

The Scratchin' Post

Volume 19, Issue 5 Northwestern School District 221 3rd St., Mellette, SD 57461 February 2016

Students turn online game into real-life experience

by: Peyton Groff

The Northwestern middle school seventh-graders visited the Aberdeen Wings to tour the Odde Ice Center on Jan. 6 after completing interactive learning games for science and math.

Science teacher Mrs. Tamra Haven and math teacher Mrs. Shelley Fischbach discovered a cooperation called Everfi, who created interactive learning games that teach science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) concepts for math and science. The game Haven chose for her seventh-grade students centered entirely on the Minnesota Wild hockey team, who partners with Everfi. During the game, the students learned about the friction of ice, how the friction changed the way objects move, the weight of the equipment, how the equipment affects certain body systems, how the players have to adapt to those changes, the different curves of the sticks, how different heights determine how much curve is needed and how to measure and predict angles with hockey sticks.

"The students were so intent on their learning. I wish that

we could do more learning in this way. It really applied our learning to real life," Haven said.

Haven, along with Fischbach, decided to contact the Aberdeen Wings because the students enjoyed the lessons so much, and many of the students had never been exposed to hockey before.

"The Wings were incredible, and from the very first call, they were more than willing to help us," Haven said.

In order to have the chance to visit with the Wings, each student had to reach the goal of completing all activities and having a 70 percent or higher on each activity, which each seventh-grader accomplished.

"It was really fun to see how they helped each other. If someone was struggling with a game, they would sit and help each other. This was a great learning tool and great team-building for the class," Haven said.

The seventh-grade class later took a bus to the Odde Ice Center, where they met General Manager Pete Sauer. Sauer showed them the team locker room and the team training facility. Each of the Wings'



Photo by Peyton Groff

Seventh-grader Joclyn Haven plays keep-away with a Wings player.

players introduced themselves to the students and answered questions that the students had. The seventh-graders also had a chance to show their skills on the ice, where they each took a stick and puck, hitting the puck into the goal and

playing keep-away with each other. Overall, the students had a great time, and Haven hopes to give the chance to future classes to encounter the hands-on, real-life experiences that this trip offered.

"I thought that the trip was

really awesome. It was cool to meet the players personally and see their locker room. I liked how they showed us different stick movements when we got on the ice," seventh-grader Alexis Rahm said.

(More pictures on Page 2.)

Three earn spots at Middle School All-State Band

by: Sadie Vander Wal

Three Northwestern middle school band members gained the honor to travel to Pierre this March for the Middle School All-State Band concert held on March 5. Eighth-graders Miranda Thorson and Cassidy Frericks and seventh-grader Mitchell Vander Wal received selection for the prestigious

concert.

After sending in a recorded audition in December, officials selected members for the band. Each student's audition determines his or her placement for parts within the band for each respective instrument section. All selected students split into two separate bands; these include honor band and fes-

tival band. All three of Northwestern's selected students will play in the festival band; Frericks plays the clarinet, M. Thorson plays the trumpet and Vander Wal plays the baritone. Selected members received the audition results Jan. 14.

For the recorded audition, each student sent a recording of different scales and etudes for evaluation by the judges. Each audition recording consisted of two etudes of technical music and three scales from which the students played.

"I encourage students to audition because the level of music that they must practice is very hard, and it improves their musical skills individually. If each student improves individually, we can improve the level of our band," Mrs. Wendy Thorson said.

Students will rehearse their concert performance pieces with guest directors March 4-5. Upon arrival to Pierre on March 4, students will begin rehearsal at 1 p.m. and continue playing 9 p.m. that night with a few breaks. The following day

students will resume rehearsal until the concert at 3 p.m. that afternoon.

W. Thorson has taught band at Northwestern for 16 years. This year marks the 15th year that she has brought middle school students to the All-State Band festival. W. Thorson mentioned how class B schools do not often earn as many spots for its students, and the large number of students receiving the honor of attending the concert in the past demonstrates the musical talent Northwestern's students possess. Out of the 17 B schools attending this year's all-state band, not many bring more than one student.

W. Thorson noted how students have more time to practice their instruments in middle school rather than in high school as high school brings time-consuming activities for many students.

This concert will mark the third year for Frericks to play in the concert. For her achievement, Frericks and her band director W. Thorson will re-

ceive recognition and an award at the concert.

"It feels like a great accomplishment," Frericks said.

Vander Wal and M. Thorson have played in the band once before. All three students look forward to the concert in the weeks ahead as they prepare.

"It's really exciting, especially to make it two years in a row. When I started practicing for the audition, the music was very difficult to get down. With many band lessons and practicing at home, I finally was able to play them without as much difficulty," Vander Wal said.

"I look forward to this amazing experience," M. Thorson said.

Whether it is preparing the students for a concert or helping them improve their musical abilities, W. Thorson reminds students of the importance of music to their development.

"Music is important at any age because it develops a different part of the brain than regular academics," W. Thorson said.



Photo by Sadie Vander Wal

Eighth-graders Cassidy Frericks (clarinet) and Miranda Thorson (trumpet) and seventh-grader Mitchell Vander Wal (baritone) celebrate their selection to the 2016 Middle School All-State Band.

**Student of the Month:
Peyton Groft**



by: Sadie Vander Wal

Sophomore Peyton Groft received January student of the month. Groft is the daughter of James and Nora Groft, and she has three siblings: Isaac, Madalyn and Samuel.

