

THE SPOTLIGHT

AMBRIDGE AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL

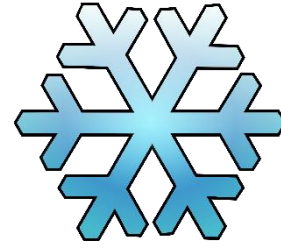
• “What’s in the spotlight?”

• February 2025-2nd issue



Winter Formal

By: Ava Grace Akella & Ellie Young



The winter formal was the third dance of the 2024- 2025 school year. It was planned by Mrs. Ceratti and Mr. Olenic. The art club did a fantastic job decorating the gym and lobby, turning our school into a winter wonderland for one special night. While some chose to stay casual, many students wore more formal attire. Even the teachers got in on the fun, wearing tuxedo t-shirts, top hats, tiaras, t-shirts with pearl necklaces, and satin gloves.

A 360 degree camera was set up in the gym for anyone wanting to pose with friends. There was also a picture station full of trees and snowmen where students could use fun props like scarfs, hats, and sunglasses. The dance was hosted in the gym, letting the participants have an extended area to dance. DJ Bob played the hits, including student favorites like Cupid Shuffle and Cotton Eye Joe. The spotlights shined like a thousand rainbows.

When they needed a break from dancing, students chatted with friends or could head to the cafeteria for a variety of refreshments. The staff members raffled off prizes, including stuffed animals and sports merch, to several lucky winners. Newspaper staff surveyed 72 attendees, and 43% thought the Winter Formal was the best dance of the year so far. (31% Decade Dance, 26% Halloween Dance).



Congratulations, TSA!

TSA Motto “Learning to Lead in a Technical World.”

In January 2025, seven students from Ambridge Area Middle School joined the High School team to attend the Technology Student Association’s Region 1 Conference and Competition. These students went up against over 100 of their peers from other districts in the area, such as North Allegheny, Fox Chapel, Pine-Richland, and Blackhawk. They have spent the past months preparing for this competition and I am excited to share the results for some of their events.

Winning First Place in Electrical Applications – Jaycenn Davis. Jaycenn also place 3rd overall in Tech Bowl. Also a placing **First** in the Systems Control Technology event – The Team of Collin Waters, Tyler Pinchot, and Ian Fusco. We had 2 teams place in the Challenging Technological Issues event: Jayda Palmer and Evie Bogati placed 2nd, followed closely by Joselyn Desroches and Collin Waters taking 3rd .

3rd Place wins were also achieved by Evie in the Digital Photography, and Joselyn in the Children’s Stories events.

These wins qualified all or our participants to attend the TSA State Conference and Competition this April at Seven Springs Resort, where they could potentially qualify for the National Competition in Nashville this summer. Congratulations to these competitors! Great job. You should be proud.



AAMS Academic Games

By: Jack D’Emilio

The first academic game of 2025 had, so many brilliant people came out to competition.

This year’s theme was our nation’s capital, A whole lot easier to study for than last year’s theme Rock and Roll Hall of fame. Sadly, this was Mr. Steigerwald’s last time teaching this competition, and I hope he has a fun time in his new teaching job. Overall, people had fun competing in the first game of 2025 and will have fun competing in the rest of 2025’s games.



Super Bowl

By: Rosella DeMuth

On Sunday February 9, 2025 the 59th Super Bowl started at 6:30 p.m. ET. The Kansas City Chiefs played the Philadelphia Eagles, and the game was played in Caesars Superdome in New Orleans. This is the second time that the Chiefs played the Eagles in the super bowl. The first time they played the score was 38-35 and the Chiefs won. The Eagles ended up beating the Chiefs this year, with a final score of 22-40.

The Eagles are now the first team to win a Super Bowl "rematch" after losing the first game to the Chiefs. In the halftime show Kendrick Lamar performed with SZA, and they sang some of their most popular songs. With 2:57 left on the clock, the Philadelphia Eagles wide receivers A.J. Brown and DeVonta Smith drenched head coach Nick Sirianni in yellow Gatorade. Overall, it was cool to see another rematch between the two teams!

What is Valentine's Day?

By: Raegan Keeber

Everyone knows the holiday Valentine's Day, but do you know where it originated from? Valentine's Day originated from the Roman festival of Lupercalia and the Christian celebration of St. Valentine. In the 14th century the holiday started being associated with love. Now people mainly just spend the holiday expressing their love. Some of the things people do to celebrate Valentine's Day are giving gifts, going to a restaurant, watching a movie. There are many things to do when celebrating Valentine's Day if you are showing your love to your loved ones.



