

F THE HIGHLAND FLING

Northern Highlands Regional High School | 298 Hillside Avenue, Allendale NJ 07401 | Volume 57, Issue 04 | September 2022



The new, 2022-2023, Boomerang Project Ambassadors at Camp Mason this summer for team-bonding.

Photo Courtesy of @wearemba on

GET IN SENIORS, WE'RE PARKING

Class of '23 can now park on campus

Cat Corrado '23

A long-awaited privilege for the seniors has finally arrived—guaranteed senior parking. Each year, as a rite of passage, seniors with cars are allowed to drive themselves to school and park on campus.

"This is extremely special to the seniors as it is their last year at Northern Highlands and they've put their time in to be rewarded with the opportunity to drive and park on campus," Assistant Principal Tony La-Rocca says.

After registering their cars for parking permits, seniors get assigned a parking lot. There are two possible options, the upper lot and the lower lot. There are close to one hundred sixty-five spaces in the upper lot and a little less than one hundred fifty spots in the lower lot.

When the time comes for the administration to decide which students get the upper lot and which get the lower lot the process is "first come, first served," La-Rocca explains.

Continued on Page 8

AMBASSADORS GO AWAY

Boomerang Ambassadors return to their annual summer retreat

Amy Tullett '23

This year's group of Boomerang Project Ambassadors returned to their annual retreat this year. August 28 to 29, the group went off-campus to Camp Mason in Hardwick Township.

The retreat had three main purposes: giving the ambassadors training to become good role models in school, preparing them for leading freshman orientation, and building connections with others.

At freshman orientation, "the ambassadors do the bulk of the work...so they have to train and practice for that," according to

Boomerang Advisor Joseph Kiely.

To prepare the

"I think it's a nice opportunity for them to learn all the things they need in order to help our freshmen."

Principal Joseph Occhino

ambassadors for this at the

retreat, the six Boomerang advisors used their collective experiences from teaching, pulling together things they've done in the classroom or learned in professional development regarding leadership and team-building.

Upon arriving at the Camp and being put into groups, ambassadors immediately began their team bonding activities. These activities involved getting to know everybody's interests and names, while problem solving too.

The ambassadors went into these activities blindly, not knowing exactly why their advisors had them doing them. However, senior

and ambassador Nina Riccardi recalls, "they told us at the end that all the things we just did, we did on our orientation day."

Following each activity, the ambassadors would come back together to discuss the significance of the activity and things to remember when doing them with their freshmen. Once all group activities were done, ambassadors received their partners for the year and then spent time getting to know their partner more, making a planning sheet in preparation for orientation, and learning how to talk to their freshmen to make sure they weren't overwhelmed once

they met in groups with their ambassadors.

Looking back on the retreat, Riccardi says, "I definitely think doing the activities ourselves made them easier to explain on orientation day."

The administration also recognizes the multiple benefits the retreat has to offer, one being camaraderie.

"They're all together. They have to know one another and I think it's a nice opportunity for them to learn all the things they need in order to help our freshmen transition into high school," Principal Joseph Occhino says.

Continued on Page 8

INSIDE



Photo Courtesy of Sophia Rippas '23

Let's Just Be-Real

Hear the newest social media to come to Highlands: Be-Real. Quick, you have two minutes to read the article or you're late!

Page 3



Photo Courtesy of Catherine Corrado '23

AP Art History or AP Selfie?

Students share the photos they collected for the AP Art History summer extra-credit assignment.

Page 12



Tia Charney '23

Friday nights just got exciting

Football Friday's return to Northern Highlands. Check inside for exclusive interviews with members of the team.

Page 16

HABITS AT HIGHLANDS

A new school year brings re-adjustment. Learn how a Highlander is handling change



Photo courtesy of Nina Riccardi '23

Nina Riccardi '23

With changes in season, our bodies and daily lives are bound to adapt. It's as if I almost have an alternate life with each new season to come. When spring comes, my cooler clothes are immediately put away, tucked in containers under my bed, awaiting the arrival of October once again. My dresser and closet are filled with bathing suits, jean shorts, flip-flops, and sunglasses.

But as soon as summer's high 80s wind down to low 60s, my fall persona is back with her apple spice candles and pumpkin cookies. I have an appreciation for all kinds of weather, but I'd have to say I am definitely a fall girl. I live for the back-to-school season as I build back up my routines that have gone into hibernation over the summer. Each year I try to be the girl with a school agenda, who takes notes with fancy pens and dresses nicely for school every day; she dies off pretty quickly mid-way through November though. This year I am going to try to update my regular autumn routines. For starters, I have utilized my calendar app. With college applications looming around the corner,

it's crucial to keep up with deadlines. I've never used the Calendar app before this, but I've now found it to be very useful, especially because you can set an alert for a specific event. So, if you need to meet with a teacher after school on any day, you add the event to Calendar, and then you can receive a notification alert beforehand. Utilizing this app has prevented me from forgetting to do my work at home and kept my schedule organized so I don't miss any meetings. Punctuality and mindfulness are individual responsibilities; it's no one else's fault but your own if you forget a club meeting or miss a due date to submit an essay. Highlands won't make you feel like you're on your own with your sched-

ule, though. Along with the Calendar app, I love the app, Saturn. Highlands does an excellent job keeping the regular ABCD schedule updated as well as adding special schedules for delayed openings or early dismissals. If you're looking for something to manage your time and extracurriculars, there is a new feature on Saturn to help. If you already have the app, I recommend using the private event button. On the homepage

where it shows the class period, there's an addition symbol in the top right corner. Once you click on this button, you can name your event, and then it will bring you to the start date/time and the end date/time. I love this because it keeps you on track. This app does wonders for the new freshmen and incoming transfer students, and is Highlands approved! Another habit I picked up from last school year is using my locker. High-

lands provides these extra spaces for us, and you should take full advantage of it. I use mine for my lunch and jacket when it's chilly in the morning, then go back to grab them at the end of the school day. It's great to not have to carry those things around. While everyone gets settled into the school year, I believe it's important to recognize that traditions can change or start anew. You don't always have to use the color yellow for history or stuff your lunch in your book bag. We all have different habits, and it's safe to say I am excited to get back into my unique fall swing. ■

The Highland Fling

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From the Desk of the Editors-in-Chief

This is our first year of high school. The class of 2026 may be considered freshmen, but just like them, we've never actually had an authentic Highlands school experience. You've heard it (or lived it) probably a million times—freshman year, we went full shut-down. Sophomore year, we returned both virtually or at 1/3 capacity. Junior year, we wore masks. And finally, we become seniors with basically the same amount of an actual Highlands school year under our belts as the freshman—close to zero.

The irony of this being our first real year of high school is that it's also our last. We've aged enough to debate whether lower or upper lot is better, sit in the best cafeteria, and wear backpacks made for 6-year-olds. We're in the midst of a storm of college applications, teacher recommendations, and meetings with our guidance counselors to make sure our transcripts go through. But again, this is a Highlands school year that only parallels the first half of our freshman year.

Honestly, as refreshing as it is, it's also strange how broken microphones and zoom meetings are a thing of the past. It's basically all we've come to know as a Highlands education, and we now have to learn to exist as students where we need to participate, study, and be active members of the Highlands community. It's an adjustment to say the least—and scary to say the most. But it's undeniable that we are lucky to have a true senior year—something that 3 years of past seniors above us didn't have.

So, it's crucial that we savor our first and last year of true high school. As we rush to get into our perfect college and create the future we've dreamed of, we can't forget the moments we will finally get to experience, like football games, pressed sandwiches, and driving to school. Although our new chapter is really only less than a year away, we can't take our last 9 months as Highlanders for granted.

The Editors-in-Chief of the Highland Fling

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National Suicide Prevention Hotline:
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ARE YOU FOR REAL?

How social media has tried to capture the “unfiltered” life



Photo courtesy of Jamie Meyer '23

Jamie Meyer '23

Instagram was supposed to be for sharing fun pictures with friends, but it has grown infamous for its true purpose: showing off the perfect life.

Instagram used to be filled with photos of pets and family gatherings, but now it's for the pictures that were carefully chosen to look effortlessly flawless.

Everyone is happy, on luxurious vacations, at exciting events, hanging out with their closest friends, and wearing the trendiest clothes. Everyone is perfect.

This is an open secret, but it doesn't stop people from comparing themselves

to other people's curated feeds. “Why don't I look that

and what they look like at that exact moment, from both the front and back

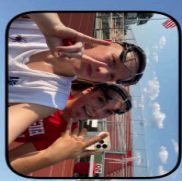


Photo courtesy of Meghan Rourke '23

Senior Meghan Rourke and friends after a long day of practice

pretty? Why aren't I that happy all the time?” Many people, especially impressionable teenagers, ask themselves these questions.

