

# WEST WORD

December 16, 2013

www.greeleyschools.org/westword

Volume XLVI No. 8

## Non-Christian Spartans share traditions

By Edgar Lopez  
Staff Writer

There is so much bustle going on during Christmas that brings out life in society, making the holiday very important for a lot of people.

Though most people at West celebrate this holiday, there are many people that do not celebrate Christmas due to cultural or religious reasons.

Junior Mohamoud Ahmed, who practices the Muslim religion, does not celebrate Christmas along with his family. Instead, they have a big family reunion around this time of the year but do not see it as a holiday. The reunion consists of

having a big meal and usually giving each other money. For the Muslim religion, the biggest holiday is Eid, celebrated in the summer and closely compared to Thanksgiving. They celebrate this holiday to be thankful for life as well as each of their families. Before they actually celebrate, they get together at five a.m. to pray, then celebrate the rest of the day with a meal and giving

Ahmed

each other presents. "I love eating sambooses," says Ahmed about his favorite dish during Eid. "They're triangle shaped bread stuffed with beef and deep fried."

For sophomore Zach Bitton, who is Jewish, Christmas is just another day in life. In the Jewish religion, the holiday Hanukkah is celebrated around this time but its specific dates change every year. This year, the eight days were during November, where a candle is lit each day on the traditional menorah. Family members usually give each other presents either each day or one big present and have a dinner all together. "Receiving money is the best part", says Bitton, "and the dinner is pretty sweet too."

## Goodbye to legendary educator

By Addison Vergara  
Staff Writer

Louis Palagi is a homegrown Greeley boy, spending the last forty-three years living in Greeley, and the last twenty-two teaching at Greeley West. Palagi teaches language arts classes at West, including theory of knowledge, IB language arts, and advanced placement literature and composition.

Palagi also spent time as sponsor of the *West Word* for nearly a decade during the 90s.

To the dismay of many, Palagi has made the decision to retire at the conclusion of this fall semester, leaving behind many special experiences and memories.



Palagi 1993

Palagi explained that the students have been the best part of his experience at West. "The energy and enthusiasm that the kids display makes my job enjoyable."

He also added how special many of the staff members were to him, saying "I worked with a lot of great people, and other than the students, that is what I will miss most about working at this school."



Palagi 2013

There is, of course, always a silver lining. Retiring will allow Palagi to spend more time with his wife, Julie, whether that is simply relaxing or traveling to a chosen destination.

Palagi is also an avid fly-fisherman and hunter, already having been on trips to places like New Mexico, Wyoming, Utah, and even California and

**Continued  
Palagi, Page 16**



Mr. Lou Palagi uses the Socratic Method to teach a small group of students in his IB language class last week. Palagi will retire at the end of this week.

Addison Vergara  
/West Word

### Wit and wisdom from Lou Palagi

"His mustache is, in fact, real."

—Brian Halsey

"Sometimes to understand something you have to step back and look at it from someone else's point of view."

—Kevin Zimmerman

"Everyone has the capability to be great; you just have to pursue the knowledge to achieve it."

—Ori Bitton

"Without father Papago I would have never known how awesome mythology really is. He's also one of the best teacher's I've ever had at the end of it all."

—Mason Sedlacek

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# Inside

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## Thespians sing, dance, attend workshops

By Merall Sherif  
Staff Writer

For three days, Greeley West Thespians from Peggy Freemole's MYP and IB theatre classes attended the largest theater conference in Colorado, the 49<sup>th</sup> annual Colorado State Thespian Conference, or "Thescon" at the Colorado Convention Center and the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Denver.

A group of 54 students attended the conference, that offered the opportunity to take theatrical knowledge and skill building classes. The classes ranged from acting, makeup, backstage work, technology, aerial work, and performing arts.

Furthermore, the students got to enjoy two plays on Friday and Saturday night, *Frankenstein* and also *Charlie's Aunt*, which West has performed before.

Also, there was a dance for the students on Friday night. Spartans had a special dinner at the Cheesecake Factory restaurant in Denver. "State Thescon every year is an amazing experience," said junior thespian Kylee Shoeman.

Kayla Uyemura (left) and Danara Flores mine for gold in the Poudre River during a field trip at the Poudre Learning Center on December 2.

Photo Courtesy of Zach Armstrong



## IB science heads to PLC

By Micheal Caro  
Staff Writer

On December 2nd, IB juniors and some seniors attended a field trip to the Poudre Learning Center. The IB classes that attended the field trip included

Chemistry, Physics and Biology.

"The purpose of the field trip was so that students may gain field experience for the courses they are taking," physics teacher Zach Armstrong said.



Armstrong

The field trip allowed the students to go beyond the classroom. The main purpose for the IB field trip was to witness firsthand the flood damage that occurred at the Poudre Learning Center two months ago. The science students collected data and samples for the flood studies. The students learned how to prevent further flood damage and how the flood affected the ecosystems

**Continued**  
**Science, Page 16**

## Last week of school FINAL-ly here for teachers, students

### West staff still looking for best finals schedule

By Tara Trevino  
Staff Writer

The finals schedule this year, following tradition, is different from the schedule from previous years at Greeley West High School.

Throughout finals week, students can expect to be very busy in all of their classes, studying and trying to make up missing work.

Every year, the main priority around the final schedule is to get the students to attend school all week during testing and study sessions.

There will be no early release on Monday. Each day Monday through Thursday will consist of long days with four classes a day. On days where students are not taking their final in class, the teacher of that class is required to give their students an assignment worth points. If a student

does not show up to their class because they have already taken their final, they will miss out on an assignment and it will affect their grade.

Monday and Wednesday will be odd days for students, and Tuesday and Thursday will be evens. Testing will take place every other class. Monday 3 and 7, Tuesday 2 and 6, Wednesday 1 and 5, Thursday 4 and 8 will all be testing. The other blocks will be study sessions.

The finals schedule is different than that of Greeley Central's and Northridge that allow for study periods before each exam. As a result, many students do not like the final schedule this year.

"This year's final schedule doesn't give us enough time to study. We should have half days like Central so we can study in the afternoon for our next day finals,"

Junior Nakiya Myrant-Mijares explains.



Mijares

### Last week means lots of make-up work turned in

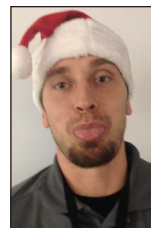
By Zeke Rodriguez  
Staff Writer

For students that get their work done early, finals week is a breeze because they only have to worry about their actual finals during finals week.

But for students that like to slack off and lolly gag at the end are always the students that try to cram in late work to get their grades up.

