



The Paw Print

BCWMS

October 2021

Homecoming Week Showcases Student Spirit

By BELLA WILTZER & JULIA COTE

Monochrome

Monday, Blue against Bullying Tuesday, Luau Wednesday, Jersey Thursday, and BC Friday: these were the spirit week categories for this year's homecoming week.

So many students dressed up to support their school and did an amazing job, especially at the football game (which Byron Center won, by the way).

What was your favorite day? When did the most people dress up? And, most importantly, will there be more chances to show spirit this school year?

Starting with people's favorite days, it appears the majority loved Luau Wednesday and BC Friday.

"I think my favorite day was Luau Wednesday because of all the incredibly creative outfits and props that students at WMS brought in.

See **SPiRiT**, pg. 2



Above: BC Spirit Day on Friday for Homecoming Week. More Spirit Week Photos on Page 4

New Year Welcomes New Teachers to WMS

by JADELYNN HOOPER & REBECCA VASQUEZ.

Byron Center West Middle School is mostly back to normal, which is a new feeling for many after last year. But that's not the only thing that's different this year, there are also new teachers! Mrs. Greene, Mrs. Abraham, Mrs. Owens, and Mrs. Rottschaffer are all new to BCWMS this school year.

Mrs. Greene is a new Math teacher to WMS. 8th grade student Ireland Reynolds said, "She is very organized, funny, and easy to talk to."

Mrs. Abraham is one of the new 8th grade English teachers. 8th

graders Nefthaly Velazquez and Andrea Sanchez-Parada said, "She is strict in a good way and she doesn't give us much homework."

Mrs. Owens is a new Art teacher this year. 8th grade student Kylie Ford said, "She helps you improve your art skills and is very helpful."

Mrs. Rottschaffer is a new English teacher. 7th grader Mage Thompson said, "It is a very safe environment. She is a warm and happy person."

See **NEW**, pg.2

SPIRIT, Cont. pg. 1

I also loved how colorful the school was that day with the many bright and fun Hawaiian shirts” says 8th grade History teacher and Student Council Advisor, Mrs. Burkhardt.

Student Council is in charge of organizing and advertising events like this in our schools.

What day got the most people dressed up? Many people agree that BC Friday got the most people excited.

“BC Friday because that’s the kind of gear and clothes that people in Byron Center have a lot of,” 7th grade student, Daylin Stasio explained.

7th grader Mage Thompson agrees. “BC day because the people here have more Byron center gear than Hawaiian clothes,” she said.

One reason why this year’s spirit days were so popular was because of the chance to win a gift card and that it was a return to normal after last year.

Student Council will be organizing future events like this for students who show off their spirit. Everyone thinks we should continue spirit week for a couple of reasons. Everyone likes to have a little friendly competition at the end of each hour to see who is the best dressed each day and to dress up for Byron Center game day and show school spirit. I think one of the main reasons people at West dress up for spirit week is because they enjoy doing it and who doesn’t love putting on a different outfit every once and a while.

Students can expect another spirit week and a few fundraisers in November and December.

NEW, Cont. pg.1

In addition to teachers, our school also hired an Athletic Director, Mr. Rodriguez and a new assistant principal, Mrs. Middaugh. Mrs. Frey is a new Psychologist at our school.

The new teachers at WMS expect many opportunities to connect and work with students this year. Mrs. Greene said, “I hope that students learn to see the fun in math and that even if it’s not their favorite subject they still feel like they can be successful.”

Having fun while learning is something that most teachers are trying to achieve in their classes. Mrs. Abraham said, “I believe that students will learn from me that reading and writing can be rewarding and fun! I also hope that they see their own greatness because of my belief in them.”

Building better skills are also important when teachers are teaching in their classrooms and WMS teachers are always trying new ways to get students interested in getting better. Mrs. Rottschaffer said, “I am hoping students will learn how to be stronger readers and writers, but I’m also hoping they’ll learn how to be conscientious, responsible, hard-working students and people.”

When deciding to become a teacher, there are different reasons for everyone. Mrs. Greene said, “I became a teacher so that I could show students that math isn’t always boring,” Mrs. Abraham responded, “I became a teacher because I love working with students (especially middle schoolers) and helping them to grow and reach new heights, both in the classroom and in life,” and Mrs. Rottschaffer said, “I became a teacher because I love learning. I love to read and write, and I want to ignite that passion in students. It’s truly a privilege to be able to make a living doing the two things that I love the most! I also love working with students--I love the energy, the fun, and the spontaneity that they bring to each of my days.”

