

THE MESSENGER

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Wishing for snow days;
dreaming of spring break...



Teaching, learning math changes with times

Most students see benefits of MathXL

By Hailey Jowers

Math XL is a personalized way of learning math for middle and high school students, in which teachers can create and assign homework and tests, and students work independently using the computer. Math XL has many positive features, including interactive learning aids, study plans personalized by the teacher, instant feedback about the individual problem, and even automatically graded assignments. Math in the classroom is not at all what it used to be.

In a recent informal opinion poll at NRHS, most students surveyed said that they like Math XL and they like it to regular paper and pencil math instruction.

"I like Math XL. I can do it at home and know if I get it right," said sophomore Zade

Richardson.

"I enjoy Math XL due to the papers that we don't have to take home," said freshman Sean Hoagland.

"I like Math XL because it helps practice what we learned in the lesson during class that day," said freshman Alex Olsen.

Students surveyed said that they see many positives to Math XL, including the fact that the computer program actually helps students solve the problem or offers them assistance with it.

"It will show us how to do the problem," said freshman Julianna Harrison.

"Math XL will give you examples if you need them, and will allow you to communicate with the teacher if needed," said sophomore Kayla Gilbert.

"The positive of Math XL is the, "help me solve it," part and if you don't understand how to do the problem, that part would help you," said sophomore Chandler Kinhalt.

Math teacher Carla Corbin echoed students who liked the online assistance that MathXL gives them. "One major issue with book work is that students can do the entire assignment wrong and not know it. When they turn it in to the teacher, he or she may not have time to grade every problem right away, so students may not know they're incorrect until they fail the test when it's too late. With MathXL, they get immediate feedback and know if they need help or not."

"If students have a question about a homework problem, they can view a similar example that shows steps for solving the problem," added math teacher Rylan Shebesta.

Other students mentioned that

Math XL is very convenient because students can work on it almost any time and on many different devices.

"More convenient because it can be done anywhere that you have internet and have a compatible device," said sophomore Devin Litteral.

"It allows you to do your work on a computer," said freshman Brody Hawkins.

NRHS math teachers see purpose, positives, and benefits to Math XL not only for their students, but also for themselves.

"Math XL benefits me in a number of ways. One way is that my students understand the material better, which is our main goal as teachers. Another way it benefits me is that it keeps students from solving a number of homework problems the incorrect way (something a worksheet can't)," said math teacher Will Shoemaker.

"Immediate feedback has to be

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at the top of the list. Students know when the questions are correct and when they are not. Multiple chances is another benefit. I don't have to assign 10 problems of the same type, if I assign 2 problems, students get multiple tries at that problem if they need it. If they get them correct right away, they can move on to other questions. Another benefit is view an example. If students are at home and there is no one to help them, they can read through an explanation of how to solve the problem. Finally, ask the instructor has allowed many of my students a chance to get help from me, on their exact problem, when I may not have the book in front of me to answer questions from a book," said math teacher Carla Corbin.

"Math XL benefits me because it gives me instant feedback on what questions students are missing, how long students spending doing homework, and it grades students work as they complete each problem," said Shebesta.

Teachers surveyed believe that Math XL has a greater benefit to their students, sometimes

moreso than written work.

"I feel as if students get different benefits from having a mixture of both. I think though if I had to choose which ones students benefit more from I would have to say Math XL," said Shoemaker.

"Students still need to work the problems out on paper, then enter their answers into the website. One major issue with book work is that a student can do the entire assignment wrong, and not know it. When they turn it into the teacher, he or she does not have time to grade every problem, so the student may not know they are incorrect until they fail the test when it is too late. With mathXL they get immediate feedback and know if they need help or not," said Corbin

Not everyone surveyed; however, believes that MathXL is all positive. There are some negative aspects that were mentioned.

"Computers sometimes crash or they don't respond," said freshman Twyla Blair.

Even respondents who prefer Math XL, have said to have had complications with it.

"You don't get enough tries,"

said sophomore Sky Gleason.

"Same of the questions are specific to where if you forget to add a zero in front of a two, you get the answer incorrect. It's the same if you accidentally put a space in between the equations," said sophomore Sara Riser.

"Some people don't have internet so it could sometimes be difficult to do," said sophomore Chris Riley.

Corbin said, though, that most of the negatives that she sees with Math XL are related to the ways in which students use it. "Just as people can cheat on book work, there are ways students can cheat on MathXL. They use other websites or use view an example to get an answer. They complete the assignment without knowing what they are doing, and that lack of understanding is reflected on test scores."

Shebesta agreed that students completing problems without fully understanding what they're doing negatively impacts their learning. "They also don't get immediate feedback on why their answers were incorrect," he said.

Math teachers also mentioned that MathXL is much more similar to the state-mandated assessments, and this similarity is another benefit for students.

"MathXL is particular when it comes to rounding, but the state assessments will also be computer graded," said Corbin. "When they say 'round to the nearest hundredth,' that is what they want. Rounding is a weakness for some of our students, and MathXL has them practice

those skills in addition to the new material that is being taught, which will help many of our students in the long run."

"The format of MathXL has some similarities to the AIR math test (state math test for Ohio) so MathXL helps students become familiarized with the AIR test format," added Shebesta.

Teachers also acknowledge that while MathXL is a great learning tool, it should be supplemented with other classroom activities.

"It is not a substitute for a teacher!" emphasized Corbin. "Since the students have different questions with different answers, class discussion between students has changed from, 'What is the answer to number 5?' '15,' to 'How do you do #5?' 'You take your number and...'"

"It is a great educational tool," said Shebesta, "but it must be supplemented with other projects, written work, etc."

Even though they acknowledge some minor issues with Math XL, the majority of students and teachers seem to realize that the benefits outweigh the negatives, and, as Shoemaker said, it's the best way to give students a math education.

"When I was in school, the only help we received on math problems were the few examples the book provided and the answers to the odds in the back of the book," he said. "MathXL will physically walk students through the problems they are struggling with. It's like having your own personal math tutor for every problem you need help solving."

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Students weigh in on assigned books

Most enjoy them, but a few changes wouldn't hurt

By Mary Moran

In school, we all had to read books, chances are a few a year. Reading may or may not be something everyone enjoys, but lots of students had something to say about the assigned books. Whether they thought they were boring, or exciting or something they've never even tried to read, they were still assigned books, usually in English class.

Most students surveyed in an informal poll at NRHS indicated that they actually like the books they're assigned and find them, for the most part, interesting and enjoyable.