Teacher and head girls basketball coach Mr. Mark Jarnot believes "it is unfair for students to wait last second to turn in missing assignments, it just causes more work for the teachers to do on the very busy final week."

Jarnot also stated "It's a crap load of work to add on to teachers gigantic pile of grading that they



Jarnot

already have a deadline to finish all grading."

But for Mr. Jarnot, like most teachers, will accept and grade late work but he will grade it and put it the system when he gets to it or when he is good and ready. Most students that slack off have a hard time of getting their final grades up because they waited so long to actually try and get their grades up that by the end of the semester or year it doesn't matter because they are so far behind.

"I realize the point of late work. Kids want to get their grade up, but their grades are down because they choose not to do the work on time. Might as well do the work when it's assigned, right?"

said Alex DeLaCroix



DeLaCroix



# Students subjected to testing that determines giftedness

**By Garrett Hays**  
Staff Writer

What exactly does it mean to be a gifted and talented student at Greeley West?

It's a program put on by the whole district determining whether students school academics are up to the qualifications. The program is made up of people with high academics and a body of evidence that is collected by intellectual testing, teacher recommendation or a home survey, which are ways of finding informational data for future reference. Gifted and talented testing ensures that students who perform at a higher level are given special opportunities to make sure that they do not get bored.

Last week, many students were given the intellect test to determine if they qualify for GT services.

Karen Chavez is the in charge of the Gifted and Talented kids at Greeley West. Chavez stated, "My job is to help kids reach their goals and be successful in class. The kids come to me and we

reach and set goals to grow in academics."

The Gifted and Talented testing can start anywhere from middle school to senior year. Chavez presents all the tests to a panel of people



Halsey

and as a group they determine whether the kid is eligible for the Gifted and Talented Program.

Greeley West football player Brian Halsey is not only in the Gifted and Talented program but also the IB program. Halsey has been in the program since middle school and still continues in high school. He is very proud of the work he has

done at Greeley West High School of the work he has put in and can't wait to graduate.

"It's very important to me to focus and work as hard as I can in school to achieve all my goals before a graduate," Halsey said.

## Boosters give away big bucks for attendance

Greeley West students have a chance to win anywhere from \$100 all the way up to \$500 this winter sports season. All the students have to do is go to the winter sporting events, and if their name is called while they are in attendance, they win some cash. Every student is put into the raffle, so it was fair for everyone. If a name is called and the person is not in attendance then the pot will increase each time until a winner claims their prize.

Junior Matt Bruning won the first prize at the first event of the year, a wrestling dual with Northridge.

- Eric Seeley



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## Mittens keep tree, hands warm

By Jenea Padilla  
Staff Writer

This month, Greeley West's student council is holding the Winter Mitten Drive. Ms. Willemssen and Student Council are in charge of the drive.

Students can bring in new or gently used gloves, hats, and scarves. There is a bin in the main office that all items can be dropped off at any time throughout the school day.

All of the items donated will be used by student council to decorate the "Mitten Tree" in the commons until the drive is over. The drive will span from the beginning of December until the end of the semester. At the end of the semester, all of the items will be donated to the Guadalupe Center.

"Help out your community and donate items to the mitten tree, it's for a wonderful cause!" said Willemssen.



Willemssen



Alie Olivas/West Word

The Christmas tree is very bright and festive in the counselor's office this year

## Christmas time is here

West students practice many holiday traditions

By Eric Seeley  
Staff Writer

Students and their families have various Christmas traditions. Every family has their own unique little spice that they add to the holiday season, and no family's tradition is quite like the others.

There is the average Christmas tradition, where families with little kids like to put out Christmas cookies and milk for Santa Clause, and of course something along the lines of carrots for the reindeer. At Killian Strouth's house they set something a little different out for the reindeer. "We put out this special sparkling cereal so the reindeer can see it when they are flying over my house," said Strouth.

At Darren DeLaCroix's house, his family likes to start off Christmas the night before. "On Christmas Eve we always open up one

gift," said DeLaCroix.

"Me and my family always watch *Santa is Coming to Town* on Christmas Eve every year," said teacher Greg McAdams. Along with watching Christmas movies, McAdams and family go to Christmas Eve mass.

Harper Sheets and her family have a tradition like none other. "We disguise a pickle decoration in our Christmas tree, and then the rest of my family has to find it," said Sheets.

Jaxon Nelson has to work for his presents. "On Christmas we have to go around and find all of our presents before we can open them," said Nelson.

Christmas is all about spending time with the ones you love. The best way to spend time with them is to make your own traditions and to spend quality time with them.



DeLaCroix

## Spartans find time to kill during break

By Lauren Miller  
Staff Writer

Christmas break seems to come earlier and earlier every year, and this year is no exception. With Christmas break just a few short days away, students are making plans as to how they will spend their break. Some prefer to stay home, while others may prefer to travel. Either way, with two weeks off of school the opportunities are endless.

Many students are traveling to the mountains to get away to snow board and ski. Riley Spight and his family are planning to stay in their condo in Granby over break to go snowboarding. Surprisingly, they also plan to go tubing if weather permits. While Riley has been snow boarding since the young age of eight, Russell Fink plans to learn how to ski for the first time this year. Keegan

Wilcox is also planning on doing a lot of snowboarding in Steamboat, Colorado over break.

As the cold slopes aren't for everyone, several students plan to stay home with their family and friends. Mira Altergott plans to simply spend quality time with family and friends. Like Mira, Kayla

Hoskins plans to hang out with friends and family as well as babysitting for a couple of days. "For Christmas, I'm pretty traditional. It's all about church, food, Christmas morning, but most importantly friends and family," shares senior Brian Halsey. Halsey plans on spending Christmas with his family at home, and is sad to not have his oldest



Spight



Hoskins

brother home this year, as he is spending it with his new in-laws and wife.

No matter how students choose to spend their break, everyone can agree it is much needed. Not only is everyone ready for a break from school, but a chance to have fun and enjoy the company of the people around them without worrying about school or homework.

## Favorite movies

Many people's favorite activity during the holidays is staying home, nice and cozy, watching movies. Christmas movies are the most popular theme that is watched.

With a variety to choose from, there are definitely some entertaining films that have become family favorites around this time of the year.

Most Christmas movies have turned into classics that instantly come to mind when mentioning a good movie. Though they all have a general Christmas topic, the films manage to keep the Christmas vibe but use a different genre, varying from *A Christmas Story* to *Frosty the Snowman*.

For Junior Jianna Piacenza, she enjoys family movies like *Snow Puppies*. "It's a cute movie and I love puppies," said Piacenza.

