

News from the Nest

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Twilight Transpires to New Moon

By Tanya Russell

NEW ULM – It is no surprise that *New Moon* broke the one-day gross record in the United States on its release date November 20, 2009, with \$72.7 million, just trouncing *The Dark Knight* [2008].

New Moon is the sequel to the huge movie event *Twilight*; both movies are based on the books of the same name written by Stephanie Meyer.

We all know that the hit movie *Twilight* raised eyebrows and that *New Moon* followed in its footsteps, but what really made these movies so impressive?

The general consensus and stereotype is that this is a movie for teenage girls and their mothers; however, many movie goers noted that there were males and even fathers like Mr. Steve Foley, a mathematics teacher at New Ulm High School, sitting next to them.

“I never really read the book before we went; I never

had a base of knowledge of what happened in the previous movie,” said Mr. Foley.

Foley took his 11-year-old son and a few of his son’s friends to see the movie just after opening night. Although he says he only went because the movie is rated PG-13, he admits the movie was a good one.

“It’s not a bad movie,” said Foley. “It’s [just] not what I expected.”

Others are a bit more interested in the whole sequel.

“The books are an interesting read,” said Kayla Evers, a sophomore at NUHS. Countless numbers of people have read the books or have seen *Twilight*

and then seen *New Moon*.

“I guess I am [a fan],” said Molly Meyer, a senior at NUHS. “I read the book and saw the movie and liked them, but I don’t consider myself a fanatic.”

Alyssa Hessel, a freshman at NUHS, said that she is not totally a fan of the movie. “It’s a good movie but the movie doesn’t really compare to the book; obviously the book is better,” said Hessel.

“Hands down *New Moon* was way better,” said Jericho DeLeo, a sophomore at NUHS who has read both books and seen both movies. “Compared to *New Moon*, *Twilight* stunk so bad.” Though she does admit that Jacob Black, played by hottie Taylor Lautner, did have a little something to do with her opinion, Evers agrees with DeLeo.



Twilight continued pg. 4

Youth Energy Summit

Saving the World One Step at a Time

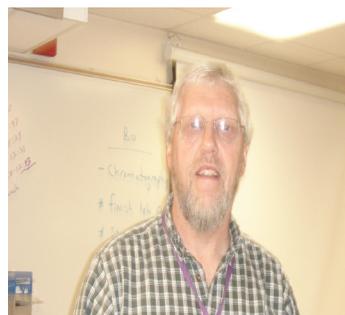
By Felicia Hooks

NEW ULM - Yes, it is possible that 13 students that meet once or twice a week can change our world forever. The Youth Energy Summit (YES) is a group of students that are interested in reducing energy usage. This new student organization began this year at NUHS.

“By reducing energy usage, they are decreasing global climate change,” said biology teacher Mr. John Olson.

The YES team is completely money free, said Olson. This group is sponsored through an organization located in Hutchinson called the South West Initiative Foundation.

The YES team is very beneficial. According to the student chair, junior Michelle Youngblom,



she has learned leadership skills and also has a chance to educate schools and the community about energy conservation.

Mr. Olson agrees. “I think it is very beneficial because the group and I learn what is all involved in reducing energy use. The students in this group also learn organization skills, communication skills, and also get to work with real life situations,” said Olson.

There are many projects awaiting them in this group.

There are three main projects so far, according to Olson. The main project they are going to attempt starts after Christmas every.

Youth Energy Summit continued pg. 7

Inside This Issue

News	
Financial Aid.....	pg. 2
Study Tips.....	pg. 2
Peterson in Macy’s Day Parade.....	pg. 3
Features	
Foreign Languages.....	pg. 4
Sleep Deprivation.....	pg. 6
New Year’s Resolutions.....	pg. 8
Sports	
Boys’ Hockey.....	pg. 10
Knowledge Bowl.....	pg. 13
Fun & Games	
Frankly Speaking.....	pg. 14
Shout Outs! / Cartoon.....	pg. 15

FAF-What?

Financial Aid is Vital for Every Senior...Even You!

By Lauren Horsch

NEW ULM - Months of planning go into figuring out what college one should attend. Visits are scheduled, meal plans are tested, and dorm rooms are inspected...But how is one to pay for college tuition when some schools are over \$30,000 a year? Well, many students are looking at financial aid to help fund their quest for higher education.

NUHS seniors like Leah Nelsen and Micayla Irmiter have already applied to their perspective colleges and are waiting for financial aid letters before making their final decisions. They both see major advantages to applying for financial aid.

Financial aid is the financial help that students can receive for many reasons including need-based and academic-based reasons. Most think of scholarships when it comes to financial aid, but there is so much more. Student loans can be a good idea, as long as one looks through and reads all the fine print and can pay them off. Grants are another great source of help that is given by the federal government that do not have to be paid back.