Groft's activities include volleyball, basketball, track, cross country, band, chorus, Future Business Leaders of America, robotics and journalism. In her free time, she enjoys running, playing volleyball and basketball and reading.

"Peyton is always focused and uses her time wisely. She is always polite and respectful of all staff and fellow schoolmates," Mrs. Jeanine Jilek said.

Regarding her future, Groft hopes to play volleyball in college and to major in exercise science. Her favorite class this year is Algebra II.

Her most embarrassing moment would have to be the time when she and Josie Clemens were playing barber shop, and Clemens cut off most of Groft's hair. Everyone stared at her and asked if she had cancer.

Groft's favorite quote, "There is no substitute for hard work," was stated by Thomas Edison.

Her role models include both of her parents.

Students turn online game into real-life experience - continued...



Photo by Peyton Groft
The seventh-grade class poses for a photo with the members of the Aberdeen Wings hockey team.

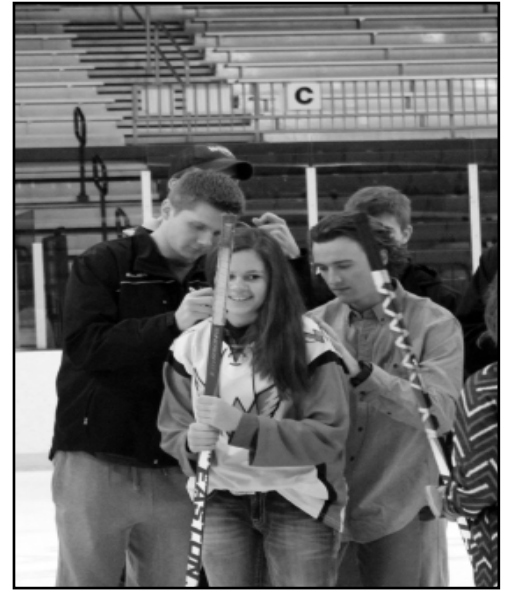


Photo by Peyton Groft
Seventh-grader Alexis Rahm smiles as Wings players gather to sign her jersey.



Photo by Peyton Groft
In the Wings' locker room, Head Coach Francis Antzalone speaks to the seventh-grade class.



Photo by Peyton Groft
Seventh-grader Seth Heidenreich hits a puck into a goal.



Photo by Peyton Groft
The seventh-graders listen intently to the Wings' General Manager Pete Sauer.

Sophomores win Voice of Democracy speech contest

by: Addison Sparling

The sophomore speech class wrote essays and recorded themselves speaking to send in to the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) in Redfield, S.D., to be judged for the Voice of Democracy speech contest. The speech, titled "My Vision for America," outlined what each individual thought would better this country. Students did this as

part of an assignment for Mrs. Nora Groft's speech class.

"I'm very proud of how well our students did this year," Groft said.

Sadie Vander Wal, Peyton Groft and Evy Peterson won and moved on to the district level, where Vander Wal received second place for her speech.

"It is an honor to receive an award in this contest. I feel that

veterans are extremely important to our nation and expressing my gratitude for them is important, so I enjoyed writing and recording my essay," Vander Wal said.

All three of them received \$100 for winning the local contest, and Vander Wal received an additional \$75 for placing second at the district level.

"It was an honor to be selected as a winner, and I was very sur-

prised," Groft said.

This is the first time Northwestern has had three winners. No one from NW won last year, and the year before, senior Isaac Groft was the lone winner from Northwestern.

"It was an honor to be chosen as a winner. It was also a privilege to do this project and learn more about the history of our country," Peterson said.

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Seventh-graders place third in state-wide stock market competition

by Sadie Vander Wal
Northwestern seventh-graders competed against other South Dakota students in a stock market competition through their math class. This online competition taught the students about the stock market while applying it to a competitive context that allowed them to better grasp the concept of stocks. The team of seventh-graders Hayden Bohl, Bailey Heim and Jackson Mielke placed third in this competition with their selected stocks.

\$100,000 to invest. The third-place team invested in stocks of Delta, Disney, Apple, Amazon, Target, Coke and Motorola. At the end of the game, the team had accumulated \$111,480.61. For placing third, the team received \$25 for their class' use.



The third-place stock market competition team of seventh-graders Bailey Heim, Hayden Bohl and Jackson Mielke enjoy its excellent finish.

Photo by Sadie Vander Wal

Mrs. Shelley Fischbach, seventh-grade math teacher, implemented The Stock Market Game into her class to not only teach enriching math skills but also engage the students through competition.

Run by a professor at Black Hills State University, The Stock Market Game gives students the opportunity to understand investments while incorporating other important real-world skills.

"It helped us learn real-life math skills," Mielke said.

Each team started with

"The best part was winning," Heim said.

Another team from Northwestern received eighth place out of the 45 teams; the team consisted of seventh-graders Jackson Christ, Kyle Peterson and Mitchell Vander Wal.

Participating schools in this competition included Edison Middle School of Sioux Falls, St. Mary Catholic School of Dell Rapids, and Northwestern. Of these three schools, 45 teams competed against

each other. This particular competition could include students from fourth to eighth grade. One of the teams from Edison Middle School acquired the first place title.

"It practices a lot of math skills that we are supposed to learn, including percent of increase and decrease, amount of change, and adding and subtracting decimals. It also makes them think strategically,"

Fischbach said.

The seventh-grade students not only had the experience of competing against other students in South Dakota, but they learned more about working together as a team to accomplish a strategic goal.

