

The Paw Print

BCWMS

December 2019

Quick Gift Ideas

by JOLIENNE SCHUTTE & BROOKLYN SCHUTTE

With the holiday season quickly approaching, it can be easy to forget to buy your loved ones a Christmas gift. Fortunately, this article is full of fun and quick gift ideas that will be sure to please your friends and family.

One gift idea that never seems to fail is making a card by hand. This one's always a hit with relatives. All it takes is time, paper, and coloring supplies.

You don't even have to be an artist to make a card, just write a cute and colorful message. It works every time.

See **GIFT**, pg. 2



NJHS Offers Helping Hands

by LEA PRUS & EMMA WHEELER

Hand 2 Hand is a non-profit organization that collects food for kids in the Byron Center and the surrounding areas.

In total, they pack and donate food for over 190 schools. They feed over 5,200 kids.

Cheri Honderd founded this organization in 2008 while serving as the Director of Kids Hope USA, and learned that some students were going hungry, which she felt was an injustice (<https://h2hkids.org>). Cheri came up with a way to send food home with kids who were hungry.

A small backpack of food is sent home with kids in need on Fridays, providing breakfast, lunch, dinner and several snacks.

NJHS students at WMS have volunteered their time, helping pack food and writing notes for the kids. If other students want to help Hand 2 Hand there are sign ups at <https://signup.com/go/OFUrnge>.

8th grader Sydney Boucher has volunteered her time through NJHS.

“When you get there, everyone goes into separate groups and works at different stations.

See **NJHS**, pg.2

GIFT, Cont. pg.1

Another gift idea that is not as familiar is a Christmas-tree-pinecone. If you have pine trees near, just grab a pinecone from outside.

You'll need some paint, too. Then, just paint the pinecone green, and let it dry.

If you're feeling fancy, add a little white onto the edges to mimic snow. This small Christmas pinecone will be an easy, small, and cute decoration.

If you don't have any pinecones on hand, don't worry! A hand-decorated mug is just as good of an idea, if not, much more useful. It's simple and fun to make.

All you need is some oil-based paint markers, a plain white mug, a working oven, and possibly some rubbing-alcohol if you're prone to making mistakes.

Make sure to have adult supervision when working with an oven and rubbing-alcohol. The mug and paint markers can easily be found in a dollar store.

Once you have all of the needed materials, you can draw whatever designs you would like to onto the mug with the paint markers.

If you make a mistake and want to get rid of it, rub a rubbing-alcohol dipped cotton swab onto the mistake. It'll rub it right off.

Once done drawing, place the mug into the oven at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 30 minutes. This will make sure that the marker sticks well.

When giving your custom mug away, be sure to tell the gift receiver that the mug must be hand-washed. Placing it into the dishwasher will cause the maker to wear off quickly.

Your family and friends will appreciate these simple, but heartfelt gifts you can make.

NJHS, Cont. pg.1

Some of the different stations are breakfast packing, note writing, and candy packing. I helped writing notes and packing breakfast. It made me feel nice to help out the kids that are less fortunate. I would recommend Hand 2 Hand to other students as a way to help out the community."

Mrs. Debowski is the WMS NJHS advisor and 8th grade History teacher who helps organize volunteers. She had heard about Hand 2 Hand based on conversations from parents that had donated food, and reached out to them to see how WMS students and she could help.

She wanted to volunteer because Hand 2 Hand helps out students at WMS and wanted NJHS to go to an organization that was helping students. Besides Hand 2 Hand, NJHS has also helped with Bite Cancer, and has had fundraisers and walked in parades for them. Hand 2 hand, in general, is an amazing program, and you should definitely get involved!

Some Holiday Traditions Feature Food, Family, and Fun

By DIANA ESPARZA

There are many students in our school who have Holiday traditions and since they are coming up, it is fun to know what people do during this season.

Some traditions involve food with family.

7th grader Kristin Deamud said, "We open presents on every Christmas Eve and make rice pudding as a family."

Kylie Sheldon, 7th grade student said, "We have my dad's family over in the morning for brunch and then we go to my mom's parent's house for dinner and to open presents there."

Other traditions involve giving to others.

7th grader Makayla Karel said, "We always make Christmas cookies and cards for our neighbors and we go around giving baskets filled with cookies to the seniors."

One common aspect of traditions shared is the importance of spending time with family.

WMS ELA teacher, Mrs. Gustafson said, "One of the unique traditions in my family is to go bowling on Christmas Eve in the afternoon. We usually divide ourselves into 2 teams. The losing team always has to clean up the dishes and the kitchen after dinner on Christmas Eve. When my kids were growing up, it was my son and me against my daughter and husband. Now that I have a son-in-law, he is included in our tradition."