Then, of course, there are numerous scholarships any student can apply for and the Free Application for Free Student Aid (FAFSA) that helps determine how much financial aid a student is eligible for.

The FAFSA calculates the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and the Student Aid Report (SAR) that play a vital role in how much money one could be given for college.

The FAFSA can officially be filled out January 1 of a student's senior year in high school. It can then be filled out during his or her years of college to continue seeing if he or she will receive continued vital aid. Yet before filling out the FAFSA, a student must

register for a pin number along with his or her parents.

The FAFSA is just one way to help fund college tuition. Many scholarships are available to students. Some scholarships involve writing an essay, but others do not. According to the guidance counselors at NUHS, Mrs. Margaret Weiss and Mr. Ryan Ziemer, local scholarships can play a huge part in funding.

"[Students are] only competing against classmates versus statewide or nationwide," said Mrs. Weiss. This limited competition gives NUHS students a higher chance of success in receiving scholarship money.

Students are seeing the added benefits of financial aid also.

"I don't want to be in debt until I'm 70," Irmiter said. She also notes that paying for college will be "cheaper" with financial aid.

Nelsen also adds that one "won't have to save as much" and will cut down on stress levels during an otherwise extremely stressful part in someone's life.

Applying for financial aid and colleges can be a maddening, confusing process, but it is one of the most important to get started on.

"Get started early," said Mr. Ziemer.

Through the website Fastweb.com students that are in the ninth grade can start applying for scholarships to help take a lot off the stress of their senior year.

"Students should be aware [of deadlines]," said Mr. Ziemer, noting that many scholarships have deadlines right after Christmas break. "Check the bulletin board," he added.

The bulletin board is located right outside of the guidance office at NUHS that lists scholarship opportunities for students, but



that is not the only place students can look. The guidance department website also lists upcoming scholarships. It is also important to frequently check with the guidance office as new opportunities become available.

"Any and all [students can apply for scholarships]," Mr. Ziemer said. But eligibility also plays a factor, according to Mrs. Weiss.

Still the vast majority of students end up receiving some financial aid for schooling.

Deciding on a college based on money might not always be the best choice, but sometimes it's necessary.

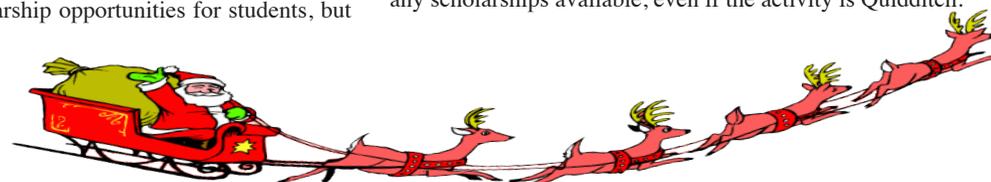
"[It's] shopping for the best price," said Irmiter.

With the FAFSA, the EFC and the SAR stay consistent from school to school, even private versus public institutions. So, the FAFSA could make or break a student's decision, but students shouldn't "jump the gun," according to Ziemer. Students should weigh the option of each school before making the ultimate choice.

Still a little bit confused about everything?

"Attend financial aid night," said Mrs. Weiss. Martin Luther College will be holding such a night on January 27 at 7:30 p.m. in the Chapel Auditorium to help answer any questions parents or students have.

Remember when applying to look for things that you are already doing. If you're involved in a certain activity, see if there are any scholarships available, even if the activity is Quidditch.



School Getting in the Way of Life?

Handy Hints & Tips for Better Study Habits

By Tanya Russell

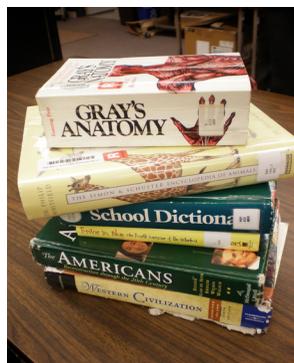
NEW ULM - It is a well-known fact that the younger classes have trouble adapting to the strenuous life of a high school kid. There is so much information to learn in school that it is impossible to remember everything.

In fact, just about 15% of what is taught in a single day is forgotten almost immediately, according to *Psychology and You*, a psychology textbook.

Additionally, there are so many stimuli in a given day: parents nagging to get work done, friends texting to hang out, and favorite TV shows about to come on. The best way to get homework done is to just ignore it, right? Wrong!

The trick is to prioritize. Make a list of the homework that will take the most effort and get that done first. Then every so often go for a quick break to reward yourself for all your hard work.

How long to study is up to you, but Mr. David Janssen, a social studies teacher at NUHS, says that ideally students should be studying every school night. Studying is all about keeping your focus and not getting distracted by the little things. The way you study is up to you, but make sure you are interested and that the method is working for you.



However, studying every night is not just enough either. "I believe that students learn best through a variety of things," says Mr. Rob Bute, another social studies teacher.