"I like them. Because they actually have a meaning, unlike some books, the books we read in school teach us something," said freshman Taylor Bayless.

Freshman Sara Harris said, "I think the books we're assigned in English class are super. They are reinventing and interesting. The characters are compelling, too."

"They are different, and questioning because you wonder what the authors were thinking when they wrote them," said Kayla King, sophomore.

Out of the books assigned, the majority chose books from the lower grades. Common favorites were *The Outsiders*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and *Romeo and Juliet*.

"*Romeo and Juliet*, because

they were lovers who killed themselves for each other to be together forever," said King.

"*The Giver*, because it was the only one I actually read, and it was pretty good," said Alissa Brumbaugh, freshman.

"*Of Mice and Men* was my favorite because Lenny reminds me of myself, and I'm goofy," remarked Harris.

"*The Outsiders*," said Thea Transier, sophomore. "I loved this book because it had drama and complications. It was just really addicting."

"*To Kill A Mockingbird*, because it isn't overly complicated and it's actually interesting," said Jocelyn Nehls, freshman.

Other students didn't enjoy the assigned stories as much as others.

"They're long and boring. They should pick books that could relate to us instead of all the books taking place in the past," said Kaitlyn Lambert, freshman.

"I think the books we read in English can be very boring, but other books could be entertaining and I enjoy them," said freshman Everett Olenick.

Freshman Caitie Biehle said, "The books? I like some of them, but most of them are pretty boring and not very interesting."

Griffin Saunders, freshman, said, "I believe they are boring.

They are long winded and always the same."

American author Judith Viorst, who has written several books for children, and is quoted on the web site renlearn.com, agreed that reading books can benefit students in many ways. "For we each get one life to live here on earth and no matter how richly we live it, there is so overwhelmingly much that we can never know about, unless we read books. And with books we can travel anywhere in the world, and out of the world—to Narnia, Oz, and Where the Wild Things Are—comforted by the fact that, when we finally come back from our journeys, our supper will be waiting and still hot." (doc.renlearn.com)

"I like the books, just not the way we read them.., said Deanna Kirk, freshman.

To follow up, Mackenzie Reffit, freshman, said, "I like reading *To Kill A Mockingbird*, because we read it step by step, and chapter by chapter. I like taking it slow."

Other students said that there are some changes that they would like to see in the selection of assigned reading.

"I would love to read more romance novels, and more novels in general, because they're very interesting. I love novels," said Harris.

Freshman Wyatt Hotchkiss

thinks that, "They should change the way we read and let us choose the books. We should read an autobiography of rap, for instance, because it means something to me."

Freshman Brandon Benzing said, "I think that the books are either unenjoyable or awesome, and that we haven't read anything in between. I would rather read fantasy books."

Viorst, though, believes that any books read can be educational, informative and entertaining. "Experiencing—through the books we read—these other lives, these other times and places, can open our hearts and minds to greater empathy, respect, and understanding. Learning—through the books we read—about other roads to take, other dreams to pursue, can help to light our way as we seek to find a place for ourselves in the wider world," she said. (doc.renlearn.com)

Overall, the students enjoyed the choices of books and most students found them enjoyable. "They were very interesting," said Tyler Honaker, sophomore. "They were the kind of books that made you want to read longer and go ahead."

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You Can't Take it With You

The winter play: what the actors have to say

By: Mary Moran

"You can't take it with you." What do you think when you hear it? Most people would think of a slogan to symbolize the unimportance of wealth, but we in the theatre program think of it as the winter play. Taking place February 19-20 in the high school auditorium, it is a popular show done several times before.

The show is about a young businesswoman, Alice Sycamore, who falls in love with the boss' son, Tony Kirby. She loves him, and she loves her insane, carefree family as well, but in her mind, they don't mix.

Alice tries to make her family as normal as possible while still keeping Tony under her wing, until she invites her in-laws to meet her family. What happens

when they show up on the wrong night? Come find out!

The cast, who have been working hard to make this show one you'll want to take with you, shared their thoughts about the play.

Ella Lindsley, who plays Alice Sycamore, loves theatre. It's what she does with her life. "The show is going very well, everyone gets along and the drama club is like a family. We may goof off a lot, but we get good work in. With our experienced and talented cast, there aren't many problems to work out."

Lindsley highly recommends coming out to see the play. "I agree entirely with the message of the show. It's one of the reasons I insist on keeping theatre

and music in my future."

Austin Lawson, or Martin P. Vanderhoff in the show, has a lot of importance, and so does his character. "I'm the grandpa. I'm probably the most important character, because without me, there would be no show. I am the happy, carefree guy who has had enough of the stress of business and just wants to have fun. I give the message."

In the script, though, Lawson said there are some difficulties. "I have a lot of 'old, wise guy' speeches, you know, like preachers and old guys have, and they're hard to not drown out."

"This character is very much like me," said Lawson. "We both have a carefree attitude and a life motto that I myself live by. I agree with it completely. I want to live my life how I do it; don't do something if you're unhappy doing it."

Penny Sycamore, played by Isabelle Oiler, is the mother of Alice and the daughter of grandpa. "She is the mother of Alice and Essie [a dancer] and she is the woman of the house. Oiler said that her character has the most lines in the production. 'Kennith, my virginity is a priceless thing to me!' would be her favorite. "It's so random and I love it," she said.

Oiler also has challenges with this large part. "Memorizing all 246 lines is a struggle, but I'll get it eventually. Penny is a character; she loves having fun and being with her family and friends, like me. I enjoy this character because she seems like an adult version of me. She's kind of odd, but still a joy to be around. I'm beginning to get off script, and everyone seems to be enjoying themselves. I recommend coming out to see the show. It's got

a great message and it's quite entertaining."

Oiler also said, "I think the message of the show is really meaningful. I am a high strung worry-wart, but that makes me appreciate the meaning even more, because it reminds me to chill. :) I would do this again, 100 times yes. I love being part of this drama program and it's a great blessing."

Skylar Grady, or Rheba the maid, wanted to be in this production for the same reason as most people. "Because I love shows, and the people are fun to work with. We work with each other to help our lines pop. This character is like me because Rheba and I are both very clumsy."

"You should come out to see the show," Skylar said, "because we worked hard, and it's a great show."

Bill Harris, known to the drama kids as 'Mr. Harvey, or Harebear,' is the director. "This is a talented, hard working group. They're fun to work with! This script is special because one, it's very funny, two, there's a life lesson, and three, every actor gets to do something fun," he said.

