



# THE WESTMOUNT GAZETTE

## Spring Edition

May 2024

### **The Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test**

**By Lilyanna Colling-Cen**

Every student in Ontario for over twenty years has taken this test that is integral for high school graduation, but why is this mandated by our province and what does it entail?

The Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) is first challenged by Ontarian high schoolers in the tenth grade and can be rewritten in following years if the requirements are not met upon the first attempt. There is also a course that can be completed that fulfills the graduation requirement, which can provide as a more accessible pathway for certain students. Currently, the test includes primarily multiple-choice questions, along with a 100-word written response, and a 500-word opinion essay. Students are given just over two hours designated to complete the

standardized tests and are required to get a minimum score of 300 marks out of 400.

Now, many students may see the test as a burdensome requirement to accomplish, but literacy is what allows humans to interact in society with articulation and refinement. The importance of literacy is not necessarily considered often; however, our lives would be completely different if we could no longer read signs on the street or write a text message. In order to ensure that the young minds of Ontario are able to comprehend and communicate for the enrichment of their lives, as well as the lives of others, the OSSLT is an important requirement that has been established.

Head of the Westmount English Department, Mary Bower, says that a way for students to improve their overall literacy is to read. Even though some have not had positive experiences with reading, there are genres

of interest for everyone, and according to Mrs. Bower, “You start to understand sentence structure, patterns and grammar.” It can also help people to learn how to express themselves and expose them to new ideas.

Literacy can change lives, and perhaps one day, this standardized test will be appreciated and will allow students to celebrate the gift that literacy provides.



### **Increasing Car Thefts in Canada**

**By David Cosma**

Over the past couple of years, Canadians have witnessed a significant increase in car thefts than in previous decades. Car thefts have increased by over 48%



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in Ontario in one year, while they have increased by 50% in Quebec, and 34.5% in Atlantic Canada. Never has our country been plagued with such abnormal levels of vehicle theft. The crisis has reached levels so high that in 2022 insurers paid out over 1.2 billion dollars to car theft victims. The cost of insuring vehicles has grown significantly to the point that certain vehicles prone to being stolen are no longer insured by companies.

Criminals have a variety of technologies at their disposal to aid in the theft of cars such as devices that can intercept a key fobs radio signal to recreate said signal in a blank key fob to gain access to the car. Another method is to break into a car and plug in a computer to its diagnostic panel to reprogram a blank key fob to start it. Around 99% of car thefts in Canada, in one way or another, utilize a computer-based method to steal cars. The rest are through violent means such as armed robberies. These methods have become so refined that a well experienced car thief, with the proper tools, can break into a car within 60 seconds.

Car thefts are usually conducted by

gangs (both domestic and international) for larger crime syndicates who in turn ship cars and sell cars in various countries like the UAE. Criminals can receive thousands of dollars as incentive for stealing these cars. Stolen cars are usually sold for much more than they would be worth. For example, a Lexus Rx350 was sold in Nigeria for around \$120,000, whereas this car would usually be bought brand new in Canada for around \$65,000. As we can see, these cars are being sold for significantly more than they are worth.

The only hope for this crisis is that car manufacturers will start to develop countermeasures on their new cars to reduce theft.

## **Witnessing Wonder: Hamilton's Total Solar Eclipse**

**By Zainab Shoaib**

On Monday, April 8, 2024, an extraordinary celestial event occurred in Hamilton, Ontario—a total solar eclipse.

A solar eclipse happens when the moon moves between the sun and the Earth, blocking the sunlight briefly. There are different

types of solar eclipses including total solar eclipses, annular solar eclipses, partial solar eclipses, and hybrid solar eclipses. The last time there was a total solar eclipse in Hamilton was in 1925, making it one year short of a whole century since Hamilton experienced a solar eclipse.

A total solar eclipse is when the moon completely covers the face of the sun, and the sun seeps out from behind the moon, while in an annular eclipse, the moon appears smaller than the sun and doesn't fully cover it due to the moon being farther from Earth. This results in a distinctive ring-like shape forming around the moon. A partial eclipse happens when the moon covers only part of the sun. A hybrid solar eclipse is an eclipse that changes between being annular and total because of the curvature of the earth as the moon's shadow travels across the planet.

