



Dr. Peter Jordan Named High School Principal

Welcome to the inaugural issue of HHS Connect. Several times per year we will give you a bit of current news from our Alma Mater and point you toward sources of more detailed information. In each issue we will profile one of the current faculty members plus we will turn our attention outward and track down one of our fellow alumni who has found a life away from Wayne County, but who maintains the Hornet spirit from their years up on the hill. Along the way we will endeavor to create a three-way connection among our alumni, our teachers and our students. We will draw upon the resources of each for the betterment of all.

On the last page we will report on the progress of the HHS Alumni Scholarship Fund and, of course, we'll tell you how you can donate to that fund.

My name is Jerry Swendsen, Class of 1965. My son, Peter, graduated in 1995, so there are two generations of alumni who might remember one of us. At this point it's mostly me here writing with substantial help from a close cadre of editors. As future issues develop I will be seeking the assistance of other reporters and editors. Recently, I had a pleasant phone conversation with our new HHS principal. A summary begins on Page 2. And, I learned to use WhatsApp to chat with Mieke Bozic. See Page 4. Please share any comments that you have. I can be reached via email at:

jerry.swendsen@gmail.com



Over the summer, Wayne Highlands conducted a five-way administrative reassignment throughout the various schools. There is an excellent article by David Mazzenga in the August 17, 2021 edition of the Tri-County Independent that covers this in detail.

Dr. Peter Jordan takes the helm at the high school after five years serving as principal in the middle school. In this issue we get to know Dr. Jordan and learn a few of the fresh ideas and attitudes that this relatively young educator is bringing to our alma mater.

Then we turn our attention far away from Wayne County, to Bavaria, where we check in with Mieke Bozic, our featured HHS alumna for this issue. Searching for alumni with an unusual career path, it will be hard to top Mieke. After high school she went to Temple to study pharmacy and ended up living in Germany and building a company to market Caribbean resorts to the varied European population. Along the way she is raising two beautiful children and she is keeping them very much in touch with their grandparents and her family and friends in Honesdale.



Peter B. Jordan, Ed.D.
Principal
Honesdale High School

Scranton High School
 Class of 2004

University of Scranton
 Bachelor of Science
 Mathematics
 Secondary Education

University of Scranton
 Master of science
 Educational Administration

Gwynedd Mercy University
 Doctor of Education (Ed. D.)
 Educational Leadership

Methacton High School
 2008 - 2012

Forest City High School
 Principal
 2012 - 2016

Wayne Highlands
 Middle School
 Principal
 2016 - 2021

Growing up in Scranton, did you have any interaction with Wayne County?

I went to Scranton High School (Class of 2004) and my recollection of Wayne County is mainly through sports. I played football and baseball. When I was a Junior, we had a really good football season going, and we got upset by Honesdale. Also, my Dad was a school principal in Scranton for almost 30 years. When I was in elementary school, to celebrate the last day of school, he would take my brother and I on a trip in his convertible to some place fun. We didn't know where we going, but we always ended up at the Carousel in Beach Lake. As a young boy, those are my first memories of coming up through Wayne County.

Take us back to 2004. When you headed off to college did you already have being a high school principal in mind?

Coming out of high school, I certainly loved math, but education is like our "family business." My Mom was a teacher, my Dad was a principal, my uncle was a teacher and vice principal. I have several aunts who were teachers. I majored in math in college and considered careers like actuarial science, but in the end I was just driven to education. That's where I was meant to be, where I felt the most comfortable and the field that I felt the most passionate about.

Where did you begin your career in education?

In 2008, just before I graduated from the University of Scranton, I was offered a job teaching math in the Methacton High School. This is a northwest suburb of Philadelphia. Methacton is a large school of roughly 600 students per class. Coaching baseball and teaching I was fortunate to be surrounded by a close group of young colleagues who had aspirations of leadership. We all decided to pursue principal certificates and Master's degrees. We have remained friends. At this point everyone is in an administrative position somewhere and we still get together several times a year.

I was very happy with my four years teaching math in Methacton, but I had my principal's certificate and I remember vividly that one day my Dad called and said, "Forest City has a principal opening. Why don't you apply and see what happens." It wasn't necessarily my plan to move back from the Philadelphia area, but after a few rounds of interviews they offered me the position. At age 26 I went from teaching math at a large suburban high school to being principal of six grades with about 50 students each. Forest City turned out to be a great place for me to start my administration career. The principal is a jack of all trades in Forest City, because it was kind of a one man show most of the time. There was no assistant principal. That is where I learned the management side of being a principal and Wayne Highlands is where I have learned the leadership side of being a principal. It's a very unique career pathway, but one that I'm very grateful for because every place I have been has given me a different perspective.

You are new to the high school, but you have been with us here in Wayne Highlands a while now.