Maybe you like the Christmas spirit but want to throw in some comedy like sophomore Caeley Lordemann; her favorite holiday film is *Elf*. For the Santa skeptics like junior Julio Camacho, the classic, *The Polar Express* may entertain you. "I didn't believe in Santa until I watched this movie," said Camacho.

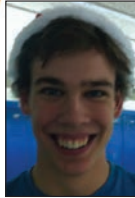
--Edgar Lopez



# Wishlist

This year I'm wishing for a PS4 and a laptop.

-Aaron Lyman, Junior



I want a new shotgun, a new buck knife, paint thinner, and chew for Christmas.

-John Campbell, Senior



I really want Jarnot to stop harassing me in class and also for a pet owl.

-Abbie Pollard, Senior



I want a mud jug, a spit bud and a log.

-Nick Richardson, Junior



I want a new sub and a new phone case for Christmas.

-Jeremy Reinders, Senior



My Christmas wish list consists of a Starbucks gift card, because I'm a white girl, and clothes.

-Suzanne Miller, Sophomore



This year for Christmas I'm asking for more bro tanks and some intellect.

-Paul Cangilla, Freshman



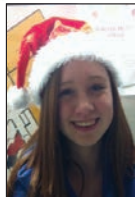
I really want an iPhone 5S, a basketball scholarship and a date with Dave Falter :)

-Harper Sheets, Junior



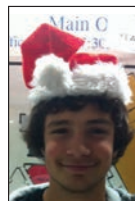
I'm asking Santa to bring me a boyfriend that's actually taller than me and also for a TV.

-Ryan Maddera, Freshman



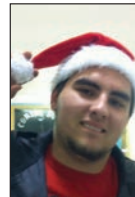
Wait... you mean Santa isn't real?

-Riley Spight, Junior



This year I'm wishing for my license back and a new exhaust to put on my truck, which I won't be driving until April.

-Gregg Wall, Senior



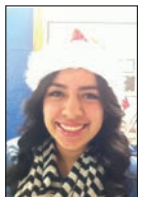
I'm asking for new cowgirl boots and new basketball shoes for Christmas this year.

-Sylvia Rizo, Sophomore



This year for Christmas I'm asking Santa for beats and Nike free runs.

-Raquel Dennis, Freshman



# Burke loves her students, dogs, GWHS

By Addison Vergara  
Staff Writer

Jane Burke is a math teacher at Greeley West High School, teaching courses such as IB math, trigonometry, pre-calculus, and advanced placement calculus. Burke, unlike many teachers in the building, has more ties to West than just

being a teacher, however.

Burke was raised in Greeley, and attended Greeley West when she was a teen. "Back when the town was a lot smaller," Burke explained. "Tenth street was only two lanes, and so was highway thirty-four." As a Spartan, Burke was heavily involved. She was a member of a variety

of clubs, and was also on the swimming, tennis, and basketball teams.

Her passion for sports brought her back to Greeley West later in life. After attending both Purdue and the University of Northern Colorado, and receiving a degree in math education, Burke was hired at West as a tennis and volleyball coach. Three years later, she was brought onto staff as a math teacher. Currently, Burke has an array of responsibilities at West, including coaching the dive team, and making sure fellow math teacher Brandon Torrez, doesn't "screw up."

Burke enjoys her students, explaining that she loves teaching because she finds satisfaction in seeing others understand math, since it can, many times, be a difficult subject.

Burke also likes being away from her work occasionally, when her busy schedule allows. She has two cute yellow Labrador dogs, named Gracey Ann and Roma Bella, which she enjoys playing and relaxing with. Burke also enjoys the Star Wars movies, and watching the Duke University Blue Devils play basketball.



Addison Vergara/West Word

Math teacher Jane Burke writes on the board while she explains algebraic concepts last week.

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Former teacher Jeff Lawrence smiles at the thought of customers while selling salsa last Thursday in the teacher's lounge.



Chris Campbell  
/West Word

## Spartan sells salsa

Recipe turns into part-time job after retirement

By Chris Campbell  
Staff Writer

**WHERE ARE THEY NOW?**

*Jeff Lawrence*

saying 'you should sell this,' so my wife and I started doing it in 2010," Lawrence said.

But selling salsa isn't Lawrence's only interest. He still announces at the football games for West, and recently, stole the game ball from one of CSU's games.

Jeff Lawrence taught at Greeley West for 26 years, from 1985-2011, and although he is no longer teaching at the school, he is still leading a fulfilling, and extremely interesting life. Since leaving Greeley West, he has become an entrepreneur of salsa, selling six different varieties in 56 stores in and around Greeley including Walgreens and 7-11.

"I used to bring food to the classroom because I like to cook. I used to reward students for doing good, and then made salsa and gave it away as gifts to my fellow teachers on Christmas. People started

**Continued  
Salsa, Page 16**

## Angel tree provides gifts from Key Club

By Alie Olivas  
Staff Writer

This year Greeley West's Key Club has decided to take on a new challenge. It's called the Angel Project and is sponsored by Ms. Kim Fisher. It is a program that gives children who aren't so fortunate presents for Christmas. The Salvation Army gets together with the students in Key Club and they find children deserving of gifts. The students get to go shopping for the kids and get to pick out one toy and one clothing item for each child.

"The students in the classes will then have to opportunity to take care of it," said Mrs. Hoffert.

Once the toys and clothes are bought, the Key Club will wrap the gifts and then give them to the students.

"This is a great program to help those kids whose parents can't afford to get them gifts for Christmas," said Hoffert.

This is a great example of how students at Greeley West are helping people get through the holidays this year. One clothing item and one toy will bring huge smiles to those kids in need.

Christmas will be more special to families this year because of this heart filled project.



*Making Memories*

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# Texting and driving poses serious danger

Texting while driving seems to be a very common sight nowadays, not only among teenagers but adults as well. The use of smartphones makes access to social media super quick and easy and many people can't get enough of it.

People are constantly on their phones making sure they don't miss the latest gossip on Twitter or post on Instagram. Many of them cannot even make it through an entire commute without checking their messages or updating their Twitter feed.

Glancing down at your phone may seem innocent until the urge to reply to your latest text message becomes too hard to bear. You take one hand off the steering wheel and both eyes off the road.

You're not only putting your life in danger but also the lives of the people around you.

I don't believe most people realize how dangerous this really is or even think about the consequences before they do it. And maybe part of it is that they've grown up seeing their parents do it right in front of them, so it seems like it's not a big deal.

Parents are always nagging their kids about not texting and driving, but if they do then why can't we?

Parents need to be more careful about setting good examples for their children but ultimately it's the drivers' decision to whether or not they want to risk their life by texting and driving.



