

Viking Press

FOREIGN FESTIVITIES

By: Sam Huebler

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This year Whitehall is honored to have eight students from different countries continue their studies here. As December comes along, people prepare for the holidays with high spirits. Some students may celebrate with their families and open gifts from Santa. The eight foreign exchange students were interviewed and have shared their traditions during the holiday season in their home countries.

Rolando Tamez Flores, age fifteen, lives with John Rodriguez and his family. He is from Monclova, Mexico. Flores shares that on Christmas Eve his whole family has a big dinner and enjoys each other's company. The next day, his younger cousins open their gifts from Santa after they all eat lunch. His favorite part about Christmas is the big dinner because he gets to be with all of his family. Flores said, "I'm so excited for this Christmas because it will be my first one in America."

South east of Monclova, Mexico takes one to Santa Catarina, Brazil. This is Guilherme Chaplin Savedra's hometown. He is sixteen years old and lives with Robert and Michelle Murphy and their family. In Brazil, they refer to Santa as Papai Noel. Many Christmas traditions are the same in Brazil as in the United States. People open presents from Papai Noel on Christmas Day, and they also have a lighted Christmas tree. Savedra shares, "This Christmas, my host family and I are going to Colorado to ski in the mountains."

Continuing east leads one to Madrid, Spain which is fifteen-year-old Patricia Roldan's home city. Her host mother is Sheryl Hogle. Roldan spends Christmas in Madrid at her Grandma's house with all of her family and later they eat a nice dinner. Her favorite part about Christmas is being with her family and friends and the gifts she gets from Santa who they call Papa Noel. Roldan shares, "On December 31, for the new year, all of the Spanish people eat twelve grapes in twelve seconds at midnight. We also have 'Los Reyes Magos' (The Magic Kings) on January 5; it's like Santa Claus, and all of the people get presents. So we get presents twice!"

Just above the equator in Ghana, Africa, takes one to seventeen-year-old Clara Nyam-Add's hometown. She grew up in a town called Accra, and now lives with Paul and Phylinda Pladies and their family. Nyam-Add states, "My favorite part of Christmas is Boxing Day. It's on the 26 of December, and you get new gifts and also give gifts. I usually go to the movies with my parents and visit my family and friends."

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Pictured from left to right, back row: Lise Kristensen, Patricia Roldan, Olver Estay Arndt, Guilherme Saverdra, Clara Nyam Add, Silja Soittila, Simon Ejlertsen, and Rolando Flores



For information on the games and times, please see the winter sports schedule on the high school website.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 *	3 *
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 *	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 *	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

DECEMBER

- 12/2- Edukators concert at 7 p.m.
- 12/3- Christmas Dance from 8:30 to 11:30 p.m.
- 12/11- Choir Concerts- Middle School is at 3:00 p.m. and the High School sings at 6:30 p.m.
- 12/19- Holiday break starts, school resumes on January 3

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JANUARY

- 1/3- School resumes
- 1/16- NO SCHOOL
- 1/18- Clubs and orgs pictures
- 1/26- half day— Parent Teacher Conferences: 12-3 pm and 5-8 pm

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 *	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16 *	17	18 *	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26 *	27	28
29	30	31				

Birthdays

Dec. 18- Osheona Webb– Sanders	Dec. 28- Joshua Kennebeck Timothy Carrier Cory Sarazen	Jan. 8- Rolando Tamez	Jan. 16- Leah Young
Dec. 19- Dylan Medendorp	Dec. 29- Miranda Jacobs Jared Brock William Cooley	Jan. 9- Cody Croff Jordan Loudermilk Riley Andrew	Jan. 17- Alexander Whitener
Dec. 20- Thao Nguyen Kori Mura	Jan. 1- Dillion McCarthy	Jan. 11- Tiffany Boucon	Jan. 18- Riley Pierce Megan Sampson Jonathan Ethridge Brandi Balzer Dylan Picard
Dec. 21- Cody Ottinger Michael Parker Zachary Shank Kellie Russell	Jan. 2- Patrick Taylor	Jan. 12- Ruby Ray	Jan. 19- Morgan Chamberlain Delia Anne Tomaras
Dec. 23- Bailey Seeger Adam Warren Andrew DeWeerd	Jan. 3- Ashley Sietsema Amber Kelley Nicholas Hoeft	Jan. 13- Scott Coffey	Jan. 20- Nathaniel Manthei Marcus Puehler
Dec. 25- Trenton Moyer	Jan. 4- Brianna Voorhees	Jan. 14- Duncan Miller Devontae Vance Alexia Cater	Jan. 21- Isaac Love Kaitlyne Lynn
Dec. 27- Brandon Gosselin	Jan. 5- Dominique Burroughs Joseph Kavanaugh	Jan. 15- Travis Friend Ryan Holeman Joshua Smith	
	Jan. 6- Kassey Lohman		
	Jan. 7- Emily Holmstrom Sara Gagnon		

'Foreign Festivities' Continued...