Yes, I was in Forest City for four years when I heard that Wayne Highlands had an opening. Wayne Highlands has a good reputation for high achievement and a strong culture. It felt like it would be the right match for my ambitions and my philosophy professionally. The District hired me as middle school principal in 2016. I came here knowing the very strong reputation of the District and now that I'm in a spot where I've lived it, it has exceeded my expectations. It truly is a very special place and I mean that sincerely.

The middle school staff was the best I've ever worked with and now at the high school, I'm more and more impressed each day. It's a very different job when you come in and you know that you're coming to be part of something that's bigger than you are. Everyone is contributing to a bigger vision of what this place is culturally. For me it's a matter of keeping the momentum going and building on the shoulders of so many outstanding educators that have set the foundation for this place to be what it is. We could talk about that list of teachers for hours.

In both positions I've held in Wayne Highlands, I've succeeded one of the best gentlemen I know, Chris Pietraszewski. He's a genuinely great, first class guy and I'm very lucky to have him still available as he is now just across the road in the Stourbridge Primary Center.

You mentioned that you didn't have a family when you went to Forest City. Do you have a family now?

Yes, my wife and I married after my first year in Forest City and we now have three children, Annie, my oldest is 5, Rosie turned 3 in the summer, and we have a 3 month old named Peter. My wife, Kathleen is from near Philadelphia and, by working remotely, she has been able to work for the same company that she started with right out of college. Of course, it's invaluable at this point in life that my parents live a block away.

Besides work and family do you find time for any other interests?

I'm a huge sports fan. I follow the Yankees and in football, Dallas and Notre Dame are my favorite teams. Professionally, when I was in Forest City, I was the Lackawanna League president. I stepped down from that when I was no longer a high school principal. Now that I'm here, I have returned to the PIAA District II Committee which oversees athletics for all the schools in the six counties of Northeastern PA. Aside from sports, my Dad is an antique car buff. He has built several cars and I help him with that from time to time. I don't know as much as he does, but I travel to shows with him and it's something we get to do together.

How was it getting settled in your new office? Are there any goals you have in mind for HHS going forward?

For starters I want to thank Assistant Principal Pat Blaskiewicz. He is a great help to me. He is an HHS alumnus and he taught here as well. I view him more as a co-principal as opposed to an assistant principal. His knowledge of the people and the building and the community is invaluable to me. Honesdale High School has a long history and a tradition of success and our main goal is to maintain that and continue to build on it. We are already talking about expanding our AP (Advanced Placement) course offerings in the near future. We are in the process of starting up a SAT Prep Course that will be free to the students. There are always curricular things to update. One thing that is evident to both Pat and me is that society is evolving and kids are changing. The many ways kids learn are changing and we need to strive to stay up with that, to stay on the curve to serve our kids in the best way possible. That changes every year.



Principal, Dr. Peter Jordan and Assistant Principal, Mr. Patrick Blaskiewicz

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Mieke Bozic

Honesdale High School
Class of 1991

Temple University
Bachelor of Science
Secondary Education
Chemistry and German
1996

Ludwig - Maximilians
Universität München
Masters, Organizational
& Educational Psychology
2006

Owner / Managing Director
AxisEuro Marketing &
Consulting
Landshut, Germany

Mieke is the daughter of Branko and Lyn Bozic, the owners of Branko's Patisserie in Honesdale. In summer you might spot Mieke visiting or the kids can often be seen via WhatsApp on Lyn's phone. For most any reason Branko is likely to close the restaurant and head to Germany as in the recent trip for Maxi's first day of school. (See photo.)

This is an HHS alumni newsletter, so let's start back in high school. I remember that you were the champion of the Greater Honesdale Tennis Ladder. Did you also play varsity tennis?

Yes, I played varsity tennis when Eve Skier was the coach. This was during the years when she used to take the team to the US Open. I was pretty bold as a kid. One year I went up to Andre Agassi and gave him my phone number. I told him to come to Honesdale and visit my Dad's restaurant. He never came to the restaurant but he did take my number and put it in his pocket.

Were there other sports or band? I did everything. I did golf, tennis, and marching band all in the Fall season. My Dad taught me golf and I was ok and they wanted girls on the team. So I did tennis first and if there was no tennis conflict, I did golf, and if neither of them had matches, I did marching band. But tennis has stayed an important part of my life. I still play and now I'm teaching my two kids to play.

You said marching band. So you were a musician as well? Yes. I fell in love with Mr. Willow when I was in middle school, and he had me play the clarinet, and the French horn, and the trumpet. I fell in love with him, his teaching style, and just the person that he was, so I went in all googly-eyed and excited and said, "Oh yeah, I can do all of that." I was sort of a band geek when I started high school. I played the trumpet in jazz band. Then, Mr. Mains needed French horns, so I lugged that back and forth on the bus for concert band. In marching band I played the Frumpet which is a hybrid horn that looks like an oversized trumpet. In the winter I was a wrestling cheerleader and when that ended I did track and field in the Spring.