**Tonya Schiestel**  
Editorial

# Finally discovering meaning of senioritis

As a freshman, sophomore, and junior you often hear about a thing called "senioritis," and until you're a senior you never truly understand how real it is. By the time students get to their senior year they are so ready to be out of here, and be done with high school.

Even with the two off blocks seniors are allowed, that is still not enough time for students to be away from school. It's hard for

seniors to wake up in the morning, and it's hard for a lot of seniors to make it through the whole day without missing at least one class.

The way a lot of people see it is they only need a few credits to graduate, therefore missing one class won't interfere with that.

Or there is the argument that students have a good grade in

the class and not going one time won't affect their grade.



**Jenea Padilla**  
Editorial

## Pertussis outbreak

As usual the pertussis virus is on the spread, but this time with a vengeance.

In the last two weeks of October, 100 cases of whooping cough were reported in Colorado, according to the state health department.

Colorado has had epidemic levels of whooping cough, in the last two years, including 1,116 cases so far this year, states the Denver post. It is recommended that infants, children and adults get vaccinated for the pertussis virus. The signs of pertussis often start with cold-like symptoms including: sneezing, runny nose, low-grade fever and a mild cough. The cough becomes more severe during the first week or two, and often is shown by periods of rapid coughing, followed by a high-pitched fever, and coughing fit followed by vomiting. The cough may last for a couple of months and is more frequent at night.

- Alexander Travis

## Chilling fact: black ice is dangerous

In the winter there are many dangers out in the cold world, from breaking your leg while skiing, to getting in a snowball fight.

You may even shoot your eye out if you get a BB gun.

But there is nothing scarier during the winter than black ice. Black ice is everywhere during the winter. It can be in peaceful suburban neighborhoods and the busy areas of shopping centers. Black ice can come out of nowhere and rob you of your balance. It's transparent and sneaky which makes black ice so dangerous at night time.

It causes very hazardous driving conditions which makes people not want to drive when black ice is out on the streets. Although black ice is different looking than white ice, it doesn't make it any less dangerous.

This makes it hard for black ice to survive, but black ice perseveres. The snow that falls down and blinds drivers can be dangerous but you don't hear any news about that.

All Christmas songs talk about how joyful the snow is; you don't hear that about black ice. Black ice didn't ask to exist; it is a product of the environment. So watch out for this winter time nemesis.



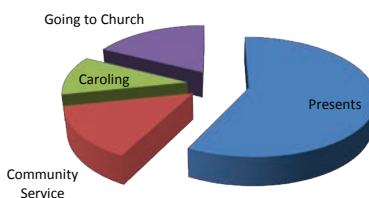
**Riley Mincic**  
Editorial

## Spartan Pulse

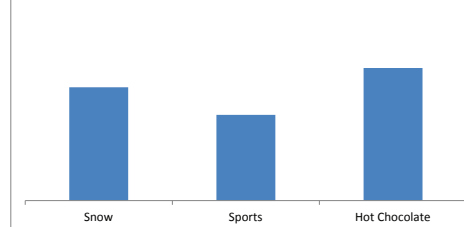
What is your favorite Christmas treat?



What is your favorite part of Christmas?



What is your favorite part of winter?





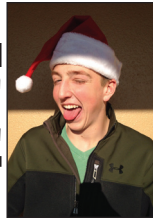
# Finals week should be a breeze

A word that seems to be dreaded by nearly all high school students is “finals”. Of course, this word refers to the four days at the end of each semester in which students are subjected to, typically, four days of final exams. Every year, as finals are approaching, and during finals week, I find my twitter feed inundated with a variety of tweets about how “difficult” or “stressful” finals week is.

The truth is, these notorious tests shouldn't be so scary. The entire point of enduring classes prior to finals week

is to prepare for the exams. The semester courses and unit tests given throughout the year are all in preparation for the “real deal.” However, many students choose not to go to class, not to do all their homework, or not to study for unit tests, therefore missing essential information, and hurting their chances of doing well on finals.

I understand that finals week is stressful for many students with multiple advanced placement or IB courses, because they are essentially college classes. However, often times,



|||||  
**Addison  
Vergara**  
Editorial  
|||||

# Take some time to appreciate what you have during holidays

Every year around the holidays people are making Christmas lists for family members, buying presents, spending hours cooking and decorating their homes. However, if you stop and think about it, there are hundreds of families in our very own town who would dream of being able to do these festive activities.

It is not wrong of us to be excited about opening gifts on Christmas morning, or enjoying a fun holiday party. But if only we bought a meal for a family in need instead of buying that expected sweater for a family member, more of our world would enjoy the holidays like they should.

It doesn't take donating tons of money or gifts to make a difference. Simply donating one hour

of your day to serve meals to the homeless would impact someone's life and make their holiday better. You would be surprised at how much you would enjoy taking time out of your schedule to lend a hand. Even if you cannot donate a penny, just being there to talk to the people means the world to them.

Christmas should be about helping people just as much as presents and celebrations.

Everyone deserves to be happy on Christmas whether you have a million dollars or ten dollars. So when you're disappointed about that gift you didn't get, just be thankful that you have a warm house, food in your stomach, and a family to share the holidays with.



|||||  
**Alie  
Olivas**  
Editorial  
|||||

teachers of these classes are very understanding. Teachers allot various amounts of class time to study before the test day, and sometimes even allow students to use a notecard with formulas or other information. Typically, the tests are on a curved grading scale as well.

Instead of complaining about the rapidly approaching finals, start studying. Use all resources possible, and work hard to get the grade you want. If students do this, the monster that we have created in the form of finals week will not be so daunting.



Sierna Barker/West Word

The mitten tree is just one example of helping others this holiday season.

# Ugg boots are becoming crocs

Are Ugg boots becoming the new Crocs? Throughout the 2000's Uggs have become very popular for almost all ages. People are now comparing Uggs to crocs, and calling them ugly. Crocs don't exactly have the best reputation as far as fashion statements go, and are usually considered a functionality shoe rather than a fashionable one.

Ugg boots have been popular for a while and are still found almost everywhere you look. The Ugg brand never seems

to stop coming out with new styles and colors. They now have sparkly Uggs with sequins that are one color if you smooth them one way and a different color the other way. They also have Ugg riding style boots, short Ugg boots, and even Uggs with fur and bows on the outside. The Ugg brand seems to be the trend setter for other boot brands as well and these styles seem to be everywhere this winter.

Has the Ugg organization gone too far with trying to keep their business going? Most Ugg fans believe the company should have stuck to the original neutral colors and simple styles. Fans have called Uggs overdone and unattractive due to the exotic colors, patterns and styles.