"I study from my notes," says Kayla Kokesch, a senior at NUHS. "I [also] read to myself. Notes and flash cards, those are the best way, though."

Students can also get parents, a friend, or a sibling to ask questions from their textbook or notes to review.

"[Students] tend to remember things more easily if they're able to connect with it emotionally or in a hands on way," adds Mr. Bute. Hence, students should always find a way to connect what they learn to their own lives.

Nevertheless, "every student is different," says Ms. Pat Poncin, a Family and Consumer Science teacher at NUHS. "Some may have the

ability to receive top marks and some may not." So even though it is expected that you put in 100%, that may not always equal an A.

As long as the time is taken to do the work, grades will keep on improving, but there has to be a balance of social and school

lives.

"They [students] spend too much time probably on their phone and with their friends," says Ms. Poncin. "Some feel that they should be going places instead of doing their homework."

According to Jacob Thunander, a senior at NUHS, the best time to study is "right after school because I still have everything fresh in my mind from classes. It's easier to keep going instead of stopping and going back to it."

It cannot all be up to the students, though. Parents should take on a little responsibility as well.

"Parents should be pushing their kids to do the homework, [but] the kids should do the work," says Mr. Bute.

"The reason why [parents should be involved] is so they know what their child is doing in school, what they're learning," says Ms. Poncin. "By knowing what their students are doing, they keep in touch with their children."

Kokesch and Thunander have also asked that teachers give students more class time to do assignments and to walk around the room offering more help.

The idea of high school is to learn as much as we can to prepare us for the future, not to ruin our social lives like we might often think!

Ashley Peterson Performs in the Big Apple

By Gretchen Austinson

NEW ULM – Ashley Peterson, a senior at New Ulm High School, performed in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade this year.

In July, the NUHS cheerleaders attended camp and while there, they came across an opportunity to audition to be part of the All-American Cheer and Dance Team. For this audition, Peterson was required to perform a cheer she learned at camp, complete a jump, and perform a dance routine she learned at camp.

Peterson was then chosen from many cheerleaders across the United States to perform in the Macy's Day Parade.

Peterson said she received a video showing the routine she would need to memorize a month before the parade. When she arrived in New York City with her family five days before parade day, she had daily practice with her fellow cheerleaders.

"After everything we worked for, the day finally arrived and it was amazing!" said Peterson.

"It was our turn to step onto the streets of New York and

perform our routine," said Peterson.

Peterson's family, unfortunately, were on the wrong side of the street so they didn't see her performing, but they still had fun by sightseeing in between all of her practices.

They performed to a patriotic medley with a beat that could make people dance in the streets. There were 650 people in this performance group; most were performing a common routine with others doing flips and jumps around them.

She also went to Times Square, which was "gorgeous." She also had the opportunity to visit the Empire State Building at night and "it was beautiful," said Peterson. She also took a cruise around the Statue of Liberty and managed to fit into her schedule the Broadway show *West Side Story* and a show by the

Radio City Hall Rockettes.

Peterson also saw many famous actors and singers.

"Jay Sean was probably a football field away from me," said Peterson.

She also saw Matt Lauer and Meredith Vieira from the *Today Show* and Ed Begley Jr., a famous actor and director.

Peterson said that if she had this opportunity again she would do it "in a heartbeat."

Peterson loved everything about this experience, all the way from the many sights of New York to Parade Day; even the surprisingly normal Hilton Hotel was fun.

Unfortunately, this trip did not last forever but now we have one of our three NUHS captains back to lead our cheerleaders. Who

knows? Maybe Peterson will teach our cheerleaders some of her new hip-hop moves from the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade!



Auto Technology

By Juan Castillo

NEW ULM – Autotech is a class offered at NUHS that is two hours long in the morning. Class is held in a shop by South Valley Street. Here students are taught how to maintain their automobiles and are also given the chance to work on their cars. The students earn their grade by doing a few assignments, but it's "mainly participation points," said Mr. Colby Gallagher, the auto tech teacher.

Some students are now working on putting a car body on a truck frame (a 4X4 car). Other students are working on taking apart engines and reassembling them. And a few continue to work on their own cars. They do oil changes, rotate tires, and work on some electrical items.

Senior Pat Regan said, "Learning is watching and not just listening" in this class.

Students are allowed to take this class beginning their sophomore year and can take Autotech II in later grades.

Autotech I and II are held together at the same time. The Autotech II students work on more advance stuff than Autotech I. They also get a few more privileges because of the fact they have more experience.

A lot of the students just love the fact that they get to actually use their hands for something other than to write. "I think its pretty relaxing and a good learning experience," senior Brady Zepfar said. Kaleb Howk adds, "It's a wonderful learning experience with lots of hands on technique. I love working on cars."

The only thing some of the students said would make Autotech better is more and better equipment. "We need a welder, another car lift, and more tools," said senior Nathan Retzlaff.

