



# The Paw Print

BCWMS

December 2018

## Snow Days Offer Surprise Time to Relax

by HANNAH PAULSON

Think about the rare day that it snows so much that (GASP) school is canceled!

Before thinking about how we spend a snow day, the question of "how is a snow day determined" comes to mind.

"There are many factors that come into play when deciding if we are having a snow day or not," Mrs. Kanitz, WMS Assistant Principal shared. "Mr. Wierzbicki and I are not the ones who make that call (BCPS Superintendent, Mr. Takens does). Safety of our students is our top priority. Temperatures, ice, snow, road conditions, etc. can all be factors that come into play," she added.

See SNOW, pg. 2

## RISE Celebrates Students



*BCPS Superintendent, Mr. Takens, shakes hands with students who were nominated by their teachers during the first RISE assembly of the year. These students were nominated for showing qualities that displayed the idea of "Reach" like setting goals. The next assembly will recognize students nominated for showing "Impact" on January 21.*

## Students and Teachers Travel Near and Far During Break

By LEA PRUS & EMMA WHEELER

Winter break.  
That's all anyone has to say and kids go wild!  
It's when WMS students finally get out of school and have a break from all the homework, quizzes, and assignments that keep us working hard every day.

On break, some people travel to warmer places like Florida, Mexico and even Hawaii. Others stay indoors at home by the fire and hang out with family.

We've asked four students and two teachers about their fun Holiday break adventures and this is what a few of them have to say.

See TRAVEL, pg. 2

**SNOW, Cont. pg.1**

What is there to do on this extra day off that many think of as an awesome day?

In my opinion, every good snow day starts with putting away all technology and going outside to play with neighbors, siblings, and go sledding! Hanging out and having family time is important.

Even teachers get outside or spend time with their families on these days. Like 7th grade History teacher Mr. Molenkamp who spends the day playing outside with his children.

He said, "I go outside with my kids, build a snowman, and go sledding down the hill behind our house."

Others might prefer to stay inside on a snow day and watch Netflix and drink hot cocoa like 7th grade student, Avery Perleberg. She said, "On a snow day I normally watch Netflix, play on my phone, and hang out with friends."

Sleeping in and relaxing before the day is over is also popular. For example, Mr. VandePol, who teaches 7th grade Science, shared that he uses the day to relax. "I enjoy sleeping in," he said.

7th grade English, Language Arts teacher, Mrs. Gustafson also loves being warm during a snow day while she relaxes during the day.

"I love to have a fire in the fireplace, put on comfortable clothes, get a soft blanket, and read the day away," she said.

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**TRAVEL, Cont. pg.1**

7th grade student, Avah Clark, is traveling out of state to visit family. "I'm going to San Francisco, California to visit my mother. I'm also going to Big Bear, and there's cabins and stuff," she said.

She is not the only one leaving the cold winter of Michigan for warmer weather.

"I'm going to Hawaii," Rayvin Glover, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader shared. "I'm also going to the beach to swim and go shopping."

Office Assistant, Mrs. Valente is also traveling out of state. She is going to New Jersey to visit her husband's family. They do the seven fishes of Christmas, open up Christmas presents on Christmas Eve instead of Christmas Day, and also go to church Christmas morning.

Not everyone is leaving Michigan for break.

WMS Counselor, Mrs. Stibitz said she is going to Ludington to visit her husband's family. They drive around and look at Christmas lights, attend a church service on Christmas, and play board games and card games with the family. They also celebrate her daughter's birthday.

Larch Bird, an 8th grade student, shared that he will also spend time with family.

"I'm going to my grandpa's house. I'll probably be watching football games, play some games outside, and maybe go ice skating on the frozen lakes," he said.

Many students at WMS will spend time with their extended family.

"I'm going to my grandparents' house. I will be stargazing, if the night sky is clear, and playing some video games," 8th grade student, Brody Mason, shared.

If you stay home, there are a lot of things you could do. You could hang out with friends and family, read a good book, or bake cookies! If you want more ideas go checkout the "Top 5 Things to do Over Winter Break" which is featured later in the issue!

Winter break is a great time that everyone can enjoy, whether you're hopping on a plane to somewhere warm or traveling to your couch to watch Netflix.

# The Paw Print

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## Teacher Feature:

### Mrs. Langford is Fun and Supportive Teacher



by MANUEL LOPEZ-ZAMUDIO

Orchestra is a fun and breathtaking class because of a funny, fearless, supportive, and admirable teacher named Mrs. Langford.