Involved in this show is the cast, plus freshman Mary Moran as the stage manager/assistant director, and sophomore Morgan Abercrombie on light crew. The show is 7p.m. February 19-20. The show is going very well, this is a hard working group.

"Without the extended time to plan a new show, I chose to do two shows this year that I was familiar with and that I knew would be well revered," said Harris. "I always remember shows as team building experiences. I have directed this show four times, but I have never been in



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it. We'll do at least one drama next year, probably an Agatha Christie murder mystery. We might also do a Neil Simon comedy."

Moran is also the stage manager. "It's a great show. It's got some incredible actors, the message is great, and as Ella said, we're a family. This show isn't just about the performance, it's about all of us being together doing something we love to do. I highly recommend coming out to see it. This script has challenges, but which one doesn't? We can get over them, I guarantee it."

"A moment that stuck out to me, and most of the cast, is Act II, because it's hilarious," said Moran. "I can't tell you how many times we've cracked up laughing while trying to go through this, still, after all this time. You'll be laughing, too."

Drama club president Anne-Marie Woods, or Essie, the ballet dancer, who isn't very good at her profession and who loves

making candy, wanted to be in the show because, "Theatre equals life. Nothing really sticks out in the show, mostly backstage interpretive dancing. I think the play as a whole is wonderful. It's so 'out there' with a really great message."

"There are so many...interesting...characters, to say the least. The timing and inflection and how you portray these characters is essential to helping the audience understand and laugh at it," Woods said..

Woods added that she can truly relate to her character. "Although she's a little more outgoing than me, I relate to her daydreamy-like attitude and her bubbliness. I love playing Essie because she's so out-there and to people who normally think of me as quiet, Essie is a lot like me around people I'm comfortable with."

Woods, too, has high hopes for the play. "Even with having half the cast in other sports and activities, it is going perfectly be-

cause we are all dedicated to and love the stage. You should come out! It's a wonderful show with humor any age could understand. I think it is one of the most valuable lessons you can learn. Wealth means nothing if you're unhappy. You can't please yourself trying to live up to what people want you to be, you have to find that happiness for yourself."

The crazy Russian Nick Kirby, or Mr. Boris Kolenkhov, is Essie's dancing teacher and a dear friend of the family for eight years. When asked who he was, Nick said, "a devilishly handsome Russian dance instructor."

"I love acting and doing Russian accents, so this was kind of two birds with one stone. I get to scream at the top of my lungs, that definitely stands out. The multiple ongoing conversations are a bit challenging," said Kirby. "Kolenkhov is as loud as I am, but unlike me, he is very Russian. I absolutely enjoy this character. He's hilarious and it's an absolutely wonderful role. We're making progress, slowly but surely. Mr. Harris deserves a medal for dealing with us. I would recommend coming out to

see it. The message is also great: people should enjoy themselves more and worry less, money doesn't buy happiness. Do it again? Of course I would."

Junior Bradey Strunk, or Mr. De Pinna, is a crazy man who makes fireworks in his friend's basement. "I like to do drama," said Strunk. "I'm supposed to be socially awkward. I'm very funny and clumsy. I can see this being me when I'm old. Come out, it's a very funny show."

Zachary Wuest is Paul Sycamore; husband of Penny Sycamore, father of Alice and Essie, and best friend of De Pinna. He also makes fireworks in the basement, and he sells them in Mount Vernon near the Fourth of July. "I wanted to keep being involved in drama, and it seemed like a really good play," he said. "Paul is like me because I'm sort of a pyrotechnic myself. I enjoy it because even though he doesn't have many lines, he's still funny at times. The show is going as well as you can expect because everyone is still learning lines and entrances. I thought the message was inspirational and true to life, and I would absolutely do it again."



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Singing straight out of competition

New Richmond choirs set to perform at OMEA

By: Christina LaRoy

New teachers bring new opportunities. This is what happened with Lizbee Hannah, the new choir teacher, who is planning on taking her choir classes to the District 14 OMEA (Ohio Music Educators Association) Contest in the early spring.

"In my previous district, I took all of my high school choirs to contest. A couple of them received the top rating and went on to perform at state contest as well. I also attended the same contest when I was in high school," said Hannah.

So far, the Troubadours group and Select Choir are for sure going to contest. Mixed Choir has until the beginning of February to prepare before Hannah decides if they're going.

"Each choir is preparing by learning three pieces in a variety

of styles. We will perform these three songs memorized," said Hannah.

According to Hannah, the first song for each of the groups will be a classical-style piece, the second piece will be a slow-lyrical piece, and the third song will be a fast, spiritual style piece.

"Each group is also singing in a foreign language. The Troubadours are singing in Latin, Select Choir is singing in Latin and Zulu, and Mixed Choir is singing in Spanish," said Hannah.

Along with singing songs that have already been memorized, the groups will have to show off their skills with sight-reading music.

Hannah says, "We are also working on sight-reading skills, as we will be given a song we've never seen before, and have to sing it for a judge after looking

at it for only four minutes."

According to Hannah, the day will start with arriving at the contest early, with lots of time to make sure students are ready to go. Then the groups will be taken into a room to warm up and practice the prepared pieces. Following warm-ups, the groups will be taken directly to the stage to perform in front of three judges. Then, they will be taken into the sight reading room to sight read a song in front of another judge. They will then most likely wait in the cafeteria until results are posted.

"I think this is a great experience for both me as a teacher and also the students," said Hannah. "Performing in front of judges with a lot of experience in the choral field helps us to gain new insight on our technique, musi-

cality, literacy, and general performance," she continued.

Students will gain a lot with this new experience.

"Hearing their comments helps us to understand further our strengths and weaknesses, and helps us grow to become better musicians and ensemble members," said Hannah. "I hope students gain a greater appreciation for and understanding of the discipline and detail-oriented focus it takes to perform at the highest level. I know they have the ability and talent to succeed when they are motivated and determined to do their best," she continued.

Come support your New Richmond High School choirs at Taylor High School on the evening of Friday, March 4th. Times are to be announced.

Take a chill pill: cutting back on stress

Ways to cope with frustration in everyday life

In the world you're growing up in at this very moment, you have to have some stress, some drama, or even some essays that won't write themselves. Of course, it isn't the end of the world, but having stress in your life really can interfere with your overall happiness, or create a negative environment. No one wants that, but it's the way it is. What if it wasn't? I've found a few ways to avoid the world of stress using these six simple tips and tricks.