In the summer of 1991 you are a high school graduate. What next? When I was a little girl, 8 or 9 years old, there was a guy who worked in my Dad's restaurant and he went to Temple University and he and I used to talk about it. When it was time, I only applied to Temple, I applied early admission and got in and I was happy. I didn't know what I was doing; I didn't know who I was doing it with and my Dad said, "Oh you should be a pharmacist." I said, "Okay, I'll be a pharmacist." But I didn't like that. I got through all my chem classes, but I didn't want to stay in that department because I knew I wouldn't like working in that retail environment. I changed my major to Secondary Education, Chemistry and German. That's my actual degree from Temple. Then I have a Masters in Organizational and Educational Psychology from LMU in Munich. We'll get to that.

Yes, tell us about the transition to Germany. How did that come about? Growing up my Oma, Dad's Mom, only spoke German and we had lost our relationship because I only spoke English. So I went to German classes when I got to university. At Temple, they had this amazing program. Since the universities are free tuition in Germany, I was able to go to Germany on a study abroad program without paying Temple's tuition. Being registered at Temple I could still apply for student loans and they provided enough money to cover living expenses in Germany. With a student visa, I was not allowed to work in Germany, but this way it worked out.

I got accepted to the pharmacy program at LMU, but it was tough. In Germany, it's sink or swim. If you don't get it, then you don't deserve to be there. It's free tuition, so there's no money to be made by keeping a student around. If you don't keep up your grades, if you can't handle the material, they will kick you out of school. I loved being in Germany, but realized pharmacy was not for me.

Returning to Temple, I switched my major and utilized all my courses in chemistry and the years speaking German. This time at Temple, I made Dean's list every term and finished with a Bachelor's Degree in Secondary Education, Chemistry and German. Again I headed to Germany to get my Masters in Munich and I really wanted to stay there after graduation, but there were no jobs just then. There were internships available and I got one doing marketing for personnel, like hiring engineers etc.

I found that I loved that work. That was trade show work. It was traveling and meeting people. It was exactly what I wanted. So I looked for jobs in marketing and found one doing marketing for hotels and resorts outside the European market. My job was to do marketing for Caribbean resorts. I loved the job but my boss was just not nice. I mean, really, I get along with everyone, but he was so unfair. And so, after 12 months, I left that company and started my own. That was in 2003. And I've been doing that ever since.

Just in the last couple years, I joined with some other people I had been working with and started a TV production company. We do educational, documentary style programs for clients in the travel industry which we then broadcast to the European national markets. We've done over 140 episodes. For instance we have just broadcast 16 episodes on YouTube for the tourist board of the Island of St Lucia. We did the five boroughs of New York City broadcast in Germany, and we just did a broadcast in Italy for the UN.

Switching gears, somewhere along the line you met Martin and are raising a beautiful family. I met Martin during pharmacy school in 1996. He is an engineer and was one of a group of friends at LMU. We didn't really like each other in the beginning. He had a dialect from a different part of Germany and I couldn't understand him and he thought I was this crazy American girl. But we got to know each other better the next year, then I came back to Philadelphia to finish up my degree. Somehow our relationship survived that two-year break and when I went back to Germany for my Masters, we were together for good.

Martin is a highway engineer. He was a representative for Bavaria and posted to Bonn for three years. When we returned to Munich, houses and apartments were so expensive. Eventually, we started looking outside and found our house in Landshut. It's 45 minutes from Munich and one of the few cities with medieval structures that were not bombed during World War II. We moved here just before Maxi was born. He just went into first grade.

We are raising Laura and Maxi to be totally bilingual. I speak to them in only in English and Martin speaks to them in German and English both. When they watch TV, I make them switch to the English channel if the program has one. Laura is just beginning third grade and she will now have two hours a week of English classes

So there you are. You love your life in Germany, yet you stay connected to Honesdale, more so than many others who just live a state away. Does that strike you as unusual? I think that the further you are away, in the end, it's the more you grasp towards being close. For instance, Martin's Mom lives 30 miles away from us, yet my parents visit us here many more times than his Mom does. I think with proximity, you know that you can go at anytime, but then you don't go anymore. Living far away, I can't just drop in and see my parents for a weekend. It has to be worthwhile and a priority, because you don't know when the next time is going to be.



You were class of 1991. Do you stay in touch with many of your classmates? As a class, we've only had a couple official reunions, then some less formal ones. I stay in touch with several of my friends though, often via FaceBook or during visits back home. For some reason several of us in the class have started our families late. I was in my 40s when I had Maxi and I know several others in their mid-40s who now have very young children.

