

The Storm Report

OAKES TORNADOES UPDATES

January 16, 2026



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WHO'S LEAVING CAPYBARAS ON DESKS?

By: Nadysen McKay

Capybaras are the largest rodents in the world and are native to South America, they live near rivers, lakes, and wetlands. They belong to the rodent family and are closely related to guinea pigs, even though they are much bigger. Capybaras have short legs, webbed feet, and strong bodies, which help them swim well and survive in watery environments. They are herbivores that mainly eat grasses and water plants, and they often stay in water to keep cool and protect themselves from predators. Capybaras are also very social animals, usually living in groups, which helps them stay safe and communicate with one another.

The teachers at Oakes Public school have been coming back to their classroom with Capybaras on their desks. Mr. Schneider has recieved two capybaras, he did some detective work and came up with it being Mr. Engle. Mrs.Dobitz recieved 1 capybara along with other little figures like a dinosaur, alien, and a turtle. She said she doesn't know who it could be but she thinks they just want to spread cheer and hope. While Mr.Engle recieved 4 capybaras he thinks it's Mr. Schneider putting them in the classrooms and that he's trying to blame someone else. Maybe it's both Mr. Engle and Mr. Schneider secretly teaming up and just blaming eachother so no one suspects them. No one knows whos placing these capybaras in the classrooms. What we do know is that whoever is doing this stays at the school past 4pm. Who knows what they're doing.



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SENIOR SPOTLIGHT



By: Kalyn Haafke

This senior has made the most of his high school years through dedication, discipline, and a willingness to push himself both mentally and physically. Involved in wrestling, track, and band, He credits these activities with helping him grow stronger, more confident, and more focused since his freshman year.

Academically, he enjoys classes that challenge his thinking. While POD is his favorite current class because of the opportunity to discuss world events and political topics, math holds a special place for him due to its real-world applications. One teacher who left a lasting impact was Mr. Schall, whose teaching style made lessons memorable long after the class ended. Some of his favorite high school memories come from goofing off with his wingmen, especially in College English.

Outside of school, he spends much of his time up in the sky flying an airplane or at the gym lifting weights. This year, he has earned his Private Pilot's License, an accomplishment he is especially proud of. His love for aviation fuels his future, as he hopes to become a Navy pilot and eventually pursue a career in aviation with the airlines.

One of the biggest challenges he has faced is perfectionism. While he admits it's something he's still working on, he's learned an important lesson along the way: doing your best is sometimes all you can control. His coaches have been major influences in his life, teaching him discipline, consistency, and the importance of striving to be better than yesterday. If he could give his freshman self-advice, it would be this: "Don't let the fear of failure overcome your ambition to succeed."

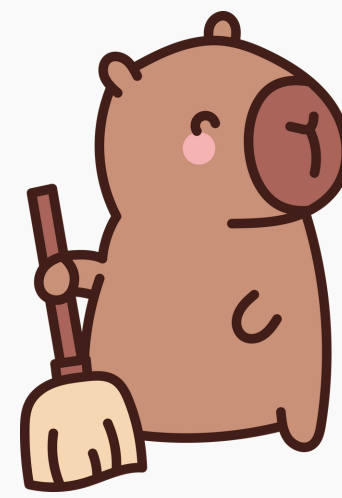
To this senior, being a senior means more than just nearing graduation, it means leading by example. He believes seniors represent the future and have a responsibility to guide those who look up to them. With his determination, leadership, and clear vision for the future, he is ready for whatever comes next, at full speed. So, fasten your seatbelts because he is ready for takeoff.



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CLEANING UP AFTER YOURSELF

By: Nadysen McKay



Cleaning up after yourself is an easy habit that says a lot about a person's character. It shows responsibility and respect for the space you are in and for the people around you. Cleaning up after yourself means taking care of your own messes, such as throwing away trash, putting things back where they belong, and keeping shared areas neat. This habit is important because it teaches personal responsibility, shows respect for others, and helps create a cleaner and more positive environment for everyone.

Cleaning up after yourself is an important part of being responsible. When someone takes the time to clean up their own messes, it shows maturity and self-discipline. Simple actions like cleaning your room, throwing away trash instead of leaving it behind, and putting items back where they belong show that a person can take care of themselves. These habits may seem small, but they reflect a responsible mindset that carries over into everyday life.