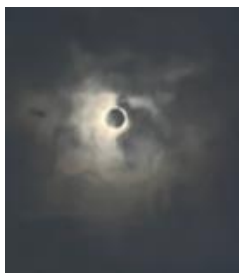
A path of totality is the area in which the total solar eclipse can be seen with the moon fully covering the sun. As one of the few major cities in Southern Ontario within the path of totality, Hamilton experienced a surge in visitors eager to witness this rare event firsthand.



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The eclipse began at around 2pm and ended at about 4:30pm. At approximately 3:20pm, Hamilton experienced totality, where the sun was completely obscured by the moon. However, in order to witness this wonderful phenomenon, solar eclipse glasses are crucial. These glasses do not function like typical sunglasses and are specially designed to protect your eyes from any possible damage while witnessing the solar eclipse. Even when the sun is covered, it is extremely harmful to look at and can potentially cause retinal burns from the sun's bright rays. It was only during totality that people were able to take off their solar protection glasses and view the eclipse directly with their eyes.

In summary, the total solar eclipse on April 8 provided a rare and breathtaking spectacle for Hamilton. With the next total solar eclipse not expected until 2144, memories of this event will undoubtedly linger for years to come.



## **Wildcats Continue Claw Their Way to Victory**

**By Lilyanna Colling-Cen**

Our school's mascot could not be a more fitting portrayal of our school community. Though Westmount Secondary School is known for myriad things, our school sports have been doing stronger than ever. Strong, fierce, and loyal pack animals are the emblem of Westmount, and that has been shown through our very successful season across the board.

There has been amazing work throughout many sports teams, and amongst individual athletes as well, with bountiful representation in the city, and at the provincial level. For example, the senior girls' volleyball team made it to The Ontario School Federation of Athletics Association (OFSAA), along with a plethora of swimmers for both individual events and relays that also attended OFSAA in Windsor, Ontario. These are only the most recent achievements from the Westmount Wildcats. In addition to an outstanding waterpolo season for the junior girls —placing in second in the school board—,

the senior girls placing third, and the senior boys basketball team becoming the D2 city champions, there were many achievements made in former sports seasons as well.

An overview of some of the great accomplishments from the fall season would be the senior boys' volleyball team qualifying for OFSAA, the varsity football team attending SOSSA, and the girls' hockey team placing first in the city as well.

To summarize, the hard work and dedication devoted to bringing distinction to the title of the Wildcats by the student athletes at our school has been exemplified unquestionably this year. Westmount is looking forward to the future of sports, and congratulations to everyone that has participated in building our school camaraderie through school sports.





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## **Westmount DECA Makes it to Internationals!**

**By Keegan Massie**

Two students of Westmount DECA, George and Ayan, have qualified for the international tournament of DECA! This tournament will be held in Anaheim, California between April 25th and May 2nd, with around 20,000 students from all around going. The two Westmount students have passed regionals and provincials to get to this level, a monumental feat.

But what is DECA? The acronym stands for Distributive Education Clubs of America, and it is all about business. Students from across the continent participate in tournaments that test their skills at finding solutions and their knowledge on business.

DECA has been around for close to 100 years, and Ontario's DECA is 45 years old, being one of the strongest and largest with 10,000 participants. Ontario is the only province or territory to have DECA in Canada, so there are no nationals for Ontario students. Westmount's DECA group started around 5-10 years ago, with many alumni returning

to tell their stories.

What do tournaments look like for DECA members? They are divided into two sections, role-plays and exams. For role-plays, a student is given a 1-2-page case study that they have 10 minutes to read and come up with a solution to. Then, the student must act out the case study's solution with a judge, and the judge will rate their performance and ability to solve the problem through indicators. The second part is the exam about business, which is written by students online. In regionals for Westmount, this exam was written in the LC. These two parts are usually each 50% of a mark that determines if a student qualifies or not. More recently, in provincials and internationals, there have been two role-plays and one exam, so the mark is divided into thirds. Preparation for these tournaments includes practice exams and case studies that can be role-played with friends and family or on one's own.