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PETER JORDAN

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Coming from the middle school to high school, you now have kids that have clearly established themselves as leaders. They are mature enough and adult enough that their input to the future and the vision of this school should be as valuable as anybody's. We want to strive to empower the students and have their input on what this school is going to grow into. We want to make students active decision makers on a daily basis on a range of issues. They will need to make decisions once they get out of school. We want to give them the opportunity to learn that process while they are still here in high school.

Well, I must say, even though it's the same building, that's a lot different than the high school I remember as I roamed the halls in 1965. Thank you for taking the time today to introduce yourself to the HHS alumni.

MIEKE BOZIC

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Well, you really seem to enjoy building your life in Germany. Yes, life in Germany is amazing. For one thing, you get so much for your money. Real estate is expensive, but so much else is not. Food and things like child care and after school programs for the kids are very inexpensive. Everybody gets a minimum of six weeks paid vacation per year. The health care cost is deducted as a percentage of your paycheck. There is no such thing as a job that doesn't offer health care benefits. You can earn less here, but have a nicer lifestyle. I wouldn't trade it. In Germany, there is more of a sense of taking care of each other. The U.S. is more capitalistic and competitive. It's hard to explain to someone living there, but once you are here for awhile, you can feel it. I'm not sure I would be as happy to live in the States anymore.

To conclude, thinking of our current students and recent HHS graduates, do you have any advice for those considering a career path perhaps far afield from Wayne County? You have used the word "bold" several times during our conversation. Yes, I guess I have. I would say, "Be bold." and "Don't be set in your ways." If I had everything mapped out for me, I wouldn't be here. I kind of let myself be guided by my situation. If I saw an opportunity, I took it. I didn't know if it was going to be good or not, but I took it. And that all led me to where I am now and I'm extremely happy for that. I've always been open to learn something new. If you stop taking opportunities, then you just don't grow as a person anymore.

Thank you, Mieke. Those are wise words to end on, so let's just leave it right there.



Scenes from Landshut, Bavaria, Germany - Mieke's hometown

HHS ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The Alumni Association has established a scholarship fund with the Wayne County Community Foundation. The first award from this fund was a \$500 grant that enabled a sophomore student to attend a summer Wildlife Leadership Academy in Lancaster County. The student was enrolled in the new HHS agriculture program, so this academy was a perfect fit to expand on her own study and bring new leadership skills back to benefit her fellow classmates and the school. There are “summer camp” type opportunities available to underclassmen in many academic disciplines, yet there are very few grants dedicated to this category as most established scholarships go to graduating seniors. One objective of the Alumni Association is to fill in this gap. To start making grants on a regular basis, the fund needs to grow at least up to a balance of \$10,000 and be headed upward from there. The balance is already more than halfway to the \$10k point and not that many people know it even exists. So spread the word to your fellow friends and family and consider giving the fund a boost if you are able.

The easiest way to donate to the fund is to visit the “Donate Today” prompt at waynefoundation.org. To donate by check, send it to the Wayne County Community Foundation with "HHS Alumni Fund" in the memo and mail it to 214 Ninth Street Honesdale, PA 18431. They can also accept donations of stock. The Wayne County Community Foundation is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, so all donations are tax-deductible.

By the way, Ryanne Jennings, HHS class of 2005, is the Executive Director of the Wayne County Community Foundation. To reach her about any questions concerning the Foundation, you can email her at rjennings@waynefoundation.org. While you are at their website, be sure to click on “Scholarships” and view the list of funds that have been set up to benefit Honesdale High School and other Wayne County students. And help us get our alumni fund on that list sooner rather than later.

THE DANIEL J. O’NEILL SPORTS COMPLEX

If you graduated before the 1990’s, you missed competing on the sports fields on the other side of Terrace Street. Starting from the football field, cross the elevated walkway over Terrace and you will find:

- > A baseball field
- > A rubberized 400 meter (1/4 mile) track
- > A field hockey pitch inside the track
- > Six paved and sealed tennis courts
- > A softball field

> Then, if you wind along the access road to the elementary schools you will come across two soccer fields. (Up that hill. Yes, you have to walk.)

Next time you are back in Honesdale drive up through that area. It’s a wonderful venue for all those sports with beautiful views out over the valley especially with fall foliage. But one thing for sure - if the wind is blowing anywhere, it’s blowing on that track.



BUILDING OUR LIST OF ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

The school district has very kindly offered to handle the distribution of this newsletter. (Thank you, Mr. Gregory Frigoletto, Superintendent). The primary method will be via email from the school district server, WHSDK12. Perhaps this issue was sent to you by a friend or you found it on a web page or Facebook. Then, you may not be on the main distribution list. If this is the case, just email me at jerry.swendsen@gmail.com and I will get your address to the proper place in time for the next issue.