Instagram is insidious for breeding insecurities.

Recently, however, the anti-Instagram appeared: BeReal. This app is the antithesis of curation.

Once a day, at a random time, an alert goes off, prompting users to “be real” by capturing and posting what they're doing

cameras.

It's a breath of fresh air.

After posting, you can see what everyone's doing at that particular time. It's candid. There's no photoshopping blemishes, no tweaking angles. It's as the name suggests: real.

This has revolutionized social media. There is no pressure on BeReal, unlike Instagram. No one is there to look beautiful or inspire jealousy.

They're just there to keep in touch with friends, to briefly glimpse into one another's life.

There's something beautiful about not being frozen with anxiety about

friends? Her BeReal shows her sitting in bed in her pajamas.

She's just like you, which is sometimes hard to remember when scrolling through her perfect Insta-

The same goes for everyone else.

A lot of people have grown anxious and insecure around social media because of this. Honestly, it's hard not to be at least somewhat nervous about posting for seemingly hundreds of judging eyes.

“If everyone else seems perfect, I should try to too, right?” is what a lot of people think.

It's hard to untrain yourself from this mindset. It's hard to remember that Instagram isn't really reflective of reality.

BeReal is likely just another trend, but for a brief time, it's a window into a more unfiltered world: one where people aren't desperately trying to impress. It has helped alleviate anxiety surrounding the online world.

Going forward, even on Instagram, we could all take a page out of BeReal's book and learn to be, well, a bit more real. ■

There's something beautiful about not being frozen with anxiety about how many likes you'll get or who will comment.

how many likes you'll get or who will comment. You just take a picture and close the app.

BeReal has grown very popular with teenagers, especially those at Highlands. It's gotten to the point where some teachers have explicitly stated that students are not allowed to take BeReals in class.

This app has broken barriers.

Your classmate who is always dressed up and with



Photo courtesy of Sophia Ripps '23

Seniors Sophia Ripps, Tess Meloro, Sam Strycharz, and Gigi Bevacqua on a girl's night out

gram.

MUSIC TO MY EARS

What do you want to hear on Music Fridays?



Photo courtesy of Emily Kam '25

Emily Kam '25

Ah, Fridays. The day of the week we all look forward to because Friday brings the weekend, time to hang out with friends, and music in school.

The music on Fridays is a good way to unwind and destress from the busy week. However, what good is music on Fridays if it isn't music that you like?

Should students be able to give their input for the music? Well, I think students should have opportunities to share their tastes in music and give suggestions for Music Fridays.

All songs would be vetted for profanity and anything else inappropriate. With this in mind, I believe students will feel more involved with the school.

Of course, if it's a

special week for a specific event, music can be played to celebrate that event accordingly. Otherwise, I think there should be opportunities for students to suggest songs.

To do so, the student council could help Highlands by sending out a Google Form occasionally. Students can put their favorite songs there. Alternatively, a giant playlist for the school could be made with students contributing to it.

Another question that arises with music Fridays is “should music be played on other days of the week?”

I would love that. I

believe it would make the school atmosphere more engaging and welcoming.

However, I don't think it should be played more than 2-3 times a week since it can disrupt the classroom setting and can be quite loud when trying to talk to friends at times.

All in all, I love Music Fridays, and they have been something I always look forward to.

Having opportunities to participate in these music days would make them even more fun! I can't wait to see the different types of music that'll be playing this year. ■



Art by Emily Gan '23

TRUST YOUR ELDERS

Here's some upperclassman advice YOU should listen to



Photo courtesy of Jiya Singh '24

Jiya Singh '24

As an underclassman, you will, at some point, stress yourself out by worrying about too many things all at once.

Trust me, I'm speak-

not worth it.

You might get wrapped up in what everyone else is doing or what your parents think you should be doing. However, if you follow everyone else's opinion and forget yours, you'll forget the most important part of high school: getting involved and enjoying the experience.

You will stay up to study for that test, just like I spent hours watching YouTube videos about chemistry, only to get a C anyway.

lesson for you: speak to your teachers after school.

They are there to help you with your workload, so utilize them whenever you are struggling.

Lastly, don't put too much on your plate. You owe it to yourself to prioritize the things you want to do.

This doesn't mean you should do nothing, though. Join a couple of the clubs Highlands has to offer or try a new sport. Put yourself out there in the Highlands community.

If you put yourself



Art by Emily Gan '23

ing as someone who used to stay up every night in 6th grade, looking at other people's statistics for colleges that I thought I had no chance of getting into. I'm here to tell you: it's

Eventually, I realized that staying up late only made me space out during the school day, causing me to miss out on important lessons.

So, here is another

first and use the resources Highlands has to offer, all while participating in the community, you'll be on your way to creating a memorable (and fun) high school experience. ■

FRESHMAN VS SENIOR YEAR

Compare two students' journeys entering new grades this school year



Photo courtesy of Sebastian Tabakov '26

Sebastian Tabakov '26

I am a freshman at Northern Highlands Regional High School. My name is Sebastian, and I am from River Vale.

Being an out-of-district student, I couldn't help but have so many thoughts going through my mind. How will I make new friends? Will I maintain the same grades I had in middle school? Will people like me?

There are so many questions on my mind, and I feel like the most pressing one is the most broad one: will I have a good high-school experience?

Personally, the media really influenced what my

juniors, or seniors. And everyone has just been so, simply put, nice.

ever, one of my main goals this year is to maintain my usual grades.

Most of the student body is so willing to help one another, whether it be freshman, sophomores, juniors, and/or seniors.

Along with Highlands being such a thriving environment, the school has more freedom in comparison to middle school.

In a diverse and large school such as Highlands, freshmen feel like they have the chance to reinvent themselves, or just have a chance to be themselves. And this can be extremely inspiring for those who felt stifled in middle school.

Coming from a middle school in a small town with strict rules, the newfound freedom I feel is electrifying and exhilarating.

Highlands gives students room to speak their minds in whatever fashion they find the most comfortable. This allows students

Because freshman year is the beginning of a high school career, it is of the upmost importance to try your best. I plan to earn the same grades that I did in middle school. This may mean missing out sometimes, nonetheless I will feel more rewarded with academic validation.

I comprehend that grades are not everything, so another one of my goals is to form a stable friend group.

Maybe the majority of the high school students act like they just walked out of Big Mouth, but I do think it's very vital to have supportive friends who can cultivate your interests.

In retrospect, I expect a lot out of freshman year. I definitely don't expect a teenage jungle fight or a gossip and croquet session—what I do expect is a year full of fond memories and newly developed friendships.

There is going to be hardship, including missing

In retrospect, I expect a lot out of freshman year.

perception of high school looked like, and essentially what it really is.

Growing up I watched movies like Mean Girls and Heathers, which forced me to believe that high school is a labyrinth of gossip, deceit, and drama.

To my surprise, and yes I'm aware it's only been a week, high school is utterly different. My mindset has made a complete shift from the initial high school image I had in my head.

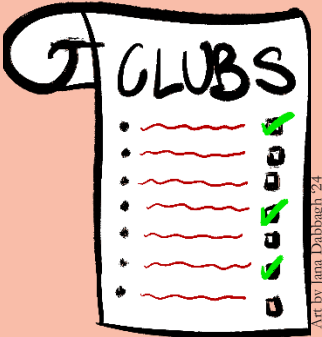
Most of the student body is so willing to help one another, whether it be freshmen, sophomores,

to feel what they have to say is valued.

Yes, I am most excited for the novel freedom, but there are so many other experiences to be excited for.

Football games are coming up along with the start of autumn. Autumn brings along the fall play in its path, and after the play comes the eccentric spring musical. Along with these milestones there are so many more events happening everyday.

With Highlands offering a plethora of extracurricular activities and social events, it may be hard to keep up academically. ow-



Art by Jana Dabagh '24

out, learning more about my friends and myself, or general high school mayhem.

I am ready for my first year of high school to be about growth and change. ■

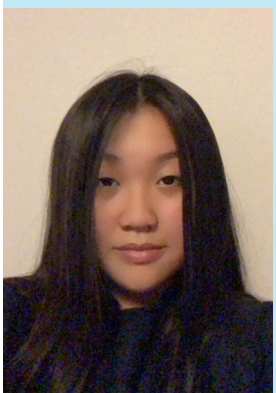


Photo courtesy of Mia Wang '23

Mia Wang '23

The class of 2023 has had a rough high school journey.

We latched onto what we thought was the ideal high school experience back in freshman year, and used it to persevere throughout the virtuality of our sophomore and junior

There are some things I was sad about missing, such as the Six Flags field trip and the cancellation of various club activities during sophomore year. I'll miss my Honors Physics class in 9th grade.