Doing this is also a way to show respect for other people. When someone leaves a mess behind, it often becomes someone else's problem. In shared spaces like classrooms, kitchens, or bathrooms, messes can make the area uncomfortable or unpleasant for others to use. By cleaning up after yourself, you help keep shared spaces organized and welcoming. This small effort makes daily life easier and more enjoyable for everyone.

Bobby shared insights about how students' actions affect his job and the school environment. When asked what kinds of messes take the longest to clean up, he explained that on carpet, things like fingernails, glitter, staples, and anything wet is difficult to remove, while black marks are hard to clean off hard floors. Leaving trash on the floor also makes his work take much longer because it must be picked up before they are able to vacuum or mop.

The job becomes even more stressful when rooms are extremely dirty or during snowy weather, since snow removal adds extra work to the regular cleaning schedule. Bobby emphasized that everyone who enters the school should help keep it clean so it continues to look nice and lasts as long as possible. He has also shared that the school exists for the betterment of students, which means everyone has a responsibility to show respect for themselves, others, and the building. While cleaning up after yourself should be the basic expectation, he expressed greater respect and admiration for those who go above and beyond by helping others as well.

Keeping spaces clean has many benefits that make everyday life easier. Clean areas can reduce stress, create safer environments, and help people develop better habits. When spaces are organized, it is easier to focus and feel comfortable. On the other hand, not cleaning up after yourself can lead to problems such as arguments, bigger messes, and even health issues caused by germs or clutter. When people ignore their responsibility to clean up, it affects everyone around them. Overall, cleanliness helps maintain order and prevents unnecessary problems.

In conclusion, cleaning up after yourself is an important habit that benefits both individuals and the community. It teaches personal responsibility, shows respect for others, and acknowledges the hard work of janitors who keep spaces clean and safe. Cleanliness also creates less stressful, safer environments while preventing conflicts and health issues. By making the effort to clean up after ourselves, we can help create a better environment for everyone and show respect for the spaces we share.

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OHS HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS: CHRISTMAS BREAK

By: Ava Thompson



Ever wonder how OHS students spend their Christmas break? We caught up with Emily Rosendahl and Kaia Heimbuch to find out!

Emily Rosendahl | Senior

Emily's favorite gift was a senior trip to Aruba—talk about exciting! Over break, she spent lots of time with family, visiting grandparents on both her mom's and dad's sides. Between family time, she stayed busy with basketball practices and three games 2 of which the varsity won. One special tradition her family keeps is reading the Christmas story from the Bible every Christmas morning. One of her favorite funny moments was watching her younger cousins attempt to drive on her uncle's driving simulator game.

Kaia Heimbuch | Junior

Kaia's favorite gift she gave was to her sister: an acrylic nail and decoration kit. She worked most of Christmas break but still made time for family and friends. Her holiday traditions include making lefse and oyster stew, keeping her family traditions alive and delicious.

Emily and Kaia's winter break experiences show that winter break is different for everyone. Whether its spending time with family, working, playing sports, family traditions. Winter Break helps students rest.



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NEW YEAR, NEW ME!



By: Isaac Bjornstad:

It's a new semester of school, and I'm sure you're just as thrilled about it as I am. We're all tired from going to bed at 3 a.m. because the break conditioned us to think we have freedom we don't actually have. Luckily for those still out of the swing in this new semester, I interviewed Mr. Lynch to see what advice he could offer to get back on schedule. So don't fall asleep yet.

Now for some, if you love what you do, work doesn't feel like work. However, that mentality usually isn't shared for schoolwork. And since this is work for most of us, we probably need some help getting back on schedule. When I asked Mr. Lynch for ideas, he responded, "The top tip would be to set your alarm." Though for some of us, hitting snooze is the most motivation we can manage.

Speaking of motivation, we probably have the motivations of fast food workers. So, for those who need some help in finding some, I asked Mr. Lynch again. He suggested, "Talk to a friend. They can help you be accountable with what you need to get done." Having someone you know to keep you on task can be very beneficial to your learning experience, and will definitely help with keeping you on task.

Now in between mid-class naps or conversations, we have to actually pay attention (the sheer horror). If that's something you're struggling with in the new year, don't worry, I asked Mr. Lynch for suggestions. When asked about how to help our attention spans, Mr. Lynch responded, "Try to limit distractions. If you're in a place where you're easily distracted, ask to find another place." Luckily for you, I have some great spots you could go to, such as the library, the halls, or maybe the office to suggest a few?