Valentine's Day movie review

by: Candise Russin

Valentine's Day is a star-studded rom-com that weaves multiple love stories set in Los Angeles on February 14th. While the ensemble cast featuring Julia Roberts, Ashton Kutcher, Jennifer Garner, and more adds charm, the sheer number of storylines makes it hard to connect deeply with any single one. Some moments shine, but the film leans heavily on predictability and rom-com clichés. Still, it's a fun, lighthearted watch for those in the Valentine's spirit.

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.



Though the Steelers season has been over, there are still things to go over that happened before the end of the season. After their successful game against the Browns on December 8th, the Steelers went on a disappointing losing streak for the rest 2024-2025 season. The only close game in that streak was the January 4th Steelers/Bengals game. While their worst game was the Christmas day Steelers/Chiefs game. It was a sad 10-29 loss, and it did not get better from there. The whole 5 loss streak started with the Steelers/Eagles 13-27 game, which led them to go downhill. Though they made to the first-round playoffs with the Ravens, the Steelers didn't put up enough of a fight with the game ending 14-28. Thankfully, it wasn't as bad as their game on December 21st at M&T Bank Stadium with their 17-34 loss against the Ravens. Next year though, there will be plenty of new trades to and from the Steelers. Lets just wish the Steelers are better and luckier next year!

Halfway through the regular season, the Pens have found themselves near the bottom of the division. Struggling with injuries and bad luck, look for them to make some moves before the March 7th trade deadline. Most Pens players will get some much needed rest this week while some players participate in the 4 Nations Face Off Tournament. Sidney Crosby will be representing Canada while Rickard Rakell and Erik Karlsson will represent Sweden in the new tournament that is replacing the All-Star Games this year.



The Pirates are packing up and moving south to Bradenton Florida for spring training. This is the time for top prospect players to show off and maybe move up to the big league. Over the winter Pirates signed returning favorite Andrew McCutchen and outfielder Tommy Pham. Pitcher Paul Skenes has been named as one of the cover athletes for the popular MLB The Show 25 video game. Opening day for the Pirates is April 25th this year. Let's Go Bucs!

Middle School Sports

by: Nadia Benkowski, Lila Catalano, & Maliya Kamzelski



The Ambridge Middle School boys' basketball team had a difficult season with highs and lows. They ended in a 6-6 record. They were able to show strong team work even with the tough competition. Their balanced record shows that there is room for improvement, but they have a determined effort to make improvements for their next season. With spring approaching comes spring sports like girls' volleyball, boys' volleyball, track, softball, and baseball. Stay tuned for more updates to come!



LET'S GO BRIDGERS!!

New Year's Resolutions

By: Sidney Kratochvil & Ella Stimmel

Most people have new year's resolutions but will most likely end up quitting. The second Friday of January is called "Quitters Day," and some people quit, but some people continue. There are all different types of resolutions. There are the common ones like working out, diets, less screen time, etc.. Then there's the weird ones like do not dye your hair or do not add random people on Snapchat. In the end though 85 percent of people will quit and give up. What's your New year's Resolution for 2025?

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

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



Mr. Simpson

By: Alyssa Smith

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

Ms. Simpson: “I have a lot of teachers in my family and my 11th grade English teacher all gave me the interest of teaching.”

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

Ms. Simpson: “I coach throwing for track and field; however, I also love to watch tv shows.”

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

Ms. Simpson: “I went to Waynesburg University and enjoyed my literature classes. Also, Waynesburg let students go to different schools each month to be a student teacher.”

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

Ms. Simpson: “I would teach either math or science I find both of them to be fun subjects.”

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

Ms. Simpson: “Mrs. Fedorek, Ms. Wolf, Mrs. Racioppo, and Mr. Rinker.”

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

Ms. Simpson: I did not have a high school job; however, in college I had a parks and rec job, and I also did HR work for Washington county as a clerk.”

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

Ms. Simpson: “I like how we are trying to change things for the better. I also love seeing how much the teachers care about the students. It is also nice to have a new principal starting the same year as I am.”

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

Ms. Simpson: “Do your best because if you do then you can never say you did not try.”



Mrs. Hartley

By: Kylee Wolf



KW: What do you teach?

Mrs. Hartley: English.

KW: What college did you go to?

Mrs. Hartley: Clarion University and Slippery Rock University.

KW: How long have you been teaching?

Mrs. Hartley: Seventeen years.

KW: What are your hobbies?

Mrs. Hartley: Reading, solving puzzles, and hanging out with my kids.

KW: What is your favorite outdoor activity?