The first thing you need: a phone number. If you're like me and trusted friends aren't so easy to find, then talk to a parent, an aunt, a friend or a neighbor. Everyone needs a little someone to talk to or vent to. If you can't find anyone, there's always the guidance counselor.

Second: a teddy bear. We all

have those moments where we just need a hug, or to squeeze something very tightly, and teddy bears are a fine solution. Not only can they not feel it when you squeeze the life out of them, but they're soft, and they're all yours. If you can't invest in a teddy bear, I highly recommend a dog. Don't squeeze the dog, though.

The third necessity for a stress free life is music. This may seem obvious, but I don't mean just any music. Every person on this planet has a song or an album that's just so much better than everything else, and that really piques their interests. Just lay on your bed, stare at the ceiling or close your eyes, and focus on the music. Just forget everything for a few minutes, and you'll wake up refreshed.

This next one is extremely im-

portant: focus on the present. If you're thinking about something you did five years ago, not only are you procrastinating, but you're allowing yourself to get stressed over something not nearly as important as the work you need to get done. On the other hand, happy memories can really fix things up in small amounts. Don't be absorbed by the past: move forward.

Number five: STOP. If it's to the point where nothing is getting done, and you can't focus you're so stressed, just give it time. Quit working altogether, take a break, take a walk, look at the river, text a friend; but don't overwork yourself. I recommend breathing in for ten beats, then breathing out for five. Or, while you're breathing, say to yourself, "Blue skies in, grey skies out" or "Positive in, negative



out." You don't need all of that negativity. Get rid of it.

Last but not least: surround yourself with positivity. This doesn't just mean positive people, but things you love as well. For example, get a cat, go for a stroll. Just make time for the things you love. All in all, your favorite things can be the difference between a slum and a smile. :)

Winter feast for the family

Comfort food for the soul

Bubbly Brooke

By
Brooklyn
Parker



Everyone loves a nice home cooked meal; the way it seems to warm up and swell a person's heart, knowing the meal they are eating was made by the loving hands of a friend.

Famous chef and our own ISI supervisor, Ray Forsee, has offered up some of his favorite secret recipes for a guaranteed tasty meal. These recipes are guaranteed to satisfy even the pickiest eater. So tie on an apron,, wash those hands and get ready to prepare a winter feast.

The first recipe Mr. Forsee recommends for either a savory appetizer or a sweet dessert is Ray's Cream Puffs. These are both a perfect beginning and end to a perfect meal.

Ray's Cream Puffs

What you will need:

1 lb. butter or margarine
1 quart of boiling water
1 lb. 3 ounces flour
1 tsp salt

Mixture bowl

16 eggs

Baking sheets

Some kind of pudding, meat or cheese to stuff your puffs.

What you need to do:

Place butter or margarine into the boiling water to melt. While still on high heat add flour and salt all at once. Beat vigorously.

Remove from heat as soon as mixture leaves sides of pan. Transfer to a mixer bowl. Cool slightly.

Add eggs one at a time to mixer bowl beating on high speed af-

ter each addition. Drop onto greased baking sheets. Use a small scoop for bite sized puffs. Bake at 425 for 15 minutes then 325 for 30 minutes longer.

After taking puffs out of oven., let cool, then take a knife cut the puff in half and place the desired amount of the filling of your choice on the bottom half, then very gently take the top half and place it on top of the filling.

ENJOY!



After the puffs are finished, a main course is needed. Luckily, Mr. Forsee has the perfect thing to follow such an amazing appetizer: his famous Ray's White Chicken Chili.

Ray's White Chicken Chili

Yields 4 gallons

What you will need:

8 lb. diced cooked chicken breast
2 cans (drained and rinsed) great northern beans
2-32 ounce cans green chiles
2 large yellow onions, minced
1 ½ pounds melted margarine
1 ½ pounds flour
2 gallons chicken stock
1-quart heavy whipping cream
4 tablespoons Tabasco sauce
2 tablespoons chili powder
5 teaspoons ground cumin
2 teaspoons salt
2 tsp white pepper
1 large stockpot

What you need to do:

In a large stockpot, bring to a boil two gallons of chicken stock. Sauté the onions in the butter,, cook until tender, add the flour into the butter, stirring until

smooth. Whip the roux into the hot stock. Add the rest of the ingredients except the cream, stirring until well blended. Simmer 10 minutes, then add the cream. Simmer five minutes until hot and smooth. Garnish with sour cream and Monterey jack cheese.

ENJOY!!!



The perfect side to go with this creamy chili is not one of Mr. Forsee's recipes but yet one of my own. It's called Creamy Green Beans.

Creamy Green Beans

What you will need:

1 large sauce pan with a glass lid cover
1 ½ pounds of fresh green beans
½ pound of chopped mushrooms
1 cup of butter
2 cups of heavy whipping cream
3 tablespoons of salt to season
3 tablespoons of pepper to season

What you need to do:

First start with cutting off the tips of the green beans. Cut off any of the hard tips before washing the green beans.

In large saucepan, melt the butter, add both the green beans and mushrooms to the melted butter. Put on medium heat and cover the pan with glass lid. Simmer like that for five minutes. Remove lid and pour in heavy whipping cream and stir it in. Re-cover with lid and let sit like that for 20 minutes on high heat, stirring it every so often. After the 20 min-

utes is up, pour onto a serving platter and season with salt and pepper.

ENJOY!



Lastly, every great home cooked meal needs a nice dessert to finish everything off. The dessert featured today is Mr. Forsee's famous Mt. Dew Apples!

Mt. Dew Apples

Yields 16

What you need:

4 Granny Smith apples (cored, peeled, quartered)

2 crescent rolls (8 count containers)

2 sticks butter

1 ½ cups brown sugar

2 teaspoons cinnamon

12-ounce can of Mt. Dew

What you need to do:

Wrap each apple quarter in a crescent roll and place seam down in a shallow baking pan

Combine butter, brown sugar and cinnamon in a separate bowl heat until it dissolves; pour over apples.

Pour 12-ounce can of Mt. Dew over apples.

Bake at 350 degrees for 30-45 minutes

ENJOY!



So that's the end of the Winter Feast. I hope you enjoy all of these yummy foods!

Plans change. Things change.

Even if it wasn't planned,
enjoy the moments you have now

If there is something I believe very strongly in, it is that we should cherish every minute we have with our friends and family. Things change. Plans change. And you should value every minute you have to spend with the people you love.