When asked about how the school year is going so far, Mrs. Greene responded, “I have enjoyed getting to know all the teachers and students. I have felt very welcomed and that has made the start to the year go very well.” Mrs. Abraham said, “I have seen that my incredible students are respectful and willing to push through challenges. I also have loved getting to know the fantastic staff at West Middle. West really is the best!” And Mrs. Rottschaffer responded, “This year, it’s been fun to get to experience a new school! It’s fun to meet new students and new teachers, and be part of the BC community.” We are excited for our new teachers and we hope they will have their best years here at Byron Center West Middle.



From left to right: Mrs. Greene, Mrs. Abraham, Mrs. Rottschaffer, Mrs. Owens, and Mrs. Middaugh

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Teacher Feature:

Science is Cool with this WMS Teacher



by JADELYNN HOOPER & CAITLIN GOOGE

We all have that one teacher that is our favorite or we just think is plain cool. Mr. Lacy, 8th grade Science teacher, is the definition of that.

Mr. Lacy has been teaching at WMS for his entire career. When we asked him why he became a teacher, he said, "I love Science. I think it's important for future generations to understand Science." Mr. Lacy could have taught other age groups, but middle school is where he likes to teach. "I find middle-schoolers fascinating," he said. He tries to make sure his class connects with students and use student strengths to help make the class better.

When asked how he decides what and how to teach, he said, "It really depends on what they're (students) interested in," and included, "a good teacher should make what they're teaching interesting."

One thing that makes his class interesting is he always makes people feel included. Another thing that makes him interesting is, Mr. Lacy isn't just a teacher, he is a father of two boys and was once a middle schooler, too. Mr. Lacy said he was the shy kid in middle school and was very quiet, he worked hard and was a good student.

We asked him what science class was like for him in middle school, he said, "I really didn't like science class when I was in middle school. We spent most of our time in class reading from a textbook and rarely did anything hands-on. I had an awesome high school biology teacher that really got me interested in science."

He also told us he loves sports! Baseball, football and basketball are three of his favorites to watch and play. He said, "I grew up in an awesome neighborhood with lots of kids my age and we would regularly get together and play sports."

Mr. Lacy is such a cool teacher and WMS is lucky to have him here. Hopefully he stays at a West middle school for all of his teaching career, teaching the future of the world.



**Thank You
Parents At West
for your support**



More Normal Start to School

by ALANI WALKER & KARLY SANDERSON

Last school year was a really new experience for all of us. But now finally things are slowly coming back to normal. Masks are not required, lockers are being used, and no more one-way hallways. Now with all that's going on, here are some back-to-school norms to get familiar with.

Similar to last year, we still have assignments, rules, and attendance. But one thing different from last year is that kids are adapting to not having zoom meetings. Lake Marsh, an 8th-grade student said, "Full in-person is so much different and forces kids to start being more productive. It is also easier to get help from teachers, and have better attendance". In-person is helping students in many ways to get on track and get their school work done.

We researched how students feel about being able to see all of their friends on a daily basis. Justin Khuu an 8th-grade student claimed, "It makes school so much more enjoyable to be able to sit with friends at lunch, and see them in my classes instead of through a computer." School can be draining for some kids but an enjoyable way to get back into old habits is being able to see friends.

This year turning in work is still a school norm, but thankfully now we can add these other ones to our list. It is easy to get overwhelmed, so keeping in touch with school norms can get students back into a proper schedule and create good habits throughout the school year.

Homecoming Spirit Week



Monochrome Monday



Blue Against Bullying Tuesday



Luau Wednesday



Jersey Thursday

Book Review:

Fall in Love with this Fun Read

by LANA SCHELL

I have had the pleasure of reading “On the Fence” by Kasie West. “On the Fence” is a story about an athletic girl named Charlotte (Charlie). Charlie is a star athlete and was raised in a family of boys. After her mom died, her dad and three brothers were her only family. She always felt more comfortable playing sports with the boys on the football team than going shopping with “girlfriends” at the mall. The boy next door named Brandon has always been a fourth brother to her until her feelings develop into something more.

Kasie West paints Charlie’s story of love and finding out who she is. With a four-star rating on Good Reads and a 4.7-star rating at Barnes and Noble, “On the Fence” by Kasie West is truly worth reading when the chance is given. The book can be found in Ms. Ferber, Ms. Rottschäfer, and Mr. Schalk’s rooms. If you like on the fence, you may also like any of Kasie West’s other books such as “Lucky in Love”, “Moment of Truth”, “Love, Life, and the List”, or “Listen to Your Heart”.



Creative Costume Choices are a Treat

by ALANI WALKER

Many students all throughout Byron Center enjoy dressing up in costumes for Halloween. It can be tough to choose costumes but here are some ideas of different costumes to use.