Could you stay long enough so we can wrap this up, please? With school starting back up, hopefully these simple tips can help you get through the rest of the year! Good luck everyone, and have a great semester... Wait, what am I writing about again? I wasn't paying attention.

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ARE NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS REALLY WORTH IT?

By: Breann Young

New Year's resolutions are goals that people make at the beginning of a new year to try and better themselves. Some people think they really help, while others think you do not need a new year to make changes. I asked two people what they thought about New Year's resolutions, and they had very different answers.

The first person said they did not really have a New Year's resolution. They explained that there are things they want to improve, but those goals are not new. They want to keep working on keeping their house clean and improving their health. They also said that since they are an adult, their habits are already part of their life and will not change just because the year changes. Because of this, they think the idea of "New year, new me" can actually set people up to fail. Instead of making one big resolution, they focus on a few big goals and then make smaller goals throughout the year. They believe that if someone knows they need to change something, they should start right away and not wait for the new year.

The second person shared their New Year's resolution for this year. Their goal is to write more poetry. Writing poetry is something they enjoy, but they usually only do it once in a while. This year, they want to make it more important because they like being creative. Having this resolution helps remind them to take time to write more often.

In conclusion, these two responses show that people think about New Year's resolutions in different ways. One person believes change can happen at any time, and the other uses the new year as motivation to work toward a goal. Both responses show that what matters most is trying to improve and sticking with your goals.


*Happy
New Year*


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WHY BREAKS BOOST FOCUS

By: Addie Umbreit



The repetitive cycle of going to and from work or school each day can be mentally and physically draining. How can we stay focused throughout the school year while balancing sports, work, and other responsibilities and activities? Something as simple as breaks can benefit not only the students but teachers as well. Studies show that regular breaks actually help students recover from fatigue, improve focus, and regain attention when they return to work.

To clarify, breaks can range from taking a couple minutes for yourself to re-group or enjoying your time off during a seasonal break. From time to time, it's rewarding to decompress in order to improve focus, avoid burnout, reduce stress, and even increase productivity.

Some people may not think or realize they need to give themselves breaks. What happens when we don't take time to recharge throughout the school year? Our stress levels can increase along with feeling overwhelmed and unorganized. According to Cornell Health, research shows that taking even a 5–60-minute break from doing schoolwork or studying can refresh your brain to help you improve or regain your ability to focus. The way we spend our time during our breaks can have an impact on the result. For example, instead of scrolling on social media, there's different strategies like organizing your workspace, listening to music, taking a walk, or even taking a nap. These methods are only a few examples of how you can spend your study breaks to allow yourself to energize or build up motivation.

One of the most recent days we've had off was winter break which allowed students and teachers to reorganize for the new year. At first, coming back after being out of school for so long can take a while to get back in the swing of things, but over this time it allows students, teachers, and faculty members time to reset, recharge, and reorganize themselves.

In conclusion, it's very important to take time for yourself to improve your focus, productivity, and even avoid burnout. Overworking won't benefit you in the long run if you're mentally draining yourself to the point that you're stressed or overwhelmed. It's difficult to complete good quality work while feeling like this, so don't forget to pause what you're doing in order to come back and finish the task with a new mindset.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

By: McKenna Allston

This fall we welcomed a new junior high math teacher, Cassidy Sanderson. My first question that I asked her was, "What made you want to become a teacher?" She responded with, "Growing up I was blessed with teachers who made a positive impact on my life." Miss Sanderson says that she wanted to be someone who can encourage students, help build their confidence and teach them skills that they will use for the rest of their lives. "I also just really enjoy doing math."



Miss Sanderson is from Devils Lake, North Dakota. She went to college at Valley City State University. In her spare time, she enjoys playing Stardew Valley, cooking and baking, doing puzzles and listening to music. Miss Sanderson's favorite quote is, "There's a hardship and everything except eating pancakes" – Charles Spurgeon

When asked what brought her to Oakes, she said, "I knew that I wanted to be in a smaller school system, so I could teach and get to know my students better." Miss Sanderson said that during her interview, it was clear that Oakes puts an emphasis on supporting students and creating a positive environment, which are both important to her.

My final question to Miss Sanderson was, "What do you hope to accomplish here at OPS?" She hopes to create a classroom environment where students are comfortable to ask questions, make mistakes, and grow. "In addition to building stronger math skills, I also want them to build confidence, perseverance, a growth mindset, and independence."