Over Thanksgiving, my grandmother pulled me away from the hub-bub of the family and asked me if I would like to stay with her over Christmas break. I told her I would talk to my parents and make sure I didn't have anything going on. Of course, in the back of my mind, all I was thinking was But I really wanted to just watch Netflix all break, and go to that New Year's party with people I haven't seen in ages.

However, I realized, that she was my grandmother and I should spend my time with her and not my laptop. So, a week later, I told her I would go stay with her over the break. She was so excited and started listing off all the things we were going to do. We were going to go shopping and get coffees every day. We were going to watch Hallmark movies and bake cookies... but plans changed.

After a basketball game a few nights before break started, I opened the back door of the car and saw my grandmother sitting there, and to my surprise, she had decided that she couldn't wait and drove down from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to spend a few extra days with me before I

would go back with her to her house. I gave her a hug and climbed into the car. On the way home, she told me all the things we would do while she was down in Cincinnati. We were going to make cookies and go to 'Cincinnati Chili', as she called it. But... plans changed again.

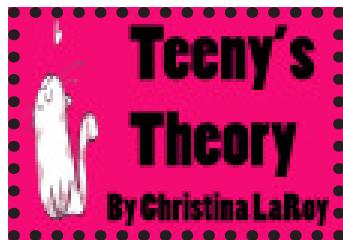
On the day that she wanted to go out for lunch and make Christmas cookies, a Monday, she

woke up and thought she had a stomach bug. She was curled up on the couch and couldn't eat anything. Even though she was resistant to go, we took her to the Urgent Care. She started to feel worse, so I helped her back to a room so she could lay down. She was telling me stories from when she was younger, like she always did, when her heart suddenly stopped. I panicked and ran out to find the doctor. I knew something was definitely not right when the doctor started to panic too. Before long, the Urgent Care parking lot was full with an ambulance, a firetruck, and 3 police cars.

We followed the ambulance to the hospital, and waited in the 'family comfort room' until the chaplain came out to tell us that she had passed away. Instead of making cookies, like we had planned just the night before, we were sitting in a hospital. Later

that week, instead of getting lattes and shopping with my grandmother, I was at a funeral. Instead of going to that New Year's party, I was comforting my cousins. The point is, things change. Plans change.

My grandmother and I had made Christmas break plans almost a month in advance. We had every day's activities planned out. But we never ended up doing what we had planned. Even though I didn't get to spend Christmas with my grandmother, I am glad I can say that I have no regrets. I never chose to play on my phone instead of having a conversation with her. I never chose to watch TV instead of running errands with her. I spent every minute I possibly could, listening to her stories and baking with her, and I will forever cherish those moments.



The Messenger

New Richmond High School
1131 Bethel-New Richmond Rd.
New Richmond, Ohio 45157
2015-2016

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The Messenger would like to remember Mrs. Betty McKenney as we begin our 75th year, and once again, thank her for her many contributions to our paper.



We would also like to remember Ms. Diana Spinnati, for her support and encouragement of our student journalism program.

The Messenger appreciates our administrators, both past and present, who have supported both the newspaper and the journalism program at NRHS.

Opinions expressed in *The Messenger* are the opinions of the writers only and not necessarily the opinions of the adviser or administration of New Richmond High School.

The Messenger accepts letters to the editor and guest columns and will publish both at the discretion of the newspaper staff and as space permits. Both items must be signed by the writers.

The *Messenger*'s regular monthly issues are now online only and are available on the high school's and district's web sites. The Senior Issue will be printed, and will be available for purchase at school at the beginning of April.

Please direct comments or questions about the paper or its contents to the adviser, at 553-3191, x10314



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Only a couple of months till Spring Break

Beaches, warm weather, top list of plans

By: Christina LaRoy

Christmas is over and the snow is melting. That means one thing... spring break is coming! Spring break, which is March 25 through April 1 this year, is quickly approaching. What do people do with this week of freedom?

According to a recent survey at New Richmond High School, traveling is the most popular thing to do over spring break. Out of the students polled, 36% of students are going on vacation.

Many of the students surveyed are taking a relaxing trip to the beach. "I am going to St. Pete beach in Florida with my family," said sophomore Madeline Walls.

"I'm going to California on Spring break," sophomore Quinton DeMaris said.

English teacher Nicole Parker is also following the trend with spring break plans. "We are planning to go to Florida for Spring Break. We are headed to Orlando, so we will probably spend a day or two at Disney or Universal and at least a day on the beach somewhere," she said.

However, other traveling students are skipping out on the sand and waves, and checking out other things.

"I plan to visit the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame with my family," said junior Alex Gardner.

Hannah Duty answered, "Niagara Falls," when asked what her spring break plans are.

Besides going on vacation, hanging out with friends is also very popular among students, with 33% of students planning on doing just that.)

"My plans are to hang out with friends," said sophomore Avedon Binns.

Sophomore David Roaden is also spending his free time relaxing saying, "I plan to hangout with friends and family and try some new things."

Of the students surveyed, 25% have no plans for spring break.

"I don't have any plans right now," said sophomore Joel Bird.

When asked what plans he had for the break, junior Corey Benzing simply said, "Nothing so far."

Sports are the least popular thing to do over spring break with 6% of students surveyed saying that's what they plan on doing.

"My plans for spring break are dealing with track practice," said senior Lindsey Williams.

"My plan for spring break is to work with the track and field team to prepare for our first track meet," said track coach Shelby Pride.

When students were asked what their perfect spring break

would be, going somewhere warm topped the polls with 45%.

"My perfect spring break would be a road trip with my close friends to somewhere warm," said Williams.

Sophomore Jenna McDowell said "My perfect spring break would be me and all of my friends on the beach."

Besides escaping to warm weather, traveling to other places is also described as being the perfect spring break among 25% of students surveyed.

"My perfect break would be spent in Seattle, Washington, sightseeing," said sophomore Kaleigh Pratt.

Benzing describes his perfect spring break as, "going to another country."

Relaxing is the next best way to spend spring break, with 23% of students describing their perfect break as a week of rest and relaxation.

"My perfect spring break



would be to eat, sleep and relax all week long," said sophomore Maria Trimble.

DeMaris described his perfect spring break as, "just to chill and hangout with friends."

7% of students surveyed described their perfect spring as going somewhere cold.

"My perfect spring break would be cold, snowy, and not in Ohio," said sophomore Shelby Miller.

