

THE SPOTLIGHT

AMBRIDGE AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL

• “What’s in the spotlight?”

• DECEMBER 2024-1st issue

AAMS Newspaper RETURNS!

“What’s in the spotlight?”

Soon, this saying will be heard around the Ambridge Area Middle School. Welcome to the first issue of the 2024-2025 Ambridge Area Middle School newspaper, *The Spotlight*.

The school newspaper was always a staple at the Ambridge Area Junior High...yes, you read that correctly...we used to only have grades 7 and 8 until 2017. With the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year, our building became a middle school to hold grades 6-8.

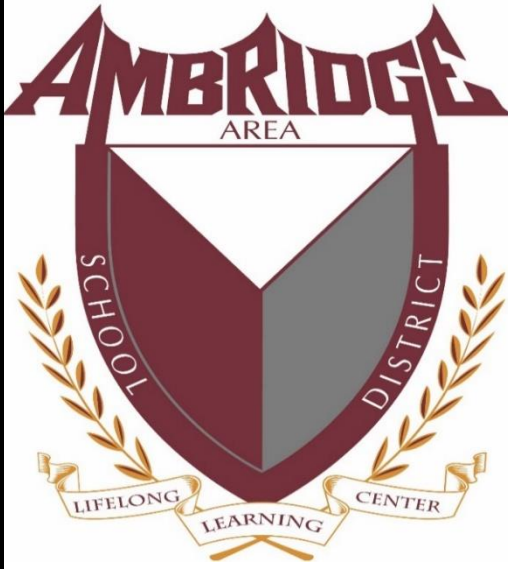
With National Junior Honor Society members taking the lead, the newspaper staff has been working hard to report on the most important and interesting stories around our middle school and surrounding communities.

The Spotlight will be distributed throughout the school year. Mrs. Braund, the newspaper advisor, is always searching for stories to give to the newspaper staff, so if anyone in the middle school or the community has a story to be told, please let our staff know.

We look forward to bringing the news to you! In this sneak peek issue, get to know the newspaper staff and what to expect in the future, so do you know “What’s in the spotlight?”



2024-2025 newspaper staff
(not all pictured)



Red Ribbon Week-Door Decorating

By: Emma Pinchot & Kylie O’Lare

The Ambridge Area Middle School Student Council hosted a door decorating contest to support Red Ribbon Week this October. Students were allowed to help teachers decorate their doors using any art supplies they needed. The doors were creative and unique, showing off all the hard work that was put into them. The doors were terrific and brought awareness to drugs and how they influence your health.

After judging, the Student Council decided on Ms. Sinatra’s *Beetlejuice* themed door. Her door was fun and well done, with the quote “Eat bugs, not Drugs”.

Overall, the contest was a fun activity to raise awareness about the dangers of drugs and bring students together.

Congratulations to Ms. Sinatra and all the students and teachers who joined in on the door decorating contest.



Hurricane Season

by: Rosella DeMuth

Could you imagine your house being destroyed by a wave at any given moment? When living in Florida, your chance of this is high.

This year Florida got hit by three hurricanes. The hurricane that caused the most damage was hurricane Helene. Helene made landfall in Florida as a monstrous Category 4 hurricane on September 26, 2024. Helene hit Florida, with 140 mph winds before roaring through Georgia as a strong tropical storm. Although, living in Florida could be fun with going to the beach and hanging by the pool, there could be a hurricane at any time.

The storm brought 140 mph winds in one of the largest wind fields to ever hit the southeast, rain, storm surges, flooding, and tornadic activity. Helene caused at least \$53 billion in damage. Luckily, people from all over the United States have donated money to repair the damage that this hurricane caused. There were also more bad hurricanes in 2024, but by far hurricane Helene was the most powerful!

Bridger P.R.I.D.E.

by: Mrs. Braund

At the middle school, the saying goes, “Show your Bridger Pride!” So, what does “P.R.I.D.E.” stand for?