I'll miss my favorite teachers. I'll miss mixing the hot sauce and ranch during freshman year to soak my fries in. These are just some of the little things that made my experience at Highlands so memorable.

Being a senior now feels unreal. I felt like these four years soared by me, and I wasn't even physically in the building for half of it. I haven't even taken a single high school final.

Highlands has such a tight-knit community that I've seen throughout the four years I've been here.

I didn't really have any expectation for what high school was going to be like.

ninety minute lunches, football games, and choosing my backpack for senior year. My mindset going into this year is pretty positive, since I have lots of friends in my classes and amazing teachers.

I'm looking forward to completing my college applications so I can relax a bit. I'm also thrilled about after graduation, since my friends and I are planning to take a trip to Asia in June/July.

I want to thank Northern Highlands for being so helpful and supportive for such an important 4 years of my life.

years.

Going into high school, I didn't really have any expectations for what my experience was going to be like. After freshman year being cut short due to the pandemic, I felt that all my connections I had made with new friends would

I'm looking forward to completing my college applications so I can relax a bit.

be cut short – and my prediction remained true for about a year.

However, I was able to reconnect with them junior year, but only from a distance.

Even during the pandemic, there have been various virtual activities being offered to prevent isolation among the students. From cheering during our football games to volunteering for organizations, our school spirit seems to never die down.

Although I mentioned lots of memorable experiences, some parts of high school were extremely stressful. Especially junior year, when I was overwhelmed with school work and studying for the ACTs. Now, in senior year, I have to worry about both my difficult classes and college applications.

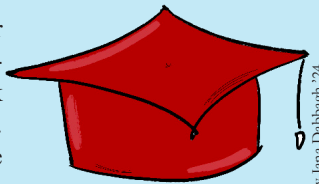
Initially, I thought high school would not be this stressful, however junior and senior year definitely changed my opinion.

Some of my favorite experiences included the

I definitely feel like I'm ready for college.

Getting good AP scores this year will be crucial since I want to start college with a few credits, so I'm hoping senioritis won't affect me.

Overall, I'm eager to start the new school year since this is my last year of high school. I will miss



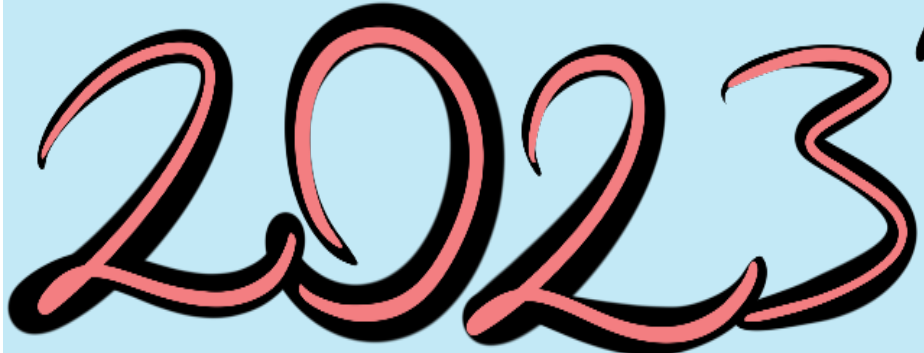
Art by Jana Dabagh '24

my long term friends and teachers who taught me such valuable lessons.

I want to thank Northern Highlands for being so helpful and supportive during such an important four years of my life. ■



Art by Jana Dabagh '24



Art by Jana Dabagh '24

ARE WE FINALLY...BACK TO NORMAL?

Our first “normal school year” since 2019



Photo courtesy of Sienna Shrier '25

Sienna Shrier '25

It feels like yesterday that I was a 7th grader sitting in my classroom being told that we had two weeks off from school. I remember the excitement my

But the two weeks turned into a month and one month turned into two months and that turned into an entire school year of virtual learning.

In March 2020, I never knew that it would be the last time for an entire year that I went to a restaurant, played field hockey, or lived a normal life.

Everyday of 2020 was a blur: virtual learning, riding my bike, baking with my sister, and staying up watching movies all night.

I didn't get to see any of my friends until June and even then it was behind a mask and 6 feet away.

The heart of the pan-

interactions.

Every summer I always looked forward to sleepaway camp. That

big trip to Washington, DC. was canceled. I never got the iconic 8th grade experience.

We have all grown so much since 2020 and things can only get better from here.

summer it was canceled, of course, so I spent most of my summer at home with my family.

In 2021, I started 8th grade, and we finally got some normalcy back. I went into school in masks for about 2 hours a day and the rest of the day was virtual.

There were no switching classes and we were constantly being quarantined.

All of the events 8th graders would normally have were canceled. There were no field trips, high school visits, and even our

school, we finally got back into a full day of school. One of the biggest struggles was that masks were mandatory, and we still had constant quarantine periods.

I am now a sophomore and wow, does time fly. This school year is supposed to be “normal”, but in my mind the world is too unpredictable.

It will be good to have some normalcy in our school this year. But although masks are optional at Northern Highlands this year, Covid is still out there. It may not seem like

that big of a deal anymore but this pandemic has really caused a lot of problems for everyone.

People lost loved ones, people drifted from friends, and people were isolated, stuck in their homes for months. We have all grown so much since 2020 and things can only get better from here.

I don't know what the future will hold, but I think that if we can all stay positive and take proper Covid safety precautions, we can go back to the way the world was before the pandemic. ■

When I started my freshman year of high



Photo courtesy of NHHS Twitter @nhhs1

Highlands welcomes the class of 2026 as the new school year begins.

The heart of the pandemic was very hard for me because I felt isolated.

classmates and I had.

demic was very hard for me because I felt isolated. There were no face-to-face

TEACHER'S CORNER

Learn all about a great addition to our school staff



Photo courtesy of Taylor Rehe

Taylor Rehe

My name is Ms. Rehe and I teach Instrumental Music, AP Music Theory, and Guitar Academy, as well as work with several extra-curricular ensembles.

This is my first year at Highlands, but I've been teaching since February 2017.

I graduated from Rutgers University in January 2017 (and again in May 2022!).

Since graduating, I've taught grades 5-12 music, including band, chorus, general music, piano, music production, and AP Music Theory, in addition to many musical extra curricular activities.

I've moved around quite a bit (come talk to me about it, I'm happy to

share), but I learned to embrace each job as an opportunity to make me a more rounded music teacher.

I didn't always want to be a music teacher. Up until my senior year of high school, I was all set to go to college to be a veterinarian.

I've always loved animals, and my first job (and only job before teaching full time) was working at a vet's office before/after hours to take care of the animals staying in the kennel.

I took all of the AP

So, in the fall of my senior year I switched gears and started the application and audition process to music school, and I haven't looked back since.

I like to tell this story because I like to let everyone know that it's okay to not know what you want to do beyond high school yet, and it's okay to change your mind! Just because you have a knack or a gift in one subject doesn't mean that you have to pursue that for the rest of your life.

I like to tell this story because I like to let everyone know that it's okay to not know what you want to do beyond high school yet, and it's okay to change your mind!

courses that I could in high school, especially in math and science, and my friends and I even joked that we took AP lunch.

However, it just wasn't something I was passionate about. My senior year consisted of 4 music classes and 4 non-music classes, and I was only really enjoying the music classes.

As my professors in college would remind us, “hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work”. You can be successful in anything that you work hard at and put your mind to.

Find your passion and follow that, wherever it may take you! ■



Photo courtesy of NHHS Twitter @nhhs1

Ms. Rehe pictured in the school library (middle) along side new staff for this school year.



Art by Jana Dabagh '24

IN A WORLD OF PURE IMAGINATION

An honors course for Sci-Fi and Fantasy has been added to the Northern Highlands 2022-23 curriculum

Laney McCrossin '26

With a new school year comes new opportunities, and this year's Honors Sci-Fi and Fantasy students are no stranger to this prospect. Honors Sci-Fi and Fantasy is a new course being offered this year.

It is being taught by English teachers: Zach Stephens, Joe Intermaggio, Danielle Walsh, and Jennifer Winkler. It is an expansion of the College Prep (CP) Sci-Fi and Fantasy course that has been taught in previous years.

CP Sci-Fi and Fantasy grew immensely popular, and in return, many students requested that an honors course be added to the curriculum.

"Let's face it. Everybody likes to take an hon-

ors class. It's different. It's more challenging," says Principal Joseph Occhino.

Once acknowledging the request for an honors class, teachers were able to evaluate the curriculum to judge whether an honors class could be created.

