

Students hope 2010 brings academic success, new friendships

MARY WOOD

New Year's Day: a time to rest after the previous night's events, reflect on the year and for many, make goals to change one's life for the better. In an *Amplifier* survey sent out to students, we asked them to share their top three New Year's Resolutions for 2010. Nearly 53 percent of students who responded to the survey wanted to do better academically, the most popular goal for the new year.

"I want to bring my grades up to As by the end of the year. It's a new year, so I have to start it off good. I will do all the work and actually study," Mihai Dan, freshman, said. Although not all students are aiming for straight-As, many hope to improve their studying habits, and to avoid last-minute cramming.

"Cramming has resulted in not doing well, and I will achieve it by writing down study times in my planner," Hanna Emerson, freshman, said. Good time management skills are required to avoid cramming. Alexandra Upton, senior, hopes to improve on those before heading off to college.

"I really want to focus this new year on making a schedule for myself and following it. Time management has been something I have struggled with all through high school," Upton said.

For some students, staying timely and up-to-date on schoolwork means playing some serious catch-up.

"I want to stay caught up with my work, since I have been gone for over two

months with the Swine Flu," Angelica Jolley, freshman, said. "I plan to talk to my teachers and a home-school tutor to see what I can do to stay with my class."

While some students were concerned about school, about 28 percent of students wanted to work on relationships with their peers.

"I want to strengthen friendships with my friends that I've made this year. Friends are really important to me, and there are some wonderful people at our school," Elisabeth Haffner, freshman, said. While Haffner is concerned about new friendships, Brittany Spurgeon, senior, hopes to maintain existing ones.

"I want to mend old friendships that faded out because we are all going off to college next year and there is no better time for a second chance at friendships than now. I plan on checking in more with my friends' days even if it's just by a simple text," Spurgeon said.

Another big concern for many students is staying fit and healthy in the upcoming year.

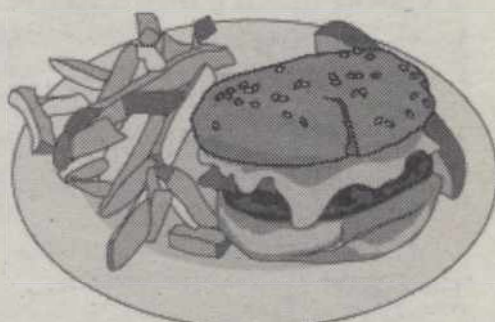
"I'm going to try to eat healthier. I'm not overweight, but I think I could stand changing my eating habits," Christiana Smith, junior, said. "I plan on achieving it by getting rid of the fatty things in my house."

Along with these health goals were hopes of staying on top of the game in sports. "My goal is to make the tennis team and get on JV or Varsity," Mackenzie Coronel, freshman, said. A major part of success in sports is a good relationship with teammates,

In a survey, students were asked to choose the top three areas they want to improve upon for the new year.

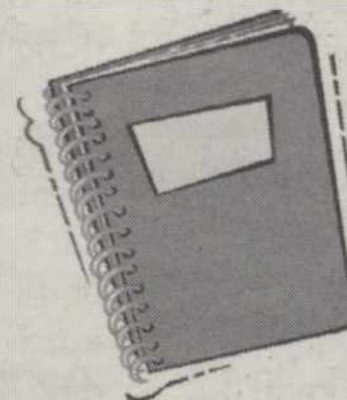
Schoolwork/grades

53 %



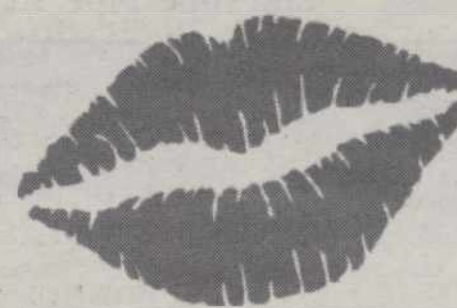
Personal habits

36%



Romance

32%



Physical appearance

28%



Friendships

28%

Other

19%

Family

15%

or in the case of horseback riding, with the horse.