"It was very exciting. It helped us understand math skills," Bohl said.

One-Act Play Preview: *The Great Nursing Home Escape*

by: Addison Sparling

The Class B One-Act comedy titled *The Great Nursing Home Escape*, by Nathan Hartswick, will be performed at the region contest in Sisseton on Jan. 27, 2016. Seven total schools will compete in the region contest and only two schools advance to state. The state competition is in Sioux Falls at O'Gorman High School on Feb. 4-6.

"I am excited about having an experienced cast and crew who are determined to perform well and return to state for the third year in a row," director Mrs. Jolinda Finley said.

This year's one act play has a cast consisting of seniors Kate Finley, Darienne Frericks, Codi Sparling, Andrea Rausch, Ethan Bauer and Allison Braun, sophomores Megan Heidenrieck and Sadie Vander Wal and freshmen Zachary Toennies and Seth Wood. The play's crew consists of senior Trevor Bohl, junior Ali Johnson and sophomores Tyler Braun, Isaac Bauer and Tucker Bohl. Finley is the director and has been for the past two years.

This year's play is set in a nursing home. Albert (played by Kate Finley), a military veteran, is a newcomer in the nursing home. Albert yearns for adventure, which is contrary to what the people in the nursing home residents are. They are boring.

"It is a very interesting play this year. I am excited to see the look on the audience's faces," Frericks said.

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Northwestern Area Preschool/Kindergarten Screening

The Northwestern Area School District will be screening children who will be three years old on or before March 15, 2016, or five years old on or before Sept. 1, 2016. Any four year olds that were not screened last year are also encouraged to be screened at this time. The screening will take place on Tuesday, March 15, 2016, in the Northwestern Elementary addition. Please stop at the pre-registration table in the choir room when you arrive.

The screening includes all children who will be in the 2016-2017 Kindergarten class.

Children will be screened in gross and fine motor skills, general concepts, communications skills, vision and hearing. Additionally, the county nurse will be available to give general physical examinations to the upcoming kindergarten class members. Early identification of difficulties can help alleviate health or educational problems, which may develop during a child's education.

As part of the school's "Child Identification Project," HEARTLAND HANDS OF BIRTH TO THREE CONNECTIONS, Rich Jankord, will be available on the testing date to screen children who are younger than three years of age upon request. Mr. Jankord will be available only if appointments are made in advance through the school.

This is a FREE service provided by the school district. The screenings take approximately 45 minutes.

If you are interested in having your child screened, please contact Jessica Halvorson at 887-3467 x110 or e-mail jessica.halvorson@k12.sd.us between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. (at least 14 days before the screening) to make an appointment. After appointments have been received, letters will be sent to each family of who has called and made an appointment to verify their time slot for March 15th.

If you know of a family who is unaware of the date for this screening, please share this information or contact the office at the number given. Thank you!

Students prepare for agriculture-related futures in new ag class

by: Peyton Groft

The school board and administration recently added an agriculture class this semester for the students of Northwestern to help them prepare for ag-related careers.

Because some students prefer to work on farms or in a career related to agriculture, Northwestern has added an ag class to assist those in this chosen field. An ag program has not been part of the Northwestern district, except the Brentford school, which had it for about six years in the mid-1960s. Farmer Jeff Vander Wal believed something had to change.

"I was blessed with an excellent ag program in high school and wanted my children and the students at Northwestern to have the same opportunities with ag education," Vander Wal said. So, beginning in January, Vander Wal took on the role of teacher.

The ag class has been opened to any high school student. Currently, almost 20 students

have enrolled. The classes take place in Mrs. Tamra Haven's classroom, although the class will also take a handful of field trips during the semester. The classes occur before school due to early morning basketball and spring play practices. Although the class cannot take place frequently at the moment because of practices, it will begin to transpire more often in March.

"The play director and the basketball coaches have been very good about letting me know their early morning practice schedules so we don't overlap," Vander Wal said.

On the first day of class, Vander Wal took requests from the ag students for what they wanted to learn. The class decided on animal and plant science as well as ag business. During the semester, a variety of guest speakers will also give the students a glimpse into the large range of diversity of careers available to them in

the agricultural world of rural America.

"My goal for this semester is to help the students determine what field or career (ag or not) they want to study after high school. Students do not have to be farm kids to be involved in agriculture," Vander Wal said.

Vander Wal hopes to assist the school board and administration in securing a full-time ag instructor in the near future.

"Other students should join the ag class because Sadie (Vander Wal) is making breakfast..." Vander Wal said with a smile.

Even though the class is only a few weeks in, the students sincerely enjoy the challenges and freedoms of learning a new subject. The class also toured the ethanol plant in Redfield on Jan. 14.

"The ag class is fun and interesting, and it is a good opportunity to learn more about agriculture," freshman Caleb Schentzel said.

News Briefs

MathCounts

Two junior high MathCounts teams participated in a meet at Simmons Middle School on Jan. 13, where eighth-grader Ezekial Duncan placed tenth.

Financial Aid Night

Guidance counselor Mrs. Kari Brenner provided the Northwestern students and parents with a lecture on Jan. 12 about financing for college.



Courtesy Photo

The Northwestern ag class visited the ethanol plant in Redfield on Jan. 14.

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Building trades class constructs additional storage on stage

by Sadie Vander Wal

The introduction to building trades class, taught by Mr. Jerry Sauer, has recently started construction on a second storage area on and above the east side of the stage. The class, which includes sophomores, juniors and seniors, constructs the structure during its 90-minute class period every other day.