Why should people sign up for DECA? This year's season has ended, with only internationals left, but next year is open to join! This club is great for anyone who wants to go into business in the future, but also helps with general skills that will help

students in their lives. As one of two Westmount students going to internationals, George, said, "It's improving your confidence to talk to people, your ability to think on the spot, and also speak on the spot, in an effective manner." So, if this interests you, sign up for a great opportunity next year! We wish the best of luck to those going to internationals in the coming weeks.

To summarize, the hard work and dedication devoted to bringing distinction to the title of the Wildcats by the student athletes at our school has been exemplified unquestionably this year. Westmount is looking forward to the future of sports, and congratulations to everyone that has participated in building our school camaraderie through school sports.

## **The Westmount Talent Show**

**By Ben Ireland**

Hello Wildcats! The Westmount talent show, which happened on March 28th, was a labour of love for several dedicated students and teachers. Running during periods three and four, the



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talent show was also a way for students to donate to the Canadian Association for Mental Health, raising over \$600. The performances by several of Westmount's artistic and creative students were very well received. One student even described the talent show as, "Epic! Definitely exciting, and talented!" when asked to describe it.

However, this leads us to ask the question of who is behind this well-executed, and enjoyable event? Well, the people behind this event are none other than Cindy He, Angela Liu, Hasret Kailay and Faith Saccomano, helped by Ms. Bannon and Ms. Shaw. According to them, the idea for the talent show came to them all the way back in December. They thought it would be a great way to show off the unique abilities of Westmount students, commenting on how you could "walk down the hall never knowing all the unique and interesting abilities people have." It wasn't all fun and games though, as the wonderful "Wanted" posters designed by Wajiha Moinuddin, and the "Talent Show Date" posters designed by Ms. Shaw, had to be printed at home, using their own supplies. Why? Although

you could never tell by watching it, the talent show actually had a very tight budget, both for participants and planners. The tryouts were on March 7th and the talent show was March 28th, which only gave participants three weeks to hone their skills before presenting in front of the whole school. The auditorium is a very busy place, and the 28th was one of the few days that it was available. It is evident that a lot of hard work went into this event. A subtle detail, perhaps unnoticed by many, is that every announcement in the week leading up to the talent show was actually a skit made by Hasret and Liav, complete with character names that changed daily.

The talent show was an event months in the making with a lot of paperwork and emails. The talent show stopped because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and thanks to the efforts of Cindy, Angela, Hasret, and Faith, we have one again. They plan on running another talent show next year, but they need a bit more help. It was very stressful for them, as they said, "we probably fought every day about what to prioritize," and, "every poster and date was a day of panic beforehand." This is why

they are proud to say that at next year's clubfest, they will be starting a talent show committee. They said that, "hopefully it will be easier next year, with others to help with the paperwork."

The talent show started with Pluto Rockets, a rock band, singing Green Day, along with impressive work backstage by the stage crew directed by Ms. Charters. As the performances continued, people especially enjoyed Elana on the piano with her original piece. Golden Hour performed by Cynthia and Reya also stayed in people's head. Zack on the piano is also fondly remembered. Why, there was even some gymnastics during the talent show, and of course who could forget Wilson Mace accompanying himself on the guitar while performing an original piece.

Dr. Bulmer, Ms. Shaw, Ms. Keating, Ms. Beesley, and George Zeng, the judges of the talent show, took all acts into account and voted for Elana Longridge, with her excellent performance with their original piano piece with accompaniment, as the winner. In second place came Emily and Sumedha, who performed a classical Indian dance routine, and in third place came Zach Li, who





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performed a stunning piano piece. As the winner, Elana received the praise of Westmount, as well as a handcrafted, specially designed trophy made by Keegan Gorle just for this event.