Sophomore Joel Bird also enjoys the cold weather, describing his perfect spring break as, "skiing in Colorado."



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Where have all our snow days gone?

Warmer winter sparks snow day superstitions

By Brooklyn Parker

There are many superstitions that have to do with snow days. They range from flushing stuff down toilets, throwing things out windows, the way snow boots have been positioned, and even doing silly dances.

Several students and teachers at New Richmond High School participate in snow day rituals, and some of them are stranger and more elaborate than others. The real question is, do these tried and true techniques really work?

Apparel-based superstitions:

One of the most common snow day superstitions is wearing pajamas backwards. Sophomore Abong Nyam said, "My biggest snow day superstition is wearing my pajamas backwards. I believe this actually does work."

Sophomore Courtney Price disagrees. She has the same superstition, but adds "It doesn't seem to work."

The second most common snow day superstition is wearing pajamas inside out. Freshman Twyla Blair believes, "If you wear your pj's inside out, then it helps get a snow day." She added, "I have no idea if it really works. It's just fun being a kid."

Sophomore Chloe Closterman also wears her pj's inside out. She says she only wears them inside out because that is what everyone says to do, but she doesn't believe it actually works.

George Steinmetz adds a physical twist to this one. He recommends, "Jump on a bed with your pajamas on inside out and backwards because it's fun. 75% of the time it works." Sounds like many students subject themselves to an uncomfortable night's sleep only to awaken to face another day of school. Maybe more students should add the element of jumping.

Footwear-based superstitions:

Students who were students of former music teacher Doug Heflin believe in his "magical" snow boots. The story is that if Mr. Heflin woke up and his boots were sitting outside of his closet, there would be a snow day the next day.

Freshmen Dylan Pridemore, Tori Owens, Brody Hawkins and Alex Olson all said, "If Mr. Heflin's snow boots are out, that means we won't have school the next day. It actually works because every time Mr. Heflin's boots have been out we haven't had school the next day." (Please note: the first snow day of the post-Heflin era occurred on January 20. It can be concluded that superstition or not, we are relieved to report that snow days have not retired.)

Superstitions based on meteorological observations:

Even though some may not consider the weather channel a superstition, others do. Sophomore Liz Shinkle said, "The weatherman says it's going to snow, and then it does, and then I get off school. This rarely happens, though. The weatherman is always wrong. They get my hopes up and then crush my dreams." Heartless.

History teacher Brad Hatfield said he also looks to the weather for his snow day prediction. "Meteorological conditions because it's the only thing that makes sense. It actually works, analysis of meteorological conditions expressed in a graph work very well." Let's face it, data doesn't lie. Hopefully Mr. Bird watches the same channel.

Superstitions grounded in disregard for the planet's dwindling natural resources:

"Throwing water outside and flushing the toilet about 50 times," is sophomore's Keirah Matlock's method. Unfortu-

nately, she reports, "It doesn't really work." Still, others have tried water-themed methods as well. Intervention specialist Deb Johnson added, "My son Briggs thinks that if he flushes ice cubes in the toilet it will snow more. No joke. Thanks elementary teachers and their stories."

Sophomore Diana Mancilla takes it even further, offering this advice, "Flushing hot chili peppers down the toilet works because when the hot peppers meet the cold water it's almost like making snow." (It is undetermined if flushing a member of the Red Hot Chili Peppers results in snow day -- or perhaps a 90-minute delay.)

Superstitions based on superstition:

Some superstitions are based on other ones. English teacher Michelle Senter said her biggest superstition is, "I rely on my Magic 8 ball! It has only been wrong once... maybe twice! Teachers reach out to me (via phone calls, social media, and in person) the night before potential snow days to ask me 'What does the Magic 8 ball say?' It's got the power!" Author's note: Stay on Ms. Senter's good side, just in case.

Flatware-based superstitions:

Some superstitions rely on eating utensils, such as spoons. Sophomore Chris Isaacs said, "My biggest superstition when I was younger was to put a spoon under my pillow and there would be a snow day the next day. I did this because my parents told me to. It does not work because it's just a superstition and it all depends on the weather." That sounds like proof positive.

Superstitions rooted in musical theater:



Icy blast from the past: former teacher Gail Weldon, the Snow Queen, performs her ritual dance in preparation for a snow day in 2005...it worked! Volunteers for Snow Queen 2015 are being accepted now. Photo/S. Griffin.

There are additional superstitions that involve music. Sophomore Jessup Durbin said he believes that doing a snow dance because it is bad to the bone works. He said, "It works because my family has done it for years."

Sophomore Brookelyn Edgar said, "I pray it snows, then sing Christmas songs. It does not work because I do this in the summer, and it does not work." Irrefutable logic.

Pragmatic views of snow days. Finally, there are those who take a more realistic approach.

According to Connor Ennis, "We will get three feet next winter or early spring because of climate change. If we don't want it to snow, it will snow. When I said I didn't want snow, it snowed and we got an early dismissal."

The wisest response may have from Alex Waters who said, "I am not superstitious; it's all up to the superintendent. We could get as much snow as other schools but still have school. I believe this because of past experiences when all the other schools were closed but we had school."

We all remember those days very well indeed.

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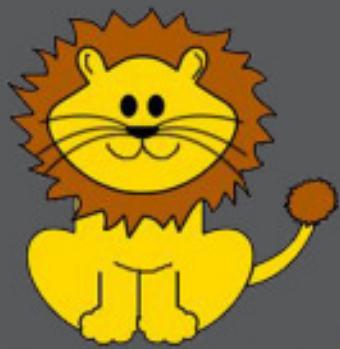
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Characters Unite is a national initiative sponsored by USA Network. It is supported by many nonprofit organizations, and, according to the network's website, "...the ongoing campaign is dedicated to supporting activities and messaging that combat prejudice and intolerance while promoting understanding and acceptance — on-air, online, and in communities across the country."

Here at New Richmond High School, we are proud to boast our very own cast of memorable characters, a few of whom we have profiled in this issue. Every single student here has a name and a story, and each one of those stories is compelling and deserves to be told. They are all NR Lions, to be sure, but at the same time, they are all unique, sincere, slightly eccentric and quite fabulous...we hope you enjoy their stories.

Characters Unite: Max Ernst

Meet the all-star on the field and in the classroom

By: Christina LaRoy

Max Ernst, a fifteen year old freshman, may be new to the high school, but he's already made quite an impression. He's funny, smart, and loves wearing his bow tie. "My proudest accomplishments are getting straight A's all the time and starting a varsity basketball game as a freshman," said Ernst.