The Ugg organization is still doing very well, so the new styles must be a success. They will most likely stay in business for several years.



|||||  
**Lauren  
Miller**  
Editorial  
|||||

## WEST WORD Editorial Policy

### Letters To The Editor

All submissions are subject to editing to conform to *West Word* style. Limit one letter to every issue (every two weeks). Typically, letters will be published in the order they are received, space allowing. Please specify if the letter includes time-sensitive material. *West Word* will not publish letters that are vague, are dominated by secondary sources, or are personal attacks on any individual. You must include facts not commonly known; originality is required. Provide your full name, grade, and phone number which will be used for verification purposes only. *Letters may not be anonymous.* Please bring letters to Dave Falter in room 306.

### Guest Editorials

Occasionally, members of the Greeley West community (students, faculty, parents and volunteers) will be asked by the *West Word* to write a guest editorial or column for the paper on a topic chosen by the editorialist and approved by the *West Word*. These articles will be edited only for spelling, semantics, and grammatical errors. *West Word* will notify the author of these changes prior to the editorial or column appearing in print.

### @GWWestword Twitter

Students, staff, and the Greeley West community can tweet

their comments, opinions, and ideas to the official Twitter page for inclusion in the *West Word*. Tweets must follow the same guidelines as the more traditional letter to the editor. Follow the *West Word* at @GWWestWord on Twitter for links to current issues, retweets about the West community, and hashtag topics throughout the year.

### Legal Disclaimer

Opinions expressed on the Viewpoints page are those of the editorialist and are not those of the *West Word*, Greeley West High School, District 6, or its faculty and staff.

# Every Spartan, every snowflake is different

By Brandon Holmes  
Staff Writer

If any student has recently walked through the hallways at Greeley West High School, they have probably noticed all of the festive snowflakes covering the hallway walls. Students shouldn't be shocked to see their name written on one of the snowflakes, as this is a tradition that occurs around this time of year every year.

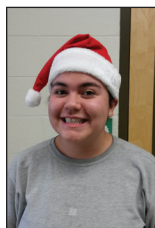
Every single student and teacher is made a snowflake and must look around the school and search for it. Snowflakes are hung around Greeley West High School everywhere from the lobby to the commons to the hallways.

This year, the student council, headed by senior Courtney Packard, started hanging snowflakes on Monday, December 9<sup>th</sup>.

Every year, the student council gets together before Christmas break and spends hours cutting,



Packard



Turner

gluing, and organizing snowflakes. On average, the student council officers spend about 10 days or so after school doing this for everyone. After all 1500 or so snowflakes are finished, they are hung throughout the school and the hunt begins. "The

goal in doing this is to start getting students in the mood for the holidays," said student council vice president Andra Turner. After the student or teacher finds their snowflake, they can do whatever they want with it. Some students prefer to hang their snowflakes on their lockers and some prefer to just toss them.

Turner also added that this tradition is getting harder and harder every year to carry on.

When the tradition started, there was a lot less students than there are now. "An incredible amount of work is done to pull off this yearly tradition," Turner said.



Katie Lyons and Tamara Smalley cut out snowflakes to decorate the hallways of Greeley West High School.

Brandon Holmes  
/West Word

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St. John's Church, Greeley	M, TH-SAT	Dec. 23, Dec. 26-Dec. 28	8:00AM-4:00 PM
St. John's Church, Greeley	M, TH-SAT	Dec. 30, Jan. 2-Jan. 4	8:00AM-4:00 PM
Greeley West H.S.	SAT	Jan. 11- Feb. 8	8:00AM-2:30PM
Greeley West H.S.	SAT	Feb. 22- March 22	8:00AM-2:30PM

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## FASHION TRENDS: Scarves

With the cold weather lately it is so hard to look cute and stay warm! Luckily, scarves are as popular as ever this year and the colors and styles are endless!

Adding a scarf to a warm, comfortable outfit can dress it up and keep you even warmer during this cold winter. There are infinity scarves and regular scarves, and thick and thin scarves; pretty much anything you could imagine. The variety of colors and styles make it easy to find one to match any outfit! Pairing a simple scarf with leggings and a big sweater is one of my favorite ways to look cute and stay super warm and comfy. Boys, don't be scared off. A scarf tucked into a jacket makes any boy classy. You can also warm up a dress with leggings and of course a scarf and jacket to match for a dressier look. Scarves can really be worn with anything and everything and always add a nice touch to any outfit.

Lauren  
Miller  
Fashion Expert



Lauren Miller/West Word

Teacher Rich Davis shows off his fashionable scarf and best side of his face on a cold day last week.

## Audiences are thunderstuck by *Thor*

By Riley Mincio  
Staff Writer

*Thor* is a movie that follows along with many of the other Marvel movies such as *Iron Man*, *Captain America*, and *The Avengers*. As from *The Avengers*, Loki makes his appearance in *Thor the Dark World*. He is a fugitive because of his attack on New York when trying to take over the world.

This movie follows the story of Thor more in this movie than it did in the prequel. There is an

Riley  
Mincio  
Movie Review



evil weapon that was on the verge of being used in the past that Thor's grandpa stops the Elves from unleashing this weapon and locked it away.

The Elves go and hide from the Asgardians until the Aether (evil weapon) reveals itself. Jane Foster goes out looking for Thor because she can't control her love for him. She ends up finding the Aether and making its presence known to the Elves.

The Elves go after the weapon that ends up becoming attached to her and try and take over the nine realms. That is

the basic plot of the movie; don't want to spoil it too much for all of the readers.

I wasn't impressed with the first Thor and wasn't sure if I wanted to go and see this movie. I ended up going and really enjoyed the movie. The reason I wasn't sure about it was because I wanted it to be a true Thor story, and not have as much action on Earth but from where Thor is from and surrounding areas.

The movie does exactly that and that is why I liked this movie. I give *Thor the Dark World* an 8 out of 10 Spartan heads. Students should see this incredible cinema piece as soon as they can.

## Cheers proud of performance

By Jake Firkins  
Staff Writer

The Greeley West Spartans Cheerleading team is going to state. They left early Friday the 6<sup>th</sup> of December and headed to the Denver Coliseum where the state cheerleading competitions were held.

The state competitions for 5A, 4A and Co-ed cheerleading teams were on Friday and 3A, 2A and 1A cheerleading teams performed on Saturday. West's cheerleading squad is in the 5A all girls division. There is no qualifying for state in cheerleading so all teams could go and perform in front of the judges if they so wished.

Lexi Potter, a sophomore cheerleader for West's squad this year was excited about going to state. Her goal for her team was to place in the top 15 teams that were performing there. There are 41



Potter

teams in Wests division.