Wrapping up, the Westmount talent show was a wonderfully executed event that was very well liked. It helped raise donations for those in need, and it provided an excellent way for those at Westmount to express their creativity.



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Life at Westmount

OFSAA Day (Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations)

## OFSAA DAY SCHEDULE

P1

ACTIVITY	LOCATION	PARTICIPANTS
Gardening	School Grounds	15-20
Spikeball	Outside near PE	18-24
Disc Golf	Outside OAC hall	36
Mindfulness Circuit	Studio B	20
Pickleball+Badminton	GYM AB	24

P2

ACTIVITY	LOCATION	PARTICIPANTS
Schoolyard Cleanup	School Grounds	15-20
Student v. Machine races	Behind Tech Hall	50
Disc Golf	Outside OAC hall	36
Orienteering Races (g.9)	Outside near PE	30-40
Pickleball+Badminton	GYM AB	24
Group Outdoor Walk	School Grounds	30

P3

ACTIVITY	LOCATION	PARTICIPANTS
Backyard Games	Front Lawn	20
Orienteering Races (g.9)	Outside near PE	30-40
Volleyball	GYM AB	36-48

P4

ACTIVITY	LOCATION	PARTICIPANTS
Schoolyard Cleanup	School Grounds	15-20
Backyard Games	Front Lawn	20
Floorball	GYM AB	36

P5

ACTIVITY	LOCATION	PARTICIPANTS
Schoolyard Cleanup	School Grounds	15-20
Orienteering Races (g.9)	Outside near PE	30-40
Dodgeball	GYM AB	48

## OFSAA DAY

Attention  
Wilcats, OFSAA  
day is on its  
way



It is just days away being on  
Wednesday, April 24, 2024



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## Life at Westmount Bandfest