Overall, Autotech is a very good class for those who want to learn a little about their vehicles and for those who are going to attend a mechanical college.

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It's All Greek to Me

The Importance of Foreign Languages in Our High Schools

By Rachel Enwright

NEW ULM – If you are a student at New Ulm High School, chances are you know at least a little bit of a language other than English. But whether you greet someone by saying “guten Tag” or “buenos días,” your life has probably been impacted in some way by another language.

On any given day at NUHS, many students can be found performing Spanish skits or repeating German phrases in the new wing of the second floor. Some are just beginners learning numbers and colors, and some are advanced students using previous knowledge to learn more about the history and culture of foreign countries. But they all have one common goal: to become proficient in speaking a language other than English.

So, why is it important for students to learn foreign languages?

Students gain life skills as well as understanding, according to NUHS Spanish teacher Sra. Colleen Tasto. “Understanding creates compassion . . . compassion toward other cultures, beliefs, and ways of life,” she said.

Mr. Peter Engeldinger, a German teacher at NUHS, agreed. “It’s a good humanitarian gesture to get out of our selfish ways and to look at life through someone else’s eyes,” he said.

Both Tasto and Engeldinger believe that learning foreign languages is so important it should be required in high

school.

“Everyone should be exposed to the sort of mental gymnastics that language puts you through!” Engeldinger said with a laugh.



While Tasto noted that everyone is different and sometimes scheduling prevents students from taking foreign languages, she believes that foreign languages “round out the humanities classes. They are a perfect way to develop a well-rounded person.”

Languages “are something that none of us knows anything about, and they are a challenge [compared] to the normal required classes,” said NUHS senior Jacob Thunander, who is enrolled in his fourth year of Spanish.

Thunander believes foreign languages should be required for high-schoolers too, even if just from a logistical standpoint. “Most colleges are making it required anyway, so it doesn’t hurt trying it out,” he said.

Greater emphasis is being placed on learning languages from an earlier age in our school system. For example, there is currently a Spanish program for students in grades kindergarten through eighth that gives students exposure to the culture as well as simple vocabulary, according to Tasto. Engeldinger said that German is now being offered for seventh and eighth graders. Tasto said that the programs give a good basic foundation, but that she would like to see something more structured.

Despite the efforts to introduce students to foreign languages earlier, the United States is still lagging behind other countries. Some European countries require students to

learn up to four or five languages by the time they finish high school, according to Tasto.

“It’s just not part of the fabric of our educational system,” said Engeldinger. “We [Americans] see no immediate need for it.”

Some may not see the need for knowing different languages, but Tasto and Engeldinger do.

“From an economic standpoint, we need to sell,” Tasto said. “We need to speak the language of the consumer.”

Thunander echoed the sentiment, saying that Spanish “will help me anywhere and especially as our country becomes more diverse.”

Engeldinger said that learning another language is also about respect. “If you only know your language, it implies that you only know your culture,” he said.

There are many opportunities available for those who know multiple languages. “You can find work in any human service—social, medical, dental. Not necessarily teaching,” said Tasto.

Engeldinger believes that, more than anything, students should learn languages because they want to. “I’m a big fan of the impractical,” he said. “I have a problem putting a reason on learning.”

New Moon from page 1

“Because it’s a love story, I think students can relate to how she’s [Bella’s] torn between two people,” said Foley. “I also think there’s an infatuation with vampires and werewolves and their immortality.”

“It talks about true love and everybody wants that,” said Meyer.

People have fallen in love with what is happening on and off the sets of these movies as well. Magazines such as *OK!*, *Twist*, and *Rolling Stone* have been following the every move including the love affairs and break-ups of the much-loved stars Robert Pattinson [Edward Cullen], Kristen Stewart [Bella Swan], and Taylor Lautner [Jacob Black]. Photo shoots and new movie deals are as sure as the new moon rising for these young celebrities.

Source:

“New Moon: The Twilight Saga.” The Internet Movie Database (IMDB.com). n.d. Web. 10 December 2009. <<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1259571/>>.

Did You Know?

If a statue in the park of a person on a horse has both front legs in the air, the person died in battle; if the horse has one front leg in the air, the person died as a result of wounds received in battle; if the horse has all four legs on the ground, the person died of natural causes.

101 Dalmatians and *Peter Pan* are the only two Disney cartoon features with both parents that are present and don't die during the movie.

Exchanging Cultures

Exchange Students Experience Life in New Ulm

By Kassi Hague

NEW ULM - New Ulm High School has seen an abundance of foreign exchange students grace the halls over the past ten years. NUHS has had students from many different countries, including Australia, Brazil, Japan, the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Spain, France, Norway, and Sweden.

Exchange students have the opportunity to learn about other students and get rid of the stereotypes they might have.

"My country has said that Americans are die hard sports fans, dumb, and fat," said foreign exchange student Maria VanDerMarel from the Netherlands. "They were right about loving sports, but not everyone is dumb and fat."