Occhino stated that,

"We read and view works about time travel and debate topics of historical relativism and ponder the existential questions of life.

I mean, who wouldn't want to do that?"

Teacher Danielle Walsh

"the teachers felt that the rigor of the course did allow for an honors level. There's more that students can be exposed to

when compared to what they acquire academically at the CP level. With this in mind, the course does provide the rigor of an honors level course."

This was to the excitement of many students who were interested in Sci-Fi and Fantasy. In fact,

so many students wanted to take this course that there are seven sections of Honors Sci-Fi and Fantasy running its first year.

There are many reasons as to why the course was so appealing.

"The genres of science fiction and fantasy are both fun and challenging. They fire our imaginations and encourage our creativity, while at the same time engaging us in deep ethical, moral, and philosophical conversations," Walsh says.

Many students were also took interest in the course from hearing how riveting the CP course was. "I chose to sign up for this class because I heard how interesting the CP level was from some of my friends," senior Kate Pedicano said.

Aside from the pure enjoyment of taking this class, students can expect to be challenged by the intensity of the course that comes with tak-

ing it at an honors level.

As stated by Walsh, "both the CP and Honors levels of the course cover similar critical lenses and pose the same philosophical and ethical questions. However, as with other honors English courses, Honors Sci-Fi/Fantasy presents a sophisticated level of reading and writing in greater quantities than one might find in a CP course."

Although the class can at times be challenging, many students agree that the workload so far has been feasible.

"So far we've been analyzing fables and I think me and other students can agree that the work we have been doing has been manageable and at a nice pace," senior Keeret Kaur says.

The class provides

a variety of engaging materials of study, including popular movies and television shows.

Walsh explains, "we consider how gender ideologies are represented in fairy tales, and then apply what we've learned to Shrek. We also view an Adventure Time episode (or two) and analyze The Matrix, all while considering the nature of reality and the pros and cons of technology. We read and view works about time travel and debate topics of historical relativism and ponder the existential questions of life. I mean, who wouldn't want to do that?"

As Honors Sci-Fi & Fantasy progresses, its curriculum will maintain a fun mix between literature and science fiction. ■

RISE AND SHINE HIGHLANDS

The Morning Show returns, with some changes

Matthew Reichert '24

The morning show is back but not the same. It never is, with a rotating cast of dedicated students each year brings fresh ideas coming together with the goal of pushing the show forward.

TV production teacher Justin Nadal says he is especially proud of the way the morning show opens.

story for an introduction.

The over-the-top enthusiasm displayed by the people on screen pervades a joy that can't help but impart itself on the viewer.

Past segments, such as "Jake's Take", blend a genuine passion in the student to create something, while still delivering information to Highlanders.

The show serves as a news program for the stu-

Highlands students.

Students didn't seem to express any preference for either, however, the morning show is shown in home-room and students seemed to have a greater familiarity with it.

Both are valuable resources for both informing the student body and also teaching those who participate a discipline.

Students can participate in the show through the class or club that teaches students how to work in broadcasting.

There is work beyond being on camera, from working the camera, teleprompter, or being technical director and editing the show together. The show even has students serve as producers.

The freedom the show has allows students to be creative while still delivering the information necessary and providing an education in broadcasting that may spark one to pursue it

The freedom the show allows students to be creative while still delivering the information necessary and providing an education in broadcasting that may spark one to pursue it as a career makes it an appealing assignment.

This fits the similar enthusiasm he and the staff of the show share for the beginning of a new year of broadcasts.

It has not been without its challenges, though. A former member remarked on the difficulties of making a virtual broadcast and managing the time on the show. There are multiple excited students trying to get their ideas into a slim five minutes.

The content is supervised by Nadal but in the creation of that content the students remain autonomous.

From that freedom, creativity can present itself. Even something as simple as the weather has spawned a complex black and white

dents. It covers announcements, weather, sports, and



The staff of the "Lowdown" getting ready to record a new segment

among other items even has featured student opinions similar to the Highlands Voices sections, but with its own distinct style.

The paper and the broadcast are very similar in their goal of both entertaining and informing

as a career.

The show will continue to develop into a bigger creative medium for Highlanders in the future. ■

RETURN TO PRE-COVID ERA

Highlands re-discovers what a "normal" school year is

Kaitlynn Karoleski '23

September 6th marked the first normal start of the school year since 2019.

With mask mandates being a thing of the past and the cafeteria finally serving pressed sandwiches again, all four grades are experiencing their first completely normal year of high school.

With Covid shutting down the world during the last three months of school in 2020, not even seniors have had a full, normal year of high school yet.

Perhaps the biggest change that makes school reassemble the way it did at the start of the 2019-2020 school year is the change in the atmosphere during the first few weeks of school.

Principal Joseph Occhino says, "just the fact that we're able to come back here with no masks on and see the smiles on people's faces is amazing." This is helping break down the barrier preventing students from making connections with their classmates.

Senior Emily Reilly exclaims, "I'm really excited to experience my first normal year of high school without having to worry about Covid anymore.

Since my freshman year was cut short and the past two years have been so affected by the virus, I think all of the seniors are ready to finally have our first real year of high school, although it's sad that it will also be our last."

The return to normalcy also allows administrators to start focusing more on things other than Covid.

"For me personally, the fact that I don't have to spend so much time dealing with Covid policies and communication about cases and numbers within our school which allows me to shift my focus to other things that need my attention," says Occhino.

He continues on, "the amount of work [the administration] had to do behind the scenes to at least provide an education for students during Covid was nonstop. When you deal with something of that magnitude of importance, it takes away from all other things that you enjoy doing."

It's safe to say that everyone: teachers, students, administrators, and staff alike — are more than ready to shift their focus away from Covid and more toward the academics and

social events that school is all about.

Another major change this school year is the termination of virtual learning altogether.

According to Dr. Tony LaRocca, Vice Principal of Student Affairs, "If you're out of school because you're sick, stay home and get better and reach out to your teachers for work that you missed. We're treating Covid the same way we would treat any other illness."

This has been a slow adjustment, just beginning with a shortened quarantine of five days.

With the removal of the alternative virtual instruction for students who test positive for Covid, it makes the disease seem like every other illness that we deal with, something many people have been pushing for for years.

Starting the school year without social distancing and masks and bringing back the excitement for clubs and sports games have been major contributors to starting off the school year in the best way possible, and Highlanders are ready for a regular year of learning. ■



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SUMMER ACADEMY SLAYS

Highlands accomplishes another year of successful summer academy

Brook Xu '24

The Northern Highlands Summer Academy is a recently developed program that began last year, the summer of 2021. A selection of courses are available to be taken over the summer that students may not have had the opportunity to take during the school year.

The Academy runs all summer from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm, Monday through Thursday. For the past summer, Session 1 took place from June 27 to July 13. Session 2 started on July 14 and ended on July 27.

There are so many different courses in the curriculum with only a few elective spots available on a student's schedule. That being said, there are also classes that need to be taken to fulfill the state requirement.

For many students, it can be a stressful ordeal to have to take certain classes during the school year and not be able to take the classes that they'd like to.

Classes at Northern Highlands are cheaper in cost compared to outside classes, with high quality education from teachers

in the building. Students are able to knock out state requirements, take an elective, or even a core class.

Since its inception, the program offered Financial Management, Geometry, Honors Biology/Lab, and Honors Chemistry/Lab.

The Financial Management class completes the financial literacy graduation requirement. It is a popular class, the only class that takes course over a three week period, or half of the summer session. In addition,

a good grade in Honors Biology.

New to this summer, the academy brought in two additional courses: Algebra II/Trigonometry, and Computer Aided Design. These courses have welcomed many new students into the program.

This past summer ran smoothly for the NH Summer Academy with around 70 students enrolled in its courses.

"We have been here all summer and have not had

request certain classes they would like to take over the summer.

One of the classes many students wanted to take was Ceramics. The Summer Academy runs on the amount of tuition paid, so the more students that enroll in a class, the more likely it will be taking place.

Susan Spencer, the Summer Academy coordinator, emphasizes her wish to add more courses outside of just math and science related classes. She has new ideas for those who are looking to take classes in the arts or humanities.

"To explore the opportunity of having a mini class trip for the arts where students spend most of their time in the classroom but spend one day of the week at a museum," Spencer explained.

The future is looking bright for the Summer Academy as they hope to expand their course choices.

Vice Principal Tony LaRocca mentions "Our goal is to continue to grow, to offer more, not only just advancements in math and science, but in other subjects as well." ■

New to this summer, the academy brought in two additional courses: Algebra II/Trigonometry, and Computer Aided Design.

tion, there is the option to take the class online, which may serve conveniently for many people.

