They are: Flutist **Katie Hickson** (also Piccolo); **Jason Lustbader** and **Jackson Ullmann**, Trumpets; **Ari Teicher**, French Horn; **Chris Clark**, Percussion; Violinists **Judy Feng**, **Devon Foggio**, **Chaihyun Kim**, **Sarah Lavy**, **Monique Medina**, **Danlei Wang**, **Dominica Wardell**, and **Katie Zhou**; Violas: **Jason Karlen** and **Kevin Xiang**; **Max Lieben**, Cello; Double Bassists **Freddy Hertan** and **Olivia Kapell**; and **James Bell**, vocal Bass. We will be eagerly awaiting results!

On February 1st at 7:00 pm, the Staples High School Chamber Orchestra will join the middle schools' All-City Band and Orchestra for the **All-City Concert** at Bedford Middle School.

Also in February on the 7th and 9th, the Staples Music Department will present its fabulous **Youth Concerts** to Westport Schools' 3rd through 6th graders in the Staples Auditorium. This year's exciting concert will feature the Staples Symphonic Band and A Cappella Choir, and the theme will be "Over the Rainbow and Beyond", featuring wonderful music and captivating visuals that have been inspired by man's fascination with the sky, moon, stars and the heavens.

Another great concert is scheduled for **Tuesday, February 8th**, when the Music Department freshmen and sophomore ensembles will present the **Winter Concert**. Please join us at 7:30 pm in Staples' Auditorium for this fine program.

We all know how wonderful music is, how it enriches our lives and how it helps students learn. Music learning is not only embedded with 21st Century Skills, but also with something more important – Joy!

Thank you for your support of Westport's music program!

Thoughts from a former SHS Student...

Harry graduated from Staples in 2010 and spent a gap year traveling. Harry is bright, but did not fit the typical Staples student model....apply early decision, go off to college and start work as soon a college is finished. He always felt that there was more to life than what most people expect of a Staples senior. He knew he had a wanderlust and had the courage to postpone college for a year to satisfy this need. He also had the support of his parents. I remember wonderful conversations with Harry about life in general. As a senior he had a full beard and looked like an adult of 25 years of age. He was a mature man in the body of an 18 year old boy. Hearing about his adventure, what he learned about life, and seeing the look of contentment on his face told me that he absolutely made the correct decision.

John Dodig

College Is Not Going Anywhere. But Life is...

Staples has more opportunities for their students than many other high schools in this country. For me, Staples was a place to explore my creativity through the variety of art classes that were available. However, being the unsettled teenager as I was (as are many teenagers) I quickly rejected subjects that to me made little "sense"- such as math. My first three years in high school were overall positive and exciting. But the moment I heard that I had gotten into college, high school seemed more meaningless to me than ever. The idea of even trying in math class was more pointless to me than it was useful or productive. I just wanted to be free. By the time of December in my senior year I felt very unmotivated, I was dragging my feet to school seemingly unhappy with my situation: Why did I have to go to high school? I thought of school as such a burden and simply could not wait until I was done. Sometime in the early winter months I began asking myself if going to college straight after high school would be the best idea for myself. I came to the conclusion that I wanted to attend college but I simply was not ready. I thought, "What is the reason for spending 50,000 dollars per year on a college that I was simply not mentally prepared for?"

It was this question that has made my life as amazing as it has been. I decided that I would take one year off before attending college in order to get my brain in the right place. So, upon graduating I worked endlessly throughout the summer in order to save money. At the end of August 2010 I left Westport and began my journey. The details of my year are not at all important to what it is that I am trying to explain.

The important aspects of my year off are the lessons that I learned: Hard work, keeping an open mind and staying positive. These three attributes are what I acquired by taking a year off.

For a parent, it may seem very far off that your child should ever be set free into this world of madness. However, the qualities that can be achieved through experiences of travelling, farming and connecting with nature are what truly feeds the work ethic and responsibility to get the most out of a college education.

For some, college is a party. The classes themselves can take a back seat for too many students, especially in their first year when they are finally "free" from their parents. With all of the drinking and drugs readily available to students as they live day to day on a college campus- it is no wonder why a freshman year (if not longer) can turn into an endless time of debauchery.

For me, taking a year off put this behavior in perspective. Not only that, but I gained a sense of independence to where I felt that I did not need to give into peer pressures of just "hanging out" or going to a party.

Thoughts cont'd..

I realized that I have my own individual characteristics and passions that in order to feed, I must prioritize my time. I came to understand that partying is not what college should really be about.

College is about challenging oneself and in turn gaining knowledge and personal beliefs about the world in which we live in.

Through my experiences I learned what the balance of opposites truly means (otherwise known as the Chinese philosophy of Ying and Yang). Our lives are balanced by what are sometimes seen as imbalances. What I have found through my experiences is that the time that I took to travel and the work that I put in on farms directly correlates to the mentality and work ethic that I hold in college. For without my year off, my college experience would be completely different (and in many cases much less satisfying).

