



The Paw Print

BCWMS

December 2017

Building new fields for players

by AVA BONT

West Middle School's student population has been growing for years.

This is due to many new students coming in from other districts to have access to more athletic and academic opportunities.

Thanks to the passing of a Bond last year, Byron Center Public Schools has started construction at WMS, in the front of the school.

The construction

See **BUILD**, pg. 2



Teachers showed their support for the Be Nice program by wearing shirts that promote it. In addition to wearing Be Nice shirts, teachers can give Be Nice slips to students when they recognize students showing kindness to others. Photo by Sophia Schans

Be Nice promotes kindness at WMS

by McKENNA MORRIS

The Be Nice program is a bully prevention program. It also raises awareness for mental health.

Mrs. Stibitz started the WMS Be Nice group, she is also the school's counselor.

The purpose of the group and program is to help students understand that they can have a positive impact on others.

“At the core of Be Nice is the understanding that the way people are treated has an impact on their mental health (the way they think, act, and feel),” Mrs. Stibitz said.

Be Nice's goal is to

ensure kindness in our school.

The Nice in “Be Nice” stands for the following: N is Notice, I is Invite, C is Challenge, and E is Empower.

Be Nice is a program that can be found in other schools around West Michigan.

Grandville, Jenison, and Wayland Union Public Schools all participate in the Be Nice program.

“The Be Nice program is at many other area schools, and with the powerful impact this program is having across

See **NICE**, pg. 2

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News

BUILD, cont. pg. 1 includes more practice fields and additional athletic facilities for the district.

As you may have seen already, the construction crew is hard at work to make our school the best it can possibly be and at the same time working as quick as possible.

Students greatly appreciate that all this new work is being done to make WMS look and be great. Many are excited and can't wait for them to be finished.

8th grade student Jonas Bont said, "The construction will be a great addition to our school."

Fellow 8th grader, Charlie Brouwer agrees and thinks the layout of the new facilities will make things work better. "It will make our school more efficient," he said.

The biggest change will be the addition of athletic facilities, including tennis courts.

8th grade student Kenzie Feuerstein said, "It will be very resourceful for sports."

WMS Office Assistant, Mrs. Kruse said, "The addition will be wonderful and will be a great addition to have a new entrance and make more room for sports and activities."

Next year when you see West Middle School it will be a whole new place. Soon, construction will also take place at the High School to add classrooms and other learning spaces for students to advance their skills and learning.

The new additions to the schools will be truly incredible!

NICE, cont. pg. 1 West Michigan, it truly has become a community movement. Parents, students, teachers, and educational staff want to see a change in the culture of our schools. We want students to feel good about coming to school, we want to promote the best learning environment for kids, and most of all, we want them to feel safe. Be Nice is all about treating others with kindness and respect, reaching out to others in need, and stepping out of our comfort zones to do what is noble. Be Nice can be the necessary catalyst to spread awareness surrounding the importance of mental health issues and can be the inspiration to create a domino effect in our schools," Mrs. Stibitz explained about how WMS got involved in the program.

Recently Be Nice has new leadership with Mrs. Postma in the Media Center.

A program like this one can turn a school and community into something positive for people's lives. There is more information about the program at www.themhf.org.

Be Nice can be found in other clubs at WMS, too. 8th grade Math and English teacher, Ms. Blundy, is the head of student council; student council has a Be Nice community.

"I like the program because it promotes a positive culture in our school. It encourages students to help one another out, and it reminds students and teachers to appreciate each other," Ms. Blundy said.

Student Council member and 8th grade student, Evelyn Shaidt is apart of the Be Nice community. She explains why she thinks the program is necessary by saying, "The 'Be Nice' group is extremely important because it's trying to get every school to stop bullying."

By focusing on promoting positive behaviors, Shaidt said that we could help make WMS a place all people can enjoy.

Ways students can get noticed for their involvement in Be Nice is by earning a Be Nice slip from a teacher for doing something kind. Examples are helping other students, helping teachers, inviting others to be a part of your group, and noticing when someone may need help.