Kevin Canonge from France said his country stereotyped America as being a huge country, the people as nice, and that we have an excessive number of McDonalds.

They knew coming to America would be exciting, but it wasn't without their fears.

"I was really nervous at first to speak the English language because I didn't want to make any mistakes," VanDerMarel said.

After coming to America, she realized her fear was unfounded.

In the Netherlands, people aren't as outgoing. "Americans randomly say 'hello' to people, making them seem more friendly," VanDerMarel said.

They found that coming to America would give them a whole new look at the world and the chance to meet different types of people.

"The houses are a lot larger in the United States. Americans don't ride their bikes hardly ever and in the Netherlands, we hardly use vehicles," VanDerMarel said.

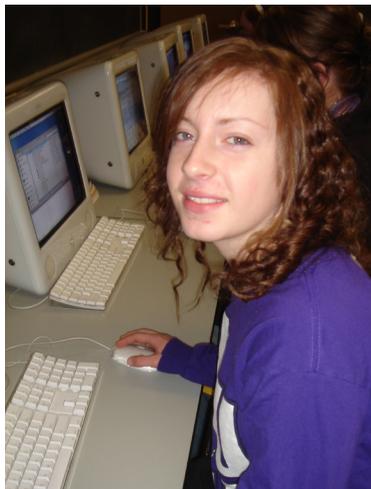
There are many great things about America, but we also have some flaws in comparison to other countries, according to several exchange students.

"Nothing is very private in this town or in the school," VanDerMarel said. She notes that everybody knows each other's business.

Not only is it a learning experience for the students coming to America, it's an experience for the staff members and students of New Ulm High School.

"I have learned mostly about how different schools [are] structured in a variety of countries," school counselor Mr. Ryan Zeimer said.

Going about picking classes for foreign exchange students is an interesting procedure. When they sign up to come to this school, they are to take a test either in geometry, algebra II, or pre-calc. The test that they do well on is the class that they get to take. If they do poorly on a pre-calc quiz, they will be put in algebra II.



"They are to take three out of the four following subjects: math, English, social studies, and science," Zeimer said. "They get to choose the electives to some extent."

One example of a couple different structures are that most foreign exchange students' schools do not have the exact same classes every day.

"Everyday it's the same routine and it gets boring with little variety," VanDerMarel said of NUHS's daily schedule.

Sports in many different countries aren't a part of the school; it's more of a club.

So, coming to America, the students found that having school spirit is exciting and different to what they are used to.

"I love all of the school spirit and excitement at sporting events," VanDerMarel said.

Although there are clearly many differences from the United States to other countries, exchange students do note there are a few similarities.

"The T.V. shows are the same and people go to school for the same reasons," Canonge said. "We also have basically the same food."

With the holidays coming up, the exchange students are feeling a bit homesick. By comparison, their countries and family traditions are different, as well. In France, for example, they do not celebrate Thanksgiving, according to Canonge.

"In the Netherlands, we open our gifts on St. Nick's Day, on December 5. For our Christmas on December 25, we go to church," VanDerMarel said.

Not only is there a difference in holidays, but there is also a difference in how kids enjoy school.

"I enjoy the school spirit and how everyone is so close and friendly in this country,"

VanDerMarel said.

"It's a good learning experience for myself and for others that I interact with," Canonge said.

Did You Know?

An average human loses about 200 head hairs per day.



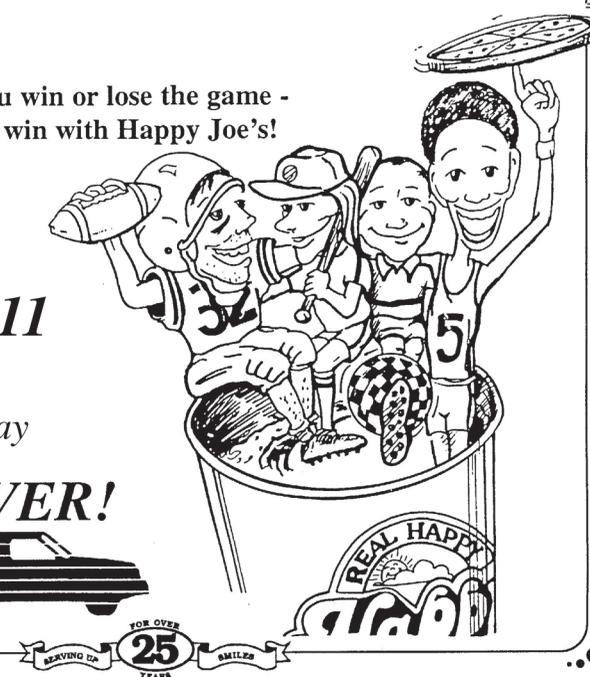
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How Much Sleep Do You Need?