Starting before Christmas break, the project will last into the spring, according to Sauer. Superintendent Mr. Ryan Bruns and principal Mr. Rich Osborn presented the idea for another storage structure on the stage similar to the one built last year on the opposite side last for the purpose of general storage, uniforms in particular.

With last year's storage structure, built on the west side of the stage, stairs led up to a platform that lay on top of the drama club's prop room and extended over the small hallway that led to the stage entrance. Underneath of the stairs, the class built another small unit for storage that included

double doors. Currently, this structure holds large props for the drama club's play productions, competitive cheer mats and various other school equipment.

In the current construction of the second storage on the opposite side, the design's similarity to the previous structure has its own new challenges. Instead of one level above the extra room on the stage, another story directly above it will be added, something excluded from opposite structure. The class will also create a small storage unit below the stairs similar to the one on the opposite side. This room may also be used as an athletic training room for athletes' taping needs.

"I think the project is going very well, and I believe that working with friends teaches us good skills. It's very fun to learn how to build stuff," sophomore Dawson Smith said.

Like many projects, this construction has seen its challenges. The layout of

the wall above the stage jags at various angles. For the ceiling and wall of the new structure, constructing joists for the levels will prove difficult in the advanced stages of the project because of the various complex angle cuts. When running a rafter perpendicular, the rafter runs into such angles, and the angle of the rafter must be changed as a result. Running into electrical current troubles has stood as a problem for the construction of both storage areas.

Regarding the class itself, the students have learned more about the layout of various structures this year. In the class' curriculum, the students construct small storage barns and acquire knowledge of the layout of such garages as well. When building this current structure, the students expand their knowledge of layout on a larger spectrum.

"Basic training on small storage barns is giving them enough background to build floor, wall, and other structures

on a larger basis," Sauer said.

The industrial tech class in Aberdeen also helps expand the students' knowledge of construction that can then be applied and aid in the construction concepts learned back at Northwestern.

"As students grow older, this construction will help them become a more informed consumer when buying structures for homes and what the layout includes as well," Sauer said.

By constructing the storage areas, students have the ability to practically apply their general knowledge of construction learned from the classroom to a large, real-world project that not only benefits the students but Northwestern's storage needs too.

"This project is definitely a real-world context for the students. If they go out and work on the farm, that is just what they will be doing, figuring out how to tie things together and identify the problem they are encountering," Sauer said.



Photo by Sadie Vander Wal

The second storage area continues to be built on the stage.



Photo by Sadie Vander Wal

Sophomore Dawson Smith, junior Kyler Johnson and sophomores Micah Collins and Austin Peterson prepare for the next step to their building process.



Photo by Sadie Vander Wal

The first storage area added onto the stage replicates how the second storage area should turn out.

2016 Northwestern Area School District Honor Roll Second Quarter

Names appear alphabetically

Freshmen: **Straight A:** Caitlyn Fischbach; **A:** Moira Duncan, Jarret Haven, Caleb Schentzel, Zachary Toennies; **B:** Gavin Bohl, Riley Grandpre, Seth Wood.

Sophomores: **Straight A:** Peyton Groft, Megan Heidenreich, Sadie Vander Wal; **A:** Jaidyn Kramp, Addison Sparling; **B:** Tyler Braun, Evy Peterson, Darien Watson.

Juniors: **Straight A:** Josie Clemens; **A:** Darby Duncan; **B:** Derek Boekelheide, Kyler Johnson.

Seniors: **Straight A:** Allison Braun, Andrea Rausch, Madison Styles; **A:** Cameron Bohl, Kirstin Borge, Kaylee Hoellein; **B:** Ethan Bauer, Rachael Boekelheide, Trevor Bohl, Kendra Bohlen, Hope Bowar, Kate Finley, Abby Fischbach, Isaac Groft, Elizabeth Heidenreich, Cody Lefforge, Nolan Peterson, Rachel Rausch, Logan Schentzel, Cory Walter.

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Clemens leads girls' basketball team to a 7-4 start on the year

by: Isaac Groft

Tenacious play by Junior Josie Clemens propelled the Wildcats into a 7-4 record halfway into their season.

In a far-away road game on Dec. 28, the Wildcats landed victorious over Sisseton 47-43. Clemens tossed in 21 points and obtained five steals. Sophomore Addison Sparling led the team's 37 rebounds with seven. Sophomore Peyton Groft also contributed four assists.

Northwestern out-played Faulkton 44-40 on Jan. 5. With an outstanding performance, Clemens led the team in scoring with 17 points, rebounding with 12, assists with six, blocks with 1 and steals with four.

Sparling hit a buzzer-beater at the end of the game to lead the Wildcats to a 51-48 victory over Hitchcock-Tulare. Clemens tossed in 17 points, grabbed nine rebounds, obtained three steals and had six assists.

Northwestern defeated St. Francis 64-44 at the Redfield Classic on Jan. 9. Junior Josie Clemens led scoring with 20 points. Clemens also led the team's 12 steals with seven. Sophomore Addison Sparling pulled down eight of the Wildcats' 39 rebounds, and also contributed six of the team's 17 assists. The Wildcats shot 22/65 (33%) from the field and 14/20 (70%) from the free throw line.