Mrs. Langford is the Orchestra Director at Byron Center West Middle School and Nickels Intermediate School.

She has taught in Byron Center for more than a decade, but started out in another area known as B.C. She was born and raised in Battle Creek, Michigan.

Mrs. Langford started her study of Orchestra as a violinist in 6th Grade just like most of her students.

In middle school, her favorite subjects were either Orchestra, where she learned to play the Violin, or Wood/Metal Shop (which would be like our STEM class at WMS).

Later in school, she started finding out that Violin was not her thing so she switched to Cello. Part of her motivation for a change was because her older sister played the Violin and she wanted to chart her own path. The Cello is her favorite instrument.

When she went to college, she had intentions to become a biologist, but she found out Music Education was her passion.

After a brief study in Venice, Italy, Mrs. Langford graduated with honors from Albion College in 1999.

The reason why Mrs. Langford wanted to become an Orchestra teacher is to help others and share her love for music.

"I enjoyed helping others succeed. Orchestra introduced me to a world that I probably wouldn't have gotten to know if I didn't do it," she said.

If Mrs. Langford was not teaching Orchestra, she said she would probably be teaching Home Economics or Italian, which she also knows how to speak.

We are thankful Mrs. Langford is teaching Orchestra at WMS and the work she also does with our Theater programs at WMS and the High School.

## Strive for Exam Success

by KAYLA MEREDITH

A commonly asked question in middle school, and one of the scariest to ask, is, "How should I prepare for my midterm exams?"

Even though it might be daunting, there are a few things that you can do to maximize your score on the midterm exams on January 16-18<sup>th</sup>.

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 and study those. Also, review past quizzes and tests to see what questions you got wrong.

The most important thing you can do is 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 you're Science teacher says that lesson 4.1-4.7 doesn't matter and isn't on the midterm, don't study those.

Midterm exams are about showing the retained information you learned a long time ago, so here are a few interesting tricks to help you boost your memory.

Look side to side, it engages both sides of the brain.

Write down the answers to your practice problems, and then teach them to your Mom and Dad or someone else at home. 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.

Good luck!

## Extended Play in OrchEXTRA

by CITLALI ESPARZA

If you notice the extra sound of music coming from the music wing after school at West, it is probably from our OrchEXTRA students.

OrchEXTRA is a new after school group made up of Violins, Violas, Cellos, and Basses. These players are 7th and 8th graders who work hard to become better at their instrument.

They meet to practice every day, right after the regular school day ends and stay until 3:20 p.m.

They receive many challenging pieces of music and work together to create a wonderful Orchestra.

Not only does this time after school teach them to become independent players, but it also teaches them to work as a team. Many work in small groups, called ensembles.

This extraordinary ensemble has created many friendships. The kids have fun working together and see each other work to get better with their instruments.

They laugh, play, and improve their skills during the process.

8th grade Violinist, Shayden Shaffer said that OrchEXTRA offers many positive experiences.

"I get more time to play and I've met a ton of new people who I wouldn't really know otherwise," she said.

Ms. Langford leads these students after school to help them develop and become better players. The new student teacher also helps and her name is Ms. Peters.

These students really enjoy having Mrs. Langford and Ms. Peters around because they are a lot of fun and make learning after school an interesting time.

OrchEXTRA is a great opportunity for those who love Orchestra and want to spend more time getting better at playing both as an individual and as a part of an ensemble.

**Book Review:*****Renegades* is Thrilling Read**

by KAYLA MEREDITH

In the book *Renegades*, by Marissa Meyer, you are introduced to an orphaned girl named Nova who had a traumatic childhood.

This book takes place in a dystopian setting. In this dystopia, there are Superheroes and Villains in an age of rebellion.

Nova was told the Superheroes will come, the Renegades will come, and after what happens to her parents, as the reader, you begin to root for this little girl.

This happens not knowing that Nova will use the event that takes her parents from her as fuel which transforms her from a little girl to a Supervillain.

This leaves you with a choice to rally for the Superheroes that are trying to do good, but are running a dictatorship, or the Villains that are wreaking havoc and taking lives in the process of trying to stop the Superheros from their dictator rule.

This masterfully crafted book wraps thrills, romance and core loyalty values into one read that you should pick up soon from the Library.