By Kacie Covington

NEW ULM - High school students are starting to look more and more like zombies walking the halls of NUHS due to lack of sleep. Lack of sleep can cause cognitive and emotional difficulties, poor school performance, accidents, and psychopathology, according to Siri Carpenter Monitor of the American Psychology Association, making it a concern to us all.

"I noticed that students are more sleep deprived on Mondays than other days," said agriculture teacher Ms. Crystal Meier.

"Students have a lot on their plate, like work, school, and sports. It's a lot of pressure for them and it causes them to not get enough sleep like they should," said Ms. Meier.

Students are recommended to get between eight and ten hours of sleep each night depending on what they do during the day. The average 5th grade student can be wide awake all day after only sleeping for around nine hours while a teenager needs about ten hours of sleep to be alert all day, according to Carpenter.

"I feel like I get enough sleep at night," said senior Andy Maidl. "I



usually go to bed between 10:30 and 11:30 pm."

"I think some high school students are sleep deprived," said Meier. "They can't pay attention as much as they could and they have a poor attitude toward learning."

One of the main reasons for sleep deprivation is that high schools are starting classes later in the morning than they used to. Schools used to start before 8 a.m. and now classes are starting after 8 a.m. Schools starting their day later restricts time for other activities in which students are involved and also provides students less time for homework, according to WebMD.

"Sometimes I find myself staying up too late at night doing homework, watching television, going to meetings or other activities, hanging out with friends, or because I'm just not tired," Maidl said.

High school seniors are supposed to get more sleep than high school freshmen because they are involved in more activities and also have more stress. "I get less sleep now as a senior," said Maidl. "When I was a freshman, I had a bedtime of 9:30 or 10:00 pm, but now it is my choice, so I usually go to bed later."

"I can tell the difference between kids

who get enough sleep and the ones who don't in school," said senior CeCe Huffman. "The ones who don't get enough sleep are the ones who are falling asleep in their first few hours of classes."

"As a teacher I can tell a difference between the kids who do get enough sleep and who don't," said Meier. "The students who don't get enough are usually the ones that have their head down and aren't paying attention."

According to WebMD, the amount of sleep does affect students' grades. When students can't pay attention because they are too tired, their grades struggle.

"I don't think lack of sleep affects my grades a lot, I'm not usually too tired, to function," Huffman said.

However, studies have shown that students getting less sleep are the ones more likely to get Cs, Ds, and Fs and the students who get more sleep are more likely to get the As and Bs.

Sources:

Carpenter, Siri. "Sleep Deprivation May Be Undermining Teen Health." October 2001. 8 December 2009. <<http://www.apa.org/monitor/oct01/sleepteen.html>>.

"Common Sleep Disorders in Teens." WebMD, 8 December 2009. <<http://www.webmd.com/sleep-disorders/news>>.

Is Technology Lowering Grades?

By Gretchen Austinson

NEW ULM - Let's face it: we have all sat down to study but were easily distracted by the electronic gadgets around us. Everyday technology such as the television, computer, and cell phones can easily distract us from homework.

The main focus of your thoughts may be on the math problem in front of you, but the digital image on the television screen takes away from your concentration. Even if the image is in your peripheral vision and the noise is in the back of your mind, it has an effect.

According to the *New York Times*, Oxford University's Institute for the Future of the Mind developed a study where a group of 18-21 year-olds and a group of 35-39 year-olds had 90 seconds to translate pictures into numbers using a simple code.

With no distractions, the younger group did about 10 percent better than the older group. When each group was interrupted by a simple text message, the two groups matched each other in speed and accuracy.

"The older people think more slowly, but they have a faster fluid intelligence, so they are better able to block out interruptions and choose what to focus on," said Martin Westwell, deputy director of the institute.

This study shows that young minds can work more efficiently than older minds; however, when they are distracted, they lose that extra advantage.

Another distraction is the Internet. Many students go to the computer to write a paper or do some research and end up talking to friends or checking their Facebook page.

There are many ways we can fix these habits. One is to turn off the electronics around us. Even music can take our concentration away.

"I try to get away from everyone else," said Elizabeth Melville, a senior at NUHS

Not all music is bad for studying. Classical music has been proven to help the brain retain information. Many students believe classical music is not the most exciting music, but it might help while studying for big tests.

Another way to improve studying habits is to sit at a table or desk. It may be more comfortable to sit on a couch or in a bed, but then it is easier to focus on how the pillows are situated rather than the life story of Galileo.

For many people, being in a clean and organized area helps them concentrate on their homework.

"If I have stuff all over the place, I feel like I need to



get up and clean," said Melville.

So, if you want to get the best possible grade in your classes, turn off those electronics and listen to some classical music.

Sources:

Lohr, Steve. "Slow Down, Brave Multitasker, and Don't Read This in Traffic." 25 March 2007. *New York Times*. 9 December 2009. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/25/business/25multi.html>>.

