

# Hawk Happenings

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## Mr. Dusko - the man behind the scenes

Riley Mohn - 11

Mr. Dusko, the new building substitute for HAHS, started working at Hamburg at the beginning of the 2024 school year. He has two degrees: Special Education K-12 and Elementary Education. His other certifications are for Middle School Science and Computer Education. Originally, Mr. Dusko went to college for biology, and he says that he “had the spark and inkling for education, but it originally did not grow from there.” Education was a path that opened up to Mr. Dusko when he was little because his older brother went into education.

Mr. Dusko has been teaching since 2010, and his first two years were at Wilson (high school or middle?). Then, between 2012 to Thanksgiving of 2023, Mr. Dusko taught at Pine Grove. While at Pine Grove, he co-taught journalism. With the journalism class, Mr. Dusko went on a field trip to the Lincoln Performing arts center in New York, and he said that was where he found his favorite food, just a ‘good burger’ or ‘a burger that makes you want a second burger.’

During Mr. Dusko’s early education, he considered doing something musical, like joining the crew in the musical. However, instead of doing musical, Mr. Dusko ran track in grades 7 and 8 at Wilson Central High School. Mr. Dusko also got into the fine arts department in grade ten, even doing oil painting in grade 12. He assisted the drama director by helping build sets and film for a play, which was Rebel Without a Cause, and he helped with the director’s original short film, too.

As Hamburg’s stage manager, Mr. Dusko found that the best part about being the stage manager was getting to work alongside the students. He loved the creative aspect of the crew, and loved “seeing how a musical can start from absolutely nothing and end with everything is awesome.” He also likes being able to see that a musical is not a musical without all of the cast, crew, and pit being present. He said his least favorite aspect would probably be how late he and crew had started, and he wished that the set pieces and the props were completed sooner instead of during tech week.

Outside of HAHS, Mr. Dusko is a silly dad to two kids, and he says that “life is too serious, it is fun not to be serious 24/7” and “I’d rather throw in dad jokes than sit in silence.” Mr. Dusko’s advice to everyone is, “Have fun no matter what you are doing.” Plus, he absolutely loves buttered baked potatoes and any kind of potato.



## Winter concert follow up

Ana Smith - 9

The winter concert occurred on December 5, and was an event that students had been preparing for since the beginning of the school year. They had been practicing, playing, and singing for around four months to get ready for their big event.

The concert went extremely well and was a great experience for people participating in it and for those who came to watch. Many of the songs were upbeat and exciting, while some of them were softer and more calm. The music teachers and other staff worked hard to put it all together and I, as one of the students who is involved with playing an instrument, appreciate all of the hard work that they continuously put in.

Although the performance was amazing in itself, I did ask some students what we could do to improve it in any way if we could. Ninth grader Charlotte Fiscus said, “We could possibly make it shorter because sometimes it feels too long.” Another student, Rylee Strunk said, “If I could change something about the concert, it would be the order in which the ensembles perform.” Lastly, tenth grader Ellie Grim says, “I would move the concert to a later date to give each ensemble more time to practice.” I would completely agree with her because sometimes the music is not always perfect, and it would be nice to have a little bit more time to practice it.

After asking students what they would do to improve it, I asked them what their favorite part of the whole experience was. Many of them said performing and being able to do it alongside their friends.

I believe that music can bring people together, as well as make events more entertaining. When performing in a concert it is always fun when people get to sing, and play your instruments, but doing it surrounded by people they are grateful for makes it ten times better. Make sure to mark your calendar for the spring concert on May 6.



## Student Spotlight: Natalie Blantz

Victoria Snyder - 9

Natalie Blantz is a sophomore at HAHS. Her birthday is November 14, 2008. which means she is turning 16 this year! One extra curricular activity Natalie participates in outside of school is cheerleading which she has done for approximately her whole life. Her main place in cheerleading is the role of a backbase. A backbase is one of the most important spots in a stunt and is the one that makes sure the flier is safe, it is mainly their duty to catch them if they fall. Nat only started to come to Hamburg last year as a freshman because she moved with her dad from Ephrata.