Continued from page 1

Traveling almost directly north to a country called Denmark leads one to both Simon Yde Ejlersten's home country and Lise Götze Kristensen's. Sixteen-year-old Ejlersten is from a city called Hillerød and he lives with Paul and Darci Christensen and their family. At home in Denmark, Ejlersten and his family all help to make the food at a relative's house. His favorite part about Christmas is, "When the whole family opens their gifts together and getting to see the joy when they see what's inside." They open their presents from "Julemanden" (Santa) on Christmas Eve. Simon's Christmas in America will be shared with family and friends. Coming from Herning, Denmark, is sixteen-year-old Kristnesen's hometown. Here in Whitehall, Kristensen lives with Tom and Kristine Beeghly and their family. Back home, they celebrate Christmas on December 24. At around 4:00 p.m., they go to church, and eat dinner at 6:00 p.m. Afterwards, her and her family all sing and dance around the Christmas tree and later open presents. This Christmas her host family plans to spend Christmas at home and go to church.

Next to Denmark is Germany where sixteen-year-old Oliver Noel Estay Arndt lives. He is staying with Dean and Stephanie Schmiedeknecht and their family. He is from a city called Frankfurt, Main. People in Germany call Santa "Weihnachtsmann". On December 6, people get small gifts and put them in boots that are outside of their front door. The children celebrate Nikolaus every December 6. Nikolaus is a Greek Christian Bishop who was known for miracles and giving gifts secretly. Nikolaus and Weihnachtsmann are two different people. Estay adds,

"On Christmas Eve, we eat together and get our gifts and on Christmas Day we meet our aunts, uncles, and cousins to have a nice dinner and hang out." His favorite part about Christmas is to receive gifts. Proceeding north-east to Finland, one finds seventeen-year-old Silja Soittila's hometown, Parola. Here in Whitehall, she lives with Steve and Deb Markel. In Finland, Santa Claus goes by the name of "Joulupukki", and he lives in Lapland, Northern Finland. Soittila loves to make gingerbread houses and cookies with her sisters. Typically, families open their presents from Joulupukki on Christmas Eve and celebrate with a special Christmas dinner. On Christmas Day, Soittila and her family enjoy each other's company in their home. They also go in their sauna and afterwards roll in the freezing snow. Soittila's favorite part about Christmas is, "Absolutely the pretty Christmas tree and spending time with my family and giving gifts."

From just south of the United States, to across the Atlantic, there are several similarities in customs and traditions during the Christmas season. The foreign exchange students are excited to experience this Christmas holiday with their American families.

As the town of

A New Kind of Spirit

By: Jessica Harris

Whitehall glows with holiday cheer and white snowflakes litter the ground, a new spirited sport has started in Whitehall High School. Competitive cheer is not only a new and energetic sport, but one that requires time, skill, and spirit. With Dorriane Kittridge and a group of excited, skilled cheerleaders, this is bound to be a season to remember.

Competitive cheer was not a sport last year, but it became an official sport this year. Whitehall High School's cheer coaches, Coach Dorriane Kittridge, Linda Welsh, and Jodi Stratton, decided that cheerleading wasn't just a sideline sport, but a sport with challenging obstacles that takes great skill. The reason this is a new sport is because of money issues and the work of putting it together was finally accomplished. The Michigan High School Sports Association, also known as the M.H.S.S.A, and Whitehall School



The competitive cheer team practices a stunt at a regular practice.

Whitehall High School

Board decided to make competitive cheer an official competitive sport at Whitehall.

Members of the competitive cheer team consist of ninth through twelve graders. They are: Ashley Golightly, Sydney Bedford, Alexis Bays, Emilee VanWye, Nicole Strandberg, Masiey Young, Kara Thomazin, Faith McConnell, Kayla Myers, Ana Whitener, Gwen Horning, and Nicole Kelley.