- Productivity
- Respect
- Integrity
- Determination
- Excellence

Our positive behavior supports rewards program is already in full-swing this year thanks to staff and students. Students can earn stamps for exhibiting behavior that follows our school rules. Additionally, students can receive stamps for going “above and beyond” throughout the school day. Stamps can be used in the school PRIDE shop and turned in to receive a reward day at the end of each nine weeks.

Monthly, the staff is asked to nominate one student who demonstrates the pride attribute of the month. September was productivity, October was respect, and November was integrity. Congratulations to all past winners.

December is determination, so make sure you are being your best self and are *determined* to be successful! Remember Ambridge Middle School...show your PRIDE!

2024 Presidential Election Turnout

By Tyler Wolf and AJ Manganello

The 2024 presidential election on November 5th, ended with Donald J. Trump winning the election. Some of the statistics are: The electoral were 312-226 with republican winning. Total votes were 77,237,942 republican votes and 74,946,837 democratic votes.

President Elect Trump won 30/50 states which is more than half. Also, this year there was a remarkably high number of voters compared to previous years.



“Wickedly” Good

by: Sidney Kratochvil & Ella Stimmel

Let’s talk about the Wicked movie. The actors they chose for it we’re amazing but..... Who wants to wait a whole year to watch Part 2. If you didn’t know, the actors sing live and did not pre-record so that is an awesome detail about the movie and just shows how good their voices are. Some people were saying that the middle part of the movie could’ve been skipped, and it could’ve been shorter.

The music in the movie was very upbeat and did not bore you at all. Some people say Ariana Grande stole the show, but we think the flying monkeys did. The choreography was very thought through and really went along with the music, beats, and rhythm.

Some facts about the movie.

1. They started filming the movie in 2021.
2. Two of the stars that were in the original Wicked Broadway show had parts in the movie.
3. Glinda is Ariana Grande’s dream role since she was a kid. We think everyone is excited for Wicked part two, and it cannot come fast enough!



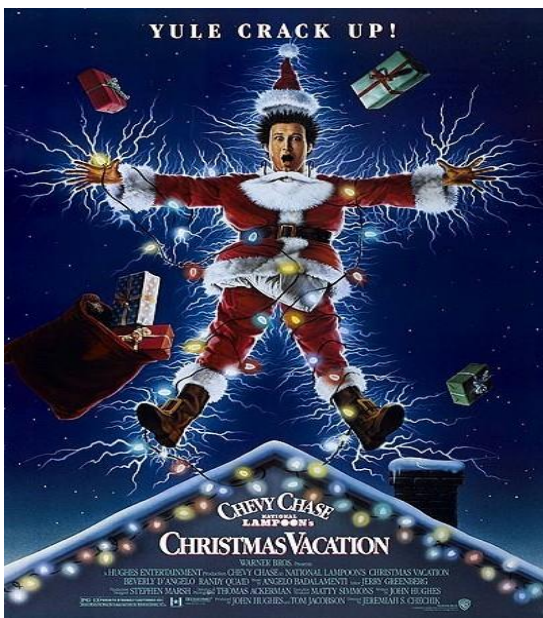
Christmas Vacation

by: Candise Russin

National Lampoons Christmas Vacation is a timeless holiday comedy that perfectly captures the chaos, humor, and heartwarming moments of the season. Chevy Chase shines as Clark Griswold, a well-meaning but overzealous father whose determination to create the ideal Christmas leads to one mishap after another. The film’s humor is a mix of slapstick comedy, sharp wit, and relatable family dynamics, making it easy for audiences to see their own holiday experiences reflected in the Griswold family’s antics.

Cousin Eddie, played by Randy Quaid, steals many scenes with his outrageous behavior, adding another layer of absurdity to the already chaotic holiday. Despite the laughs, the movie also offers touching moments of family, tradition, and the true spirit of Christmas.

Whether you watch it for the iconic scenes (like the disastrous Christmas lights or the overcooked turkey) or the heartfelt conclusion, Christmas Vacation remains a must-watch holiday classic that never fails to deliver both laughs and warmth.



Pittsburgh Sports Page

by: Lucas Smith & Jaycenn Davis

Welcome to the Pittsburgh Sports Section of the Newspaper!
Read all about the recap of the Pittsburgh Penguins, Steelers, and Pirates.