As you can see there are many fun traditions students and staff of West Middle have and enjoy celebrating every year with their families.

The Paw Print
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**If you would like to
join the Newspaper
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by EMMA WHEELER

Mr. Purdy is one of the new History teachers at WMS this year, teaching both 7th and 8th grade students.

The love for History runs in his family.

“History has always been my favorite subject. My dad really liked history and we watched a lot of documentaries. I also had a couple of really great teachers that taught history like a story and that’s what I like about teaching the subject as well,” he said.

He always wanted to be a teacher, even when he was a student in middle school.

“I am the oldest of 6 kids and spent a lot of time teaching them new things and loved it,” he said when asked how he got interested in teaching.

However, if left with the choice of another profession, he still would be interested in something dealing with history hunting.

“The fun answer would be Indiana Jones. I definitely wanted to find some hidden treasure while being a history professor,” he said.

All teachers have at least one favorite book and movie; his favorite movie is “The Guardian” which is PG-13 and his favorite book is “The Alchemist,” which is a fantasy fiction novel.

When asked his biggest inspiration he said, “My grandfather. I have always looked up to him for being a great person and I have learned a lot from him.”

Besides teaching history, he’s always wanted to travel to Europe to see some of the places he teaches us about in real life.



So far, the farthest he’s traveled is Cancun, Mexico.

He played many sports in school and likes to still play some, he said.

“In school, I played basketball, baseball, and soccer. My favorite sport currently to watch is football. My favorite to play is still basketball,” he said, adding some more information about his favorite teams to cheer on from the stands or in front of the T.V.

“My favorite sports team is the Lions, but I like the Vikings as well. And Go Green,” he said.

When given the choice between what superpower he would choose he said, “I think being super smart would be great. That way you could invent things to help you be like other superheroes anyway.”

Mr. Purdy is an awesome addition as a History teacher in our school and overall, a really fun teacher.



New Lunch Club Lets Students Battle

by AARON WEATHERWAX & JAKE FRYLING

A new club at WMS has started, named "The Blades."

It was created this past September by 7th grade student Simon Kramer. In order to start a new club at WMS, students can go to the office and fill out a form that allows the group to get approval. Students also need a teacher or staff member to help start a new club.

The Blades meets twice a week at lunch. This club is for people that like to Beyblade.

Beyblading is where players have something like a top with special things on it that make it stronger, in order to use it, there must use a launcher or try to less efficiently spin it with the player's hand.

Different beyblades then go against each other to test the strength and ability of it.

Simon Kramer is glad this club was something he could get started at WMS.

"I'm happy the club got its new room for lunch time; we have so much fun playing Beyblades. I think lunch is a good time to do Beyblades with those who like them," he said.

RISE ASSEMBLY: REACH





Snow Day Superstitions

by MIA RUSH

As the colder months are approaching and snow is starting to stick, students are doing everything that they can to ensure a snow day.

Ever flushed an ice cube down the toilet? Or worn your pajamas backwards and/or inside out the night before a snowstorm?

Ana Herbst, 8th grader, states, “[she] used to always do those things as a kid, my brother Noah still does it.”

As children, most of us have probably done something to persuade Mother Nature into giving us a day off of school, but what are some other things people do in hopes of a snow day?

Some people put a white crayon on every window sill in the house. The belief is that the white will encourage Mother Nature to make the ground white by covering it with snow; sounds a bit far-fetched to me, but anything goes when trying to get a little extra snow to fall for a snow day, right?

Another way some people prepare for a snow day is to yell “SNOW DAY” into the freezer, in hopes that Mother Nature will listen and grant a snow day.

Aubrey Larobadiere, an 8th grader, said, “[her] brother did that last year, it was kind of weird to watch.”

Need some more ideas? Running around the dining room 5-12 times is supposed to help with the snow day wishes. So is placing a spoon underneath your pillow before you go to sleep (extra points if the spoon is frozen).

Putting ice cubes on the front porch is also a superstition to earn a snow day; the more ice the more snow.

Although these night-before-a-snow-day rituals might just be silly superstitions, it can't hurt to try some out.

Who knows? They may just work.

Even if they don't, it can still be fun to try.

Chesskers Offers Friendly Competition

by PAITIN VANDUSEN AND MADISON BARNARD

Have you always had a passion for playing games like Checkers or Chess? Are you competitive and want to learn?

Either way, you should go to Chesskers.

Chesskers is a fun, relaxing activity that is held on Fridays in the LMC during lunch.

Students can bring friends to play games such as chess, checkers, other board games, or something as simple as playing cards.

You can become competitive at something you know or learn a new game.

As members who have been participating for about a month, we have learned checkers and Chinese checkers which both have their difficulties to figure out at first; while in the club you get better and better.