Natalie’s favorite class is Military History which is taught by Mr. Haegele because she finds it intriguing. Her two favorite music artists are Frank Ocean and Zach Bryan because she finds their music very therapeutic. Some of Nat’s favorite songs are Pink Skies, Remember Everything, and Something in the Orange.

In her freetime, Natalie likes to read books. A couple of the most recent books she has read more are They Both Die in the End written by Adam Silvers and It Starts With Us written by Colleen Hoover. Natalie loves a nice helping of macaroni and cheese because after a long day it helps her relax and just have a nice snack. Natalie has been told that she is caring, thoughtful, and trustworthy by her other friends.

## College football season ending

Rylee Strunk - 9

College football season is coming to an end, but there is still one big game left, the National Championship. This year, college football did the playoffs and bowl games a bit differently than in years past. There was a 12 team playoff bracket. This allowed more teams to have a chance at making it to the championship. There were certainly some upsets as the playoffs played out. All four teams that had a bye in the first round lost in the quarter finals. With these losses, it meant that Penn State would play Notre Dame in the Capital One Orange Bowl



on December 31 in Miami, Florida. It also meant that Ohio State would play Texas in the Good-Year Cotton Bowl Classic on January 1 in Arlington, Texas.

These two games were very crucial because whoever won, would make it to the National Championship. After a very close game between Penn State and Notre Dame, the Irish did win by a field goal. The final score was 27-24. As for Ohio State and Texas, the Buckeyes did win the game by two touchdowns in the end. The final score of this game was 28-14. There was certainly some disappointment by fans of Penn State and Texas, but also excitement for those teams who won.

The National Championship will be held on January 20, in Atlanta, Georgia at Mercedes-Benz Stadium. This stadium is where the NFL team, the Atlanta Falcons play. At this game, fans will see Ohio State and Notre Dame play to win the Championship. Fans will get to see the Ohio State and Notre Dame bands play during half time. The biggest question now is who will end up winning? “I think Notre Dame is going to win, but Ohio State will be a challenge,” said Ana Smith. Ana grew up being a fan of Notre Dame. Big time Penn State fan Brady Breininger thinks differently. “Unfortunately, I think Ohio State will win because they seem to be getting hot at the right time,” said Brady. It will certainly be interesting to see who wins this big game.

## Elective choices and opinions

Kristianna Cunkle - 10

Electives are two different classes in our school that can be chosen by students every year. They are fun classes that the students get to choose based on their likes and interests, providing a break from the normally busy and demanding school day. Electives are a good way for students to have fun and explore different things while in school. From a survey, the most favorite elective among the students is publications. Students said that they enjoy being able to write about different topics and current events that interest them. Along with student favorites, there was also video communications, art history, Spanish, and drawing. For video communications, Dakota Schneider said that she enjoys the class because she is “able to be creative and have fun while also getting work done with my friends.” For art history, Kaylum Riegel said that he likes being able to learn about art, and that he is now able to recognize more art and point it out to others. For the Spanish elective, one student said that they “like learning new things, and it is an overall beautiful language.” For drawing, Kaitlyn Gallagher said that she likes being able to take a break from the day and just draw for a period.

One student said that if they could change something from one of their classes, they would change the publications assignments because “we do the same ones every single year.” While doing the same assignments might seem because you are used to them, it can be boring to some when having to redo the same exact thing.

The students were also asked what other electives they would like to see implemented into our school. Dakota Schneider said that she would really like to see a public speaking class, because it would provide a way to become more confident in speaking in front of large crowds of people.



“It would also just really help with our futures overall,” she said. Another student, Lilly Gibson, said that she would love a photography class in the high school. There are a lot of students in our school that enjoy photography, and it would be a good and most likely popular elective. She also said that she would like to see a speech and drama class, because she “took one in middle school and absolutely loved it.” Another student said that they would really like to see a class, something almost like an “intro to adulthood.” Although it wouldn’t necessarily be the most fun, it would definitely help students prepare for the future, teaching them how to pay taxes and loans, even things such as making doctor appointments or setting up an air conditioner. Student Kaitlyn Gallagher said that she would like to see a fashion class elective. She said that the class wouldn’t just be about fashion, but would also include a “deep dive into things like fast fashion and how fashion boosts the economy.”