The competitive cheer team is easing into the sport efficiently. There were no cuts to be on the team. The team practices in rounds. During each round, the team focuses on one type of activity. In round one, they practice jumping skills. Round two they practice the splits and tricky back walk overs. Back walk overs are bending over into a back bend and flipping the legs over until landing on the feet. The third round is practicing complex stunts. The team practices for three hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays and two hours on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Alexis Bays said, "My favorite part of competitive cheer is that all of the girls have a very tight bond with one another." The team's expectations are to be able to master their tumbling skills, splits, being in sync, and have jumps that are up to the M.H.S.A.A. expectations. The team focuses on working hard to do well in competitions and districts.

Rivalries to the competitive cheer team are county wide. The schools that Whitehall will compete against are: Oakridge, Holton, Montague, Hart, Shelby, and Reeths-Puffer. Their first meet is Wednesday, January 4. The team plans to compete in the spring and summer in five competitions and one invitational. Whitehall will not

host any competitions this year. When cheering against other teams, the girls wear the school colored varsity cheer uniforms. Coach Kittridge is Whitehall High School's varsity football cheer coach although this is her first year in competitive cheer. Coach Kittridge said, "First and foremost, our first goal is for the whole team to be able to have tumbling skills like back walkovers and back tucks down." The goals of the team are to make it to districts and do well in their first year of competitive cheer. The competitive cheer girls are eager and excited to train this winter and to compete in the spring and summertime.

The competitive cheer team's season has just begun. Upcoming competitions excite the cheer team, and they look forward to working hard and having contagious spirit. The team cannot wait to work together and become the team they hope to be.

Impede Your High Speed for Winter Driving

By: Andrea Garvey

It is that time of year when roads fill up with snow, ice, and hazards. Some drivers see this as a slight inconvenience. Other drivers, however, feel that winter brings treacherous driving conditions including inexperienced drivers.

Officer Travis Bolles, who is the liaison between Whitehall District Schools and Whitehall City Police, gives advice to students about winter driving. Due to the bad driving conditions that winter brings, Bolles said the most common traffic accidents among teen drivers he has witnessed are skid-offs as well as fender benders. Teenage drivers are prone to make

many mistakes due to inexperience. In the winter months, it is easy for mistakes to become more frequent. Bolles shared his opinion on common mistakes teens make behind the wheel in winter. He said, "The most common reason for these accidents is driving too fast for conditions. This is easy to correct, as most motorists just need to slow down." Another reason for accidents he said was distracted driving. Distracted driving may include using a cell phone (calling/texting/etc.), eating and/or drinking, or just having too many people in the car. These mistakes can also be easily corrected.

Whitehall students who drive had something to say about winter driving. Junior Karly Griffin has driven for a little more than a year with only one winter behind her. Griffin said she decided to put up the keys this winter and not drive due to her experience last winter. Griffin said she slid into a ditch going 40 mph on a road with a speed limit of 55 mph last year. Because of this, Griffin said that winter driving scares her.

Meanwhile, there are students who enjoy winter driving. Senior Austin Bean and senior Nick DuBois will both be driving this winter. Bean and DuBois agreed they enjoy driving this season because of the unplowed roads. Although some students enjoy winter driving, they still need to be cautious of certain winter driving hazards. Bean and DuBois said the most common hazard they are aware of are other irresponsible drivers. Whether students enjoy winter driving or not, there will always be things they need to avoid on the wintery roads.

These three students, along with junior Alejandro Reyna and senior Jillian Hagen,

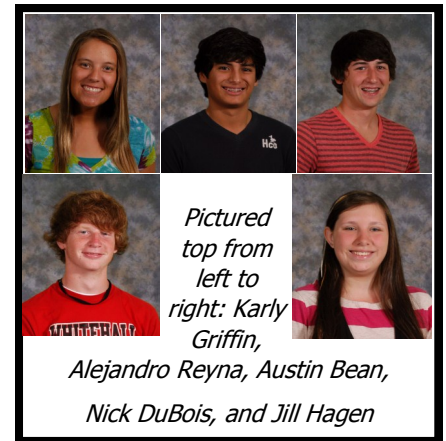
mentioned how speed is an issue that makes driving difficult in the winter along with not stopping fast enough at stop signs or stop lights. If lack of experience is a factor in this behavior, Officer Bolles said, "I would recommend going out with a parent or an experienced driver and practicing. There really is no other way to get used to driving in bad conditions besides practicing in them."

Locations, like certain roads and corners, may also serve as another reason that winter driving is difficult. Bean said country and back roads are usually best to avoid in winter. Hagen said the S-curve on Mears Avenue is tricky. Reyna added that the S-curve on Zellar Road is difficult.