Northwestern defeated Potter County 60-48 in Hoven on Jan. 18. Junior Josie Clemens powered the Wildcats with 30 points, and eight of the team's 18 steals. Sophomore Addison Sparling hauled in 14 of the Wildcats' 34 rebounds. Junior Darby Duncan had the team's only block in the game. On the night, the girls shot 17/71 (23%) from the field and 19/28 (67%) from the free throw line.

Through 11 games on the season, Junior Josie Clemens leads shooting with 77/178 (43%), scoring 214 points. Of the team's 357 rebounds, Clemens has brought down 86 of them. She also leads in steals, with 55 of the Wildcats' 147. Sophomore Addison Sparling leads in assists, with 44 of the team's 147. On the season, the Wildcats have shot 205/678 (30%) from the field and 105/188 (56%) from the free throw line. The team has outscored opponents 572-515, and averages 52 points per game.



Photo by Kate Finley

Junior Josie Clemens passes the ball to one of her teammates.



Photo by Kate Finley

Sophomore Evy Peterson strongly goes up for a shot over one of her opponents.



Photo by Kate Finley

Junior Darby Duncan runs to play help-defense in the game against Ipswich.



Photo by Kate Finley

Sophomore Addison Sparling pushes the ball up the court in an attempt to get a quick bucket.



Photo by Kate Finley

Senior Codi Sparling boxes out two of her opponents during the game against Ipswich.



Photo by Kate Finley

Senior Kirstin Borge boxes out her opponent.



Photo by Kate Finley

Junior Josie Clemens pushes the ball up the floor, looking for one of her teammates.

Combined efforts fuel boys' basketball team

by: Camercon Bohl

A combination of efforts leads the boys' basketball team deeper into its season.

The Wildcats fell to Eureka-Bowdle 53-69 on Dec. 29 in Aberdeen. Junior Derek Boekelheide hauled in 22 points and grabbed two steals, along with freshman Jarret Haven. Freshman Caleb Schentzel had four rebounds and four assists to lead Northwestern.

Northwestern lost to Potter County 60-34 on Monday, Jan. 4 at home. L. Schentzel led the team with 14 points and five rebounds. Boekelheide

had three steals along with nine points and one assist. Haven scored five points, one rebound and one steal. C. Schentzel scored three points, one blocked shot and one steal. Freshman Gavin Bohl scored two points and had one assist. Senior Cody Lefforge scored one point and had two steals.

Florence Henry overcame the Wildcats 59-30 on Friday, Jan. 8 at Florence. L. Schentzel led the team with 14 points. C. Schentzel scored five points, had two rebounds and three steals. Haven scored five points, had two rebounds and two steals.

Boekelheide scored three points and led the team with nine rebounds. Junior Andrew Lefforge scored two points and had one steal. C. Lefforge received two rebounds and two steals. Eighth-grader Zech Clemens had one rebound and one steal.

Ipswich defeated Northwestern on Thursday, Jan 14 in Ipswich with a score of 52-66. L. Schentzel led the way for the Wildcats with 19 points, 10 rebounds and two blocks. Boekelheide had three assists. A steady effort by Haven, L. Schentzel, C. Lefforge and Bohl gave the team four steals total.

Warner beat Northwestern 63-24 on Tuesday, Jan. 19 in Warner. L. Schentzel led the team with ten points and had three rebounds. Boekelheide scored seven points, three assists and one rebound. Haven scored five points and led the team with five rebounds. A. Lefforge scored two points and had one rebound. C. Lefforge had two steals and two rebounds. C. Schentzel had four assists and three rebounds. Clemens had two rebounds.

The team is now 0-6 and awaits anxiously for future games.



Photo by Kate Finley
Freshman Jarret Haven attempts to block the shot of his 6'9" opponent.



Photo by Kate Finley
Freshman Caleb Schentzel goes up for an easy shot underneath the hoop.



Photo by Kate Finley
Senior Logan Schentzel puts the ball in the hoop after getting a rebound against Ipswich.



Photo by Kate Finley
Freshman Jarret Haven jumps over a Warner opponent to score a basket.



Photo by Kate Finley
Junior Andrew Lefforge drives around his opponent to the hoop.



Photo by Kate Finley
Senior Cody Lefforge blows past his opponent in a game against Warner.



Photo by Kate Finley
Junior Derek Boekelheide passes the ball up the court as he and his team break the Ipswich press.

NFL Playoff Predictions

by: Isaac Groft

By the time this story gets out, the National Football League will be into Super Bowl mode. I, like you, have my own outlook on how the playoffs will shape out to lead up to the big game in February.

AFC (1. Denver Broncos) (2. New England Patriots) (3. Cincinnati Bengals) (4. Houston Texans) (5. Kansas City Chiefs) (6. Pittsburgh Steelers)

In the wild-card games, the Chiefs will head to Houston to take on the Texans, the winners of the poor AFC South, who posted a record of just 9-7. Despite two or three standouts on the team, the Chiefs' ball-hawking defense will hold down the Texans' offense and advance to the divisional round to take on the number 1 seeded Denver Broncos, who hold home-field advantage throughout. On the other side of the equation, the bottom-seeded Pittsburgh Steelers will roll

through a Bengals' team that is questionable on starting quarterback Andy Dalton's broken thumb injury, and whether or not he will be able to return. As long as the Steelers maintain possession and win the turnover margin, they will easily overcome the Bengals. This takes us to the Divisional round, where the Chiefs will take on division foe Denver, and the Steelers will take on the injury-prone Patriots. Because of this setback, the Steelers will win a tight game with New England, even though the Patriots still possess veteran Tom Brady. The Chiefs, however, will not fare as well. Despite Denver's early-season loss to Kansas City with five turnovers, this time around will showcase a healthy Peyton Manning, who knows the game like no other. This leads us to the AFC championship game, where the Broncos will host the Steelers. In an early-season meeting, Pittsburgh overcame a 27-10 deficit in the second quarter to win 34-27. Expect to see similar results, as star wide-receiver

Antonio Brown clobbers through the Denver secondary with ease, and leads the Steelers to the Super Bowl, again (Yes, I am serious).