While students might enjoy their current electives, there is always room to add some more in favor of the students. It may cost money and time, but students would definitely have a good time and like to see them in the school if they were to ever be implemented.

## Student Spotlight

Brooklyn Scheffler - 9



Ashley Santiago is a freshman in Hamburg Area High School. She is 15 and her birthday is November 17, 2009. Some things she likes to do in her freetime are hanging out with friends, sleeping, playing Roblox, listening to music and playing Block Blast. Some hobbies that she does are playing in jazz band with her saxophone. She has been playing for four years. She does track and runs daily.

“I want to be a cosmetologist when I get older because I have a passion for doing people’s hair and makeup,” she says. She also would like to go to college if she does not get into BCTC school for cosmetology.

She loves all types of music but her favorite music is R&B and her favorite thing to do is to listen to music. She has six dogs: three French bulldogs - Anthena, Nova and Paris, a bully named Black Widow and two Yorkies Kia and Lexi. Her family consists of her dad, mom and older brother and is more close with her mom than anyone.

Her favorite class is history because she likes to learn about what the world once was, how the world has changed, and became how it is now.



# Snow days: student opinions

Lilly Gibson - 10

Snow days are a very common occurrence in the northern hemisphere. Dating back as far as the 1940's, snow days have been something that children and teens look forward to every winter. Nowadays though, they have become more rare in occurrence. Two reasons for this are because of the lack of heavy snow but also the option for virtual classes. On Monday, January 6 the whole school district of Hamburg had a virtual learning day. This means that students went to all their classes via zoom and all of the classes were shortened by nearly 15-20 minutes.

Jordan, a sophomore, says that she prefers virtual learning days. She said "I like virtual snow days a lot more than regular snow days. I find them easier and more relaxing as I don't really enjoy being in the building," and stated how getting up in the morning can be taxing and a bit annoying everyday. Virtual days allow students to get up later and do not force them to get ready or leave the house to get a ride, catch the bus, or walk to school. Jordan also said, "I do appreciate regular snow days, but I hate having to make up the work. I think my workload is enough as is, and adding an extra day's worth stresses me out even more that I already am," and commenting that it is easier for her to complete work at home.

A pro of having virtual learning days is that summer vacation is longer because days are not taken out to make-up the missed snow days. If too many snow days occur, days from Easter vacation as well as other holidays like Martin Luther King Jr. day may be used instead, including summer vacation. Many teens in high school have said they enjoy this because that gives them more time to hangout with friends and family. Others though have disagreed, saying that virtual days were an important part of their childhood. Nowadays, they feel like they are missing out on the experience, especially those with younger siblings who have only known virtual learning days. In both circumstances, students have the nice opportunity to relax at home instead of going into the building.

# HAHS carols for HASD

Riley Mohn - 11

Among all the other extracurriculars that are tied to Concert Band, such as Jazz Band, Marching Band, and Flute Choir, Caroling Band is the most vital for recruitment and entertainment. Caroling Band is where a group of varying sizes every year gets to go to the elementary schools, middle school, and high school, and just play Christmas music.

Some students of Caroling Band even joined Concert Band in the first place because of the Caroling Band. Being in the Caroling Band is not just fun entertainment, but also putting oneself out there to inspire others in the fine arts.

Mackenzie Hoover, a Junior who plays the Sousaphone, or the big tuba, in Caroling Band, joined to be an inspiration for kids. Greta Fink, a freshman who plays the baritone saxophone, or the lowest and largest saxophone, joined just because she wanted to and she said, "I knew I would like it." Marlena Narducci, another Junior who plays the bass drum, joined the Caroling Band because, "I like Christmas music and I like seeing people smile and light up."

With being in Caroling Band, one not only gets to miss the school day before break, but they also get to inspire kids, see their past teachers, have a pizza party, and watch a Christmas movie. This year, though, some of the Caroling Band even played a bit of pep-band music for the pep-rally.