By now you have probably heard about the Steelers’ fantastic season so far, with them claiming the top spot in the AFC North after their 44-38 game with the Cincinnati Bengals. This back-and-forth game tilted more towards the Steelers after the first half. The other successes from the Steelers came from earlier in the season with a 3-win streak at the start of the season. After returning to Pittsburgh with a 24-27 loss to the Colts, they lost at home to the Cowboys 20-17. Someone that wasn’t the Cowboys had won that night though, and it was T.J. Watt getting the 100th sack of his career.

Getting tired of losing, they kicked-off their 5-win streak with a dominating 32-13 game against the Raiders. Their next game was with Russell Wilson, who wasn’t a letdown for his first game. The Steelers took that game from the Jets 37-15. We ended our winning streak with the Browns, right after winning against the Ravens. The upsetting 24-19 loss was well-fought, but the Browns worked harder for it. Even Mike Tomlin, head coach of the Steelers, complimented them, but that didn’t let the Steelers stop them against the Bengals. In the Steelers’ latest game, they had a pay-back win against the Browns, winning 27-14.

The Pens started off the season losing the first game against the Buffalo Sabers 7-3; however, fast forward to the third game, and they got their first win against the Senators 5-2.

Late October was tough for the Pens when they went on a six-game losing streak. The Penguins won against their rivals the Capitals 4-2 in early November and handed an overtime loss to the defending Stanley Cup champs the Florida Panthers.

Captain Sidney Crosby scored his 600th career goal while Evgeni Malkin scored his 500th this season. There are lots of games left this season for the penguins to catch up in the bracket... will they make it? Let’s hope!



Finally, The Pittsburgh Pirates and it was another rough year for Pirates baseball with the team finishing at the bottom of their division with a record of 76-86.

This poor performance had die-hard fans asking if the managers had the team’s best interest in mind. But it wasn’t all bad. This year saw the debut of Paul Skenes, the Pirates first round draft pick from LSU.

Skenes’s pitching record was 11-3. He was selected for the MLB All Star game and named National League Rookie of the Year. Hopefully next season the Pittsburgh Pirates will have better luck.

Middle School Sports

by: Nadia Benkowski, Lila Catalano, & Maliya Kamzelski

The middle school sports teams at Ambridge had a season full of dedication, resilience, and growth.



The girls’ soccer team finished with a stellar 11-2 record, thanks to their hard work, strong communication, and teamwork on the field. Each player contributed, whether through scoring, defending, or supporting teammates, leading to many victories.

Next, the boys’ soccer team has had a strong season, holding a 6-3-4 record. With six wins, three losses, and four draws, they have shown resilience and skill on the field. Their performance this season reflects both individual talent and effective teamwork as they continue to push for success.

Similarly, the cross-country team had an exceptional season, with each runner passing their personal bests each race. Nadia Benkowski and James Springer stood out as the top female and male runners.

The football team, despite a challenging 1-5 record, showed remarkable patience and determination, facing adversity with unmatched effort.



Lastly, the girls’ basketball team finished with an impressive 8-4 record, demonstrating growth and resilience. Their teamwork and sportsmanship both on and off their court made this season a memorable one.

Overall, the middle school fall sports were a success. Stay tuned with boys’ basketball, wrestling, track, and volleyball coming up!

For all the questions teachers ask us, have you ever wanted to ask your teachers questions?

Ms. Wolf

By: Alyssa Smith

Well, check back in every issue to read which teachers have "Spilled the Tea?"

Mr. DiCaprio

By: Lila Catalano & Nadia Benkowski



N.B.: What led you to being a principal at Ambridge?

Mr. DiCaprio: I have family members, and I have had friends that have gone here. I even have some family that still go here or are in this area. It's funny I just felt like it was a really good opportunity, and I am really excited to be here. I think the students and community are just great. I am just honored to be your principal, and I will try to put in all the time I can to be a good principal.

L.C.: What sports teams are you rooting for?

Mr. DiCaprio: Of course, the Pittsburgh teams Steelers, Pirates, and Penguins are my big team, but my favorite NBA team is the Dallas Mavericks.