She said that her team was excited but also a little bit stressed. The reason for the stress is because state is such a bigger competition than the smaller ones they are used to. Lexi also said that their coach, Brodie Subia, is excited for them and believes that they will perform to the best of their abilities.

"No matter what, no matter how we place, I'm so proud of my team because I know we will go out there and do our best," Potter said before her competition.

The Spartan cheerleaders spent a couple weeks before the competition practicing their routine. They wanted to make sure that they could get it as close to perfect as they could before their big test at state.

They then spent their allotted 2 minutes and 30 seconds performing that routine in front of the judges trying to impress them. They ended up placing 30<sup>th</sup> out of 37 with 57.90 points.

## Poms place 3rd

The Greeley West Poms went to state this year. The state completion was held at the Denver Coliseum and the Poms did their performance on Friday night.

The Poms worked really hard this year in preparation for state. After not even making it to the final round of the State competition year, the Poms were determined to make it improve on last year's performance and make it farther in the competition. The Poms ended up taking 3<sup>rd</sup> this year but it wasn't what they were shooting for.

"We got third but we were hoping for better. However we were happy with the results," said Kylee Jackson.

They were able to do better because they had a stronger team this year said Jackson. "We cracked down and practiced tons." The Poms practiced every day and on each Saturday, they practiced for 5 hours.

--Jake Firkins

## Students say they aren't on Twitter too much

By Alie Olivas  
Staff Writer

Technology has become a huge a part of today's world, and now Twitter has become the new Facebook. Throughout the school, the sight of people of all ages using Twitter cannot be ignored. But the real question is, could Twitter be taking over the school?

"I use Twitter more than I text. It's definitely taking over our school and it has become a problem because there's a lot of drama and students focus

more on Twitter than their class work," said junior Peyton Tellez.

Most teachers all share the same opinion. They are constantly telling their students to put their cell phones away during class. Students using the Wi-Fi to check their Twitter also take up much of the school's bandwidth making it take forever to download anything on the internet, which makes using the internet as a teaching tool almost impossible for most teachers.

"It's very frustrating because in classes I teach

like student athletic training, I use videos to show real life situations and it freezes all of the time or doesn't even download. The kids are then missing out on valuable information," said teacher Poling.

Many of the students, however, feel that Twitter does not distract them from their daily school lessons in class.

"I don't feel that Twitter is taking over Greeley West because there aren't as many tweets during the school day as after," said Nakiya Myrant-Mijares.

# When it comes to options, skiers have all types

**By Mason Barnes**  
Staff Writer

In the state of Colorado there is a wide variety of ski slopes to choose from. To be exact, there are 27 ski resorts in the state. Avid skiers can find any style of resort that they want to depending on their preferences.

Colorado is home to some of the nicest resorts in the nation. Two of the Colorado slopes, Telluride and Vail, are ranked in the top 10 nicest resorts in

the United States. People come in from all over the world just to get a chance to ski and snowboard on these amazing slopes.

Alongside with Vail and Telluride people have 25 other resorts to choose from, whether they're a Colorado resident looking for a fun weekend or a tourist from out of state looking to have a great experience. This list includes Copper Mountain, Winter Park, Breckenridge, and Steamboat. Copper Mountain and Breckenridge are not that

far from each other and are very similar in a ton of ways. Both mountain's back sides offer great challenges for the more experienced skiers. They are great family resorts and have many other non-skiing activities.

"My favorite resort is Vail because it always has fresh snow and the lodging is really nice," said sophomore Johnny Shirazi.

Vail attracts people from all over including celebrities like NBA star Dwight Howard. You can make the argument that Vail is the nicest in the state.

The ski resorts are a nice change of pace.



Shirazi

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# Hoops season begins

## Boys win first game

By Jenea Padilla  
Staff Writer

Monday December 9<sup>th</sup> was the first game of the boys' basketball season. The team, coached by Tory Hanson opened at home against Rocky Mountain High School. Rocky had five games on the Spartan boys, but they managed to pull through and come put on top with a 53-50 win.

The Spartans started off really good, and they had a big lead at the beginning of the game. Then the Spartans reignited themselves to gain a late fourth quarter lead. The game winning shot was made by, sophomore, Cordell Gillingham with roughly a minute left in the game.

Freshman, Darren DeLaCroix scored 15 points in his first game ever as a Spartan. Towards the end of the game the score was 52-50, but Darren made



Hanson

## Girls struggle early

Since the girls' basketball season started a little over a week ago, they have been struggling going 1-4. They have lost to Legend, Rocky Mountain, and Windsor. The win was huge for the Lady Spartans, as it was against cross town rival, Northridge. The Spartans outscored the Grizzlies 38-27.

The Spartans are led by junior Harper Sheets, who is a three year starter. "We need to get our offense going and we need to be strong with the ball, and decrease the amount of turnovers we have," said Sheets.

--Eric Seeley

one of his free throws bringing the score to 53-50 making it at least a little more difficult for Rocky to catch back up.

"Starting varsity as a freshman is definitely nerve racking, but the guys make it easier," said DeLaCroix

## Shaha proud of swimmers' start

By America Monje  
Staff Writer

The Greeley West girls swim team didn't start the season off very strong at their first meet on December 5, 2013. Despite getting 2<sup>nd</sup> place in their 200 medley relay and Kayla Uyemura placing 3<sup>rd</sup> in her 50 free, they lost 217 to 85 to Mountain Range High school.

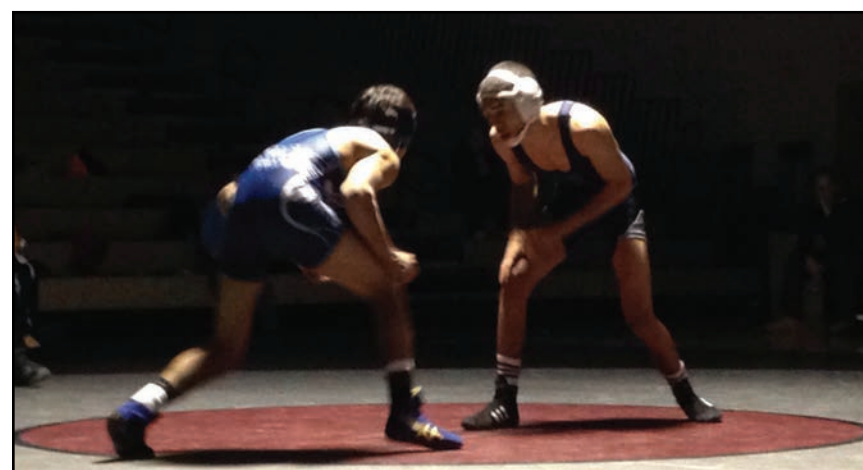
The meet took place at the VMAC in Thornton. "I'm very pleased with them, they're working hard and with a full heart," said Collin Shaha.

