

HAPPENINGS

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HASD Performs Elf the Musical

Cora Rodriguez - 11

As the Christmas season approaches, the Music department of Hamburg Area High School hosted its musical of the year, Elf. This musical had 18 amazing high school performers, including many middle school students.

A description of the show is described by the Music Theatre International as "Buddy, a young orphan, mistakenly crawls into Santa's bag of gifts and is transported to the North Pole. The would-be elf is raised, unaware that he is actually a human until his enormous size and poor toy-making abilities cause him to face the truth. With Santa's permission, Buddy embarks on a journey to New York City to find his birth father and discover his true identity. Faced with the harsh realities that his father is on the naughty list and his half-brother doesn't even believe in Santa, Buddy is determined to win over his new family and help New York remember the true meaning of Christmas."

The cast of this school's musical leads consisted of Travis Noecker (Buddy), Arianna Barata (Jovie), Kristen Martiez (Emily), David Behm (Walter), and Clayton Lash (Michael). Other high school students were Cora Rodriguez (Manager), Ali Reed (Santa), Selena Henne (Deb), Tiana Trabosh (Ms. Greenway/Saleswoman), Ian Fink (Chadwick), Isha Kaur (Miss Matthews/Security Guard 1/Fake Santa), Chevelle Pinter (Charlie), Nishi Vesuwala (Fake Santa), Kristen Buchert (Mrs. Claus), Cadence Jalbert (Tiara/Charlotte), Jaden McAuliffe (Security Guard 2/Fake Santa), and the Ensemble included Hannah Ortiz and Braelyn Rubright. The only difference to the cast presented here than what people saw in the show was the absence of Cadence Jalbert because of complications with quarantining but she was involved up until a week till the opening show.

Mr. Barry Driesbach, the lead director, enjoyed choosing this magical musical. However, "One of the main reasons for choosing "ELF" was the music. Although I really liked the story, after listening to all of the music it just made the decision to do this show that much easier." He loved the musical the more and more he worked with it, but "My favorite scene is always the scene that leads up to the curtain call because I can always see the sense of accomplishment on everyone's faces knowing that 'YES, WE REALLY DID THIS!'" Scenes in musicals are important, nevertheless, music builds the foundation of the story and grows on people's hearts.

Mrs. Jackson's allusion to this phenomenon is, "The music for ELF has definitely grown on me. I like it much more now than in August. I like the song "In the Way" because it is peppy and tells the audience what it is really like working for Walter, who does NOT like Christmas. It is sung by Deb, Walter, Emily, Michael, and the office employees."

The leads of the show were Travis Noecker and Arianna Barata. Arianna expresses her struggles and stress from auditioning for the role. "I wanted Jovie because I knew she would be such a fun role to play. Who wouldn't want to play a mean character? It's so fun. She also has a great song that I'm so happy I get to sing!" Every actor in the musical had a different interpretation and acted in different ways. Arianna Barata shared, "My version of Jovie (or how I interpret her) is just a girl who is over everything. She is also just kind of mean. She is just annoyed and bored with Christmas and her life in general but definitely has a fun side. She just needs something (or someone) to help her find it."

Hamburg Area High School's Elf the Musical was a blast for everyone involved and increased the Christmas spirit around the school. Every single person involved in the musical, including Cast, Crew, Pit, and Lights/Sound, did an amazing job!

Students discuss their end of the year thoughts of 2021

Grace Cromyak - 9

This year was concerning for some people, such as students wondering if they will have in-person learning or virtual learning, citizens wondering if they will ever be able to go out in public to get personal needs, families wondering if they will be able to spend time with each other on certain holidays and even going on vacations together as well. This year was very challenging for all of us. Especially the different versions of COVID-19 that were infecting everyone around us. Hopefully next year will make a big difference for all of us. We need it for all the troubles that we went through. We need a second chance.

The thoughts I have for this year in 2021 were, it was a great year overall but I feel as though it could be better. I went through my ups and downs dealing with personal stuff and also making a big change into going into high school. I think that this year was great and many good things have happened. This is one year I will be able to remember. Entering high school I have gained a lot of friends. I have expanded my opportunity into being a bigger person such as talking, being more verbose, and being more active such as leading my way into golf, this sport I particularly never thought I would play in my entire life. I always thought it was such a boring sport, but it turns out that it is actually a really great experience. Everything was so new to me, I did not really want to learn anything and I had no faith in myself, but I pushed myself through and I ended up loving it rather than hating it.