Geometry, Honors Biology/Lab, and Honors Chemistry/Lab are common classes that students take over the summer for those who would like to advance to a higher class. In this case, a student may be planning to take AP Biology in the fall by filling the class requirement of getting

any issues," Principal Joseph Occhino said.

The only downside is missed classes are non-refundable. Students are encouraged to attend all classes.

In hopes of attracting more students in the future, the academy plans to include even more courses. At the end of the year, a feedback form was given out to students. Students are able to comment and

AP SEMINAR

New course offering at Highlands

Eric Koo '26

AP Seminar is a new course that Highlands is offering this year. Taught by Mrs. Julie Goldberg, AP Seminar is a prerequisite for AP Research.

A large part of the decision making in implementing this new course was to fill a niche for teaching about note taking and studying in efficient ways.

When asked, Principal Joseph Occhino highlights how, "Mrs. Goldberg who teaches this class has been wanting to teach a class and she is all about research." As a certified English teacher, Ms. Goldberg is experienced as well as passionate, and according to Occhino, a great fit for teaching this class.

AP Seminar is being taught with the intention of helping students understand and improve their methods of studying.

"That's what this course is all about, advanced research."

Occhino comments.

This course is made up of two parts, AP Seminar and Research. The main goal of AP Seminar and AP Research is to help students become more involved and interested in advanced research.

Vice Principal Dr. Tony LaRocca expounds on the benefits of this course, saying, "The topic in itself is an umbrella to the many different types of courses we have to offer... so having a well-tuned skillset in how to conduct research will help you in the courses that you take."

As Ms. Goldberg puts it best, "AP Seminar is challenging and engaging, and builds skills that students will need for other high school classes, college courses, and even their careers!" ■



Photo Courtesy of the College Board

SANDWICHES, SALADS, AND SATISFIED STUDENTS

With a new start comes exciting changes to the Highlands Cafeteria post Covid years

Rebecca Hoffer '23

As a new year begins at Northern Highlands, there are some additions and changes to the cafeteria.

Seniors remember the salad bar and hot deli sandwiches, but for underclassmen, these are new selections for lunchtime.

Alongside the new selections in the cafeteria, there are also some new rules that are being implemented for various reasons.

Last year, the salad bar was closed due to Covid restrictions and students wanting salad could choose between different premade salads for their meals. Now, the salad

bar is back in full swing, offering many different topping choices, ranging from fruit salad to cheese.

The toppings also change depending on the

Changes, no matter when they occur, help to keep everything fresh and running smoothly.

day and the week, so there will constantly be different toppings circling in and out of the cafeteria.

Even upperclassmen are noticing the changes and have positive remarks. Senior Lynn Heo says, "I'm

very excited to have the salad bar back. It helps to keep things interesting and even as a senior, I'm not bored to eat lunch every day. I love the variety of the

toppings and the strawberries are a new must-have."

The hot sandwiches are also back in the cafeteria. Students can either pre-order or order their sandwiches during lunch like in previous

years, but they can now choose to have a hot sandwich, along with the special add-ons for hot sandwiches such as crispy chicken.

These new additions to the cafeteria aren't only exciting for the students, but for the staff at Northern Highlands as well.

Principal Joseph Occhino mentions, "the addition of the salad bar and hot sandwiches is mostly due to the fact that we now have our full kitchen staff back. Chef David was very excited when he announced to me that we would have a full staff for the first time in two years. Having more people a part of the kitchen al-

lowed us to make these additions for this school year."

Another change to the cafeteria this year is that backpacks are no longer allowed in the lines in the cafeteria.

The backpacks were a major contributor to the long lunch lines. With the elimination of the backpacks, there is more space for students to move around and get on and off the lunch lines.

The use of student IDs to pay for lunches is also being introduced this year.

On the back of this year's student ID's, there is a QR code. The QR codes can be scanned at

the cash registers and log your information in for the cashiers automatically.

The hope of this is to speed up the process of paying and make lines move faster.

Additionally, this will eliminate any communication issues for lunch codes, being that with the old system, students would go up to pay for their lunch and have to say their ID out loud to access their funds.

Changes, no matter when they occur, help to keep everything fresh and running smoothly in the cafeteria. ■



The sandwich station getting all prepared for the next school lunch block

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ORIENTATION READY

Summer retreat readies ambassadors for freshmen orientation

Continued from Page 1

Occhino also recognizes the similarities between the ambassadors and athletic teams and the value of them spending time together, saying “a lot of teams now go away, just to get the teams together and kind of have a bonding moment. Many of our teams do that before games, it’s a nice thing for the ambassadors to do.”

More on the side of the Boomerang advisors, “it allowed them to touch base with their ambassador groups...to have a well-focused plan for the start of the year, which they weren’t really able to do the

last couple of years,” Assistant Principal Tony LaRocca says.

This year’s retreat was the first retreat in four years to take place off of North-ern Highlands’ campus.

With regard to the 2019 ambassador retreat that was held at Highlands even though Covid restrictions were not an issue, the Boomerang advisors “thought it went alright but definitely isn’t the same if it’s not done somewhere else,” Kiely says.

Kiely also recognizes that, “being somewhere else makes it a little more special; people are sleeping in a place they’re not comfortable in, but everyone’s

kind of in it together.”

LaRocca shares similar sentiments, saying, “with the ability to congregate in large settings like that, especially overnight and on a bus, we were able to set that time aside for the ambassador advisors to relay the message they wanted to the ambassadors.”

Following the retreat, ambassadors put their newly learned leadership skills and plans into action at freshman orientation which “really went off without a hitch and it was really wonderful,” LaRocca remarked. ■



Ambassadors getting to know each other!

Photo Courtesy of @wearehella on Instagram



Ambassadors planning for orientations

Photo Courtesy of @wearehella on Instagram

HONK IF YOU LOVE SENIORS!

A reminder about senior parking privileges and a look inside the lots

Continued from Page 1

“My experience in the lower lot has been really good. I am really excited to finally be able to park at school and be able to wake up a little bit later in the morning,” senior Lily Rodriguez says.

“I am easily able to find a parking spot and recently, when I have left the lot in the afternoon, the traffic hasn’t been too bad,” Rodriguez shared.

Alanna Breen, a senior assigned to the upper lot, also gave her feedback. “I think both lots have their positives and negatives. Even though the lower lot is further from the school,

some say it is easier to get out of the parking lot from there. Also, if you are planning to stay at school later than dismissal and you are assigned to the upper parking lot, you are required to move your car to the lower lot after school, which might be a hassle for some students.”

In previous years, the biggest issue in the parking lots has been non-seniors parking in the seniors’ spaces.

“Right now, not a lot of juniors are of the age to drive but as the year goes on, more and more juniors are going to have their license and are going to want to drive to school.

Unfortunately, we don’t have enough space to accommodate all of the junior drivers in addition to all of the senior drivers. In our handbook it is stated that the senior parking lot is a senior privilege...It’s unfortunate that we don’t have the space for everyone with a license to park but that’s the reality, there won’t be an infinite amount of space,” LaRocca states.

If any student other than a senior parks in one of the lots without a permit, disciplinary actions are outlined in the student handbook.

For the first offense, the punishment is a Saturday detention. After multi-

ple offenses, a student’s senior parking privileges will be revoked.

“We have sent emails in previous years. We’ve run license plates and we have given Saturday detentions to the students parking in the parking lot without permission. That will happen again. It is not fair for the seniors who have waited and have earned that privilege to show up and not be able to get a spot because someone else has unauthorizedly parked,” LaRocca warned. ■



The Class of '23's cars lining the Upper Lot.

Tara Charney '23

SAY GOODBYE TO THE LATE BUS

Upper Saddle River late bus to no longer run due to decreased need.

Griffin Evans '24

Northern Highlands students from Upper Saddle River could often rely upon the late bus for a ride home, whether it be for

clubs or extra help, if a parent or guardian was preoccupied with work or other responsibilities.

Unfortunately, due to an increase in transportation costs, the later bus to

Upper Saddle River is no longer available effective immediately upon students return to school in September.

Upper Saddle River was the last town to drop the late bus, meaning the late bus will no longer be available for any town.

“We had a late bus to Ho-Ho-Kus, that was done away years ago because of budget constraints,” Principal Joseph Occhino states.

The cut was made due to an increase of approximately 45% to 200% per bus route.

Although, it’s necessary to get students to and from school during the

school day, but it’s not necessary, in some people’s eyes, to pick students up at four-thirty in the afternoon,” says Occhino.

However, getting access to a ride home in the immediate future is difficult for many students who have working parents and cannot drive.

While a student may feel motivated to drive their fellow students home, their license would not allow them to drive more than a single passenger that is not a parent or guardian.