**Soon in Theaters...****December 21<sup>st</sup>***Aquaman*,  
Rated PG-13**January 4<sup>th</sup>***A Dog's Way Home*,  
Rated PG**February 8<sup>th</sup>***The Lego Movie 2: The Second Part*, Rated PG**February 22<sup>nd</sup>***How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World*,  
Rated PG**Top Ideas for Spending Time Over Break**

by EMMA WHEELER

Usually over winter break, there's at least one day when you have nothing to do.

If you can relate, then this list is for you! Here are five things that you can do over winter break:

1. Get cozy on the couch and read a book or watch a movie
2. Go outside and play in the snow or sled with your friends
3. Get a nice cup of Hot Cocoa
4. Bake cookies or other treats
5. Spend time with friends and family

Happy Holidays from  
The Newspaper Team!

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# Great Debate: Cell Phones in Class

by EMMA BOUCHER & HANNAH PAULSON

## FOR:

I think we should have our phones in class for safety.

I know there is not a big chance of this, but if something were to happen to the teacher or student, you could call 911 right away, instead of a risk of running to the office. I also know that not everyone knows how to use the regular teacher phones connected in the classroom.

You might think, *why not use the teachers cell phone?* Most people have a passcode on their phone or a thumb print. If something happened to the teacher then you could still call the Police.

I understand that on a normal day, a phone might ring in the middle of a class and could be a distraction. I do think the teachers still have the right to take it away if you are on it or it rings.

But maybe teachers can give back the phone after class.

People may think that having phones are a big distraction, but I think sometimes they can be beneficial to our safety.

## AGAINST:

We should not be allowed to have phones in class. Phones are a distraction! They can cause havoc and be potentially life threatening.

What if you are in a lockdown and it is a real, but you don't know that. Imagine you and your friend are messing around on snapchat and Instagram secretly. You turn off your phone a bright light pops up, along with a loud DING. *Snap from Kylie.*

The intruder could be right by your door, threatening your safety, your friends' safety, and the safety of others around you.

It is also a distraction. I have seen kids in class on Instagram and Snapchat chatting with other kids on their phones. This is NOT OKAY. Instead of learning, it is distracting from the actual lesson. School matters. And that includes making sure you have your attention on the teacher.

# DIY Offers Answers for Giving Gifts

by HANNAH PAULSON

One of the most nerve-wracking things in life can be getting a gift for someone.

Your mind goes through plenty of thoughts like, *"Is this really what they want. No, that is way too expensive, how am I ever going to give them what they like?"*

Now, we have the answer, D-I-Y.

DIY, according to the Cambridge Dictionary means "Abbreviation for do-it-yourself: the activity of decorating or repairing your home, or making things for your home yourself, rather than paying someone else to do it for you."

Instead of buying something someone might forget about or throw out the next year, get them something from the heart.

Something from the heart can include a number of things. You might create your favorite mix of treats like a hot cocoa mug with marshmallow dippers, or something that is useful like pocket hand warmers.

Whatever it is use make, they are easy and the instructions can be found online or in a book.

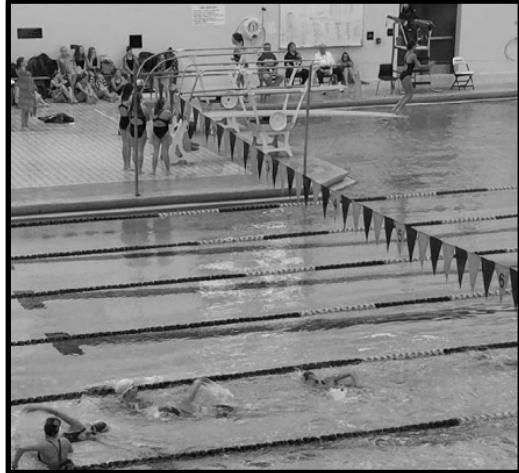
Making a DIY gift also shows that you care enough to make them a gift.

Putting your time and energy to make someone a gift will surely mean a lot.

The flipside is that sometimes if you are a busy person, you might not be able to pull off a DIY. You might have basketball, swim, dive, or other after school activities.

But no matter what you get or make someone for the Holidays, they'll be sure to love it!

## Swimmers Work Hard and Form Friendships



By LEA PRUS & CITLALI ESPARZA

Byron Center has a great swim team with many swimmers who work hard and have fun.