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Traditions of Christmas Past and Present

By Felicia Hooks

NEW ULM - Christmas is the most widely celebrated festival in the world. This special holiday is for giving and sharing, for joy and happiness, for laughter and smiles, but most of all Christmas is for love.

Depending on beliefs, traditions vary from family to family. Like most people that live in your community, opening presents on Christmas Eve or Christmas morning is a popular tradition.

According to sophomore Morgan Schimdt, on Christmas Eve her and her family spend a lot of time together playing tons of games including Wii and catching up. "We eat and soon after go to church," said Schimdt.

According to juniors Katie Weber and Iesha Rodriguez, they celebrate Christmas by getting together with grandparents and going to church as a family.

In 354 A.D., the tradition of Christmas was first devised.

According to the "History of Christmas and the Symbols of Christmas," Christmas is a celebration of love and mirth symbolized by the Nativity, the Santa, the caribou, the poinsettia, and evergreens.

New Year's Resolutions Are They Worth Making?

By Hannah Stark

NEW ULM - The New Year is just around the corner, and it is time to start fresh. According to research studies, setting a goal can improve your personal well-being and self-esteem. Unfortunately, these goals are often created but rarely completed. Some would even say that setting goals, such as a New Year's resolutions, are not even worth it!

New Year's resolutions are created to start the New Year on a clean slate. However, many people have a difficult time making it through the entire year before giving up on their goals altogether. There are three common reasons why people do not continue their resolutions. One reason is that they aren't exactly positive what it is that they want to achieve. Another is the shortage of self-confidence. The last reason is the lack of seriousness.

Sadly, only 8 percent of people are successful in achieving their resolutions, according to Stephen Shapiro, author of "Interesting New Year's Resolution Statistics." Who are these determined 8 percent? It appears that the younger you are, the more likely you are to achieve your resolutions. Those in their 20s complete their resolution 24 percent more often than those over the age of 50, according to Shapiro.

Setting goals, such as New Year's resolutions, have positive impacts on many people's lives. For example, a goal to lose a certain amount of weight is a goal that positively affects a person's health. Setting yourself a goal is good because you are ten times more likely to eventually attain your goal, compared to people who do not challenge themselves or create goals, says

The Roman Catholics believe that December 25 is the date of Jesus Christ's birthday, which brought about the celebration of Christmas.

The word Christmas comes from the old English "Cristes maesse," meaning Christ's Mass.

According to "The History of Christmas," there are twelve steps of Christmas with the traditional carol:

1. Honesty meaning he sees you when you are sleeping.
2. Hope meaning for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.
3. Faith meaning away in a manger.
4. Peace meaning bless all the dear children in thy tender care.
5. Renewal meaning lo how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung.
6. Humility meaning fall on your knees.
7. Goodwill meaning let the whole world sends back the song.



Shapiro.

So what is everybody hoping to achieve in 2010? 47 percent of New Year's resolution are self-improvement and excelling in education, according to Nathan Wright, author of "What Are Some Statistics on New Year's Resolutions?" Additionally, 38 percent of people that are making New Year's resolutions for 2010 are setting a goal to lose weight and become healthier and 34 percent of resolutions made are related to money.

A poll taken at NUHS shows that the most popular resolution for teenagers is to improve in school. However, many of the students do not plan to keep their resolutions the entire year.

Setting New Year's resolutions often intimidates people because they are afraid of failure. However, there are simple steps that you can take to help you stay diligent in completing the year with a positive outcome, according to Bob Strauss, author of "How to Keep Your New Year's Resolutions."

First, when setting your New Year's resolution, aim low, but not too low that you achieve your goal in the first month. If you set a goal that is difficult to attain, you are more likely to give up.

Also, do not overload yourself. Choose one, and only one, goal that is exceptionally important to you. It is difficult enough for the average person to complete one New Year's resolution, so why overwhelm yourself with three or four?

When setting a New Year's resolution, tell everyone that you know. That way, you are less likely to give up because

8. Love meaning how silently the wondrous gift.

9. Perseverance meaning we got into a drifting bank, and we got up sought.

10. Wonder meaning oh holy night, the stars are brightly shining.

11. Glory meaning angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains.

12. Joy meaning fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains.

Through the stories told, you can't always expect one exact tradition of Christmas. It's a very precious time that we can grow with our families and express the feelings of love and compassion. Not only do we exchange gifts, but we are really exchanging feelings and emotions at Christmas time.

Sources:

Szaflik. "The History of Christmas." 9 July 1999. Ridgewood High School. 10 December 2009. <www.ridge.net.org/html>.

everyone knows what you are working toward, and they will be there to support and encourage you.

Most importantly, reward yourself. If your resolution is to be kinder to people, reward yourself by buying something nice after keeping your lips sealed tight in a circle full of gossiping girls. If your resolution is to lose weight and keep fit, reward yourself with a sweet treat at the end of the week. Rewards give you something to look forward to.