Students can turn these slips into Mrs. Postma in the LMC and there is a drawing each week for the chance to win a prize.

Be Nice is helping many students and communities to deal with a variety of problems, including issues around mental health. This program is spreading kindness and caring behavior throughout WMS and asks you to think how you can Be Nice to those around you.

Student Life

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Share your opinion
with us! Send it to
our editor and you
might see it in the
next issue!

Teacher Feature:

Teacher loves language and learning

by JESSICA O'NEILL

Who has a love of Foreign Language, travel, and learning? You can find this teacher in WMS Spanish teacher, Ms. Monk.

As the fourth child of four brothers, Ms. Monk is originally from Frankenmuth, which is famous for chicken dinners and Christmas stores.

Before college Ms. Monk enjoyed her days learning Spanish and hanging out with close friends and family. At Aquinas College, she majored in both Spanish and Political Science.



Photo by Jada O'Neill

Ms. Monk has always been interested in Spanish because she starting learning it in 1st grade; it is hard not to notice her love for Spanish and learning.

She has her Master's degree from Western Michigan University and is on her way to getting her Doctorate in 2018.

"I love learning, I love traveling. I believe that there is not a single second in time where you can not learn something new," she said.

Part of the reason why she has decided to continue the journey of learning is because she thinks you can achieve your goals when you apply your best efforts, confidence and determination.

Ms. Monk enjoys spending time with her only pet, a two-year-old Yorkipoo named Zipper.

"I like to hang out with Zipper; usually we take walks and go to new places," she said, "but of course my favorite thing to do in my free time is to go see family and friends and hang out."

Ms. Monk first decided she wanted to be a teacher starting her first year of college and Spanish has always interested her.

"I enjoyed Spanish so much all I wanted to do is spread my love of Spanish to others by teaching it to other non-fluent Spanish speakers," she said. Her favorite subject to learn is Spanish, because Spanish language is growing.

Ms. Monk enjoys traveling, especially to Spanish-speaking areas.

"Within the Spanish-speaking areas I believe there is just a endless amount of new things to learn, and that's what I love most," she said.

Student Life

Student Council empowers students to impact community

by McKENNA
MORRIS

WMS

Student Council is a group of students who want to make a positive change in the school.

They are working towards this by organizing fundraisers that help the community and the school come together.



Student Council members pose in front of Ms. Blundy's room during one of their first meetings this year.

The advisor to the group is 8th grade teacher, Ms. Blundy.

She likes bringing the school together through Student Council activities like fundraisers and tournaments.

“I enjoy doing the tournaments because it's fun to see students come together outside of school. It's also great to fundraise for a good cause, like bringing happiness to kids over the holidays,” she said.

In December, the student council will be collecting Toys for Tots. These toys go to kids who, for a variety of reasons, aren't able to receive Christmas presents. This helps others and is a way to bring joy to all.

Also, the Student Council is raising money for the Byron Center fundraiser, “Bite Cancer.” This Byron Center organization’s goal is to raise money for cancer research and cure.

In addition to finding ways to help others, Student Council hosts certain sports tournaments, to raise money and for students to have a blast.

Natalie Carey is an 8th grader on Student Council and she is on the sports tournament committee.

“I like the tournaments because they are fun, it helps me connect with my friends, and it gives me something to look forward to,” she said.

This year there will be a dodge ball and basketball tournament.

Many people enjoy being involved in these tournaments to be active, and play with their peers.

Students also like to come out and watch the competition happen. 7th and 8th graders are very competitive, which makes things even better.

Taylor Humphrey, an 8th grader who is the Student Council president, said, “I think adding fun games and putting new spins on fundraisers is a great way to interest more students. I also love the sports tournaments because they provide a fun environment for the student body to enjoy.”

Fundraisers and tournaments and these types of events are exciting ways to get everyone in the school involved. All of these ways are tremendous ways to bring together the school, and the community.

Arts and Entertainment

Video Game Review:

Hats off to Mario in *Odyssey*

BY: ISAAC MCKINNEY

Mario. When you think of that name the job you think of is a plumber, yes? That is not the only hat he has worn. He has also been an inspector, doctor, a hero, and many more.