N.B.: How long have you been in the educational field?

Mr. DiCaprio: Yeah, I was a teacher for four years, and then after that I went to Pa Cyber to eventually become an administrator. Then I was a director of curriculum at Montauk. I was an assistant principal at Mohawk for two years and now I am here being a principal. So, I think it has been a total of 15 years and 7 years as an administrator.

L.C.: What is your greatest accomplishment?

Mr. DiCaprio: I would say when there was no hope for a couple kids to graduate when I was at Mohawk and so I just kept working with the kids and pushing with them and their teachers to get them to be able to graduate. So, I would say like a lot of those tough ones where the kids are really behind on credits.

Veteran's Day Celebration

By: Mrs. Braund

Thank you to all the Veteran's that came to the MS this morning to take part in our "THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE" appreciation assembly.

The MS would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to Ms. Johnson, Mrs. Ceratti, and Mr. Becker for their hard work and dedication to our middle school in organizing this event. The performance from the MS band and chorus was both patriotic and uplifting. Also, a special thank you goes out to 8th grader, Alex Pompeo, for helping organize this event, along with the 20 + MS students that gave inspirational speeches. Everyone's commitment to bringing this all together for our community is truly commendable.



A.S.: "What made you want to be a teacher?"

Ms. Wolf: "I love hanging out with other kids, and I love books and sharing them with students."

A.S.: "How do you spend your free time outside of school?"

Ms. Wolf: "Reading, playing video games, and hanging out with my dog, Daisy."

A.S.: "What college did you go to, and what did you enjoy about it?"

Ms. Wolf: "I went to Point Park University, and I liked performing and plays."

A.S.: "If you switched subjects what subject would you now teach?"

Ms. Wolf: I would now teach Drama/Theater.

A.S.: "Who do you consider your teacher friends?"

Ms. Wolf: Miss. Scafuri, Mrs. Fedorek, Miss Simpson, Mrs. Braund, Mrs. Yannessa, and Mrs. Bober.

A.S.: "What kind of part-time job did you have in high school/college?"

Ms. Wolf: "I worked at a movie theater."

A.S.: "What are some things that you enjoy about this school?"



Ms. Wolf: "I liked the badminton tournament, my co-workers, and I love when students borrow books from my class."

A.S.: "What is one message you want people to know?"

Ms. Wolf: "Read more and be nice."



Badminton Tournament

By: Brandon Patton & Rylan Wolf

Every year our middle school has a Badminton Tournament as a reward at the end of the first nine weeks. Students can team up with their friends to participate in a two-on-two game, first to 11 points wins! After the championship game, a singles tournament will begin. This one-on-one is fast paced and allows students to show everyone else who is best.

For the doubles tournament winners:

8th grade: Peyton Hokenbrough and Cayden Pollock-Badminton Bros

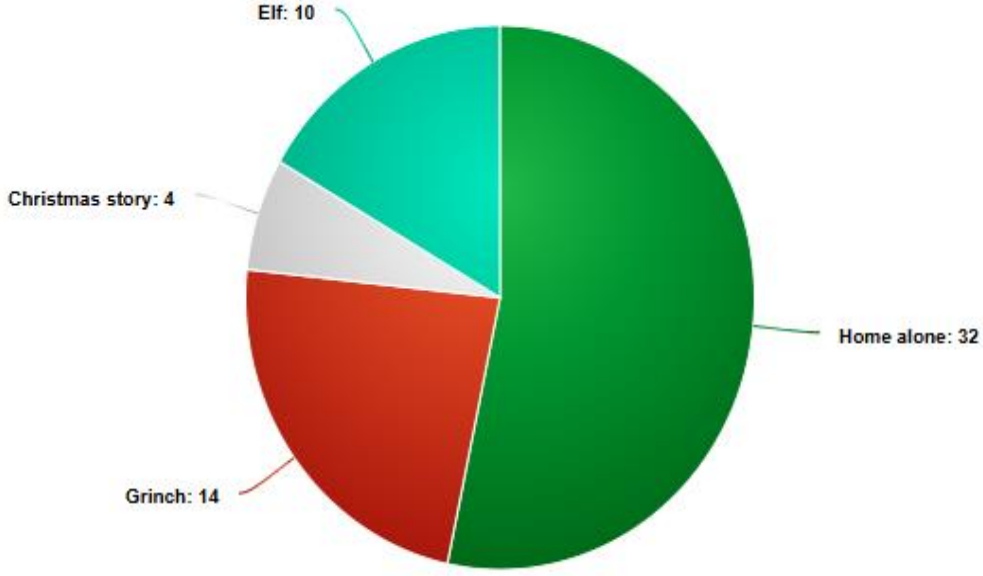
7th grade: Dez Motton and Avant Kirby-LiL Kids

