

SHARING A PASSION FOR NEWSPAPER

WSS

Wedding bells ring, top hats and veils adorn heads, lights dim, rose petals lay scattered on the floor. An editor hands off a *West Side Story* member to a "spouse." Moments later, both say "I do." Who is the betrothed? The *West Side Story*.

"When you join the staff, you've just made a dedication that you will give your all to WSS," managing and news editor Fenna Semken '18 said.

That commitment gets misunderstood.

"On the date of the wedding, I wrote 'my wedding,'" entertainment editor Emma Brustkern '18 said. "I had so many people look at my calendar and ask 'What do you mean, your wedding?'"

The staff showed its dedication daily.

Designer Tyler Thomasson '18 said other staff members inspired him. "I admire the diverse stories ... it is a pleasure seeing the finished product," he said.

Other students cherish the journalism.

Co-distribution manager Reagan Hart '18 said she enjoyed writing a profile of cheerleader Ben Jaeger '18. "Even the frustration of trying to find another source ... that was even fun," she said.

Similarly, writing profiles ranked as a favorite job for some staffers.

"I initially interviewed Lexi Williams because she played guitar in the hallway," news editor Nina Elkadi '18 said. "But our conversation expanded to explaining her life story."

Shared friendships took on importance.

The atmosphere is "crazy awesome," art editor Leah Dusterhoft '17 said. "There's always someone in there to help you out."

Other aspects of newspaper created a positive vibe.

"If everyone does his or her job, then we always have an amazing newsmagazine and a rich and engaging website," web programmer George Liu '19 said.

But with 61 staff members, the logistics could seem overwhelming.

"I've had too many communication issues and misunderstandings due to a

combination of my personality and the sheer size of the staff," copy editor and ad representative Junhee Lee '18 said.

Through it all, staffers support one another.

"It's never something we don't want to work on, even though the balance can be overwhelming," Isabelle Robles '17 said.

And it's all about finding the focus, whether it is themselves or the camera.

"The drive that I have in my mind is to be the best photojournalist I can be," Alyson Kuennen '18 said.

Besides print, the WSS broadcasts news second hour every Tuesday.

"Journalism gives me the chance to make videos for a greater purpose other than just for my own entertainment," Layla Hannaford '17 said.

Being a WSS staff member reflected a dream come true for a few students.

"My passion grew, not only for graphic design but for journalism in general," Simran Sarin '17 said.

For other staff members, the joy came with the audience.

"I write a lot of the entertainment pages and I like knowing that I get to make people smile," Molly Howes '17 said.

The WSS affected staff in other ways.

"I have become much more outgoing and have advocated for my ideas," sports editor Gabby Skopec '17 said.

Sometimes, it was hard to not want to do everything.

"Being fair and not snatching all the stories is difficult," profiles editor Ala Mohamed '17 said. "I try to ... not overwhelm myself with too many stories."

And there's more happening in the newsroom than most know about.

"There is always something going on in the newsroom," Ryo Ohashi '17 said.

—By Megan Haman

COLLABORATION

Juniors Angla Zirbes, Fenna Semkem, Teresa Knecht and Bailey Raso collaborate on new ideas at lunch Nov. 10. "I love how WSS is just a creative environment and really enjoyable," Zirbes said.

DISTRIBUTION DAY

Ala Mohamed '17 hands out the WSS with grace Christopher '19 in the Commons on Nov. 4. "Being on staff allows me to tell stories, stories about West and the outside world," Mohamed said.

MORE PAPERS Assistant sports editor Ellie Gretter '18 helps distribute Nov. 4. "I like having the opportunity to meet lots of different people and being able to tell their story," she said.



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