Griffin mentioned Holton-Whitehall Road as one of her least favorite places to drive in the winter months. Officer Bolles' opinion was that any road with a speed limit higher than 25 mph can be dangerous in winter conditions. He also acknowledges parking lots or driveways to be prone to accidents due to the high amount of vehicles in a small space. Officer Bolles added, "Bridges can be especially slick, so please be careful."

It is made clear by nature that winter is capable of bringing conditions that make it difficult for some to drive in. However, winter driving can be easier than thought as long as every driver remembers that their first responsibility is to pay attention and to not allow

themselves to become distracted. As you buckle up this season, slow down and prepare for months of careful driving ahead.



Learning Through Teaching

By: Sam Sawyer

Each year Whitehall High School gives a warm welcome to student teachers. These student teachers come from local colleges to teach in classrooms as preparation for receiving their teaching degrees. They have



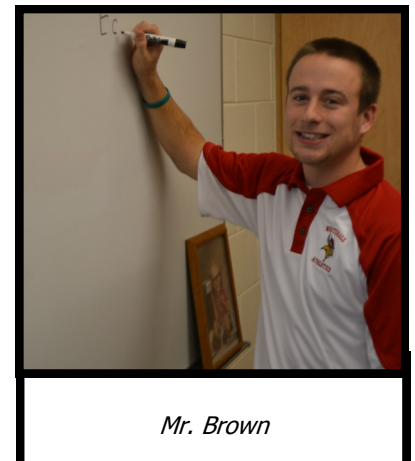
Ms. Romanosky

worked hard over the last few years to achieve a future career in teaching and being a student teacher has brought them one step further. This first trimester, Whitehall High School was the host of two student teachers.

One of Whitehall's student teachers was Ms. Deanna Romanosky, who student taught for Mr. Kirk Mikkelson's math classes. Romanosky is working toward her teaching degree at Western Michigan University. She majored in mathematics and minored in earth science. Romanosky said she has always loved math. She found an interest in math during an Algebra II class in high school. She explained it was the first time that she was really challenged in school, and it was nice to be challenged. Romanosky mentioned she has always wanted to pursue a career in teaching. She admitted that

having to help her siblings with schoolwork had a great impact on her decision to be a teacher. After earning her teaching degree, she would like to become a high school algebra teacher.

Megan Stout, a sophomore, said, "She has improved a lot from the beginning of the year," while Nate Burns, a junior, mentioned that, "...Ms. Romanosky really knows what



Mr. Brown

she's talking about." Romanosky concluded by saying, "...There are good days and bad days, but I really like it here." This experience has further prepared her for her upcoming future as a teacher and has overall been a fun experience.

Whitehall's other student teacher is Mr. Aaron Brown who student taught for Mr. James Morningstar. Brown is a Western Michigan University student. He plans to major in social studies and receive a minor in history. His inspiration to become a teacher came from a high school social studies teacher. This particular teacher helped Brown become more aware of history and government. This teacher also influenced Brown to become a teacher himself. After earning his teaching degree Brown would like to become a high school government teacher. Brown admitted his teaching experience at Whitehall went better than expected and has definitely prepared him for a future teaching career. If he couldn't be a teacher, Brown said that he would probably have a career in criminal justice, but after being a student teacher, he is looking forward to pursuing his first career choice as a teacher. One of Brown's students, sophomore Jordan Jerome said, "He has great potential." Another student, junior Sydney Norris said, "Mr. Brown is a nice guy."

Both Brown and Romanosky said their goodbyes to their students on December 15. They will graduate with their teaching degrees two days later on December 17. Morningstar said that having a student teacher was a great learning experience. He mentioned he gained new ideas for teaching and enjoyed Brown's company. Mikkelson said that the experience, "Is always fun, challenging, tough, and interesting at times." He said that he enjoys having student teachers periodically because it gives the chance for him to exchange information and ideas to improve teaching. Although the experience was tough at times, being a student teacher all paid off at the end.

Birthdays **Continued...**

Jan. 23

Nathan Hall
Gabriel Demumbrum
Ashley Stone
William Wilson

Jan. 24

Nathan Spira
Jacob Knowlton

Jan. 25

Derek Jacobson
Timothy Willer
Arpana Dahal
Nicholas DeCouto
Shontika Reed
Felisha Collins

Jan. 26

Miriah Mcadow
Scott Murphy

VALHALLA

This newsletter is produced
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Whitehall High School.
Students in grades nine
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