Super Mario

Odyssey came out on October 27 for the Switch. The Nintendo Switch is a mobile console you can take anywhere with a mini screen or you can hook it up to the TV using the dock.

Mario *Odyssey* is a great pick for the Switch's style because of the way you play it. You can play it with motion controls, as a controller, or connected to the mini screen.

It is RPG (Role Playing Game) which started out with you, as Mario, fighting with Bowser to save Peach in a cut



scene until Bowser eventually defeats you and you get kicked off the ship and knocked out.

You have to save Peach from Bowser marrying her. To help, you can control other sprites, and way more by throwing your hat at them. These creatures give you special abilities and ways to access new areas.

It is a great game with fantastic graphics, the tutorial is fabulous, the controls are unique and it is a great big win for players and Nintendo.

Third movie in *Despicable* series should be on replay

by PAYTON STUCK & MARY O'NEAL

If you are looking for a good movie to watch over winter break you should try *Despicable Me 3*!

Right from the beginning, the movie just sucks you in. Better yet, it's a movie that you sit there for hours just to watch over and over again. It never gets old.

In addition, you can also watch the two movies before *Despicable Me 3*, that are just as good, if not even better.

Since there are three movies, it will take you a while to watch them all. You will want to watch them all once you've seen one of them and you will want to watch them over and over again.

Part of the replay value is the humor - they are really funny!

One of the main characters named "Gru" meets his twin brother and when they meet it is super funny!

Lastly, it is rated PG, so they are family friendly and they are still interesting all at the same time.

These are all the reasons why *Despicable Me 3* is a great family-friendly movie to watch anywhere, with anyone.

Soon in Theaters...



December 22:
Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle, rated PG13

December 29:
The Greatest Showman, rated PG

January 12:
Paddington 2, rated PG

Opinion

Holiday tunes more special with limited play

by KENDALL MEAD

There has been much debate over when you should start playing Christmas music.

Many people think that it should be played the day after Halloween and others think it should be played the day after Thanksgiving, which I would agree with.

I do not care for starting Christmas music on the day after Halloween because I feel each holiday should have its own time. When you start after Halloween it doesn't give Thanksgiving the attention it deserves.

There are people who like Christmas music to be played all year long.

One station in London, UK started playing Christmas music year round. This takes away the exclusiveness and all around goodness of Christmas music.



Local radio stations that start Christmas music at different times are Star 105.7, in 2016 they started November 3. The River 100.5, another local station, starts November 8.

I also believe Christmas music can get monotonous after listening to it for too long.

To keep the Christmas spirit alive, radio stations should save the Christmas music until after Thanksgiving and then start playing so people don't get too used to hearing it.

Also, maybe the many stations that start playing Christmas music earlier should either stop playing Christmas music all together at midnight on Christmas Day or stop shortly after.

Although, I prefer it when the radio stations start later and play until New Year's Day.

Student Perspective: What is your favorite part of winter?

by JADA O'NEILL

Winter is a very chilly and whimsical season that many students enjoy. Here is what some West Middle students have to say about their favorite part of winter.



"I like skiing because I like going down hills."

Oliver Modderman
8th grade



"I like to read, stay inside, and drink hot chocolate."

JoJoe Fletcher
7th grade



"I like to go outside and build snowmen."

Cheyenne Bird
8th grade



"I like winter because I can stay inside a lot and play video games."

Larch Bird
7th grade

Opinion

Sports benefit from cuts

by ADRIANNA GOULD

Many students at WMS participate in school sports. There are some who do not make the team due to cuts. Should this be allowed?

I believe that there are many kids that play sports and there are too many to have them all make the team.

Although it is hard to be cut from a sports team, it would not work without cuts. If there weren't cuts, our sports would not do as well as they do now.

Our teams do very well because of great coaching and great players that are able to make the cut by meeting the standards for the sport they are playing. If all kids that try out were to make a team, we would have very large teams and it would effect playing time.

Cuts are a part of sports and even with a small amount of players there can be, it is still hard for everyone to get a fair amount of time playing.

