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Newsletter of the Whittier High School Alumni Association and Educational Foundation

Cardinal Chatter

WHSAAEF
PO BOX 65
WHITTIER
90608-0065

current topics >>>

CYBER CHATTER:

You could be reading this online, on your Tablet, or on your cell phone. The Chatter is available on our website as a PDF with important links embedded. Please let us know your preference when renewing your membership. **Save trees, stamps, printing costs and reduce waste by indicating your preference for email delivery.**

VISIT WWW.WHITTIERHIGHALUMNI.ORG

- **UPDATED EVENT INFORMATION**
- **CARDINAL CHATTER ARCHIVES**
- **SPONSORING AUDITORIUM SEATS**
- **ALL-CLASS REUNION BBQ TICKETS**
- **CLASS REUNION CONTACT INFO**
- **HALL OF FAME BANQUET**

President's Message

Your Association Making a Difference

**SUMMER
2021**

I hope this edition of the Chatter finds you healthy, vaccinated, and enjoying a less restricted life!

Did you miss our **WHS Virtual Hall of Fame Awards Ceremony** on April 11th? You can still see it on the YouTube app by searching "WHS Hall of Fame" and it should pop up! Of course, you will be on the honor system. If you watch it, please go to whittierhighalumni.org and donate the ticket access cost of \$25.00 or designate it on the enclosed envelope. While I am a little embarrassed to encourage your viewing due to my excess screen time in the ceremony, I know that 100% of your donation will go to support WHS students, programs, and facilities. So please, log in, enjoy the virtual tour of WHS, the induction of 5 amazing alumni and 1 faculty member, the awarding of 20 scholarships, and the well-deserved recognition of WHS faculty and staff!

In planning for the Hall of Fame Ceremony during this most challenging pandemic year I Googled the meaning of a Cardinal and found that in Native American folklore a Red Cardinal represents **devotion, loving relationships, fierce loyalty** and is associated with **great fortune**. It also states that a red cardinal appears in times of stress and despair to encourage **hope and persistence**. Our Alumni Association took those words to heart as we awarded 8 additional Scholarships this year, above and beyond those generously sponsored by the following alumni donors. Many thanks to these sponsors: the **Clinton D. Vanderwall ('43) Family, Jan Slater Lopez Wood ('46), Don Jenkins ('49), Ellie Bewley ('65) & Genevieve Lescsak (faculty), Joe Vinatieri ('70), John ('74) & Laurie ('80) Peel, Cathy Freitag Clark ('75) & Nancy Freitag ('80), the Colette Marcellin ('77) Family, Ivannia Soto ('94), Stephanie Cuevas ('08),** a very special "Anonymous Donor" from the **Class of 1960** who has donated generously for many years, and all of the family, faculty, and alumni who contributed to the first **Wally Leonard Scholarship**, as well as those designating "Student Scholarships" when donating on our website or with the enclosed envelope over this past year. (Continued - Page 4)

120th anniversary

Membership competition update!

- 30s-1
- 40s-4
- 50s-38
- 60s-27
- 70s-8
- 80s-5
- 90s-5
- 2000s-2
- 2010s-1



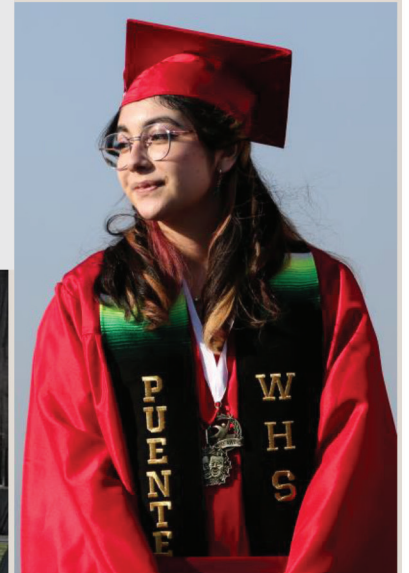
108 new members!