A lot of students like to trick-or-treat with friends in matching costumes or costumes that correlate with each other. Some ideas for that can be your top favorite movie or book character, such as *Stranger Things* characters, or *Harry Potter* characters.

Another idea that is popular amongst many teens is correlating costumes such as fruits, sports players, historic figures, and more. There are many different options on how to go about this but places such as Party City and Amazon have many resources to get costumes or ideas.

With so many vast options, it can be hard to decide but most importantly wear something that is comfortable and makes you happy wearing it.

So, what are you waiting for? Go get your costumes and have a great time trick-or-treating, going to a Halloween party, or just celebrate with friends and family.

Game Review:

Farming Game Has Magical Twist with Friends

by SIERRA KING-MUNN

“Ah! Welcome to Stardew Valley! You came to take on your late grandfather’s farm, eh? Well, you have come to the right place, there are dozens of other things to do as well, like mining, farming, fishing, foraging, meeting new friends, get cash, raise animals and so much more! Dozens of mysteries are hidden within Pelican town, do you think you can solve them all?”

Making friends is great in this game because they send you gifts that can earn you a little extra cash or become useful in completing quests. There are many magical elements as well. Customize your farm any way you’d like. You can build a coop and raise chickens, bunnies, ducks, and even dinosaurs if you find the rare dinosaur egg.

You can build a barn where you can raise, cows, goats, pigs, and even baby animals if you have the deluxe farm. There are fish ponds where you raise many fish, slime hutches where you can raise slimes of your own, There are even Stardew Valley holidays where you can win prizes and get gifts from people like Christmas, Easter egg hunts, a luau and so much more. So what are you waiting for? Get out there and make your farm!

Backpacks in Class Save Time For Students

by REBECCA VASQUEZ

Byron Center West Middle School has mostly gone back to normal. For example, students are putting items and belongings in their lockers and most students don't wear masks anymore. Students are starting to communicate with each other a lot more.

But things haven't gone fully back to normal. For example, students didn't usually bring their backpacks into class and now more and more students are bringing their backpacks and belongings to class. Some students feel that backpacks in class are necessary and others feel they don't really need to bring them into their classrooms.

They are really useful to bring with you to class because you don't have to time yourself or be in a hurry to go to your classes. Because you have your backpack with you, you get time to use the bathroom between classes and you don't have to worry about being late.

Students who are on sports teams don't have to worry about extra space in their lockers because they can put their gear in the locker instead of their backpacks. Having a backpack with you can help at the end of the day depending on where your last class is and where your locker is. If your locker is all the way upstairs and you were downstairs, you would be worrying about the time and being left behind and might not be as focused in class. With backpacks, you don't have to worry because everything you needed would be in your backpack.

Even if some people think backpacks in class are useful, some think that they waste space and cause distractions. Some ways that people think they are wasting space is when you leave them on the floor far from your table and people trip on them or don't have room to move around. Some teachers also think they waste space because they usually walk around the classrooms and keep tripping on them.

While I think backpacks in class are a great idea there are times they are annoying. Overall, I think backpacks in class are useful and I like being able to bring mine to class. Many people have different opinions on things and this is my opinion on backpacks in class.

Have an opinion on a topic that you would like to share?

If you would like to share your opinion or join the Newspaper and Yearbook Club, contact Mrs. Campbell at jcampbell@bcpsk12.net



Trick or Treating is For Everyone

by GWEN PITSCH

Personally, one of my favorite parts of the year is October. I love going out and getting all sorts of candy. When Halloween comes around I already have my costume picked out and ready to go. So when it comes to trick or treating, I think everyone should go if they want to. But who wouldn't want to go out and get free candy?

Some kids may think that trick or treating isn't 'cool' anymore, but I think that it is a very fun experience for all ages. Don't feel like you shouldn't go trick or treating just because you got older. You are only a kid once and I would take advantage of it.

Another good part of going trick or treating is dressing up. Dressing up can be a good way to express yourself. You can plan out costumes with your friend and have them be more fun that way.

Hopefully now you are convinced that you should go trick or treating with your friends or by yourself. Remember you are only young once.

Setting Goals and Priorities Can Set Up Success

by ALANI WALKER and KARLY SANDERSON

Pack your bags because school is back in session. Here are some helpful tips on how to start off the school year right. When starting a new school year, things can be stressful, we get it. The rush of getting to your classes on time, but most importantly finding them at all. Things are different now including we have to wake up early, keep doing our homework, and do all of our other activities. Balancing it all can be hard, but with a little practice and advice, you will get the hang of it. With COVID still here and school starting, everything can feel very overwhelming. But not to fear, here are some tips.