We are lucky to have Miss Sanderson's skill set here at OPS!

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By Lila Iverson:



MORE HOMEWORK $\neq$ BETTER EDUCATION

Homework is a pain. Students stay up late trying to get everything done. Stressing over deadlines. Homework is too common in every class. Teachers love to assign it for practice, extra work, and may or may not grade it. More work for kids does not lead to better education and can harm learning.

Many kids are in sports or other activities so they don't have much personal time to get things done. Which leads to stress and anxiety. I am no stranger to having to stay up late to get things done and the lack of sleep does not help in anyway. Most think students overreact about the pressure life throws at them but it is a lot. So let me break it down they have to balance homework with activities, jobs, and family responsibilities. That is a lot.

Kids should focus on basic human needs. With schoolwork they mainly focus on getting it done and not fully understanding the work. Half the time teachers just assign busy work and repetitive work. Nobody likes repetitive work. The extra work causes rushing and like I said it gets you nowhere. Reducing the information that they process. Instead they could have a debate or discuss real-world topics, watch educational videos or documentaries, playing strategy or logic games as a better alternative.

On the other hand, homework can build responsibility and discipline. Which is a good foundation for kids to grow on. However, responsibility can be taught through quality assignments, projects, and in-class work. If you overload kids with work it can lower motivation and engagement. Leading to lower grades or missing assignments.

There are some positive things about homework but the negative outweighs the good. Students can't get help at home because their parents don't want to relearn the things from high school to teach their kids. With all of that teachers help out the parents and not assign homework.

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STANDING FIRM WITH KELLEY LOVELACE

By: Breann Young and Mrs. Haafke

If you have ever attended an Oakes home game, you have heard Kelley Lovelace's voice echoing through the gym, celebrating every basket, every effort, and every athlete, no matter the size of the crowd. Now, that same spirit of encouragement is being returned to him as the Oakes community rallies around Kelley following his recent cancer diagnosis.

Hearing the diagnosis was a shock. "No one likes to hear the 'C' word," Lovelace shared. "It can be scary because there are so many unknowns. Not knowing what will happen next is often the hardest part." Like many facing a life altering diagnosis, Kelley experienced fear and uncertainty, but he also found unexpected clarity.

"As the shock wore off, I realized that this experience has brought my family closer together," he said. "That has been a good thing, and it reminded me how important family and spending time together truly are."

Since sharing his diagnosis, Kelley has been overwhelmed in the best way by the response from the community he has long supported. "The support from the community has meant more to me than I can explain," he said. "I have been amazed by how caring and kind the Oakes community is. I have seen how people here support others during tough times, but experiencing it myself has been overwhelming."

Acts of kindness, both big and small, have helped carry Kelley and his family through difficult days. One moment that stood out to him was the support shown by Mrs. Haafke and the students at Oakes Public School through the Stand Firm movement. "Seeing students come together to show encouragement has made a big difference and reminded me how strong our community is," he said.

Through it all, Kelley's faith has remained a steady source of hope. "The best way the community can continue to support my family and me is through prayer," he explained. "My faith is very important to me, and I believe that prayer is powerful. Knowing that people are praying for us brings comfort and peace during difficult times."

On the hardest days, Kelley says his faith in Jesus Christ and the relationships around him keep him grounded. "I know that I am never alone because of my relationship with Him," he said. "Spending time with people who care about me makes a big difference and helps me stay positive."

As he continues his journey, Kelley wants the community to know just how grateful he is. "Thank you to everyone who has supported me," he said. "Those words do not fully show how grateful I am to the people of Oakes and the surrounding community."

True to the role he has always played as an encourager, supporter, and voice of hope, Kelley also leaves others with a reminder. "There is a God who created you, loves you, and is always with you," he said. "You are never alone, and if you ever want help finding Him, I am your guy."

Just as Kelley has lifted the spirits of countless athletes and fans from behind the microphone, the Oakes community now stands firmly behind him, proving that support, faith, and unity are louder than any diagnosis.

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ICE FISHING SEASON

By: Jyles Meier



It's ice fishing season and everyone's getting on the ice. People are starting to bring out four-wheelers and snowmobiles to make the trip much easier. That means the ice is close to being ready for pickups to start driving out! The weather affects this a lot. Without multiple weeks of freezing weather the ice is unstable and usually only allows people to walk out on the ice in the early season.