On the Dias >>>

Cardinal Commencement Ceremony a Modified Success



Adorned in full academic regalia WHS graduates once again graced the dias, collectively in their cardinal gowns and tasseled mortar boards; and individually in their unique stoles, medals, and masks displaying their pride of accomplishment, commitment, and association. In a Covid-modified ceremony, our newest Alumni participated with joy and flair as they waved their diplomas and transferred their tassels in triumphant celebration of an extra-ordinary final year as Cardinal seniors.



SPONSOR WHS AUDITORIUM SEATS

- PERFECT GRAD GIFT
- HONOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY
- CELEBRATE WITH YOUR CLASS



• Sponsorship levels vary by location
• Discounts for one-time multiples
• Brass Plate with 2 Lines, 40 Characters
SELECT SPONSORSHIP LEVEL AND MAKE YOUR DONATION AT:
whittierhighalumni.org/donate-form/

SAVE THE DATE: OCTOBER 17th - 12PM at Whittier High School

Annual All-Class Reunion BBQ and Campus Tour Returns

If you miss the ambiance of the Whittier High School campus and the comraderie of your fellow alumni, then make a commitment to attend this year's event. Once again Retired WHS Faculty Member Ben Chu will grill and join us for a meal in the recently renovated cafeteria.

A recent inductee of the WHS Hall of Fame, Ben Chu will demonstrate his prociency at high temperature chemistry while turning tri-tip into a savory sensation for us all to rave about.

GET YOUR TICKETS NOW AT:
<https://www.whittierhighalumni.org/bbq/>

Invite your friends and family for a day of nostalgia and great food. Plus meet members of the WHS Band, Cheer Squad, and ASB.

MEET US ON THE FRONT LAWN
Lunch at 12pm - Campus Tour at 1:30
ADULTS \$25 – CHILDREN \$15

For ease of payment use our website, or send your check in the enclosed envelope with a note indicating the numbers in your party.



WHS FAMILY ROCKED BY RECENT LOSSES

As we go to press for this season's newsletter we have learned of the tragic passings of Cardinal Alumni and WHS Staff. Despite our general policy to avoid using this newsletter as a source of obituary notice, we are compelled to recognize these few individuals to honor their contributions to our communities.

On May 28th WHSAAEF Board VP Steve Koelle ('70) succumbed to complications following a stroke. Steve only recently joined the board before his untimely misfortune. He played football at WHS, where he was mentored by Coach Vic Lopez, and had a rewarding local teaching career retiring from Rio Hondo in 2017. One week after Steve's passing, in an extremely rare coincidence, two more of our Cardinal Family were taken from us along with a close friend of one and the spouse of the other, in violent car crashes. On June 4th Ryan Park ('07) and his wife Jaime Huntley-Park, both detectives with the San Diego PD, were killed in their vehicle by a wrong way driver near San Ysidro. Later that same day beloved WHS Auditorium Director Aaron Morgan and his close friend John Guzzardo (on the left in the adjacent photo) were killed in a three-vehicle collision in Lakewood, CA. Guzzardo's 14-year old son reportedly survived the crash. We hope for his safe recovery.

If you want to pay your respects you may wish to visit our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/whittierhighalumni/> where many have already responded with their condolences and memories. We include a few words below from WHS Principal Timothy Liggett's heartfelt letter informing the WHS Family of Aaron's unexpectedly tragic demise:

Aaron was a true professional when it came to his work. He ran the auditorium like a maestro, his ability to manipulate light and sound nearly as artistic as the artists he was supporting. It didn't matter if it was a middle school band concert or the LA Philharmonic; every group that used the Vic Lopez Auditorium got the same superstar treatment. Speaking on behalf of a number of school administrators, I can tell you that big school events in the auditorium are always stressful but Aaron's preparation and expertise always served to lower that stress level as the facility was always ready to go and in tremendous condition.