Chesskers is a fun activity for WMS and is open for anyone who has a friend or a group of friends who like to go against each other in some friendly competition. This is also a fun way to try a new activity which you may not have done before.

Club member, 8th grade student, Beth Fredrickson said, “I find playing games with other people a lot of fun.”

One benefit of this club is the variety. There are a lot of options to do while you have your lunch, but the most popular seems to be chess.

Other options do include other skill stuff such as checkers but also board games, and pegboard games. In addition to playing with your friends, you can also meet new people and work on ways to express ideas and think through solving problems.

8th grader Lily Alvarez, who was also involved last year, said, “I like playing games and it builds communication skills to be more comfortable around people.”

Being in Chesskers club is so much fun, I highly encourage it to anyone that likes friendly competition or games of skill.



Captivating Read Proves Why It Won

by JOLIENNE SCHUTTE

If awards are an indicator on how good something is, look no further than *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*, by Benjamin Alire Sáenz.

This novel is critically acclaimed as a Stonewall Book Award, Pen/Faulkner Award, Lambda Literary Award, Michael L. Printz Award, and Pura Belpré Award winner.

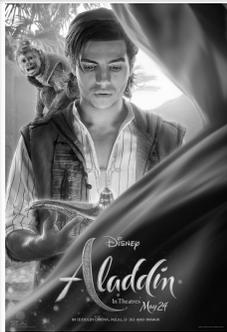
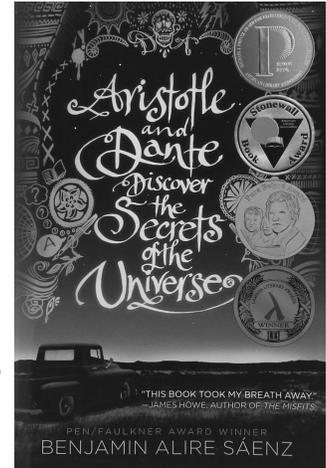
The book has also been read and approved by Lin Manuel-Miranda, writer of the musical *Hamilton*.

This novel takes place in El Paso, Texas during the 1980s. Told from Aristotle's perspective, it follows a fascinating friendship between two boys that stands against the test of time and trials of life.

As Aristotle and Dante navigate learning how to swim, dealing with neighborhood bullies, handling grief, and figuring themselves out, their relationship blossoms in an unexpected way.

The story is told poetically, is culturally aware, and takes note of the different mannerisms in the eighties.

Although the book may seem lengthy, it is definitely worth a read and will leave readers with much to think about and discuss.



Singing, Dancing, and Laughs Make Remake Better

by PAITIN VANDUSEN AND MADISON BARNARD

Remember when most of Disney's movies were cartoon animations you would watch on TV? Things have changed because the fairy tales we enjoyed seeing as animated movies are coming out now as live-action.

In some cases, story elements have also changed. With change, sometimes things can just get better and better or get much worse.

The movie, *Aladdin*, fortunately is one that is not harmed by going live-action.

You probably already know what happens in the movie because you probably watched the 1992 cartoon with Robin Williams as the voice of the Genie. In the 2019 version, the genie is Will Smith, which was a surprise!

There are some extremely funny parts in this *Aladdin* such as the songs One Jump Ahead by Mena

Massoud (who plays Prince Ali) and Will Smith.

A couple of favorite parts are the party at the end which has some really good music and when Aladdin asks Jasmine if she trusts him before the carpet ride. This also leads into the song "A Whole New World" which is one of the best songs in the whole movie.

Overall, 2019 *Aladdin* is amazing and so much better than the one from 1992 for a couple of reasons such as the music and the use of the actors.

The music in this year's *Aladdin* is so much better and it just keeps you hooked wanting to listen to the soundtrack and seeing the movie over and over.

If you are looking for a fun movie that is great and keeps you on the edge of your seat in suspense throughout the whole film, this is one to watch with your friends and family.

We encourage you to see it if you haven't because it is just so good.

Midterms Made Easy with These Tips

by KAYLA MEREDITH

One of the scariest questions to ask, especially for seventh graders, is how should I prepare for my midterms?

Well, there are a few things that you can do to maximize your score on exams.

Instead of going through and reviewing every single note you've taken, review your test and quiz study guides to see what the important things to know are.

Also, review your quizzes and tests to see what questions you got wrong, these things are more important to study!

The most important thing about midterms is to listen to your teacher!

If your math teacher says that you can make a notecard, don't think you're too smart for it, take advantage of it!

If your science teacher says that lessons 4.1-4.7 don't matter and aren't on the midterm, don't study those.

Midterms are all about retaining the information you learned a long time ago, so here are a few tricks to help you boost your memory.