He's very satisfied with the girls and how they swam for their first meet, and looks forward to a strong season.

The swim team is very excited for what the season has to offer. The past years have been pretty successful considering how hard it is to make it in 5A.

Apart from being a young team, there are also many strong swimmers.

They may have had a tough first loss, but the season still waits.



Sirena Barker/West Word

Anthony Garza readies for his match against a Northridge opponent. The Spartans beat the Grizzlies to open the season.

## Bear beat-down

### Grapplers open with dual win over Northridge

By Sirena Barker  
Staff Writer

On Tuesday December 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Spartans opened their season against the Grizzlies.

The Spartan wrestling team took on the Grizzlies in their home duel at Northridge. Due to conflicts in the gym, AD Jeff Cranson said, "Northridge was more than gracious in helping us out."

West won the match 42-32 and had some very great duels. Anthony Garza won his match on top of Lopez 13-5. Throughout the match, Spartan

fans held their spirits high to try and help their boys come out on top.

The Spartans had a great opener against the Grizzlies that Tuesday night and kept ahead the whole night. Heads held high, the Spartans walked out of that Northridge gym with a W against one of the town rivals.

The wrestling team has since continued its season finding various successes in tournaments. Their main dual season will start back up in January.

## Physical Ed Students of the Month



Mr. Hanson  
Brooke Gardner  
Jaxon Nelson  
Mr. Stieb  
Andrea Lopez-Tzun  
Heath Clark  
Ms. Abbott  
Abigal Rocha  
Kaleb Quiroz  
Ms. Polling  
Darren DeLaCroix  
Samantha Augustino



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# What?

**Directions:** Match each Spartan pictured with their row of answers to find out who said **WHAT**.

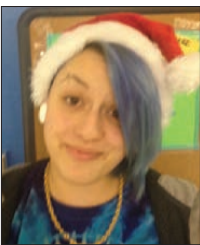
<b>WHAT is your favorite food to eat?</b>	<b>WHAT is the best part of Greeley West?</b>	<b>WHAT is your dream vacation location?</b>	<b>WHAT is your dream college?</b>	<b>WHAT is your most embarrassing moment?</b>	<b>WHAT celebrity do you want to meet?</b>
---	---	--	------------------------------------	---	--



A

Wing Shack	Graduation	Afghanistan	USMC	How many times I failed the ASVAB test.	General “Mad Dog” Mattis
------------	------------	-------------	------	---	--------------------------

Michael Watkins



B

Qdoba	Basketball	Bahamas	Oregon	Fell off bike while in a diaper	Kevin Durant
-------	------------	---------	--------	---------------------------------	--------------

Jasmine Lopez



C

Pasole	Festivities	Jamaica	Oaksterdam University	Put on half of my makeup on for the day	Bob Marley
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Cordell Gillingham



D

Hot Wok	Mr. Jarnot	Japan	CU	Ripped Pants	Miley Cyrus
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Bryan Vargas

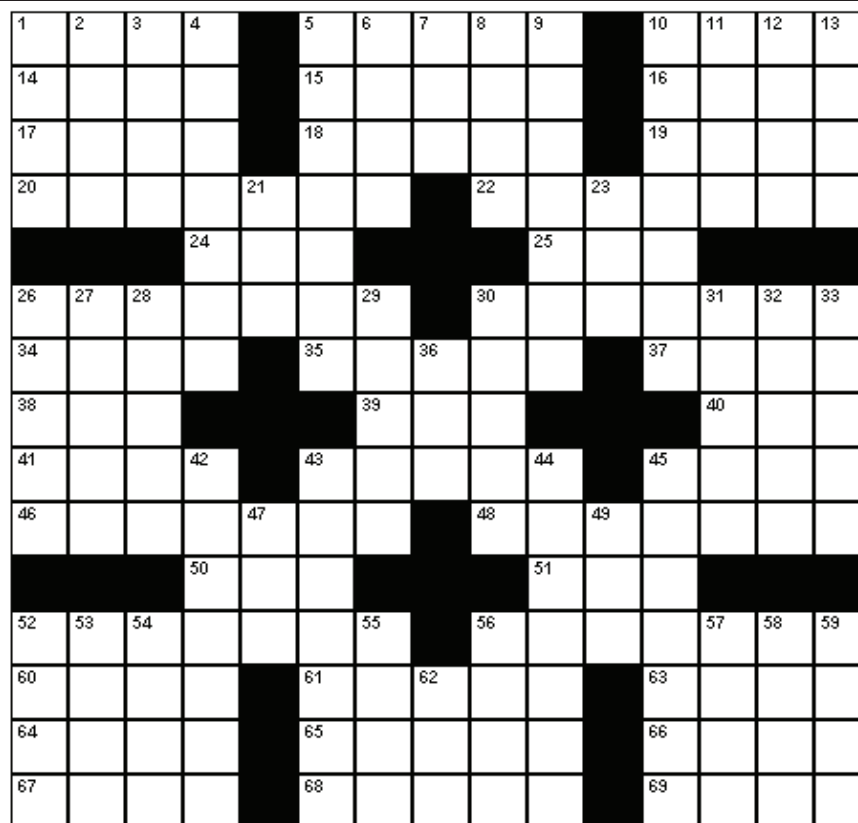


Across  
1- Prefix with Tibetan  
5- Swedish imports  
10- Aggregate  
14- Beginning on  
15- Conclude by  
16- Vintner's prefix  
17- Slave  
18- Coherent light beam  
19- Christmas son  
20- Earphone  
22- Matured  
24- Caterer's coffeepot  
25- It breaks daily  
26- Refrain voluntarily  
30- Implore urgently  
34- Large town  
35- Loses heat  
37- Describes a gently cooked steak  
38- Hot time in Paris  
39- Heston's org.  
40- Lisa, to Bart briefly  
41- Side  
43- Shouldered  
45- Some whiskeys  
46- Subtle absorption  
48- Illness  
50- Goose egg

51- After taxes  
52- Letter  
56- Bordered  
60- Florence's river  
61- Monteverdi opera  
63- Adjutant  
64- Up \_\_\_ good  
65- Electrician, at times  
66- Manitoba native  
67- Org.  
68- Hanker  
69- Look after;

Down  
1- Scarf  
2- Words of comprehension  
3- Director Ephron  
4- Not at work  
5- Containing element #34  
6- Med school subj.  
7- Show stoppers?  
8- Boxer Max  
9- Walks with long steps  
10- Minter  
11- Long time  
12- Dagger of yore  
13- Auctioneer's cry  
21- Lady of Sp.  
23- Dance step  
26- Vinegary prefix