So, for any parent to who feels that a gap year between high school and college is a complete waste of time or that it may have a negative impact on your son or daughter- please reconsider. For it is actually an investment. It is an investment in their lives and yours. All too often our society urges people to rush from one thing to the next. Rushing will not enable anyone to get the most out of what it is they are trying to achieve. By taking a year off, your son or daughter will have time to develop the part of themselves that is completely individual. This aspect will in turn yield a happy and wholesome sense of well being while building up a work ethic that will directly impact their mindset upon attending college.

If you have any questions, please contact me: Harrymoritz@hotmail.com

From the Guidance Department

Guidance and School Counseling Department Bulletin February 2012

DEADLINES FOR SPRING SATS & ACTS:

SAT DATE	REGISTRATION DEADLINE	ACT DATE	REGISTRATION DEADLINE
3/10	2/10	4/14	3/9
5/5	4/6	6/9	5/4
6/2	5/8		

Staples H.S. School Code: 070-920

Register online at www.collegeboard.com or at www.actstudent.org.

COURSE SELECTION:

This is the time to choose courses carefully. During the months of February & March counselors will begin to see students on an individual basis to select courses for the following school year. Please make these choices carefully as changes are not always possible. Teacher recommendations are most important in these decisions. The schedule below will be followed:

Guidance, cont'd...

Grade 11	February 13th - 17th
Grade 9	March 5th - 9th
Grade 10	March 19th - 23rd

Please have students sign up to see their counselor on the appropriate dates for each grade level to pre-register for courses. Students sign-up in their counselor's appointment book in the Guidance Office.

SENIORS:

Do not slump! Too often this time of year seniors think that it is safe to relax and not work as hard. After all, first semester is over and colleges will make decisions on information received to date. Many times, however, students are wait-listed at colleges and third quarter grades are requested. Obviously those grades play a key role in removal from a wait list. Moreover, colleges have been known to revoke their acceptance of a student based on poor performance and/or loss of credit in the second semester of senior year. Keep your standards high! Remember to tell your counselor and Mrs. Ketley of all acceptances and to update Naviance. Also, please inform your teachers who were kind enough to write recommendations for you. It is not too late to thank them if you have not done so already.

JUNIORS:

Remember to stop by and make an appointment to see your counselor regarding post high school planning. We would love to have your parents join us. Please bring the list that you developed through the Naviance Program with you to the meeting.

FRESHMEN: From January 31st to February 10th, all freshmen will be taken from physical education classes through the College and Career Center to complete a personality survey called, "Do What You Are." This survey, which is part of the Naviance program, is a non-judgmental tool for helping people better understand themselves and others.

SERVICE ACADEMIES:

Juniors who are interested in applying to the United States Military (West Point), Air Force, Merchant Marine, or Navel Academy are required to write to their Congressman now. Please discuss this with your counselor. The deadline date for contacting Congressmen is early October of the senior year, but the sooner you apply, the more time your Congressman has to evaluate your file. All Congressmen have application packets available in their offices. Counselors will be happy to help you with the process.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (F.A.F.S.A.)

The F.A.F.S.A. form is online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Although aid is based on 2011 tax return information, don't wait to fill this form out, you must estimate as best as you can. The schools will ask for verification of this information later if you are admitted and receive financial aid.

AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS:

Tuition Grants Scholarships are now available for downloading at www.staplestuitiongrants.org. The deadline for the Tuition Grants Scholarship application is March 15th, with financial documents due April 22nd.

Local scholarship applications including Woman's Club are now available in the Guidance Office. The deadline for this application is March 5th.

Scholarships with Upcoming Deadlines:

KFC Colonel's Scholars is looking for high school seniors with financial need and an entrepreneurial spirit to qualify for the program. Awards are up to \$20,000 for tuition, fees, textbooks, room and board. Applications are online at www.kfcscholars.org. For questions, visit the website or call 1-866-KFC-7240. Deadline: Feb. 8, 2012.

Proton Energy Scholarship will recognize and award high school seniors across the nation who demonstrate outstanding achievement, excellence and promise in the field of science or technology, and who plan to pursue higher education in this field. The scholarship will award up to four-year undergraduate scholarships with a total value of up to \$100,000. Deadline: February 10, 2012. Visit www.ProtonEnergyScholarship.org

GAR College Class Scholarship (Gordan A. Rich Memorial Foundation): Awards (5) \$12,500 per academic year scholarships. The recipients of GAR scholarships are exceptionally qualified high school students with demonstrated financial need whose parents or guardians have, or had, a career in the financial service industry (banks, insurance, etc.) Visit www.gordanrich.org. Deadline: February 10, 2012.