In his free time, Max enjoys sports, sleeping, eating, and hanging out with my friends. He's an all star on the court and field, playing soccer, basketball and baseball.

"Some of my greatest memories are winning tournaments that I have been in throughout my life," says Max. Since coming to high school, Ernst said he has become a harder worker and

made more friends.

"Do well in math. Also, exams aren't really that bad," said Max, when asked what advice he would give his middle school self. After high school, Max plans on going to college to become either a medical biologist or a pilot so he can become an astronaut.

Max's favorite subject in school is biology. "I personally find genetics super cool and I love that stuff," said Max.

Max's family includes his dad and his mom, who are strict but good parents, an older brother in college who is extremely religious and smart, and a little brother who is a redhead with a temper and who loves basketball.

"I wake up. Eat my breakfast.

Shower, lay in bed until 6:43 a.m. Then I go ride the bus to school. I go through all seven periods then usually go to basketball after school. I get home from basketball at 5:45 p.m. I finish my homework, shower, eat, then go to sleep," said Max when asked what his typical day is like.

"My pet peeves are people who can be smart, but choose to be dumb, people who complain, people with big egos, and getting pinched," said Max.

As for what he wants people to know about him, Max said, "People don't know that I am very driven to do well



in school and they should know I am."

Hayley Parker speaks out... Freshman believes everyone is important

By Hailey Jowers

Hayley Parker, fourteen year old freshman, describes herself as quiet and shy... but that's not all she's cracked up to be. "I describe myself as shy, athletic, smart, and short," Hayley said. When you meet Hayley, I guess you could say she's pretty shy, but she begins to warm up to you after you get to know her, as she did with her new family. Hayley, as an adolescent, was adopted along with her two sisters, in 2007.

When asked about her family, Hayley replied with, "I have a mom, a dad, and two sisters, thirteen and sixteen. I also have two kittens, Luna and Carmel. "I believe that everyone is important and we should never single someone out for being different," said Hayley.

One of Hayley's proudest accomplishments, was when her volleyball team won second place in tournaments. "Even though it wasn't first, I was very happy," said Hayley.

When asked about her typical day, Hayley said, "I wake up, go to school, and then after that I go to some kind of sport. Then I go home, do homework, take a shower, and then go to bed."

One of Hayley's greatest memories with her family, was when she went to Holiday World and rode every ride there. When asked what Hayley would do with a ton of money, she replied, "I would buy lots of food and homes for the homeless." With the rest of her life, Hayley said she would like to work for the FBI.

Hayley was asked what she looks for in a friend, and responded with, "I look for if they are kind, funny, and outgoing." Hayley's biggest role model in her life is her mother, who finished schooling and got her degree, and is now working at a job she loves.

Although Hayley loves her current family, she possesses a necklace from her birth mother, that she considers her most prized possession.

One challenge Hayley has had to face, was getting seven teeth pulled out. "And French," Hayley said.

When asked what has changed her life for the better or worse, Hayley replied with, "Honestly nothing."

One thing Hayley would like



to let everyone know about herself is, "I want them to know I get really nervous, and I'm also sad sometimes, and I don't know why. But others shouldn't treat me differently."

Who is she? Courtney Sullivan

The story behind our own freshman clarinetist

By: Mary Moran

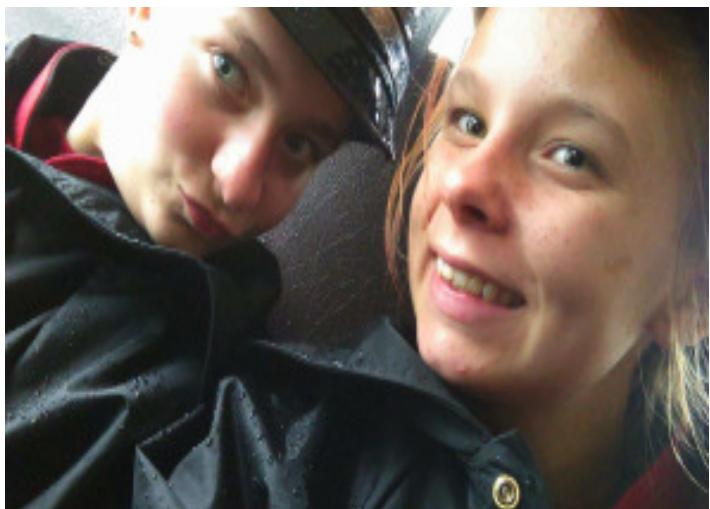
In the new year, freshman Courtney Sullivan has been making her way through life, successfully maneuvering through the struggles of a teenager. 15-year-old Courtney, born November 5th, has quite the story.

Describing herself as, "caring, and a good listener," Courtney had a nice childhood growing up. "It was great growing up, my friends were always right down the road, and I had my family, so we always hung out," she said.

When she has free time, she spends it with her family at home. "I listen to music and hang out with my family. I love the band Fun, I know everything about them. It's weird, I know."

Courtney participates in one sport, cross country. "I joined cross country and I was scared that I would be too slow. But, by the end of the season, I got down to the 20's, or 20 minutes."

Courtney's favorite subject is modern world history. "I've al-



Rook Waitz (left) and Courtney Sullivan (right) in their band uniforms. Photo/C. Sullivan.

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ways liked history. It's interesting."

Courtney has always lived in the village, and always enjoyed it. "I grew up there, and I always had my friends. It was nice."

Courtney has plenty of friends. "I like how they have always been there for me," she stated.

Speaking of friends, it's something she's good at, according to Courtney. "I think I'm good at being a friend," she said. "I enjoy helping people or doing band stuff because I've always loved helping people. With band I've always been in band, and I've always loved playing my instrument."

Courtney doesn't quite know what she wants to be when she

grows up. "I see myself in college or done with college, I either want to be a nurse or a band teacher; I haven't decided yet."

Courtney's favorite word is "savage." She likes it because it describes herself. "I'm a savage queen," she said.

"I have strong opinions on bullying and equal rights," she said. "Bullies are really bad people, and everyone should be happy. I support people for who they are."

Courtney enjoys music. "Music inspires me the most, in every song there's a meaning. And those meanings mean a lot to me."

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It's all about the buzzer!

Academic Team hopes for strong second-half finish

By Brooklyn Parker

BUZZ, BUZZ, BUZZ, DINGG!!! The sounds of buzzers all clicking at once, each hopeful member of the A-Team vying to get to answer the question, the question that might just win that match for their team.