NFC (1. Carolina Panthers) (2. Arizona Cardinals) (3. Green Bay Packers) (4. Washington Redskins) (5. Minnesota Vikings) (6. Seattle Seahawks)

In the wild-card games, the red-hot Seahawks will travel to Minnesota and win a two-possession game against a Minnesota team that they clobbered a few weeks ago. On the other side, the Redskins will be playing in hostile Green Bay, where they will play a very competitive game with Packers, but will climb just short of a victory. Taking us into the divisional round will let us see the 15-1 Panthers destroy a Packers team that has been very tentative offensively as of late. Arizona, however, may not fare as well, and will lose to a Seattle team that mangled them in a non-competitive 36-6 blowout in

week 17. This will take us to the NFC championship game where Carolina will play host to a battle-ready Seattle team. This game will feature two of the most agile quarterbacks in the league, with Russell Wilson and Cam Newton. Seeing that the Panthers have that winning edge to them, they will win a very offensive game with the Seahawks, and advance to the Super Bowl.

In Super Bowl 50, we will see Antonio Brown and the Pittsburgh Steelers take on the underdog role as they do battle with Cam Newton and the elaborate Carolina Panthers. As long as Carolina's stout defense endures, they will contain Brown and force a couple of turnovers on quarterback Ben Roethlisberger. Those forced turnovers will quickly turn into points for Carolina as they will win Super Bowl 50 by 10+ points.

Northwestern's varsity wrestlers leave it out on the mat

by: Sadie Vander Wal

Two Northwestern high schoolers compete on the Warner-Northwestern wrestling team for the 2015-2016 season. Sophomore Tyler Braun and freshman Sean Shepherd represent Northwestern on the varsity squad and have triumphed thus far in the season.

Braun, in his fourth year on the varsity team, has worked hard to overcome obstacles. Placing at various tournaments this season, he works diligently at every practice to improve his skills. Because of a knee injury, Braun sat out last season to improve his health. Now back on track once again, he already has succeeded on the mat this year with two sixth-place finishes in the 182 lb. category at the Mount Vernon-Plankinton and Kimball tournaments.

"It feels great to wrestle again," Braun said.

In his first year on the varsity team, Shepherd continues to work diligently and strives to achieve his goals on the mat. As he continues wrestling, Shepherd hopes to improve on his skills. He competes in the 113 lb. category. He looks forward to seeing his dad at parents' night this season.

"I hope to not get pinned for the rest of the year," Shepherd said.

After practices began last November, the wrestlers will practice and prepare in order to qualify for state in February. The team has competed at Kimball, Faulkton, Mount Vernon-Plankinton and Lyman so far this



season. Head coach Jordan Russell, Northwestern's head football coach, and numerous assistants have pushed the team at practice to prepare for the tough matches to come.

"I've gotten better from the hours of practice over the years," Braun said.

With tournaments still to come, both athletes anticipate the tough competition ahead.

Best of luck to Braun, Shepherd and the rest of the wrestling team on their season!

Courtesy Photo

Sophomore Tyler Braun wrestles an opponent earlier this season.

Are semester tests necessary for students?

Staff editorial

Christmas vacation exists as the ultimate reward for a long semester of hard work and dedication to school work. The month of December brings festive lights, catchy holiday songs and brightened spirits. However, for some high school students, the holiday season does not seem as cheery as it did in their junior high and elementary years. Before Northwestern high school students are let out of school for break, they must take semester finals that account for 10 percent of their semester grade. These difficult tests require a significant amount of studying in order to ensure that a student's letter grade does not drop below what he or she desires. Students may see semester tests as a hassle now, but many benefits exist to taking them as well.

The purpose of semester tests is to see what students have learned from the year or semester and if they have prepared and studied the mate-

rial. Students who study and complete assignments should not have a problem with the semester test. By studying and reviewing, students better remember what they have learned and can even apply that knowledge to real-life situations down the road. Semester exams offer an opportunity to boost one's grade in a class and review the material for future reference and demonstrate the knowledge gained from the teacher's lessons so far in the school year.

To some students, the semester test stands unfair when they have completed their work on time for the entire semester but cannot perform well on tests. Some believe that because they have a high grade average in the class, they should not have to take an exam that may negatively affect the grade. Studying for these finals gives the students little sleep and puts a large amount of stress on their bodies. Not only do students have to study for the

one test, but they also have to study for a test in each subject. At Northwestern, this could amount to seven or more exams over the course of two days. The amount of studying required to receive a good grade proves extremely stressful, and many times, students do not have the adequate amount of sleep or nutritious food in their body to efficiently take a test.

Other schools have options regarding the semester tests. Students who have completed all of their assignments and have a passing grade do not have to take the exam, whereas the students who failed the class, had incomplete assignments, or would like to take the test to try to receive a better semester grade, must take it. Some schools only make students who missed class for any reason take the final test. At Northwestern, all students take the exam regardless of a student's grade, attendance or completed homework.