“Having club advisors drive students home would be a challenge. As per school policy there must be

another adult present in the car and the policy only cov-

erages as its impact goes beyond the Highlands community.

“I understand it’s not easy... and it’s an unfortunate situation and I know that,” commented Occhino on the situation.

Despite this inconvenience, Highlanders from Upper Saddle River will be sure to navigate alternative ways home just as students from other towns have. ■

The cut was made due to an increase of approximately 45% to 200% per bus route.

ers driving students to and from a school activity, and not to the student’s home,” explained Occhino.

The late bus issue is

“We had a late bus to Ho-Ho-Kus, that was done away with years ago because of budget constraints. The same thing has now happened with Upper Saddle River.”

Principal Joseph Occhino

ROKOSZAK’S FINAL BOW AT HIGHLANDS

After teaching for over 35 years at NHRHS, Laura Rokoszak has retired

Michael Reifman ’23

Preface: How do you encapsulate thirty-five years of dedication and hard work in just one article? That was what felt like the impossible question to answer while writing this piece. Typically, this article would have been included in the June edition of the Highland Fling, not the September issue, but considering that this is our first September without her teaching it only felt right to make a special note of it now.

This spring, after thirty-five years here at Highlands, Laura Rokoszak has retired from teaching. Rokoszak began her journey by getting a B.A. from Trinity College. She then went on to get two masters degrees from Montclair State University.

Rokoszak says that after college, her first two years of teaching were at a preparatory school in Connecticut. Then she interviewed at Northern Highlands and has been with the school ever since.

She further details that she was “one of the few people that transitioned from the original staff to the current one. When I got here in 1986, the school had only been around for 21 years, the Founding Principal and Vice-Principal were still here when I joined the staff.”

In her first year here, she assisted with plays and got the opportunity to choreograph a couple of musicals. Slowly but surely, she transitioned over the years to directing these plays.

Interestingly, Rokoszak says that she was “never planning a career in theater but [she] kind of made it a part of [her] career by teaching and directing.”

One of her favorite musicals that she has put on in her career, she actually did twice. She directed “How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying” over twenty years ago and then got to do it

again about two years back in 2020.

Kate Post (NH class of 2020) says that “when she asked for suggestions for musicals, I had always wanted to do one of the older shows so we could wear cool costumes... my junior and senior year we got to do shows like that with Rokoszak and I loved it.”

Post added that all her shows were “always a ton of fun. She was so organized and encouraged all of us to learn our lines

you only hear positive stories about her.”

Connor Strycharz (NH Class of 2020) says that his favorite show memory with Rokoszak actually occurred during his freshman year.

The night before the show, there had been a gas leak in Allendale and nobody was allowed in the building, even though it was the group’s last dress rehearsal. Strycharz says that “Mrs. Rokoszak had anyone with a song in the show over to her house...

“When you say Mrs. Rokoszak’s name, people’s immediate reaction is just ‘yes’, then you only hear positive stories about her.”
Junior Connor Acer

early on. She always had her act together... I really respected her for that.”

Rokoszak says that How to Succeed “holds a very warm spot in [her] heart because it was one of the first musicals [she] directed and then also the last one. [She] knew going into it that it was going to be my last one and nobody else did except for Mr. Kiely.”

The show holds special meaning for a lot of its cast members, including current junior Connor Acer. It was Acer’s first high school production and allowed him to get to know Rokoszak on a greater level. Acer says that even during tech week, which was one of the most “strenuous times of [his] life”, Rokoszak was still there and always supportive.

Even when he thought to himself, “oh gosh, I have to go perform Brotherhood of Man sixteen more times” he knew that, “everytime she would tell [the cast] it was great, it truly felt like [they] had done great, which meant a lot.”

Acer says that, “when you say Mrs. Rokoszak’s name, people’s immediate reaction is just ‘yes’, then

[they] sat in her living room and just sang together. It was just so sweet and honestly a memory from high school that will stick with [him] forever.”

Post gave another memory saying that Rokoszak would write letters to entire cast before a show. She says that “on opening



Rokoszak (center) taking a photo with her period 8 class

night you could find yours taped to your dressing room mirror... I just loved that she did that and I still have all of mine.”

Joseph Kiely, friend and colleague of Rokoszak, conveyed that “Laura maintains relationships with people and people want to maintain relationships with her. It’s very like her to bring people back to work on projects years later.”

Kiely says that one of his favorite memories was during production of Once Upon a Mattress, when Rokoszak brought back a former student to do the set design.

Another relationship that Rokoszak maintains has been with Matthew James (NH Class of 2019).

James says that “she attended both of my last two personal projects... I just think it’s awesome to have a teacher support you like that.” James says that, like Post, he has kept all

his “before show” letters from Rokoszak and that they mean a lot to him.

Beyond directing, Rokoszak has also taught over 11 different English courses at Highlands. This year, that included American Literature, Introduction to Acting, and different levels of Actors’ Workshop.

Rokoszak voices that “[she likes] to laugh in class and get kids engaged.” One of her favorite things to teach to students has been The Great Gatsby in American Literature. However, she says that, “with my acting classes, any time we’re reading a contemporary play or doing scenes, it’s fun.”

Strycharz mentions how “in the school day, her class was just a moment of respite from all the typical high school stuff. You just got to go in and act or read a play. There was no other class that allowed you to do that.”

Current junior Michael Pontecorvo had Rokoszak for Actors Workshop and felt similarly. “It’s a very cozy and welcoming environment. If you’re ever feeling the weight of a day, you just kind of shed that

what I was doing.”

While talking about her class environment, Rokoszak says that, “I started in the era of teaching where I was told don’t smile until Christmas, that’s the only way to get kids to behave. I disagree with that, I think teaching kids that you can be respectful and kind... that’s typically what you get back from them. Also, it was impossible for me never to smile until Christmas.”

She adds that she focuses on “emphasizing a culture of kindness in her classroom.”

Acer says that through this motto of kindness and dedication, “everyone in the department has been shaped or molded by Mrs. Rokoszak, in some way, including Mr. Kiely.”

Rokoszak has been family friends with the Kielys for years. He says, “in pre-k, my youngest brother, Tom, was in the child-development class here. They became friends and our families have been intertwined in the 23 or so years since then.”

Kiely has been involved with the musical for four years working with Rokoszak in one capacity or another. He says, “Anyone who has worked with her knows what it’s like... it’s professional and compassionate. She puts the students first and their wellbeing above everything.”

Anderson’s family also cherishes their personal relationship with Rokoszak. He reveals that “she became close with my older brother first and then the rest of my family... it’s really great the kind of relationships our families have together. We love

“Selfishly for me, I wish it was one more year... but I don’t think Roko disappears with this. I think her influence is still gonna be felt in the school”

Junior Michael Pontecorvo

monologues, I hadn’t had much experience in acting, and with monologues you’re just there on the stage putting yourself out there, it can be difficult. She really guided me and would even stop me, never to criticize me, but rather to help me improve upon

each other.”

On the topic of her retirement, Anderson says, “She’s earned it... I know not everyone is as lucky as me to have worked with her all four years and I just wish her the best. She’s built up such a great and welcoming community



Headshot of Laura Rokoszak

that I have faith it will be ok.”

Pontecorvo agrees but says, “selfishly for me, I wish it was one more year... but I don’t think Roko disappears with this. I think her influence is still gonna be felt in the school.”

Rokoszak affirms that retirement was always something she had been considering when she turned sixty.

One of the things she will miss the most, though, is “the English department banter... a remarkably clever group of individuals and between the sass and the sarcasm. I will just miss the pure unadulterated humor.” She says that she will be “begging them to keep [her] in the group chat.”

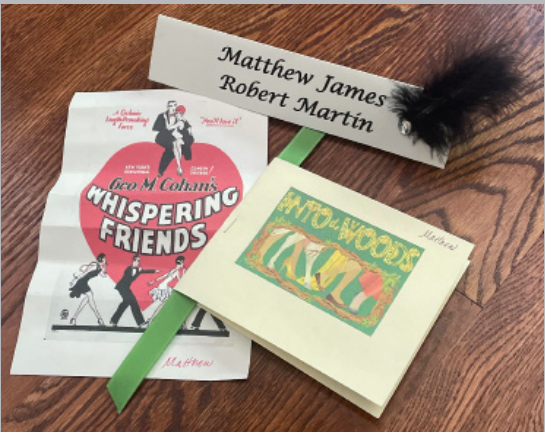
Kiely adds that the English teacher group chat should be “printed and hung in the Museum of Modern Art.”