"My horseback riding goal is to obtain a new horse. After my last horse was sadly put down due to a sudden emergency problem, I would like to start working more with Lucy, the horse on whom I am currently riding

and competing with," Emily McDonald, freshman, said. "She is very special and I am building a great connection with her."

Other goals for 2010 included stopping bad habits. "Every year I tell myself to stop cracking my knuckles, but it hasn't been

very successful," Jennifer Wells, junior, said.

Although everyone has different goals for the new year, all of the goals are focused on self-improvement, which can often be challenging. But if this year doesn't bring a desired change, there's always 2011.

Traditional holiday harmonies create high spirited happiness

MARSHALL MILLER

Even before the last trick-or-treater rang the doorbell, "Jingle Bells" was playing in stores signaling that the holidays are here! Whether it's the Muppets or Enya, it's hard not to be in the mood—



think warm fires and freshly baked gingerbread cookies.

Caroling may also be one of the oldest forms of music during the holidays. Concerts, sing-a-longs

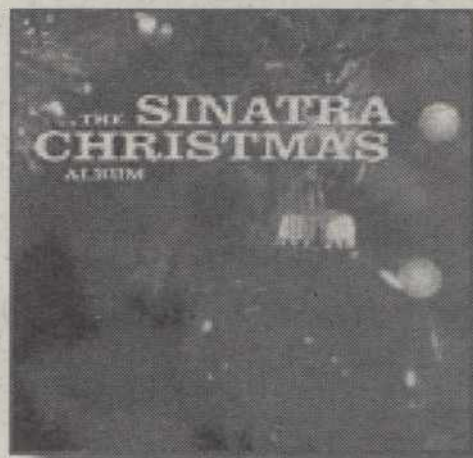
and spontaneous song include popular tunes like "Jingle Bells," "Jolly Old St. Nicholas," "Oh Christmas Tree" and "Deck the Halls." There are many opportunities to vocalize—there's even Christmas karaoke cds offered.

In the pop genre, one of my favorite's is Adam Sandler's humorous take on the holidays, "The Hanukkah Song." It seems like almost every famous, or not so famous artist has a holiday album.

"I like 'All I Want For Christmas Is You' by Mariah Carey because it puts everyone in a good mood," Aubrey Pesicka, sophomore, said.

Other great soundtracks include "Charlie Brown's Christmas," John Nilsen's

"Heaven and Nature," and the humorous "Red

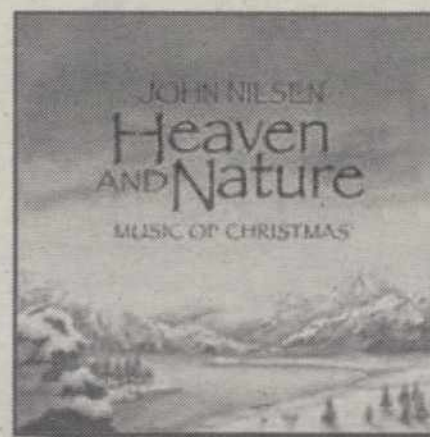


Neck's Christmas." All have different styles of music but are equally entertaining. Some include a deep piano or a melancholy tone, whereas others have guitar and vocals included. The many varieties of holiday music make it possible for everyone to have a good time.

"I just like listening to Frank Sinatra during the

holidays," Ian Winslow, sophomore, said. Frank Sinatra's collection features familiar titles such as "The Little Drummer Boy," and "Silent Night."

The majority of holiday music emits good vibes and is uplifting, but are there any songs that set



the opposite mood? When it comes to music to avoid there is one song to be aware of.

"'Wonderful Christmas

Time' by Hilary Duff is annoying because it just repeats, 'We'll be having



a wonderful Christmas time' over and over again and so I just feel green with rage when I hear that song," Morgan Winnick, sophomore, said.

To enjoy this holiday season, take the time to choose good music to enhance the festivities. From country to rap, there's something for everyone.