Others may have different experiences in the year 2021, such as getting a new job, starting a program, starting a club, playing an instrument, or even a particular class.

Freshman Vincent Heckman said, "I thought 2021 was kind of a hectic year but not as bad as 2020. Reasons are some things like the presidency or national world problems. I don't think much of it changed me, I think it had an effect on everyone such as getting to see their family and friends more and more stores and shops are also opening up."

Mrs. Fink quoted, "The biggest challenges of this year in 2021 were coming to work and having to wear a mask. Another challenging part was dealing with certain students and their mental issues since certain problems might occur in school or at their home."



Girls wrestle at Hamburg

Lonasia Tolbert - 11

This year starts the first season of girls wrestling at Hamburg Area High School. Their season officially started on November 19, 2021. Athletic director Mr. Menapace commented that in the past years at Hamburg Area High School there have been girls that joined the boys wrestling team so why not have a girls wrestling team. In the area teams like Governor Mifflin and Brandywine Heights have a girls wrestling team.

Shannon Govern is especially excited for this season. She shared, "I think that wrestling can bring certain team bonds that other sports lack, and that's probably my favorite part about it. The bonds that I made this pre-season with my teammates are something I will remember for the rest of my life." Unfortunately this school year Hamburg only has three girl wrestlers. Shannon shared if you are thinking of joining girls wrestling next year just come out once and check it out.

Shannon attended the Hamburg open mats this past November and reported seeing many improvements in her form when doing squats, pushups, and even her pull-ups had been refined in only one month. Shannon's basic understanding of a correct stance, take-down, and finishing move has grown exponentially as she continued going to Hamburg's open mats. Wrestling was something Shannon always wanted to do, "I remember being at my older brothers' wrestling matches and wishing I could wrestle because I didn't know that girls could. I jumped on the chance of going to an all-girls open mat last year and haven't looked back since," she said. Shannon is very excited to see what the future holds for her teammates and herself this season.



Meet Mr. Laughlin

Hannah Kristiniak - 9

Mr. Laughlin teaches Integrated science and chemistry at Hamburg Area High School and likes Hamburg very much. After graduating from Blue Mountain High School, he wanted to be in a rock and roll band. He attended West Chester, Wilkes University, and Lebanon Valley College and is certified to teach chemistry, science, technology and hopes to be certified in computer science. Mr. Laughlin changed his major in college many times and discovered that he really enjoyed chemistry and then followed the education path to become a high school teacher.

After being a substitute at Boyertown Area High School, he came to HAHS because he was invited to and positions had opened up. He started October 2019.

Some of Mr. Laughlin's hobbies include music, growing Christmas trees, working on cars, and anything with computers and technology. Mr. Laughlin plays in a rock and roll band in his spare time and he can play guitar, keyboard, and bass. He also enjoys growing Christmas trees in the field next to his house. Mr. Laughlin enjoys working on cars, especially Jeeps, and he is always open to learning more about technology.

This is the second year that Mr. Calderone has worked with Mr. Laughlin and they work together in the fourth and seventh period of the school day. Mr. Calderone says, "He is the best! I was so happy when he joined our faculty here at Hamburg. He is a fantastic addition to the Science Department." Mr. Calderone's favorite thing about Mr. Laughlin is that he enjoys seeing him make learning science fun for the students and says that all the lessons that Mr. Laughlin's plans are top notch. Something outside of school that Mr. Calderone enjoys talking about Mr. Laughlin is watching him perform his favorite Billy Joel songs.



A look at Mitski and upcoming Laurel Hell

Mia Kalbach - 11



Mitski Francis Laycock, more commonly known as Mitski, is a 31 year old Japanese-American indie rock singer based in New York City. She recently became widely recognizable through her songs making waves on Tiktok over the past two years, most notably "Nobody," "Washing Machine Heart," and "Me and My Husband." However, her history and depth as a musician goes far beyond her top hits. From her debut album *Lush* in 2012 all the way up to *Be the Cowboy* in 2018, Mitski's music is linked under a common thread of heavy topics including her struggles assimilating into American society as a biracial Japanese immigrant, the expectations and objectification of women, isolation, self-destruction, co-dependent relationships, dehumanization of workers, depression, and general life dissatisfaction.