A few students had something to say about her leaving though. Strycharz wanted her to know that “acting teachers, if they’ve had an impression on you, have by proxy made you a better person. I’m not really aware of the amount of gratitude it takes to repay someone for that, how much it takes to thank someone for simply making you a better person. So while words can hardly do that, I suppose I just have to say thank you, I am eternally grateful.”

Acer says that “there will be a Mrs. Rokoszak shaped hole in the wall for a long time.”

“It was a foundational wall,” Kiely agrees upon hearing this. “I think this will be a loss felt in the school in every department. She is somebody that everyone goes to for advice... she had this very special perspective that we are all going to miss.”

Rokoszak puts it simply, saying, “Highlands has been like a second home to me.” ■



Matthew James’ cast member gift from Rokoszak

Photo Courtesy of Matthew James

Welcome

New Teachers

Jennifer Winkler



Ciara Shulmann '23

Is an Honors science fiction and English 9 teacher this year. She used to be an attorney working at a law firm in Morristown, NJ before coming to Highlands. Ms. Winkler was eager to work in a district with exceptional students and staff which is why she came to Highlands.

Elizabeth Homan



Caleigh Amano '23

Is teaching Biology and Sports Medicine this year. She worked in the pharmaceutical industry for 29 years, doing everything from research to building a start-up pharmaceutical company. Mrs. Homan came to Highlands because she had always had a desire to teach high school biology so when she retired from pharmaceuticals, she decided to pursue this dream. Her three children also graduated from Highlands and had great experiences.

Taylor Rehe



Kaitlyn Harle '23

Is teaching band, AP music theory, and guitar academy this year. Most recently, she worked at Central Middle School in Long Hill, NJ, teaching grades 6-8 band, chorus, drama, and general music. Ms. Rehe came to Highlands with the opportunity to help rebuild a music program and make it his own - She has always enjoyed teaching high school the most, so this was an opportunity she couldn't pass up.

Nicole Martino



Tanvi Koduru '25

Is a new math teacher who is from Hillsdale and teaches Basic Algebra, Algebra 1, and Algebra 2/Trigonometry. She came to Highlands from Park Ridge High School because she heard about the school's good reputation and high-achieving students. After being at Northern Highlands, she loves the community and that all the teachers are very collaborative and very quick to answer her questions.

Catherine DeVincentis



Ciara Shulmann '23

Is a Special Education teacher working with the Chemistry Department this year. She worked in Hackensack for 17 years and is ready to go back to teaching full time now that her own children are twelve and nine.

David Cord



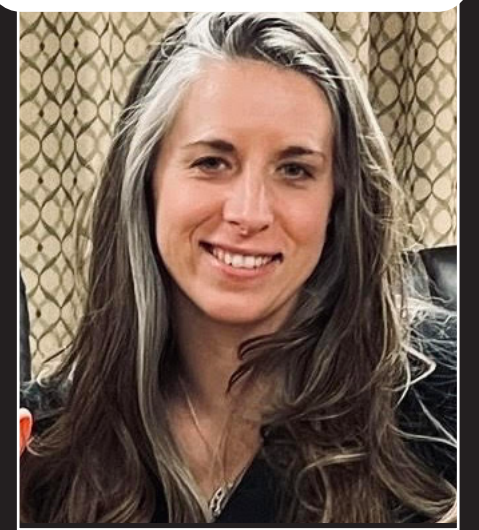
Ciara Shulmann '23

Is a new special education teacher. He worked in Kearny, NJ for 10 years before coming to Highlands. He's excited for the opportunity to teach and coach at one of the best districts in the state. We are so excited to have him here at Highlands as a coach and teacher!

Caleigh Amano '23

Is a Social Studies teacher this year. She has worked in many districts for over 14 years. Mrs. Dillon knew what an amazing school Northern Highlands is because she lives in Allendale and her husband is involved in school safety and security initiatives in the district. Her children are also students at Hillside and Brookside Schools and can't wait to come.

Rachel Dillon



Kaitlyn Harle '23

Is an English 9 and AP Language & Composition teacher this year. He previously taught at Paramus High School where he taught juniors and sophomores English. Mr. Norrell has only been here for a short time, but can already see that Highlands is such a special place to teach at.

Darrel Norrell



Tanvi Koduru '25

Is the new Director of Guidance. She is from Washington Township and she came to Northern Highlands because she felt it was "an opportunity that she couldn't pass up". She says that she's heard about the wonderful people here from her mom who is a Northern Highlands graduate. Ms. Wegert previously worked in Hawthorne for 5 years as the Director of Guidance. This year, she is looking forward to building relationships with other staff members and assisting the guidance department to help more students at Northern Highlands.

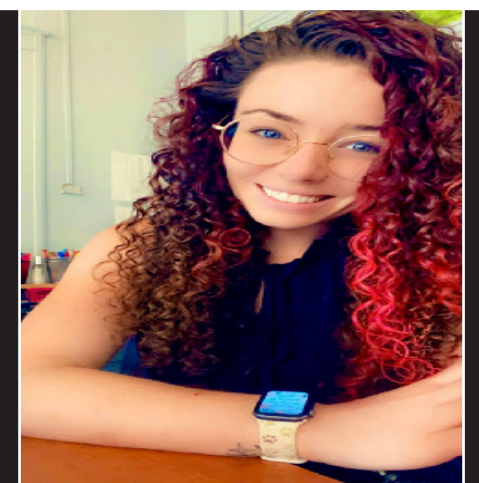
Christine Wegert



Tanvi Koduru '25

Is a new American Sign Language teacher from Park Ridge. She decided to come to Highlands because it reminded her a lot of her high school in Pascack Valley in that they both are student-centered and they both have unique opportunities for students to pursue their passions. Ms. Rodenberg likes the sense of family and pride at Northern Highlands and that people can bond together in their shared experiences of being a Highlander.

Shannon Rodenberg



A SUMMER EXPLORING ART MUSEUMS

AP Art History students explore the MET and the MoMa for their summer homework

Aarna Arora '23

Over the summer, students who were enrolled in the AP Art History course had a few assignments to complete to prepare them for the content they would learn during the school year. One of the option assignments was to visit a museum and take a selfie with 10 of the 250 pieces taught in the AP Art History curriculum. Each photo would allow 1 point to be added to the lowest test grades.

I had the opportunity to interview senior Catherine (Cat) Corrado, who chose to take on the task of finding these art pieces across the many museums in New York City. Cat

and her friend Lily had to visit multiple museums to find the art pieces in the

there, which took us over an hour to do." After the unsuccessful attempt to

“Learning about art pieces in a museum is completely different than learning about them on a slideshow.”

Senior Cat Corrado

curriculum. According to Cat, “my friend Lily and I went to the Museum of Modern Art (MoMa), assuming that there would be ten pieces. We were completely wrong, as we only found three pieces

find ten pieces, Cat and her friend headed to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to find the remaining works of art. The Met is a huge museum and it took Cat and Lily “about 2 hours to find the seven

pieces and take selfies with all of them. We were pretty exhausted but extremely relieved to have the extra credit.”

While the assignment took tremendous effort, it was a wonderful experience for Cat. She thought, “it was really interesting to see all of the pieces that I would be learning about in the future and see how different they looked in real life compared to the picture that we had online of them. Learning about art pieces in a museum is completely different than learning about them on a slideshow because you can see the texture of the pieces, how the light reflects off of them, etc. when looking at them in person.” The trip to the

museum “made me really excited for the class because now when [the artwork] is mentioned in a slideshow, I already have some background knowledge of them and I can remember them easier.” Her favorite part of the assignment was that it was interactive. Cat mentions how she “was able to see the works of art, grab lunch, and meet some cool people in the museums.”

The Met and MoMa are both home to some of the most extraordinary art collections that draw thousands of people daily. For Cat, her “favorite part of the Met had to be the Egyptian art collection because the pieces were extremely large and

fascinating,” and her “favorite part of the MoMa was ‘Water Lilies’ by Claude Monet because the piece was captivating and really cool to see in person.” Seeing the art pieces that Cat and Lily will be learning about later this year must have been an amazing introduction to AP Art History.

This summer assignment is definitely a more unique and enjoyable alternative to reading a book or completing a packet of notes, but on top of that, it sparked many new memories and adventures for students. ■



Cat Corrado '23 at the Met taking a photo with Girl with Ball by Roy Lichtenstein.



Jackson Pollock's Autumn Rhythm painting.



Grand Salon from the Hôtel de Tessé, Paris made by Nicolas Huygot.



Ugolino and his Sons made by Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux.