Semester tests prepare students for college. When students enter their post-secondary school, they will take semester finals for their classes. Most classes at college only last the duration of one semester; therefore, the semester does act as a final for the class. Students who have never taken a final test prior to college not only do not know the information that may be included on a final test but do not know how to properly and efficiently study for such a long, tedious exam.

Semester tests may seem like a hassle to students now, but the tests only prepare them for their futures. Testing students of their knowledge on certain subjects proves necessary for educators to better understand which topics that still need reviewing and which ones have been mastered by their students. Tests do not harm students; they only add to their knowledge and help them grow.


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In the Hallway....

In the Elementary....

Whom do you want to be your valentine this year and why?

by: Peyton Groft



"Ty because I like him," first-grader Taylor Vetter said.



"Nobody," third-grader Rennan Bruns said.



"My mom or dad because I like them, and they are nice," first-grader Daniel Peters said.



"Broden because he is silly and has an imagination," first-grader Abigail Schnell said.



"Nobody because I don't have a crush on anybody," third-grader Jessica Christ said.

In the Middle School....

Whom do you want to be your valentine this year and why?

by: Peyton Groft



"Casper the Ghost because we are both single," eighth-grader Eleanor Tonga said.



"My mom because she takes care of me," sixth-grader Christopher Toennies said.



"Dani Jo because she's cool," eighth-grader Hailey Boekelheide said.



"Hailey because she's cool," eighth-grader Dani Jo Watson said.



"Riley because she is my loving sister," sixth-grader Emma Grandpre said.

In the High School....

Whom do you want to be your valentine this year and why?

by: Addison Sparling



"Mila Kunis because she is hot," senior Ethan Bauer said.



"My husband so that he will buy me a gift," Mrs. Amanda Fa'Onelua said.



"I do not want a valentine," junior Josie Clemens said.



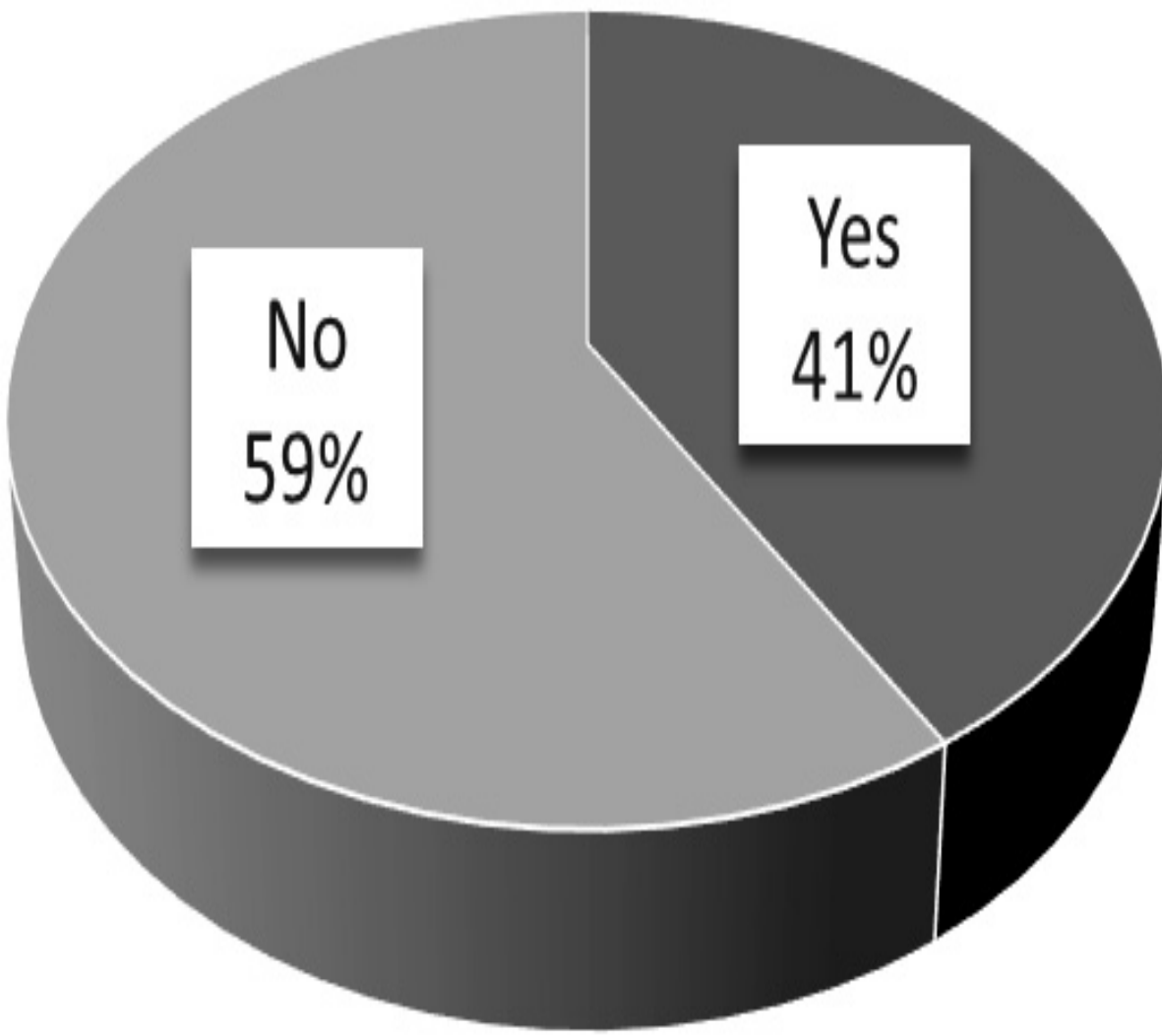
"Jason my grandson," Mr. Scott Boone said.