First, being on top of your schedule is one of the main steps to having a successful school year. We've discovered that one of the most important things is getting enough rest. This can be challenging for some procrastinators out there but it is a key factor to having a set, organized schedule.

Another important key to having a successful school year is getting on top of homework and studying. I know that this is a challenge for all of us, but when you are on top of things you have more time to relax and prepare.

Now studying for three hours may seem like the best option to getting a good grade, but actually, you can do better when you study for short amounts of time and take breaks. It isn't healthy to be slugging over your computer for hours, but doing flashcards with a friend, or taking a fake test is very beneficial. It's important to recharge, so while working, always stay hydrated and full. It's important to have a good work area, but this depends on what you prefer. Some prefer working with friends and helping each other out, while some might like working in quiet spaces. But one of the most important things is to have a neat workspace, know where your pencil is, have a folder for all of your work, things that can help you not lose loose papers and important documents.

Finally, one of the utmost important things to having an amazing school year is to not stress it. We know that it can be stressful for most students or even parents but remember that there is always room and time for improvement. It's important to have a productive schedule, but at the same time rest, taking breaks, and making time for yourself is very important too.

Welcomed Changes After a Year of COVID

by CAITLIN GOOGE

COVID has affected so much of this year and last year and could even affect the future. There are many difficult changes that we've gone through from last year and throughout this year, but we are still here today.

The biggest change this year from last is the option to wear masks. It's great to see so many people's faces this year, not just eyes and above. Sometimes I look at a person's face and completely forget what they looked like before.

My favorite change is now there are so many new and great

opportunities to get involved with school. Different clubs and traveling and making more friends because of those things, everyone gets a chance to have fun at school.

There is also less stress of changing to online to hybrid now to in-person is a great change. I can tell it definitely reduced my stress and anxiety. From turning in assignments to being in zoom class on time, and last year you couldn't really make friends by being in Zoom, if you tried the whole Zoom class would hear which would be quite embarrassing.

This year is a great year for normal middle school experience.

It is also a great time to make friends, join clubs, and do what you like without worrying about COVID so much.

This year we can look forward to so many cool things to do with more days of school with in-person learning. Being in person causes less stress and anxiety.

Even with this new look on the school year, it is also a time to remember the days where you would hop on a Zoom in your pajamas sprawling out on your bed.

Sport Builds Miles of Teambuilding



by NEFTHALY VELAZQUEZ

Cross Country is two miles worth of running. It is not like running in soccer or track where you do a little of things and you get benched or have a break. In Cross Country, runners have to run all two miles and at the end, they can either stay for the next race or go home and rest.

In cross country you don't run solo and score points. It's the first three runners that cross the finish line that is in the school that score the points so runners can encourage teammates or try to be in the top three.

Runners get to experience a variety of trails. The course can be really rocky or very muddy, but it's not like a track that's just a flat surface. In Cross Country, runners have to tackle hills, rocks, mud, tree branches, and be careful not to lose shoes in the process.

The finish line is where runners have to put all the energy left to start sprinting near the end. Coach Day spends a lot of time screaming "SPRINT! SPEED IT UP!" only because she wants her team to beat everyone that's in the meet.

Warm up is important. During dynamics, runners have to make sure to get a good stretch while you can because stretching prevents injuries.

The start line is where the coach will start telling you "Check your shoes," just because they don't want you to lose a shoe while running. I has happened to runners before.

"I stubbed my toe an unlimited amount of times but it felt good to get a personal tree root foot massage. advice: tie your shoes or run barefoot," Judson Phillips said, but at the end of the day he did good and he got the Gatorade runner of the week award.

Coach Day is also a teacher at WMS. She has been an English/Language Arts and is a Resource Room teacher. She has been coaching Cross Country for multiple years at WMS. Last year, COVID created many changes.

"When I coached during COVID, I had to keep kids spread out as much as possible. I even had my runners sit on dots 6 feet apart when we would talk, which is something I have kept doing after COVID," Coach Day said.

Being a coach is something that is rewarding. "One of the best things about coaching is getting to see my runners get better. It is exciting to see a kid fall in love with running and start to enjoy the process," she said.

WMS students compete with schools from all over West Michigan and beyond. "One of my favorite teams to compete against is Wayland. They have a great program and love to compete, which is fun for runners and coaches," Coach Day said. When asked about coaching and teaching, she added, "It can be challenging to balance coaching and teaching but I love doing both. I get to coach and joke around with kids and see them in a different light, but I also love spending time with kids in the classroom setting."