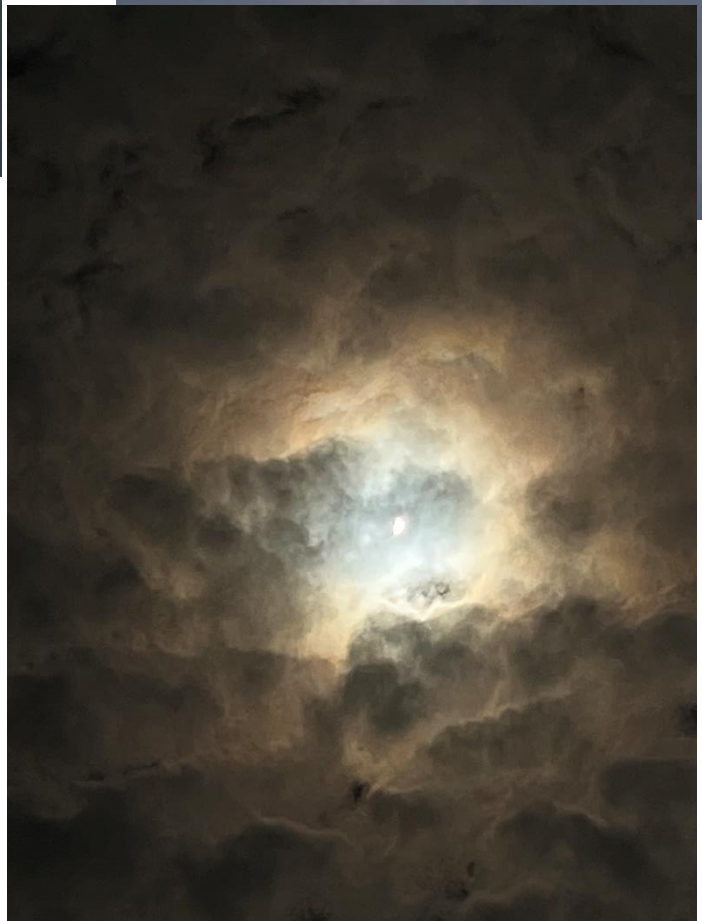
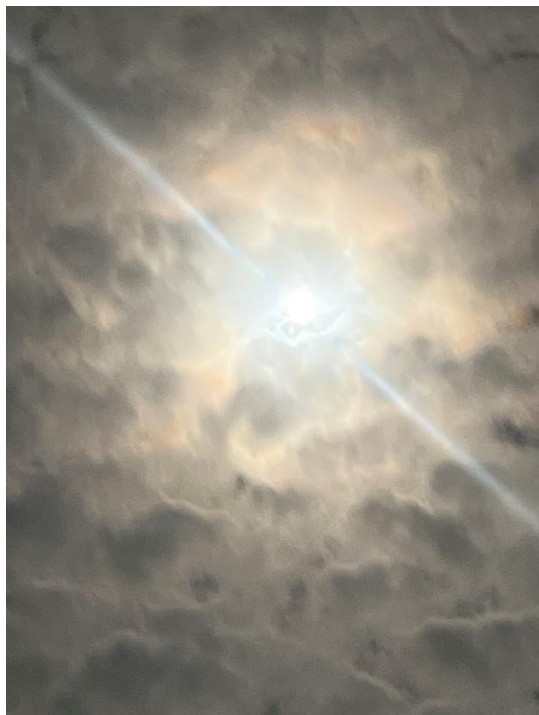
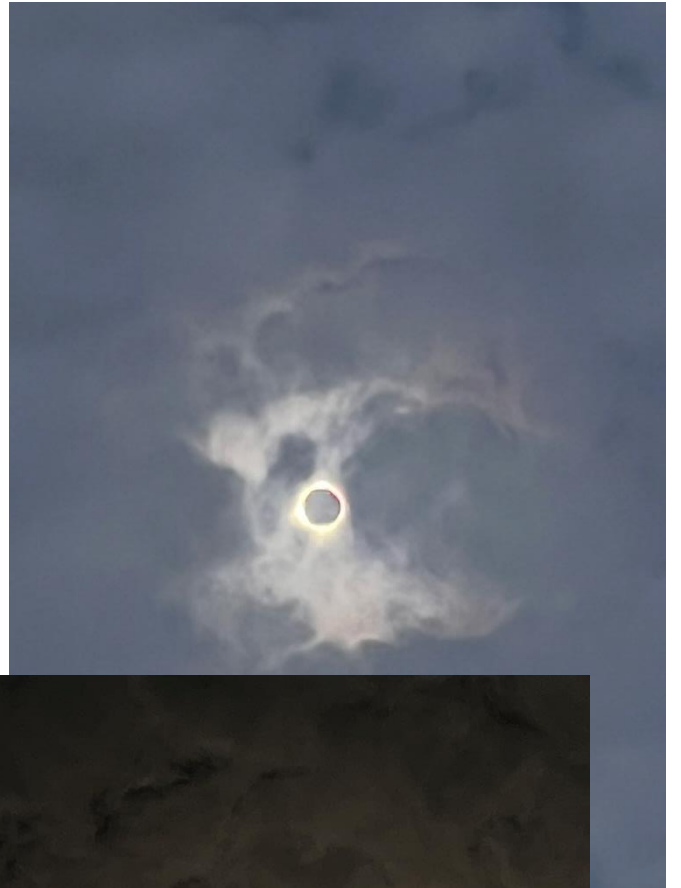






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**Life at Westmount  
Total Solar Eclipse**





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## Life at Westmount Senior Girls Championships







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Life at Westmount  
Winter Media Day for Athletes





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## Life at Westmount The Talent Show

Henna Ludin - Karate	Emily and Sumedha - Bollywood dance (Kathakali)
Maple Gin - Piano and singing in Chinese	Zach Li - Piano
Iceberg - band	Cindy He - Gymnastics
Maya Panagalin and Violet Corning - Bruno mars	Laira, Fatima, Sofia, Rachel - Drama Skit
Menuki De Silva - Singing	Doyoung Kim - Piano
Nathaniel Li - Guitar solo	James Stewart - Tuba
Wilson Mace - guitar and singing	Pluto Rockets - band
Landyn - did a thing that literally cannot be described	Cynthia and Reya - sax and piano duo







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