

DODGING JANUARY DOLDRUMS



COURTESY OF AMY KRISTOF-BROWN

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When the thermometer hit 50 degrees three times the first week of January, who expected the bitter cold that tested tempers and school calendars the last week? The polar vortex that descended on the Midwest grounded planes and, for the first time in a decade, cancelled UI classes for more than a day. But West students found ways to cope. "Sleeping more and watching Netflix for hours on end" was senior Baraa Suleiman's solution. And although the month seemed endless—especially on Jan. 31, when the low of minus 28 degrees set a record—some students braved the cold when the weather wasn't life-threatening.

"I like playing with my dogs during snow days, because you don't have to worry about time, you have the whole day," Emma Bach '22 said.

On all but the coldest days, athletic practices provided much-needed contact with friends.

"I like to go to soccer practices and hang out with my friends," Eric Shaffer '20 said. "Otherwise, I just stay inside where it's warm." To avoid the cold, Sarah Callanan '21 said she likes to "cuddle up with my dogs and watch Netflix."

For Emily Niemiec '21, time with friends helped her survive the least favorite month. "And I just remember that it could be worse," Niemiec said. Good point. Ask anyone living in Minnesota, North Dakota or Wisconsin.

Although technology wasn't part of the original winter survival kit, plenty of students turned to their phones or to Netflix for distraction. Aaron Fennell-Chametzky '20 said he alternated playing video games with going to the gym.

And Maya Wagenknecht '21 offered a winning combination to get through January's 31 days: sleep + wear Nordic Beach + watch Netflix.