University of Connecticut Women's Center, 100 Years of Women Scholarship awarded to any high school senior planning to enroll in UConn who has demonstrated a commitment to women's issues through community or school service. The awards range from \$250-\$1,000. Deadline: February 24, 2012

Scholar Athlete Milk Mustache of the Year (SAMMY) 2012 Award Program recognizes outstanding scholar athletes in grade 12 from high schools throughout the contiguous U.S. Twenty-five winners will receive: a \$7,500 college scholarship from the Milk Processor Education Program; an invitation for winners, parents and/or guardians to attend a SAMMY 2012 weekend at Disney World in Orlando, FL, scheduled for June 2012; an opportunity to be pictured in a special congratulatory Milk Mustache ad in the June 2012 edition of USA TODAY and other national publications. Applications will only be accepted online at bodybymilk.com. Deadline: March 9, 2012.

Glen Moon Scholarships One 4-year award for \$2,000 and two 1-year awards for \$1,500 are available for students who want a career in teaching. Submission is online only. Get the 2012 application form at www.artct.org. Deadline: March 21, 2012.

"ARRIVE ALIVE" Scholarship Program provides financial assistance to help students pursue their educational goals. This year's scholarship focuses on the dangers of distracted driving (defined as when motorists use a cell phone to call or text while behind the wheel). They offer (10) \$1,000 scholarships to Connecticut high school seniors. Visit www.GetCarter.com. Deadline: March 26th, 2012

Fairfield County Community Foundation Scholarship Program: Greater Bridgeport Area for 2012 Graduating High School Seniors: This scholarship program is for seniors from the following 9 towns: Bridgeport, Easton,

Fairfield, Milford, Monroe, Shelton, Stratford, Trumbull and Westport. Visit: www.fccfoundation.org Deadline: March 31, 2012.

Northrop Grumman Scholarships: Merit-based scholarships awarded, in the amount of \$5,000 to undergraduate students, who demonstrate both significant motivation and aptitude for a career in science, technology, engineering or mathematics. Visit: <http://shpefoundation.org/ahetems-northrop-grumman-scholarships/>. Deadline: April 1, 2012.

Kline Family Community Service Scholarship is awarded to deserving graduating seniors who plan to attend UConn and who also have a demonstrated record of community service. At a minimum, at least one \$250 scholarship is awarded each year. This past year the Committee awarded three scholarships totaling \$1,500. Visit the website at <http://www.klinefamilyscholarship.com> for the application and instructions. Deadline: April 25, 2012.

Milton Fisher Scholarship: For Innovation and Creativity – a four-year scholarship of up to \$20,000 (up to \$5,000 per year for four years), for exceptionally innovative and creative high school juniors & seniors, and college freshmen from Connecticut and New York City. www.rbffoundation.org. Deadline: April 30, 2012.

St Vincent's College has a new grant program which allows students who qualify to receive generous grants to help defray the total cost of their St. Vincent's College education. The grants are determined by a student's grade point average (GPA) and combined SAT scores in math and critical reading. A minimum GPA of 2.0 and 900 SAT scores or 17 on the ACT will make them eligible. Call Sharon Simon, 203.576.5516 if you're interested.

2012 FAIRS AND WORKSHOPS

4/2/12 - Trinity Catholic College Fair, Stamford, 6:30-8:30PM

4/3/12 - Hartford National College Fair, 9 - 11:30am & 6:30-8:30pm, CT Convention Ctr., Hartford, CT.

4/22/12 - New York National College Fair, 11am-4pm, Jacob K. Javits Convention Ctr., NYC.

For more information: www.schoolguides.com | www.nacacnet.org

Hartford Gap Year Fair, February 8, 2012, Bristow Middle School, 34 Highland Street, West Hartford, 6:30-8:30 pm. Contact person: Sheila_Nussbaum@whps.org, School Counselor at Hall High School.

College Transition Workshop for High School Students with Disabilities, Saturday, February 25, 2012, 1:30-3:30 pm, Adanti Student Center Theater. Registration Deadline, Wednesday, February 22, 2012. Call 203.392.6828 or email: drc@southernct.edu. This workshop will provide in-depth information about the services and supports available to students with disabilities at Southern.

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broadwayboys

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Openings for Board Members and Host Families in the ABC Program

A Better Chance of Westport, the local chapter of a national program bringing under served scholars to live in prep schools or communities with nationally ranked high schools, is developing its Board of Directors for 2012-2013.

There are a number of positions available that can be handled on your own schedule, and monthly Board meetings are in the evenings, which is helpful for those who work full time. If you are curious about what positions are available, please e-mail Catherine Davis at cdavis244@aol.com.

Host Families include a scholar in their family life each Sunday and one weekend a month. If you would like more information on this program or to talk to a current host family, please e-mail Nancy Yates at nyates@post.harvard.edu. Learn more about us on our web site www.abetterchanceofwestport.org.



**PTA COFFEE WITH
JOHN DODIG
Friday, February 17
9:00 am
SHS Faculty Dining
Room**



**FTW Deadline
Friday, February 17
5:00 PM**

Submit articles to:
shs_pta@westport.k12.ct.us