Mrs. Hartley: Being in the woods and camping.

KW: What is your favorite color?

Mrs. Hartley: Purple.

Mrs. Racioppo

By: Sidney Fabian & Maria Hill

SF: Why did you come to Ambridge Middle School?

Ms. Racioppo: I came to Ambridge Middle School because I am a proud alumni. When I went to college, I was super prepared compared to some of my college classmates. I wanted to share with my students the same sense I have for Ambridge.

MH:What was your favorite class in school?

Ms. Racioppo: In middle school it was math. In high school, I would say math or chemistry.

SF: Why was it your favorite class?

Ms. Racioppo: My mom has a degree in mathematics, so that probably has something to do with it.

MH: Why did you choose to be a health/gym teacher?

Ms. Racioppo: I graduated with a bachelor's in sport Physiology, teaching was not my initial path coming out of college. After graduating college, I took a position at Ambridge high school as a teaching assistant. Through my experience working at the high school, I decided to go back and pursue my teaching certification in health and PE. I thought my love for sport psych would align with teaching health and PE.

SF: What do you like to do in your free time?

Ms. Racioppo: Hiking with my friends, attending sports events, travelling, hanging with my friends. Nothing too exciting.

MH: What is your favorite class to teach?

Ms. Racioppo: That's a hard one as I have only taught three classes, and they are all very different. Ask me again in a few years.

SF: What was your least favorite class in school?

Ms. Racioppo: Subject wise I would go with the reading in middle school.

MH: How do you like teaching at Ambridge so far?

Ms. Racioppo: It's been great so far, it's been an adjustment because I worked in the high school with students for the past six years. However, I believe I am finding my groove working the middle school students. The strangest thing is not having to run the stairs constantly anymore.”

SF: Did you play any sports in middle school or high school? If so which ones?

Ms. Racioppo: Yes, middle school- 7th grade cross country, 7th/8th grade Basketball; high school-Tennis

Moana 2

by: McKenzie Waters, Kylie O'Lare, & Emma Pinchot

The sequel, *Moana 2*, was considered a Disney hit at the end of 2024. The movie was rated 6.8/10 on IMDb and has 61% rotten tomatoes.

Moana 2 continued the plot from the original movie, *Moana*. In *Moana 2*, she journeyed across the ocean once more to continue her family's legacy of connecting with other people and islands and contained a surprising twist that will most likely lead to another *Moana* movie in the future.

There are a variety of opinions about this film, but we personally believe that the original movie was better than the new one. Overall, the movie appealed to all ages and it's a fun family friendly movie.



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.



Math Counts

By: Alyssa Smith

MATHCOUNTS is a national math competition for middle school students grades 6th-8th. It is for those that are academically inclined in math or are just generally interested in it. In the MATHCOUNTS competition there are four rounds of testing: the sprint round, the target round, the team round, and the countdown round.

The sprint round consists of 30 problems which are to be solved before the time of 40 minutes runs out. This round is an individual round with the questions progressing in difficulty. The target round consists of 8 problems that are given in sets of 2. The problems in the target round are open-ended and take multiple steps to solve within the time limit of 6 minutes. The target round is one of the rounds where a calculator is permitted but many students might end up stumped even with the aid of a calculator. The team round consists of 10 problems to be solved by a team of 4 students collaboratively working together to answer the problems within 20 minutes. Similar to the target round, the team round is the only other round that permits the use of a calculator.

Finally, the countdown round is only for the best of the best. Only the top 10 people to score the most points on the previous rounds can participate in the countdown round. This round is quick-paced, and you are racing against the person next to you whoever gets the answer first will buzz in and answer if they are wrong or if they forget to buzz in then their opponent gets the chance to solve it correctly. It starts with places 9 and 10, whoever wins that round goes again place 8 then 7 and so on until they reach place 1. On the final round whoever wins that round is smart enough to be able to move onto states and that in itself is a huge honor showing their abilities of quick-thinking and problem solving however the person who loses that round also gets to move on as well as the highest scoring group from the team round. After being able to move onto states if you are smart enough to win states as well then you will move onto nationals.



Holiday Concerts

Congratulations to the chorus and band students under the direction of Mrs. Ceratti and Mr. Becker for their outstanding holiday performances. Their hard work and dedication were evident in every note, and they truly brought the holiday spirit to our school community. We are incredibly proud and look forward to the spring concerts.



Upcoming AAMS Important Dates:

Spring Dance: 3/21/25

Spring Band Concert: 4/8/25

Spring Chorus Concert: 4/10/25

NO SCHOOL (Easter Break): 4/17/25-4/21/25

