

'Cocoa and Cram' to help students study for finals

Hannah Blagg

Staff Writer

Cocoa and Cram will be held on Dec 12 from 3-5 p.m. in the commons.

A number of students and staff will be available to help students study for exams or work on completing final projects.

"It's an awesome way to not only learn for your finals but it also allows you to connect with the FCHS community," senior Carlynn Rockwell said. "You are going to be able to study for your finals which is a big deal, especially for freshmen. When it's your first week of finals, it's a lot of stress, but it's a good way to relieve that."

The event is free and snacks will also be provided.

Class Add/Drop period to occur Dec. 18-20

Alex Ellmer

Staff Writer

The Add/Drop period will be open from Dec. 18 through Dec. 20, and Jan. 8 through Jan. 10 in Student Services.

During this time, students can talk to counselors to make changes in their schedules for second semester.

"A student might want to come if they would like to see if they can change their electives for semester classes only," Counselor Anna Morris wrote in an email to Spilled Ink. "We can't change around year-long classes."

Though counselors will have sign-up sheets outside their offices, students will be seen on a first-come-first-served basis.

In addition, not all requests for schedule changes will be met. According to the "Schedule Repair Guidelines," changes may be made if students failed a class, accidentally enrolled in a class they already completed, did not meet prerequisites, or were placed in the wrong level.

Staff Ugly Sweater Day to take place on Dec. 14

Hannah Blagg

Staff Writer

The annual Staff Ugly Sweater Day will be on Dec. 14, and staff is encouraged to wear any ugly sweater that complies with school rules.

Counselor Kristin Flanagan is organizing the unofficial event. "Personally, I love the holidays, particularly Christmas and I think it's just fun to wear ugly sweaters," Flanagan said. "Some people wear traditional sweaters from the '60s and '70s versus some people kind of hand craft their own."

Staff members who wear ugly sweaters will gather to take a picture at 7:15 a.m. in the LTC.

Last year, there were approximately 40 participants, and staff members involved earned prizes for the best sweaters.

Intriguing past, personality bonds teacher to students

Sadie Buggle

News Editor

Although he owns shoes coated in the elements of the periodic table and seemingly hundreds of science graphic tees, the walls of his classroom give a glimpse into an intricate love for so much more, and just briefly show the adventure that is his life. Adorned with chemistry posters, taped up student artwork and large concert posters, the walls of his classroom allude to the years before Enrique Blas resided in upper L hall, teaching regular chemistry and AP Environmental Science.

In high school, Blas was what he considered an "old-school skateboard punk rocker who grew up during the real punk rock music times." Blas went as far as to join a skateboarding team and traveled competing in events.

This hobby sparked his interest in the bands he continues to listen to and support, including groups such as The Clash, The Ramones, and The Pogues.

"It's always been a part of what defines me. I was always into punk rock— not only was it what all the skateboarders listened to, but the lyrics really spoke to me," he said. "I remember sitting in the hallway of my dorm at CSU bummed out about some girl and listening to the lyrics of Joy Division. It got me through it."

After graduating from college, Blas worked at Montgomery Ward in the lawn and garden department and afterwards started a professional chemical engineering career with the Valspar corporation. In seven years, Blas had a variety of different jobs in the company, including engineer manager of up to three plants, which meant he had to travel often.

Blas became so committed to the



Science teacher Enrique Blas sits at his desk, surrounded by old records, skateboards, concert tickets, and other memorabilia. Photo by Sadie Buggle

industry that he began his own paint manufacturing business in Chile. However, after seven years of running the business, Blas made a realization.

"I liked training and working with new employees," he said. "I never got to do it much when I started my own company because it was all business stuff, like sales and collections, and those were the things that I hated. I realized that the position of a teacher kind of perfectly fit my interests and what I actually enjoyed doing."

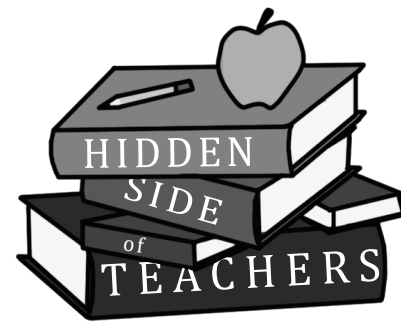
So Blas sold his plant, moved back to the states, and got his masters in education and his teaching certificate. It is now his 18th year teaching science at FCHS.