Some people may ask what exactly the A-Team is. The Academic Team is a sport of brains. Some of the smartest kids in school gather every week to compete against the clock and other schools. Each team is seated at a table with buzzers; they are asked a series of questions, some of which are asked of the team (teams can conference and decide on the answer) and others when the first person to click the button on the buzzer

gets to answer the question. There is also a written alphabet round and a lightning round (questions can come from any subject area) when team members are only given five seconds to answer. The team with the most points at the end of the match wins.

The A-Team is coached by English teacher Sue Griffin, aka Queen of A-Team, who has been coaching for 16 years. The team's record, as of today, is 3-5.

Griffin said, "We beat Norwood in the first meet and looked really good, then lost to CNE and Georgetown; we won another one, but have lost a couple of close ones, too."

Senior Joe Cool Maxwell said, "I personally feel I could have

done better in the first few games, although, I feel we are doing well overall."

Sophomore Katie Huss (Hussmaster) said, "The season is decent, despite the fact that I'm still learning. (I'm a newbie.)"

Their public record may not be the way the team wants it to be right now but they continue to work to their goals with the best willpower.

"Even though we've had a couple of defeats, I still think we have a really good team and can win our division. My goal is to finish near the top of the American Division this year. I also want to encourage more freshman and sophomores to join the team for next year," said Griffin.

Most of the team has goals that relate to winning the league championship and to have fun.

Maxwell said, "If not league champs, I hope we finish at least top two and do well in the end-of-season tournament. Personally, I wish to just contribute as much as I can mainly because I have only been on the team two years and wish I could've been on all four."

The team has a great chemistry and they all seem to get along like a family of geniuses. As senior Kelsey Nichols puts it, "We are a family!"

The A-Team members, being as smart as they are, have some advice on studying. The Queen of A-Team said, "Memorize, memorize, memorize! A lot of A-Team questions are just trivia--memorizing lists of authors and titles, artists and their works and just seemingly insignificant general knowledge really helps out at matches."

Self-proclaimed King, senior Nick Kirby, said, "Just make lots and lots of note cards."

Some final words from Griffin are: "I love the team chemistry--everyone gets along and everyone truly wants the team, not the individual, to do well. We have a lot of fun in practice and at meets. We even had to wait outside Norwood Middle School after our first meet this year because of a bus problem and even had a good time doing that. Chase Heflin and Evan Grippa have a rather disturbing attachment to squirrels, though."

Even though there is a lot of memorization with being a member of the A-Team and some disappointment with a few losses, there is also a lot of fun.

Anyone interested in Academic Team for next year, should see Mrs. Griffin for a schedule and information.

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Shout Out!



NRHS faculty and staff recognize students who do great things

Mrs. Davis

Daniel Catron: Much improved effort and grades. Had really bad grades last quarter, and this quarter has mostly B's and C's. He's applying himself more and has improved effort along with grades.

Mrs. Hatfield

After a rocky start to high school, **Hailey Hultz** has decided to become a fantastic freshman! Hailey has discovered that she could be successful in all of her classes and even excel in a few. Through hard work and staying more focused, Hailey is currently successful in all of her classes and is excelling in some. Hailey is currently maintaining an A average in Modern World History and English. Hailey's attendance has improved and she is much more conscientious about her classroom assignments and assessments. I am happy to give a "shout out" to this much improved, awesome freshman.!

Mrs. Hauserman

Committed Collier: Kendal Collier--she continuously challenges herself with new ways of approaching her Senior Concentration. Kendal's hard work both in and outside the art room demonstrates commitment.

Technically Talented:

Carla Herzig-Carla shows creativity and great skill in all of her art classes!

Art King: William Fox--Will has amazing artistic talent!

Quality Queen: Rainey Strippelhoff--Rainey demonstrates such incredible technical skill in her quality-themed work.

Rising Star: Abbi Sammons, 100% all the time.

Mr. Crowley

Laura Wilson: Honors Physics--great attitude and effort! Never gives up and "keeps on keeping on" even when results are not what she was hoping for. Great team leader and motivator! Always smiling and positive (except when calling me 'Crabby Crowley')...wonderful asset to the class.

Mr. Moorehead

Sierra Deitsch: Sierra is a student in my fourth period biology class. She is quiet in class but carries an A average. On the last quiz, she earned one of the highest grades. Sierra continues to work hard, maintain an A average, and always has her assignments completed. Way to go, Sierra! Keep up the hard work!

Mr. Bailey

Anna Hamilton and Ryan Buckley: both have been

nominated to represent New Richmond High School at the Greater Cincinnati Leaders of Character Initiative through the West Point Society Leadership and Ethics seminar.

Mrs. Johnson

Zade Richardson, Nicole St. Clair, Jessica Woosley, Dakota Carnahan, Justin Carr, Sara Riser: all working hard and having fantastic grades!

Mrs. Hannah

Chris Brunk: Has had a positive, motivated attitude since the beginning of the semester. Working harder and putting forth good effort more consistently. Becoming a leader for his section.

Mrs. Parker

Kirstian Bailey: Awesome senior writing project in English Comp.!

Tyler Sammons: Being awesome in English Comp. that one day!

JV Cheerleaders for working hard and making it look easy!

Brooklyn, Diana, Carmen, Skyler, Christina, Hayley, Taylor and Jordan.

Mrs. Griffin

Sydney Payne and Mathew Cox: great students in my first bell and always do excellent work. **Quinton DeMaris**--there's a great writer hidden in there! **Julia Brashear, Hannah Reinert:** awesome students

in second bell. **Zach Wuest:** highest grade on the Macbeth extended response test--95%

Lane Dees, Jenna McDowell: both are great, committed students in fourth bell.

Blayke Murphy, Skylar Grady: very creative students who did an outstanding job on the Macbeth project.

Andria Cochran, Elexis Sanchez, Cole Thompson: ambitious, motivated students in my sixth bell class.

Mrs. Corpuz

Joe Maxwell for excellence in Calculus class and helping his fellow students.

Ms. Wilkins

Hailey Kramer: always comes to class with a smile and a great attitude! She is enthusiastic about learning new things and asks great questions...even if they do get us off task at times!

Deionna Tillery: D has been working her butt off in anatomy and has really stuck it out through some difficult material! Her humor and personality are appreciated by everyone in the class.

Mrs. Prescott

Troy Robinson for his excellent effort in Applied chemistry.