

# new year's resolutions

by Mary Elchert

We all have them. They creep up on us until we have nothing in front of us except them... New Year's resolutions. Everyone has their own resolution, whether vocal or unspoken, that they want to accomplish. Most of us find ourselves at 11:59 p.m. on December 31, full of optimism, believing that we, this year, will be different. This year things will change. This year the old you is gone and the new you is here.

What's your resolution? Is it to get fit? Is it to get straight A's? Is it to take risks? Jessica Carpenter, a sophomore, says "I want to do better in school" is her resolution. Junior Cody Moyer, says his New Year's resolution is "to keep rotating the reed so my clarinet is easier to play." Resolutions should be based on making yourself a better person, whether on the outside or inside. However, several weeks in, many lose faith in their resolutions and drop them immediately; soon after we are back to our same routine, unchanged.

The ritual of the New Year's resolution goes back to 153 B.C. Janus, a mythical Roman god, was placed at the head of the calendar. With two faces, Janus could look back on past events and forward to the future. He became the ancient icon for resolutions. Many Romans looked for forgiveness from their foes and also gave gifts before the beginning of each year, kind of like Christmas.

The New Year has not always begun on January 1, and it doesn't begin on that date everywhere in the world today. It begins on January 1 only for cultures that use a 365-day calendar. January 1 became the beginning of the New Year in 46 B.C., when Julius Caesar developed a calendar that would more accurately reflect the seasons than previous calendars had. Today, Caesar's calendar is still in use.

The Romans named the first month of the year after Janus. As previously stated, Janus could look both in the past and future. At midnight on December 31, the

Romans imagined Janus looking back at the old year and forward to the new. The Romans began a tradition of exchanging gifts on New Year's Eve by giving one another branches from sacred trees for good fortune. Later, nuts or coins imprinted with the god Janus became more common New Year's gifts.

After Christ was born, things changed. Christians changed New Year's Day to December 25, the birth of Jesus. Then they changed it to March 25, a holiday called the Annunciation. In the sixteenth century, Pope



CODY MOYER TELLS US HIS NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION. PHOTO: J. GROSSEN

Gregory XIII revised the Julian calendar, and the celebration of the New Year was returned to January 1, where it remains today.

New Year's is the oldest of all holidays. It was first observed in ancient Babylon about 4000 years ago. In the years around 2000 BC, Babylonians celebrated the beginning of a new year on what is now March 23, although they themselves had no written calendar. The Babylonian New Year celebration lasted for eleven days. Each day had its own specific method of celebration, but it is safe to say that modern New Year's Eve celebrations pale in comparison. Although the date for New Year's Day is not the same in every culture, it is always a time for celebration and for customs to ensure good luck in the coming year. Whatever your resolution, good luck!

# new year's trivia

by Emily Hernandez

Once a year, people get together and celebrate the ending of the year and the beginning of another. People watch the ball drop, and throw parties and confetti. Not everyone in the world celebrates it on January 1st, but we all celebrate it. So, how much do you know about the holiday? Answer these questions and be surprised that you might not be an expert.

## Multiple Choice

- Under which calendar is New Year's Day, January 1?
  - Julian Calendar
  - Gregorian Calendar
- Kwanzaa is a seven-day holiday that begins December 26 and extends through Jan. 1. What does the word mean in Swahili?
  - First fruits
  - First people
- The name January is derived from which Roman god?
  - Janus
  - Zeus
- In the United States, the coming of the New Year is celebrated by the lowering of a gigantic crystal ball. Where does this event take place?
  - Time Square
  - Chicago
- The Chinese people believe that who roams the earth on New Year's?
  - Their ancestors
  - Evil spirits
- When was the first ball lowering celebration?
  - December 31, 1942
  - December 31, 1907

## True or False

- In Spain people eat 12 grapes as the clock strikes midnight because Spain had freak weather conditions resulting in an overload of grapes, and that was the best solution to get rid of the grapes.
- The New Year in Scotland is called Hogwarts.
- In Greece children leave their shoes by the fireside on New Year's Day (also the Festival of Saint Basil in Greece) with the hope that Saint Basil, who was famous for his kindness, will come and fill their shoes with gifts.
- Bangor, Maine drops a purple beach ball decorated with Christmas lights.

Answers

1) B 2) A 3) A 4) A 5) B 6) B 7) True 8) False 9) True 10) True

# happy new year

by Jessica Marascio

Throughout the world New Year's is celebrated but not all in the same way. People have different traditions unique to each country.

## british new year

It is believed in Britain that the first male to step foot into a home during the New Year brings with them good luck. They bring useful gifts such as coal or money for the family to symbolize that they will have plenty in the year ahead. This custom is called "first footing."

## german new year

On New Year's Eve, people leave their plates from dinner that night out until after midnight. The plate would have on it a little of every food eaten by that person, and this is said to ensure a well-stocked larder. They also try to look into the future by dropping molten lead into cold water and looking at the shape it formed, such as a heart, which means a wedding that year.

## japanese new year

Oshogatsu, the Japanese New Year, is a time to be with family, and everything is closed for the day. Evil spirits are said to be lurking during this time, so a rope of straw is hung across the front of each house because this represents happiness. When the clock strikes 12 in Japan, people begin to laugh for good luck.