Write down the answers to your practice problems, and then teach them to someone else.

Writing things down and teaching them to someone is proven to help you remember it better.

Drawing pictures of things that you're trying to remember also helps boost memory.

Another important part of the exams is time management. Prioritize your time when studying. Spend more time on the subjects you struggle with, but still, spend at least 20 minutes on every subject.

Be sure to also eat a good breakfast on exam days. Nutrition can help you stay focused and help you perform your best.

Also, study based on the days you have your exams. On exam day, do your best and take your time.

Good luck!

Long Breaks Can Be Bad

by MACILYNN SHAFFER

The length of winter break has become very controversial.

When it's time to return to school, students struggle to catch up on what they have forgotten over break. Weeks of information may be forgotten and work can be misplaced.

On the other hand, winter break is a wonderful time to relax and process the first few months of learning. Over break, students can become more active, having snowball fights, building a snowman, and simply playing in the snow.

Time off from school can do a lot to help students. This can be good for students, because all of the studying can cause stress.

I, however, think that winter break is too long.

With students coming off of Thanksgiving break, they are already set behind on work.

If you hit students with another break just weeks later, think of all of the damage that could do to the grades of the students because they get out of the routine of learning.

Grades could drop, causing failing grades in classes.

This can also impact sports. If students fail classes, they will become ineligible to compete in sporting events. This means that our sports teams could drop ranks.

Because winter break is so long, I would recommend doing a little studying over break to keep your brain in tune.

Winter Break Bingo

B	I	N	G	O
Go to the Movies	Ski	Go to a Game	Play Video Games	Play Board Games
Make a Resolution	Visit Family	Sleep Over with Friends	Study for Exams	Go Out of State
Sled	Bake Cookies	Free!	Make a Snowman	Make Hot Chocolate
Learn Something New	Decorate for New Years Eve	Watch a Movie at Home	Go to the Fun Spot	Sleep In
Craft	Go for a Hike	Read a Book	Go Shopping	Exchange Gifts

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Basketball Bursts with Success at West

by CITLALI ESPARZA & MIA RUSH

The WMS basketball teams are back and better than ever. With four teams representing WMS, you probably have heard on our announcements how the 7th and 8th grade Orange and Black teams crush the competition.

These teams work incredibly hard every day after school, going from sprints and shooting drills to scrimmaging each other, always practicing to win.

David Schemes, an 8th grader, said, "I like going through our plays and I like how Coach Krauss pushes us to our limits. He makes us work hard and makes us strive to become better athletes. During practice, we do many shooting drills and we run a lot."

8th grader Connor Ferguson, states that during practice there is a focus on getting better.

"You get to take what you did badly in the game before and improve. You're also always learning new things on how to improve your game and your team's game," he said.

Coach Krauss, who also teaches Math at WMS said, "I really enjoy coaching basketball and this group of kids. I like how hard they work and how they enjoy the game. They come to practice every day with a mindset to get better. We try to make practices challenging yet fun at the same time. Kids like it when practices are competitive, so every drill we do we try to give kids opportunities to compete. We tend to focus our practices on skill development. Primarily working on making these boys better basketball players. We also work on specific plays and defenses which will help us win!"



Dedicated Cheer Team Competes to Win

by MIA RUSH

This year's competitive cheer team is the best it has ever been. With almost 30 girls on the team, it is the most the team has ever had!

The new coach, Justin Lewis, has high expectations for the team as they compete. There are two rounds of competition: round two and round three.

Middle schoolers do not participate in round one, which is only for high school.

In round two, the focus is mainly on synchronization, whereas round three is focused on stunting and tumbling.

Round two sets the team up to win or lose, so they make sure that everything is perfect.

Round three features stunting, jumps, and running tumbling. This is where they get the majority of their points.

This includes throwing flyers into the air, doing tumbling passes on a mat, moving the flyer while they are in a stunt, cheering carefully memorized words, and showing facial expressions.

If you're thinking cheer isn't a real sport, they could easily prove you wrong. Practices last about two hours every evening at the high school.

During practice, they work on perfecting their rounds, making facial expressions, stunting, tumbling, getting more flexible, improving skills, and memorizing the words to each round.

Competitions consist of several teams competing for first place. The team with the most points wins the competition.

Each skill or stunt has points and so does being loud and making facial expressions. The rounds are both about two minutes long, packed with physical activity that includes choreography.

When asked about how much she enjoys cheer, Paige Huizenga, 8th grader, said, "Cheer is really fun; hanging out with my friends and getting fallen on during stunting really makes my day!"

Competitive cheer is a sport that takes hard work, passion, and grit as well as determination and patience; the girls at WMS are definitely giving it their all this cheer competition season.