Swim practice takes place at the high school pool every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The practices take place from 3:00 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. Meets take place every Tuesday and Thursday.

8th grade swimmer, Madelyn Pitsch, started swim this year.

She said, "It's only my first year, but I love it! I like hanging out with my friends and I also like the swim meets."

8th grader, Allyson Pitsch said her favorite part is cheering on the friends she has made on the team. "I met my best friends while doing this sport," she said.

Swim is an amazing sport which helps people become determined and hard workers. They make new friendships and have lots of fun! If this sounds like a fun sport, you should join swim next year. Don't forget to cheer on your friends that are swimming now!

## Scoring Points on the Court and Beyond in WMS Boys Basketball

by JOLIENNE SCHUTTE

While basketball brings a lot of passion and energy to school, it also serves a new challenge for students who play.

At after school practices, players work hard running drills and different basketball plays, preparing for their next game.

The drive to win the next game is huge and determines players to do their best, even off the court.

Mason VanDyke, 7th grade player says, "It [basketball] benefits me because when I don't have games or practice I always am working on my game."

One of the coaches and WMS History teacher, Mr. Molenkamp says, "I think for us, we set the goal to improve every week. The most important for us is to show improvement."

With the drive to always do better, it keeps student determined and empowers them to improve in the classroom too.

Mr. Molenkamp also says, "There's a lot of things that go into it, with keeping their grades up and building those friendships outside of class, I think it's important for them to have that opportunity."

Basketball helps students set academic goals and helps them with social skills that are important throughout life.

Basketball is a nice change of pace from the sometimes long and slow school days. Basketball challenges players, to communicate and plan ahead, they have to have strong instincts and quick reflexes to ensure the team's success.

"I like basketball because there are many different challenges and it makes it fun to challenge yourself. It's fun to play and it is even more fun when you play in games," Mason VanDyke said.

In basketball, there is always a goal to work towards and something to look forward to with each time the players take the court. These players never get tired of their favorite game.

Competitive spirit and determination are the fuel for the WMS basketball teams and drives them to work towards winning goals.

# Cheerleaders Chant, Stunt, and Tumble into Competition

by MIA RUSH

Competitive cheerleading is when cheer squads compete against each other in a competition.

At a typical cheerleading competition, teams perform a two-and-a-half-minute routine with a cheer or chant that includes stunts, jumps, and tumbling.

Teams are judged by a panel of experts on difficulty and execution. The WMS cheer team consists of 18 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

In cheerleading, there are two rounds that middle schoolers compete in: round two and round three. Round one is for high schoolers only. Round two consists of 8-7 members right now, and round three has 11-12 people so far.

In round two, everybody has to do the same thing, at the same time. The team starts with a basic sequence of moves, then they switch positions and do a jump (toe-touch). Following that, the team does a back walkover and then switches places again to go into a “switch split” (right split into left split.) They then move one last time and do a one-handed cartwheel.

Round three is the round that stunts are performed, and the team can get the most points. They start with a toe touch then shift spots to do tumbling.

Five people do back standing handsprings, while all the others line up in between them and do a forward roll in unison.

The cheerleaders then move to their stunt spots, with Ellie Lanning, Autumn Frey, and Serenity Metzger flying. The groups do stunts like a teddy bear, extension, sponge



and cradle. After that, they move to different spots with only Ellie and Autumn flying extensions while Stella Beecher, Emma Busche, Emma Carlson, and Valerie Cruz tumble across the floor.

Practice for the cheerleaders goes from 3-5 p.m. to work and get better at the stunts they have to do. The stunts include an elevator (bases bring flyer up to their chins and backspot grabs ankles [this is a standard stunt and is the base for all the other stunts]).

They also do cradles (bases throw flyer up into the air from elevator then catch her) and teddy bears (flyer goes into a straddle while bases hold the flyer's legs and the backspot supports her from underneath).

When asked about her favorite stunt to do, Serenity Metzger, an 8th grader said, “My favorite stunt would have to be an extension.”

Competitive cheer is coached by Mrs. Ruddle, who also teaches History at WMS.

It is a great sport that forces people to learn to work together. Everybody has to be in unison, or the round does not look right.

Serenity Metzger said that one of her favorite things about cheer is how the team is built on trust and how the cheerleaders rely on everybody on the team to do their part.

They are one dedicated team.