Students at HAHS like celebrating Christmas through music and songs. Mackenzie Hoover says that her favorite song is Adele's "Fidelity", or "O Come All Ye Faithful", and her favorite movie is The Muppets Christmas Carol. Greta Fink says "I like the song Grinch, and the movie National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation." Marlena Narducci says that her favorite Christmas song is "Christmas Wrapping" sung by the Waitresses, and the claymation movie Santa Claus is Comin' to Town.

# How one student built their dream car collection

Joshua Castro - 11

Zachary Spatz, nicknamed Zach, is a junior at HAHS whose long-time interest in vehicles fostered his hobby of collecting cars and auto parts. When he was younger, he was first drawn to vehicles and liked how they were represented in media and merchandise like Fast and Furious and Hot Wheels, respectively. While he collected miniature cars at first, his hobby developed further in his teenage years when he was eager to drive. Zach learned quickly and soon began a car collection, growing it in a short time.

Zach currently owns eight cars which he displays in his driveway. He is not concerned with damaging them as he believes he is a responsible driver with 3 years of driving experience. He maintains them through the occasional wash and drives them frequently, sometimes bringing friends or family. Moreover, he enjoys playing music of various genres in his car, like pop and country. However, Zach does not trust anyone else driving his car, even if they are close, to avoid unnecessary damage.

It might be difficult to imagine a high schooler owning eight vehicles, more than four times the national average according to Consumer Shield. However, Zach funds his expensive hobby by working at a car wash and as a mechanic. Despite his heavy workload, he enjoys both positions as he gets to work with something he loves. Also, he often buys cars at a low price to fix them and sell them for financial gain. Recently, he repaired a 2002 Ford Focus, sold it, and profited from the sale.

If Zach had kept every car he owned, he would have 12 compared to the eight parked in his driveway. He currently owns a 2011 Subaru Impreza, a 1989 Honda Civic, a 1999 Dodge Neon, and a 2008 Ford Focus, and his favorite is the Subaru because he says it is his most reliable and fun car to drive. "It's my dream car," explained Zach. As such, he drives it all the time and washes it once a week.

Zach's dedication and love of cars has helped him build his collection quickly, and he never plans to stop growing his collection. Moreover, he is happy with his lifestyle but is always looking to improve. His hard work for his interest shows how a strong focus can help a person achieve their goals without delay and increase one's life satisfaction.

For more information about car ownership statistics, visit: <https://www.consumershield.com/articles/average-cars-per-household>

# Students make New Year's resolutions

Lydia Fultz - 10

New Year's Resolutions are goals that individuals make at the beginning of the year in order to push themselves to achieve things. People think of the new year as a fresh start and a way to achieve things they may otherwise have not been motivated to achieve. While people have a wide variety of New Year's resolutions that they set out to achieve, not everyone always ends up achieving all of them. New Year's resolutions can sometimes be overwhelming to jump into all at once, but it certainly may be the best way for certain individuals to achieve their goals.

Sophomore Liz Carroll says that she plans on running more in order to make big improvements for the Cross Country season. She also is excited to start driving and is excited to get her license. She also would like to take the ASVAB and pass with a high score.

Sophomore Hunter Jennings would also like to improve his running, mostly in track, and he too wants to get his license. He also says he just wants to be a better person, he states, "I would like to be a better homospian."

It seems that for those who are finally getting old enough, driving tends to be a New Year's resolution for them. Another big resolution that people tend to have all around is to exercise or become better at one's sport. This seems to be one of the most seen and biggest New Year's resolutions across the board. Although New Year's may be a great time to set goals to achieve, it is also important to keep in mind that setting and achieving goals can happen at any point throughout the year and does not have to wait for the next year to come around.



# Lydia Fultz's birthday falls on major day

Elizabeth Carroll - 10

A rather important day during the month of January this year that is not talked about a whole lot is Inauguration Day. This occurs every four years after an election in the United States on January 20, or 21 if January 20 falls on a Sunday when the president and vice president are sworn in and take office.

There is also another holiday that falls on January 20, which is known as Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The difference between these two events is that Inauguration Day has a set date, and Martin Luther King Jr. Day only will take place on the

third Monday in January. Because of this, students will have off on January 20, since MLK Day is recognized as a federal holiday to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his speeches that fought for equality and racial justice in the 1900's.