6th grade: Parker Piatro and Ben Hoke-GOATS



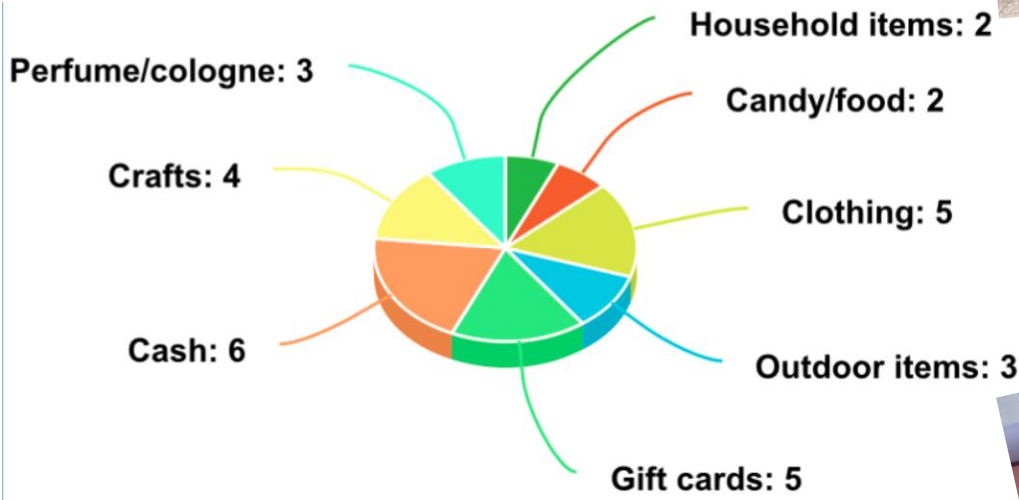
Favorite Christmas Movie

By: Kate McPherson & Alyssa Walker



Favorite Christmas Gifts

By: Caden Ilnicki



Holiday Spirit Week

Monday 12/16: HOLIDAY HAT DAY
 ✓ Wear your festive holiday hats and headbands

Tuesday 12/17: Twinkle Tuesday
 Let's see your best light-up clothes, jewelry, glitter, and sequins!
 ✓ Candy Canes (of all flavors) will be available in all lunches for \$1
 ▪ All proceeds will go to "Toys for Tots"

Wednesday 12/18: Sweater Weather Wednesday
 ✓ Show off your best Christmas sweaters
 ✓ Candy Canes (of all flavors) will be available in all lunches for \$1
 ▪ All proceeds will go to "Toys for Tots"

Thursday 12/19: Winter Wonderland Whiteout
 ✓ Wear as much white as you can

Friday 12/20: Polar Express Day



✓ All aboard the middle school Polar Express
 ✓ Wear your comfy Christmas clothes as we celebrate the start of the holiday season.

Newspaper Tik Tok

By: Sidney Fabian & Maria Hill

Are you ready to see interviews and all things happening at the Ambridge Area Middle School? Follow us @ambridgenews for all the latest videos with students, teachers, and staff.



Halloween Dance Highlights



Upcoming AAMS Important Dates:

- Christmas Break:** 12/20 (11:00 A.M. Dismissal) - 1/5
- Back to school:** 1/6/2025
- Winter Formal:** 1/17/2025
- NO School:** 1/20/25 & 1/21/25
2/17/25

Merry Christmas and
 Happy New Year
 from The Spotlight staff