"My sister because I love her," junior Ali Johnson said.

Do the students of Northwestern have a valentine this year?

by: Addison Sparling and Sadie Vander Wal



Top 10 Worst Valentine's Day Gifts

by: Sadie Vander Wal

10. One FBLA Valentine's Day sucker
9. Fake flowers
8. Toaster
7. Tools
6. Expired food
5. Gym membership
4. Self-help book
3. Sugar-free candy
2. Lump of coal
1. Nothing

Trends: Can you match the person with the correct phone?

Photos and story by Addison Sparling

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A.		B.		C.		D.		E.											

Answers: 1E, 2B, 3D, 4A, 5C

Fantastic 4

Addi's Apps

Everything these days is electronic or can be used through technology, including books. So many apps and accounts can be made to read books online or on the go.

This is not a brand-new technology, but it shows to becoming more and more popular. iBooks, the app that comes on every Apple device, is free and easy to use. Several free books already exist to be read, and then a large amount of books can be purchased price similar to in the stores and have it mobile anywhere they go. The app also offers audiobooks that can be listened to. The audio part of this app shows very similar to Audible, which is another app that can be downloaded to acquire books and listen to a person read them.



Isaac's Intellect

My intellect for the day is the importance of a "real" summer vacation. Although this is what we call it, "vacation" is really a misleading term. To me it is just summer; a chance to rekindle the spirits and rebuild the body. As a senior, I have worked my way through many grueling days of hard work and dedication. I recommend a well-rounded summer of solid rebuilding. I just completed the most fulfilling summer of my life, full of basketball camps and open gyms, football camp and workouts, cross country running, YMCA personal training workouts three times a week, and strength and conditioning twice a week. Easily enough, every athlete should be able to come to our strength and conditioning workouts on Tuesdays and Thursdays for an hour and a half. Three hours a week is very manageable. Get here and enjoy a workout with your teammates that not only builds your body but your relationships with your teammates. Next thing that I recommend is cross country miles. For us runners, three or four runs a week is a great way to stay in shape for the upcoming season and to produce some great results, including popping into some 5Ks during the summer. The YMCA workout is at your own expense; it can be done on your own at the school's weight room. Get in there for an hour and mix lifting between arms, legs, and abs until it hurts to stand up. Refuel your body afterward with a protein bar or shake for your own good. For both boys and girls, basketball is a great way to get in some additional cardio. Both teams participate in team leagues, camps and open gyms. For volleyball, you can get in a private lesson with the coach once a week for an hour. These lessons carry over into leagues once a week and eventually into the season.

My message to the readers: keep your summer "break" schedule well-stuffed throughout the entire three months. If you truly care about you and your team's success, keep an active body and prove that you've earned that spot on your team. Summer opportunities are starting to become available, so spend your spring planning your summer workouts. You and your team will reap the benefits next season!

Sadie Says

With the start of a new semester, an agriculture class, described in a previous story, was introduced to Northwestern. Because of Northwestern's agricultural community, an agriculture class could benefit many students, especially those who will enter into an agriculture career in the future. Students who do not plan on working directly with the agriculture industry in their future can benefit from this class for multiple reasons as well.

Agriculture impacts every person on earth in one form or another. First of all, it pathed the way to established civilization. Nomadic tribes finally settled down on permanent territories in order to farm the land and grow crops, according to Bright Hub. As a cultural innovation, agriculture has shaped everyone's lives entirely. With modern technology, farmers can plant and harvest crops in a time efficient manner and in abundant numbers to feed more than just one family; it also ensures that food will be available at all times of the year. Other science advancements have produced more nutritious crops and a higher quality of meat. With the implementation of an agriculture class, Northwestern's students will develop an awareness for the agriculture industry and notice how the future of agriculture will affect their lives.

Agriculture connects people. Simply learning more about where food comes from and how farms in the community operate will develop a better understanding in students. The hands-on learning that this agriculture class will use will give students the opportunity to expand their knowledge base on subjects of interest. Even if students do not live on a farm, they can benefit from this class by applying their experiences with the class to their own lives, recognize possible careers in this field that they may not have been aware of before, and apply information from the classroom to the real world around them.

Peyton's Power Hour

The 99 Workout

Set 1:	Set 4:	Set 7:
99 jumping jacks	66 jumping jacks	33 jumping jacks
99 crunches	66 crunches	33 crunches
99 sec. wall sit	66 sec. wall sit	33 sec. wall sit
99 knee lifts	66 knee lifts	33 knee lifts
9 pushups	6 pushups	3 pushups
Set 2:	Set 5:	Set 8:
88 jumping jacks	55 jumping jacks	22 jumping jacks
88 crunches	55 crunches	22 crunches
88 sec. wall sit	55 sec. wall sit	22 sec. wall sit
88 knee lifts	55 knee lifts	22 knee lifts
8 pushups	5 pushups	2 pushups
Set 3:	Set 6:	Set 9:
77 jumping jacks	44 jumping jacks	11 minute run
77 crunches	44 crunches	
77 sec. wall sit	44 sec. wall sit	
77 knee lifts	44 knee lifts	
7 pushups	4 pushups	