Not only do these things take place on January 20, but it is also the same day as the birthday of sophomore Lydia Fultz. She says that it is nice that the school has off on MLK Day, because she can spend her birthday relaxing. There is not much too crazy about her birthday, however she happily says, "I'm just excited to drive." These two events will not affect her birthday happiness in any way.

Even though these three things are very important, they all hold different significance to different people. No matter which one is more important to one person than another, it is still important to recognize them despite it affecting one person, a very large group of people, or a whole country. Everyone has their own views about things, and it should be respected as such.

For more information about these two important events visit: <https://www.usa.gov/inauguration>

# Student Spotlight: Alyssa Brensinger

Madison Redding - 12

Alyssa Brensinger is a senior at Hamburg Area High School, she has been attending Hamburg since kindergarten. Around school, Alyssa is known for her academics. Alyssa takes multiple classes including AP Government, AP Environmental, AP Literature, and honors pre-calc. Her favorite class is for sure AP Environmental as she enjoys doing the labs. She is also a part of the many clubs Hamburg has some of them being Mu Alpha Theta and she is the treasurer of the Jewelry Making Club.

After High school, Alyssa plans to attend college where she will major in history with a possible minor in political science. After college, she might attend law school. She finds these topics very interesting and thinks they would be fun to study.

Out of school, Alyssa loves to hang out with her girlfriend and friends, as well as spend time with her dog Diogee. She has a job at a local pizza shop Louee's. Alyssa explained, "I enjoy working there a lot." Alyssa has worked there since she was 15.

Alyssa is very excited to graduate high school this coming year. She noted that "I am very excited to leave Hamburg." As Alyssa has been here her whole life and would like to experience new opportunities and different types of life. Her favorite thing so far about her senior year is the fact she is graduating in exactly six months. Alyssa explained that her biggest advice to the underclassman is, "Take APUSH. It was my favorite class and Mr. Kline is a great teacher."



# Students opinions on New Year performance

Alaena Cox - 10

To celebrate 2025, New York City held the annual ball drop and invited artists to perform their songs for the large crowd. Those artists were Fresh, Ernest, HARDY, Laufey, Natasha Bedingfield, T-Pain and many more. The crowd seemed to love it and so did students at Hamburg Area High School. Chase Brodhead, a sophomore, reported, "I enjoyed the wide variety of artists so everybody could enjoy a genre of music."

Mark Amber is a female R&B performer who showed off her songs "Belong Together" and "Good to be". Many of the students were unaware of her before her performance but grew fond of her work. A more popular singer, Carrie Underwood performs some of her hit songs such as "Before he Cheats" and "Church Bells". Her show gathered a ton of cheers from the crowd and the students, since a few of them are big fans.

It was calculated that about 22.2 million viewers tuned into ABC's New Year special on New Year's Eve to watch their favorite singers perform. The artists definitely made time fly much faster for those outside in New York during the cold weather.

Viewers who want good spots for the ball drop and artists rush to Times Square way earlier than when the ball drop is meant to commence because of the large crowd they must beat to get there. At 3 pm everybody was able to travel to their desired location but many people arrived sooner to make sure they got the spot. They wait out there for hours and even some get the privilege of showing up on the news.

# HAHS New Years Celebration

Kaylea Detweiler

As the new 2025 rolls around quickly, I asked how HAHS students spent their New Year's Eve. Most may have stayed until midnight to watch the ball drop, others could have just gone to bed. A fellow student Landon Poullos says, "I ate, slept, ooh and I had derealization." Derealization could be a feeling in the spirit of seeing one another from outside the body. This is normal when an occurring new year has arrived because soon we will realize life is moving faster than usual. I have realized the last two years of high school flew by me. Furthermore Dakota Schneider says she "hung out with boyf," her boyfriend.

I spent my New Year's driving around with my best friend who lives an hour away and watching the ball drop with her, since most holidays she tries her best to come to Hamburg. Bella Bailey says, "I had an amazing new year with my best friend to celebrate a new beginning and to celebrate our 13th years of friendship."

Overall HAHS and outsiders enjoyed their New Year and are excited to finish the rest of the school year off strong. The New Year is a time of joy, hope, and reflection, celebrated by people worldwide in all different ways.

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