Ice fishing requires a good amount of gear like warm clothing, rods, augers, bait, and a shack. It could be that simple, or you could go all out and get all kinds of lures, tip ups, and electronics. Getting this extra gear makes it a lot easier.

I asked Mr. Peterson what items he always brings with when he goes on the ice. He said "My live scope, other electronics, and snacks. You can never have enough". Which is especially true since you could stay on the ice for days.

So, during your vacation in freezing weather, make sure you stay cozy. And bring extra hot chocolate... just in case.

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT KELLEY LOVELACE?

BUY A T-SHIRT

Shirts can be ordered Until Jan 28 : Click
Here to Order!

BUY A BRACELET



Honor Society will be selling silicone bracelets for \$3 with all money going to Kelley- Cash/Check donations can be made as well

ENJOY A MEAL

STANDING FIRM WITH KELLEY

PASTOR, CHAPLAIN,
BASKETBALL VOICE - LET'S
RALLY AROUND KELLEY!

NOW IT'S OUR TURN TO
STAND WITH HIM

WILD GAME FEED(BURGERS TOO)

SILENT AUCTION- ENDS @ 1 P.M.
GUN RAFFLE, AND RAFFLE
BOARDS WILL BE @ 1 P.M.

March 1st
11-Until Gone

ALL MONEY RAISED WILL BENEFIT KELLEY
LOVELACE ON HIS CANCER JOURNEY

EMAIL: KALYN.HAAFKE@GMAIL.COM IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS
OR WOULD LIKE TO DONATE TO THE EVENT OR CALL JEREMY
SITZLER @ (701) 408-9048

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GIRLS BASKETBALL SEASON

By: Kalyn Haafke

The girls basketball team has reached the middle of the season with a 5–8 record, showing steady growth, resilience, and strong team chemistry.

One of the biggest highlights so far came over winter break at the Richland Holiday Tournament, where the team went 2–0. Senior Izzy Friedt said the trip was memorable not only because of the wins, but because of the bonding that took place off the court. Coach Kourajian echoed that sentiment, noting that spending time together in Fargo helped strengthen team chemistry and confidence.



Throughout the season, the team has faced challenges, including adjusting after losing six seniors from last year and working through slow starts in games. Senior Emily Rosendahl said many players have had to step into new roles, pushing each other in practice to improve. Seniors have taken on leadership responsibilities, focusing on effort, encouragement, and setting the tone both in practices and games.

Slow starts have been one of the team's main obstacles, but senior Lexi Harris said the team has worked to shift momentum early by focusing on energy and getting quick baskets. That adjustment has paid off in several comeback wins, including games where the team trailed at halftime and responded with strong second halves.

Statistically, the team is shooting 31% from the field and 27% from three-point range. Izzy Friedt leads the team with 9.1 points and 10.1 rebounds per game and tied a school record with 25 rebounds in a game against Midway-Minto. Lexi Harris is averaging 6.6 points and 2.5 assists per game, while Emily Rosendahl contributes 5.5 points per game.

As the season continues, both players and coaches emphasize growth over results. "You find out a lot about yourself when things get tough," Kourajian said, noting that learning how to respond to adversity is one of the most important lessons basketball can teach.

The team also expressed appreciation for community support, saying that packed gyms and loud crowds bring added energy and motivation during games.

With continued focus on fundamentals, teamwork, and effort, the girls basketball team looks to build on its progress as the season moves forward.

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BOYS BASKETBALL

By: Dylan Quandt



The Tornadoes rose to 6-1 after the game on January 6th vs EKM. before the game vs EKM, Oakes is ranked 14 overall and 5 in class B according to MaxPreps. With the big win at home vs 5-0 EKM, Oakes' rank will rise. Counting the Cowbell and the game vs EKM, Oakes went 5-0 over the break and look to continue the hot streak this month.

In January, Oakes will have big games inside and outside the district. Jyles knows we are staying locked in, he said. "We're going to continue to just keep getting better every day and staying focused." Said Meier. After Beau Thorpe's strong performance over break I asked him what's one goal the team has after the break. He said "To keep playing one game at a time and focusing on getting better every day."

Though school was out over the break, players still have to come in and practice and stay ready for games. Both Thorpe and Meier agree this can be a challenge. Jyles pointed out how Christmas leftovers may slow you down at practice. Beau talked about the difficulty of getting everybody to come in and work hard when we are busy over the break. Good luck to the Tornadoes as the season continues.