Do something good for yourself this year and try something new! Make a resolution to simply become a better person, or help build New Ulm High School into a happier place to be. You never know, you might surprise yourself!

Sources:

Shapiro, Stephen. "Interesting New Year's Resolution Statistics." 11 December 2009. Web. 8 December 2009. <<http://www.steveshapiro.com/2008/12/11/interesting-new-years-resolution-statistics/>>.

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How to Stay Healthy During the Holidays

By Amber Reed

NEW ULM - Everyone looks forward to the big feasts that go along with the holidays, but what everyone doesn't look forward to is the weight gain that inevitably comes with the calorie-loaded feasts and the sugar-filled snacks. The next thing you know, the air gets cooler and your jeans get tighter!

Some people may put on five to seven pounds over the holidays. These pounds are usually caused by eating larger meals than normal, eating more sugar-filled treats than normal, and not exercising enough to balance the intake of those extra calories.

"Too many sweets is a sure way to pack on a few pounds," says NUHS health and personal fitness teacher Mrs. Anita Longtin. "Try to substitute sweets like cookies with a healthier snack, for example, pretzels, popcorn, fruits, veggies, and nuts."

Some other ways to avoid gaining weight are to eat breakfast before going to grandma's house. Doing this will help keep from over eating during lunch, and also by eating in moderation.

Try to eat a little of everything – don't eat too much of just one thing. Keeping hydrated is another way to avoid

unwanted weight gain. Drink a glass of water before you eat and during; it'll make you feel fuller faster. Also by eating smaller portions and having small snacks inbetween meals will help to avoid eating a lot at the next sitting.

Besides eating habits to stay healthy over break, use hand sanitizer and wash your hands often.

"especially if you're sharing a snack mix, use your own cup or bowl," said Mrs. Longtin. "Avoid touching other's food."

It's also important to wash all vegetables and fruits when preparing a meal. By following these H1N1 safety rules, everyone should be one step closer to staying healthy this holiday season.

"If you want to keep the pounds off, losing 1-2 pounds a week is the best, safest, and most reliable way," said Mrs. Longtin.

To help stay healthy or to help shed those new-found pounds, EXERCISE!



"Any kind of moderate, physical activity helps," said Mrs. Longtin. "Try something new like, an exercise ball, yoga, Pilates, an exercise DVD."

Since we live in Minnesota, there is tons of snow around, so if you don't like staying inside, try exercising outside. Snowboarding, sledding, skiing, snowmobiling or ice-skating are all fun ways to exercise in the winter. Just get out there and EXERCISE is the key!

For those who don't get easily motivated to exercise, try rewarding yourself with a treat like buying a new pair of shoes, a new outfit, or going to the movies when you exercise a half an hour a day, according to Mrs. Longtin. It is important to try to find an exercise you enjoy doing instead of a dreadful exercise that feels like a chore. To keep exercise from getting boring, mix it up. Ice-skate one day and the next day do yoga.

If you follow these simple rules and regulations, you should stay in tiptop shape and stay healthy over the holidays! Have a happy and healthy Christmas!

Youth Energy Summit from pg. 1

The heat in the school is going to be lowered to save energy. Then a second project includes providing energy saving meters. These energy savers don't take a lot of effort to work. You can take them home and check how much energy you are saving. These energy savers are going to be located in the Media Center for every student and teacher to bring home and use. For the third project, YES will be going over

and working with the elementary students to educate them about renewable energy.

"There are still many exciting projects that await us," said Olson.

"This group is full of memories," said Youngblom. "My best memory so far was when we were trying to decide on planting trees. We joked about planting whomping willows

for our school, just like in Harry Potter," said Youngblom.

"So far the YES team has made good success," said Olson. "But sometimes a lack of money or a project that is not as easy as it seems to be becomes an obstacle," said Olson.

With the 13 students at NUHS and many other students from across the region, they will be taking their next projects to the next level and saving the world one step at the time.

What is Your New Year's Resolution? Will It Last?



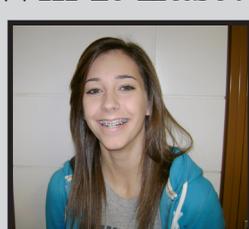
Mr. Curry, gym teacher
"I don't make New Year's resolutions because you don't follow them, so why make them?"



Mr. Maki, choir teacher
"To allow more time for fun because life's too short and I spend too much time working. No, probably only for a couple of months."



Adam Klinkner, senior
"To achieve my greatest potential in school and to find my high school sweetheart. Yes, I do believe so."



Cassie Swift, junior
"My New Year's resolution is to not go into cruise control at the end of the school year, because that is always what happens to me and I want to keep up my grades. Probably not toward the end of the school year."



Kelsey Eckstein, junior
"My New Year's resolution is to run 10 miles by the summer. Yes, I will, yo!"



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