Bans lead to more focus in class

By OLIVIA PITSCH

Some students think that it is unfair that both tech decks and slime have been banned from school.

But maybe that's a good thing.

I liked to play with slime during class and so did most of my friends. But sometimes it can distract you.

Can anyone really tell the

teacher that they haven't been distracted by one these things in class?

Also slime can make a giant mess in the classroom.

So when you think about it banning slime and tech decks was for the best even if it seems unfair.

Just remember you can always play with fidgets while you're doing your homework at home!

One Topic, Two Opinions:

Should cell phones be allowed?

For

by KENDALL MEAD & MICHAEL DUQUET

There are educational benefits that can be unlocked if our school would allow cell phones in class.

You could use it in Math as calculator, giving the school more funds for other things that they need.

Next, students could listen to music on it, which allows many to focus much better.

It could also help classwork because it can run Google Docs so students could work in-between classes.

Lastly, students could benefit from phones is that they could call or text home if they get sick or a practice is cancelled.

These are just a few benefits if phones were allowed in class.

Against

by CHANDINI MULKI

Cell phones should not be allowed in class because they could be distracting and phones keep people from interaction.

First of all, phones can be distracting. If phones were in class, students may not be listening because they are checking their Snapchat stories and caring more about a funny thing someone posted than learning something new.

Additionally, it keeps them from interacting with others. If a student spends all their time huddling over their phones, they will not get a chance to connect with their peers. This means that phones keep kids from stepping out of their shells.

I agree with our school's policy that phones are allowed in school, but not in classrooms because they could be distracting and prevent students from interacting with others.

Sports

Team shows hustle, hard work on court

By McKENNA
MORRIS & JADA
O'NEILL

WMS is known for having amazing athletes, especially when it comes to our basketball teams. Both 7th and 8th teams have done well this season.

7th grade is coached by Mr. Amo and Mr. Chapman; 8th grade is coached by Mr. Krauss and Mr. Molenkamp. The coaches push players to work hard and the games have also been well supported by students.

The teams practice everyday after

school at Nickels.

Evan Kaiser plays basketball on the 7th grade B team. He likes basketball not only because he has played it all his life, but also because his dad coaches the sport at Cornerstone College. He said it is very fun and it teaches kids life skills.

Hunter Schichtel plays on the 7th grade team. He likes basketball because it is an opportunity to bond with your friends, and it helps you to work better with people.

Luke Petroelje is on the 8th grade A team and knows this will help

him for playing in high school.

"Playing for the school team helps get us get ready for high school sports, with kids we will play with in the future," he said.

Corbin Bays is also on the 8th grade A team. He said, "I really like is that we all want to work hard and we all want to win badly so we all try our best in practice to make winning possible. Lastly, I really like all of the things that



7th graders battle for the rebound at WMS.
Photo by Jada O'Neill

this team has taught me. It has taught me how to work together with other people and how to get along with other people."

Basketball is a very supported sport that many students enjoy participating in.

Girls dance use teamwork in routines for competition

by JADA O'NEILL

From pirouettes to leaps, dance is an amazing sport here at Byron Center West Middle School.

Many people don't realize all the time and energy the dance team puts into everything they do. From practices on Monday and Thursday, the team strives to learn Jazz, Pom, and Hip Hop routines for competitions throughout winter.

Riley House is a seventh grader who is apart of the dance team. Like many on the team,

she agrees that dance is an amazing.

"I like dance because it helps me tell a story without saying anything and it's a great way to stay active," she said, "I especially love our Byron teams, they're all so supportive and push you to try your hardest."

Sabrina Muthyala is an 8th grader who is apart of the dance team. She likes the way the team works together towards goals.

"It's a way to bond with people and make and

grow relationships. It teaches us to be better people and how to either work with difficult people or as a team in general," she said.

Also, she explains how rewarding dance can be.

"It's also makes the team have better reflexes and grows out stamina as well. We become healthier citizens with better morals - all thanks to our amazing coach," she said.

The coach, Skyler Ter Mors is in her first year with the dance team and has had a great start so far with a team who loves to dance.