Mitski often moved around in her youth, developing feelings of alienation early on. From Japan, to the Czech Republic, Malaysia, Congo, Turkey, Alabama, and Virginia, she constantly adopted new personas that never really were the real her. She struggled a lot as a teenager, describing angrily how she "had so much intelligence and energy and drive" but instead of using that passion to study more or change the world as she put it, she "directed all that fire inward, and burnt [herself] up." "Everything was so hard. I just wanted to be dead. I didn't have anything I was good at, because I didn't know I could make music yet." After a night of partying, which she did a lot after graduating high school a semester early with nothing to do, she experienced a creative shift. "I had a keyboard in my room, and I just sat down and started writing this song for the first time. And I thought, this is something I can do? That's amazing."

However, fame and the industry presumably became a drain. In 2019 Mitski deleted all social media, removing herself from the public eye and taking an indefinite break from music. Fans were left hanging for three years with no real indication towards the end of the hiatus, at least, until she made her surprise return in October 2021 with her single "Working for the Knife." She used this song as an outlet to express her complicated feelings towards her career. "It's about going from being a kid with a dream, to a grown up with a job. [...] And feeling somewhere along the way you got left behind. It's being confronted with a world that doesn't recognize your humanity, and seeing no way out of it." Later in November she released another single, "The Only Heartbreaker," which was accompanied by the exciting announcement of her new album *Laurel Hell* that will be released on February 4, 2022. Alongside this, Mitski will take back to the stage and embark on a tour throughout North America and Europe starting on February 17th.

Marvel's The Eternals

Genevieve Arena - 9



The newest Marvel movie *The Eternals* was released November 5, 2021, with extremely mixed reviews. While some fans enjoyed the movie, and simply accepted the fact that the characters were there throughout the entire Marvel timeline and just supposed to avoid human conflict, others were not so easily convinced. Additionally the heroes are constantly discussing their backstories between a failed romance that lasted five thousand years, and a medical condition that could potentially require a memory wiping procedure. Despite the two and a half hour run time, that is about as deep as the viewers get into those details. Even the main characters' powers themselves were not that particularly interesting. One can heal, another can turn stone into other elements. The main love interest's only powers are to fly and shoot laser beams. At one point they even call this character Superman, which drives home the point that *Eternals* lacks its own identity. Finally fans were extremely excited, when the cast list was looked up Harry Styles is the first person to pop up, however, he was not even in the movie. He only appeared for a few minutes in the post credits scene. Freshman students have called this movie "a letdown" and "definitely not the best Marvel movie". In conclusion, *The Eternals* is by far one of the worst reviewed movies Marvel has released.

The Titanic

Olivia Kocher - 9



The *Titanic* was a ship that sailed on April 10, 1912 and sank on April 15, 1912 at 2:20 A.M, killing 1,500 people out of the 2,240 passengers that were on board. The *Titanic* sank by hitting a huge iceberg and took 2 hours and 40 minutes to completely sink under. On December 19, 1997, this tragic accident was made into a 3 hour and 14 minute movie.

The *Titanic* film starts out with Brock Lovett (Bill Paxton) and his team of treasure hunters trying to find the heart of the ocean, which is a heart shaped blue diamond necklace. As they are trying to find the heart of the ocean, they find a safe with a bunch of soaking wet papers. Among these papers they find a drawing of a woman wearing the heart of the ocean, later they get a phone call from a 101 year old woman named Rose Calvert (Gloria Stuart), claiming to be the woman in the drawing.

Brock Lovett decides to bring Rose to them, hoping she can tell them where the heart of the ocean is. When Rose arrives she begins to tell them her entire story from when she boarded the *Titanic*, when it sank, and what happened after. She explains that the person who drew the picture was a man named Jack Dawson (Leonardo DiCaprio). She retells the story of how when she was young and still went by Rose DeWitt Bukater (Kate Winslet) she met and fell in love with Jack Dawson. She told them everything that happened from the moment the *Titanic* sailed to the very end when the survivors were saved.

The romance, as well as, the raw sadness of this event is one of the reasons why this film is so popular. Throughout the years *The Titanic* movie has become one of the most popular and well known movies, winning 11 Academy Awards. When the movie first came out it was the number one movie in the U.S for 15 weeks. Seeing as the film was made in 1997, they did very well at making the event look realistic. The film even has some actors that portray real people that were on the *Titanic* the day it sank, such as, Captain Edward John Smith, Margaret "Molly" Brown, John Jacob Astor IV, and Charles Joughin. It has been 24 years since the *Titanic* movie came out but people still enjoy watching it today.

For example, Freshman Student Ashley Moyer says "Personally I love the *Titanic* Movie, and it's actually my favorite movie."