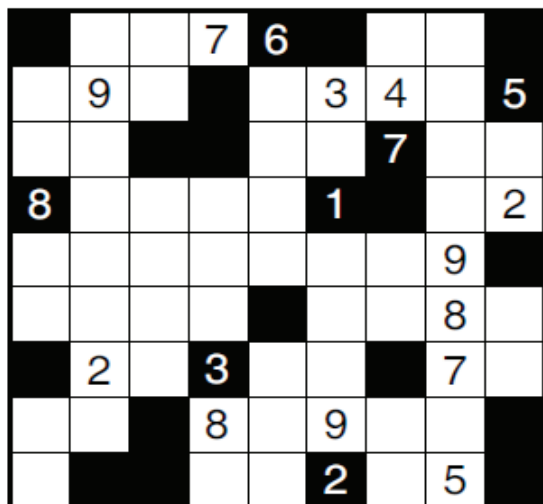
27- Seizes with teeth  
28- Water vapor  
29- Taboos  
30- Tasteless  
31- Snap course  
32- Weeps  
33- "Siddhartha" author  
36- Eight-time Norris Trophy winner  
42- Rainy season  
43- Surging  
44- Primitive form of wheat  
45- Withdraw  
47- Make a lap  
49- Cinque follower  
52- I could \_\_\_ horse!  
53- Career golfers  
54- Taverns  
55- Part of HOMES  
56- Visionary  
57- Make weary  
58- First place?  
59- Notable exploit, legal document  
62- Brother's title



"Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com  
(<http://www.bestcrosswords.com>). Used with permission."

## STR8TS

No. 84 Medium



You can find more help, tips and hints at [www.str8ts.com](http://www.str8ts.com)

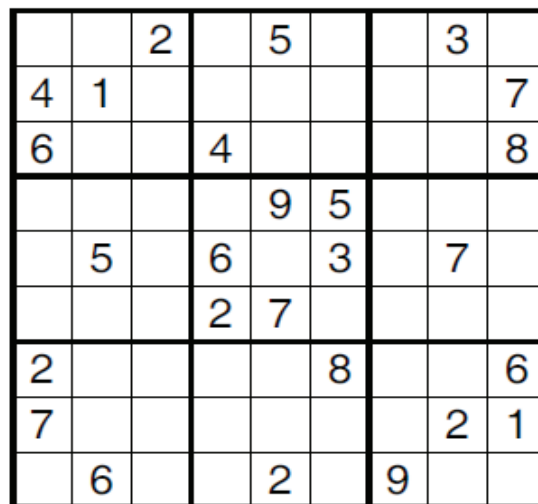
Previous solution - Tough



How to beat Str8ts -  
Like Sudoku, no single number can repeat in any row or column. But... rows and columns are divided by black squares into compartments. These need to be filled in with numbers that complete a 'straight'. A straight is a set of numbers with no gaps but can be in any order, eg [4,2,3,5]. Clues in black cells remove that number as an option in that row and column, and are not part of any straight. Glance at the solution to see how 'straights' are formed.

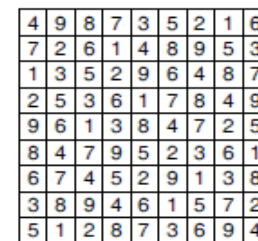
## SUDOKU

No. 84 Medium



The solutions will be published here in the next issue.

Previous solution - Easy



To complete Sudoku, fill the board by entering numbers 1 to 9 such that each row, column and 3x3 box contains every number uniquely.

For many strategies, hints and tips, visit [www.sudokuwiki.org](http://www.sudokuwiki.org)

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# Panera Bread is West’s new neighbor

By Lauren Miller  
Staff Writer

As Greeley West students have probably noticed, Panera Bread is now open in Greeley! The excitement is almost too much to handle for some people as they enjoy this popular new restaurant.

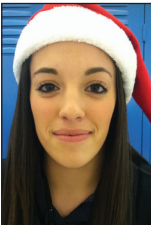
This is the 5<sup>th</sup> Panera café opening in Northern Colorado. They are located off of Centerplace drive, which adds to this already busy part of Greeley. As so many successful restaurant chains have already made their way to the Centerplace area, Panera will surely go off with a hit. With this area being so close to the high school, it is a very convenient place to go for lunch if time permits.

The restaurant is across the street from Simply Mac and directly east of Café Mexicali and Jimmy Johns.

Panera made its grand opening on December 9, 2013 just in time for the holiday season. Panera has a unique selection of food, unlike any other in the area. They serve specialty soups, sandwiches and salads along with fresh-baked breads and unique recipes. They serve a variety of drinks as well, including smoothies, lattes and more. They are open for breakfast at 8 am and stay open through lunch and close at 4:30pm. They also offer free Wi-Fi all day. Construction has been going on for over three months now, and everyone is excited about the new restaurant. The construction will continue for a while as they finish building a new Chick-Fil-A next to Panera.

This is the first Panera Bread opening in Greeley, and previously Panera fans would have had to commute to Loveland to enjoy this restaurant.

“Panera is one of my favorite restaurants and their food is amazing,” said freshman Kelsey Story. “My favorite is their mac and cheese.”



Story

From  
Salsa, Page 7

No matter what his interests are however, he still misses West, and is full of stories about the teachers in the building that are still teaching today. Throughout his career as a teacher at West, Lawrence did many things around the school including coaching track, girls softball, and boys and girls golf.

“I used to be Brandon Torrez’s track coach. He was always flexing around with his shirt off. There was one day where Torrez was supposed to be running, but was laying in the grass with his shirt off trying to get a tan.” Lawrence said.

From  
Science, Page 16

at the PLC. The field trip also gave the students an idea on how to repair flood damage at the PLC.

“It was a good way to spend time with classmates and seeing the flood damages was interesting,” said junior Kai Miranda. She is taking IB Biology and took soil samples from the PLC. She and her group mates have not yet started their experiment but want to look at the effects of the ecosystem from the flood from the PLC.

From  
Palagi, Page 1

some east coast states to satisfy his passion for the outdoors.

He plans on having more experiences like this in the near future. However, Palagi explained that the best thing about this retirement will not be making plans, but not having to plan.

“I look forward to doing whatever I want”, Palagi said.

Palagi will be truly missed at West, but the knowledge, experiences, and lessons he has shared with staff and students alike during his time here will leave a lasting impression.

S	I	N	O	S	A	A	B	S	M	A	S	S				
A	S	O	F	E	N	D	A	T	O	E	N	O				
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