"The best part of teaching? Easy. June, July and August," he said, grinning. "But, really, I love to get the chance to meet a new batch of kids every year."

Today, Blas enjoys cycling and usually rides a couple thousand miles every summer. Blas also likes

to hunt, fish, camp, golf, mountaineer, and lift weights. He still finds a thrill in going to concerts and traveling, and still skateboards on occasion.

Maybe it's due to his connection with his high school self, his love of music, his joking and kind nature, or his passion for teaching and meeting new people, or maybe it's something else entirely. Whatever it is, there is something inside Blas that makes it easy for students to trust him and bond with him.



Only wild west zoo once found in Fort Collins

Molly Lubbers

Editor-in-Chief

A bison lumbers past, blinking its large eyes sluggishly, close enough to touch. Nearby, elk and deer chew on grass offered by guests. Even the mountain lions here act more like cats, seeming almost playful rather than aggressive predators.

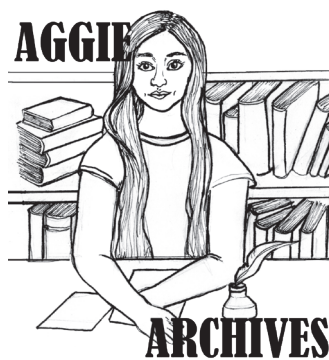
This scene couldn't happen today, but it was once reality; Fort Collins was the destination for the largest private zoo in the world and the only wild west zoo in America.

This was all thanks to one man: Frank Miller Jr.

Though it was perhaps his greatest achievement, Miller's focus wasn't always the zoo. He also started a department store, developed his father's old saloon, and more.

His father was a Danish immigrant who moved to Fort Collins in 1882. Frank Miller Sr. built the "Miller Building" which can still be seen today in Old Town. Now, Little Bird Bakeshop and Bondi Beach Bar inhabit the space, but at the time, it had both a liquor and dry goods store. His businesses thrived, but Miller Jr.'s ventures went far beyond.

Rather than stay in Fort Collins his whole life, Miller Jr. became involved in Buffalo Bill's show as a trick shooter. As he traveled across the country, he learned the art of entertainment. He bought



a stagecoach from Buffalo Bill, and he used both that and his inspiration from the experience to create his own wild west show.

In 1920, Miller Jr. returned to Fort Collins and bought Trail's End Ranch. He developed the land into a guest ranch, becoming extremely successful.

What made his ranch so unique were the 1,400 different types of animals it featured. Though some were exotic, all of his animals were domesticated to act like pets.

Miller named most of his animals, and it is said he could call most of them to him from even a quarter of a mile away, but his favorite pet was actually a bear.

The Fort Collins Courier reported in 1919 that the bear had wandered up to a picnic party that included Frank Miller, and when he started to go home, the bear caught up with his car and climbed into the back seat. Furthermore, it says Miller

took the bear to Laramie City to go on the Ferris wheel and merry go round. The bear also was taught tricks, including drinking a beer out of a bottle and "kissing" Miller Jr.

This delighted his guests. His ranch soon became known nationwide; in 1925, more than 10,000 people visited. Not only did people come from the U.S., but some of his guests came from over 25 different countries. He put on about 3,500 performances.

Unfortunately, the glamor of wild west shows and elaborate ranches like the one he had faded away with the end of the Wild West era. He lived the rest of his life in the Linden Hotel after losing his business and family. Today, the hotel is Nature's Own, and some employees have reported disturbances they attribute to his ghost.

He's become forgotten in history, even though he is one of the most notable figures of Fort Collins' past. It's these strange, quirky stories that are so fun to come across in the archives, and it is always sad to think that they are lost to so many.

But best way to honor those that are hidden by history is to remember their experiences. Miller may not still be shooting in a wild west show, or tending to his strange zoo, but we can still imagine him riding down College Avenue with a bear in his car and entertaining his guests with his antics.