Music helps the brain

Skylynn Binder - 9

Music is a part of our everyday lives and can bring people together. It is found in every culture and every language. Now, advances in neuroscience can help us better understand how exactly music affects our brains. Neuromusicology is a new field in neuroscience that explores how the nervous system reacts to music. Deane Alban's study on how music affects the brain found that music affects every single part of the brain. It can improve one's emotional state and all aspects of life.

Scientists have been able to prove that listening to upbeat music can help improve emotions. The effects of music lower the stress hormone cortisol and can help you feel more in control of your life and powerful. Similarly, sad music has its benefits as well. It can increase self awareness and help heal emotionally when going through a difficult time in life. Listening to music can also boost brain chemicals by stimulating their formation which also increases dopamine levels in the brain. Dopamine helps us focus, find things interesting, and helps us experience pleasure.

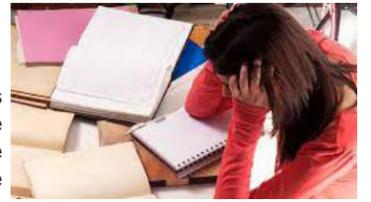
"Usually when I'm doing homework I'll listen to music. It helps me focus" says Kaanja Martz. Music can improve creativity and productivity, as well as lower stress levels. When people get to pick the music they want to listen to while working, it can improve their work ethic. Music is helpful to the brain in many ways, and it serves just as many purposes.



How breaks affect student's motivation

Kaitlyn Barry - 12

As Christmas break rapidly approaches, students are getting more and more ansty. While some are able to take it easy during their holiday breaks, some students are still faced with work and projects to be completed over the break. Many students report feeling much less motivated during the break and for a period of time after. Students can often come back from breaks feeling disengaged and unproductive, with teachers having to find ways to regain their students' attention for the long stretch before spring break. Aaliyah Stump and Tatiana Short both noted feeling a lack of motivation to either complete, or even put their all into assignments that they are given over break. They also both noted a lack of focus in the following days after returning from break. Despite these setbacks, breaks are critical to a student's overall mental health, especially as the short time before becomes extremely busy and stressful.



The best advice for teachers is to wrap up any large unit or project before breaks. This way, less time is spent reviewing after the break, and students and teachers experience less stress throughout the break, knowing what is waiting for them back at school. Another piece of advice is to ease students back into learning, rather than jumping into new material right off the bat. Though breaks should leave students feeling recharged, it is unlikely that every student will feel ready to jump back in within the first few days.

With this advice, the build up to break and the return can be much easier for students and teachers alike, while everyone is able to enjoy a fulfilling Christmas break.

The Santa Clause' review

Hannah Kristiniak - 9

The title is not a typo and there are two ways to spell the name of the person who brings Christmas cheer. The reason the movie 'The Santa Clause' is spelled differently than the normal spelling of Santa Claus is because of the clauses that he has to follow in the movie. This movie came out in the year 1994 and is a Christmas movie.

This movie takes place in Lakeside, Illinois in the year 1989. The main characters are Scott Calvin, Charlie Calvin, Neil Miller, and Laura Miller. Scott and Laura are the divorced parents to Charlie and Scott is a no fun businessman. Charlie favors his mom and stepdad Neil over his dad Scott. When Charlie is spending the night at his dad's house, Santa lands on the roof, falls off from being startled by Scott, and disappears leaving behind his outfit, sleigh, and reindeer. Scott pulls a card out of Santa's pocket that said, "If something should happen to me, put on my suit. The reindeer will know what to do." Charlie gets really excited even though Scott does not seem amused. After some convincing from Charlie, Scott puts on the coat and something magical happens.

This movie is directed by John Pasquin. Tim Allen plays Scott Calvin, Eric Lloyd plays Charlie Calvin, Edward Ernest "Judge" Reinhold plays Neil Miller, and Wendy Crewson plays Laura Miller. I think all the actors played their characters very well. They all made the whole movie very believable and the acting seemed so real.

My favorite scene in the movie is when Scott and Charlie show up at Santa's workshop in the North pole and Scott is confused, but Charlie is really excited. Overall I really like the creativity in this movie. There are many scenes in this movie where special effects are needed. For example in the beginning of the movie when Santa falls off the roof they use smoke and edit the film to make santa disappear but not his outfit in the snow.

A lesson I learned is that family is important. I think watchers of this movie would also think this too because Scott does not pay much attention to his son Charlie until he starts to spend time with him and get to know him and learn the importance of family.

I would recommend this movie to kids and people who like magical Christmas movies. 'The Santa Clause' is rated PG. My final opinion on this movie is that it is overall a good movie. I give this movie five out of five stars.

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