As many of you know, Aaron didn't do all of that work alone. Every year, he trained a small cadre of students (the ATC kids) how to work in the auditorium. He provided valuable industry experience to those kids and was an amazing teacher. More than that, he provided real mentorship and made deep connections with the ATC students. They, along with the students in the theater company, had such a high level of respect and love for Aaron - it is no exaggeration to say that many of those students are now suffering through the unexpected and untimely loss of a father figure.

But as amazing as Aaron was at his job, he was an even better human being. He always had a smile and a kind word for everyone. He had a great, easy-going temperament and was a wonderful conversationalist. I know that I was Aaron's boss, but I always considered him to be a friend. My life was certainly richer having had Aaron in it.

My thoughts and prayers go out to Camille (his 19 year-old daughter), and all of our students and staff who were close to Aaron. We will have grief counseling available today for anyone (students or staff) who find themselves needing extra support. I know the saying is, "The Show Must Go On," but please, take whatever time you need to process this. As always, we will rally as a Cardinal Family to support each other and to celebrate a life well-lived.



Stephen R Koelle ('70)
WHSAAEF VP
RETIRED PROFESSOR
RIO HONDO COLLEGE



Aaron Morgan
WHS Auditorium Director



Ryan Park ('07)
San Diego Police Detective

WHSAAEF to Honor Aaron Morgan with Seat Dedication in the Vic Lopez Auditorium

There would seem to be no more fitting remembrance of the life and passion of Aaron Morgan than to dedicate a seat in the Vic Lopez Auditorium, where he spent untold hours of service and dedication, including its care and preservation. – In memory of a life of service and support to WHS and its students.



WHITTIER HIGH SCHOOL
Alumni Association &
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President Eshilian's Message Continued

(Continued from Front Page)...

I certainly hope that, as a Cardinal, you look back at your time at WHS with great appreciation for the **devotion** of your teachers and faculty, continue to celebrate the **loving relationships** you formed there, and are feeling a **fierce loyalty** for your alma mater.

This edition of the *Chatter* is dedicated to encouraging annual memberships, additional donations in your area of interest, promoting sponsorships for Auditorium seats, and attendance at our October 17, 2021 **All-Class Reunion BBQ** – highlighting the grilling expertise of Mr. Ben Chu a 2020-21 Inductee to the WHS Hall of Fame. The WHSAA Educational Foundation is hoping for another year of **great fortune** after completing our twentieth year of supporting Whittier High School!

– Lori (Peel) Eshilian ('72)

Principal Liggett's WHS Update

Greetings Cardinal Alumni,

I am writing this message to you on the day after the last day of classes for the 2020-2021 school year. And what a roller coaster of a school year it has been! We started the year on Distance Learning, with hopes that students would be back on campus within a few months. The post-Halloween surge, however, derailed those hopes as the pandemic worsened in LA County, as it did around the country.

Spring, however, brought renewed hopes thanks in large part to the vaccines. As COVID case rates dropped throughout the county, we began to bring students back to in-person classes in small groups, reaching 50% capacity by the end of the school year. All our athletic teams returned to action for abbreviated, yet very meaningful seasons. Our theater program found ways to showcase the talents of our students despite the inability to use the actual theater. And we were able to give the Class of 2021 a proper send-off with a Senior Spectacular (picture Prom, Sadies, and Grad Night all rolled into one), a Senior Sunset/Movie Night, and an in-person graduation ceremony in Torres Stadium at Pioneer High School on June 2. The Class of 2021 was amazingly resilient, and I could not be more proud of them.

Our district has announced its intention to return to full, in-person instruction in the Fall and while I believe that is highly likely to happen, we still do not know exactly what that will look like. But if I have learned anything from the 2020-2021 school year, it is that the WHS community can adapt to change and find ways to thrive in difficult circumstances. I have every confidence we will be ready for whatever the next school year will throw at us and that our staff will continue to provide a world-class education to our students. I hope you are all staying safe and healthy and my thanks, as always, for your support of Whittier High.

– Timothy Liggett