BACK FOR A MUSIC-FILLED YEAR

Talented Highlands students audition for three A Capella groups

Emma Pereira '24

With the start of a new school year, Highlands A Cappella is back up and running, and to kick off

the season, auditions were held to determine who will make up Highlands' award-winning groups. The Highlands Harmonics, Highlands Belles, and

Highlands Voices are the three Highlands a cappella groups and all of them have participated in ICH-SA competitions, a cappella festivals, Highlands'

concerts, and more. These groups are full of talent, and every year bring something new to the table.

Auditions for the program are held over the course of multiple days. Firstly, students auditioning attend an a cappella auditions workshop on Monday, September 12. The following week, on September 19, auditioners will attend the group auditions, where they will perform a specific vocal part within groups. Between this time, auditioning students will be expected to prepare a solo song of their choice within any genre and submit a video of their performance to Paster.

After this process, Paster will post a call-back list or the audition results on his school website, and the groups will start to prepare for competition! In an interview, Paster encouraged all auditioners to "go for it." He shared that "the worst thing you could possibly say is I wish I would've when it's over."

Paster also reflected

on the upcoming season, mentioning that he is "really excited." He noted that since Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted, the groups "can get back to really focusing on [their] music and make it more complex and interesting."

is "really excited about a cappella this year." Bellapianta is looking forward to returning to the "group dynamic and competition season." Her favorite part of the season is when the "preparation and all the work [they] put into pays

“The worst thing you could possibly say is ‘I wish I would’ve’ when it’s over.”

Thomas Paster

Paster has been directing a capella for many years, and his favorite part is being able to be an audience member once his group is performing. He looks forward to when he can "just sit there and enjoy it and watch it."

Antonia Bellapianta, a junior who has been a part of the a cappella program the past two years, also expressed that she

off during our [their] competition performance."

After this carefully crafted audition process ends, students can look forward to the debut of Highlands A Cappella soon. Who knows what unique ideas these groups will come up with this year, but it is surely going to be amazing. ■



2022 official poster for Northern Highlands A Capella.

Photo courtesy of Tia Charney '23

ONE SUSPECT, ONE WEAPON, ONE ROOM

The classic mystery game is coming to life in this year's fall play

Nolan Rota '26

From September 13-September 15, Highlands held auditions for the upcoming fall play, *Clue*. The play, based on the hit Hasbro board game, is a

suspects includes Wadsworth, Yvette, Mrs. Scarlet, Mrs. Peacock, Mrs. White, Colonel Mustard, Professor Plum, and Mr. Green.

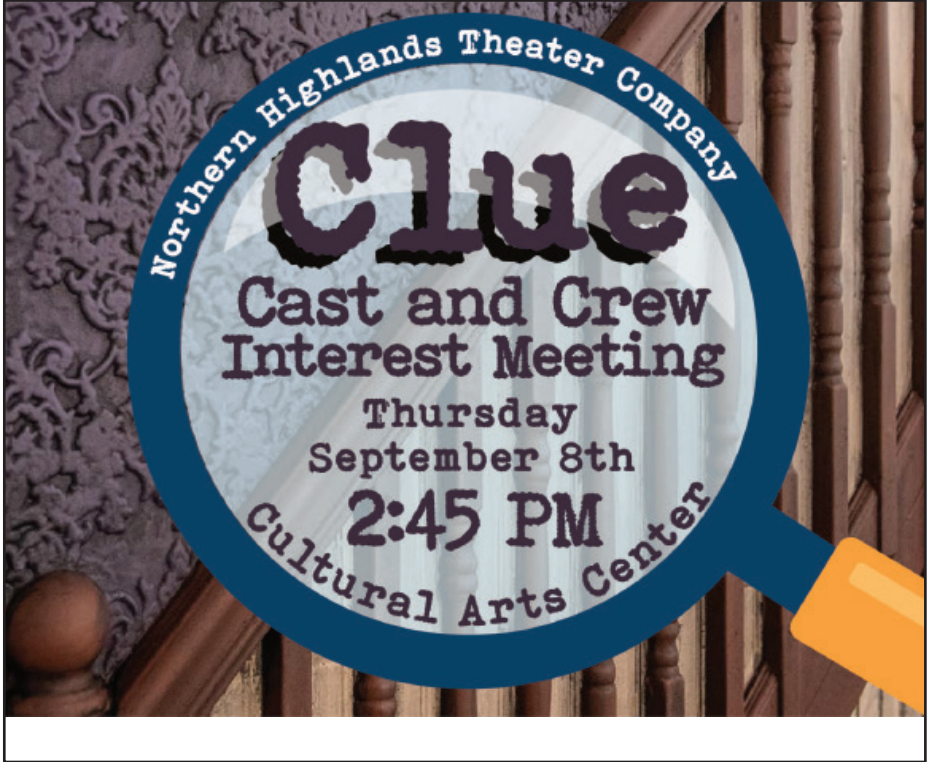
These characters travel to different rooms and

humorous 1985 murder mystery movie.

Shaina Strang-Wolf, the play director, shared thoughts about why Highlanders might be interested in the play. Strang-Wolf said, "I think a lot of students at Highlands will really enjoy comedic plays to go have good laughs and see their friends playing fun roles, and I also think murder mysteries are very interesting especially since our play will perform just a few weeks after Halloween. So everyone will be in a spooky mindset to see something creepy, but a lot of fun."

Nick Franchi, a sophomore, participated in both the fall and spring plays last year and plans on auditioning for *Clue*. In an interview, Franchi expressed his interest in the play and why he is eager to return to the theater.

Franchi said, "I always really liked *Clue*, and I'm a big fan of the musical. When they announced this play I was just really excited, so I read the script, and it seemed amazing as I thought." Patrick Keeble, a senior, who was been a part of the Highlands production team for years shares how his experi-



Poster for the initial interest meeting for the play back in the first week of September.

Photo courtesy of Karen Bae '23

“I think a lot of students will really enjoy a good laugh.”

Shaina Strang-Wolf

hilarious murder mystery that takes place in a frightening mansion where multiple people come together to solve a murder case. The main group of

investigate various possible murder scenarios. Highlanders might recognize these famous characters from either the classic hit board game or from the

ences with the Highlands theater company has benefited him.

Keeble said, "I got a start early on, {referring to his early theater career} and it was really nice to make those connections with people early on. You just know more people in the hall since you really know more people around the school, and it's great honestly, everyone feels very close. It really is like a family."

Purchase tickets for

Clue in early November. The production team works tremendously hard on all projects, and Highlanders are sure to enjoy this hysterical, suspenseful play. As the performance dates get closer, some teachers will even offer extra credit points to students who go see the play. See you at the theater. ■

AP ARTISTIC AWAKENINGS

AP Art students share their thoughts on what a new school year means for art

Jiya Singh '24

Last June, many Highlanders eagerly submitted their work to be reviewed and considered for a spot in an AP Art class for the upcoming school year. They all had taken art classes at Highlands and wanted the opportunity to challenge themselves in a higher level class.

"I really enjoyed photography for the past two years I took it," said junior Sophia Chieffi. Chieffi is currently taking AP Photography, where students are required to submit a portfolio of their work in May, similar to AP Drawing.

Junior Sydney

Wishik agreed, "A lot of juniors take multiple APs, so I thought it would be cool to have one that isn't academic and something I genuinely enjoy."

It seems as though this is a common sentiment among AP Arts students. Wishik also outlined the portfolio process for both AP Drawing and AP Photography, noting how flexible it is. "The due date for a theme is October, but most of my class is ready to start ours this upcoming week. You can also start over the summer if you want."

Even though the class is structured to be flexible, many AP students also praise Highlands for

making the portfolio process even easier, as they are able to "explore many different media and supplies to push themselves creatively," senior Cai Mapes says. But it's not just about the materials.

"The teacher makes it very stress-free," Chieffi adds, "It's more of an exciting thing than anything."

Despite having a supportive classroom environment, AP Drawing students are nervous about selecting a theme that resonates with them. To Mapes, the ability to "stand out" is a must, while Wishik worries about "being a perfectionist" and the "long cycle of

critiquing your work over and over again."

Both of them realize this is a completely normal and common feeling, because portfolios are typically personal. Many artists seek to "put their likeness within the paintings" with pieces that are directly influenced by their experiences and emotions.

Regardless of their worries, the artists are excited and determined to put their best work forward, especially by pulling inspiration from many different sources and letting their personalities shine through. "It doesn't feel like work to me, especially, with Ms. Melle's

support," Wishik says.

Highlands even has classes for those who are more interested in the history behind pieces of art. AP Art History is an art elective that teaches the history of art and architecture from prehistoric times to today.

Sophomore Sachi Kaisare took the class for that reason, expressing how thankful she was that Highlands "makes it even easier to be in touch with the arts."

Similarly, junior Farrah Farahani felt the choice was a "no-brainer" because it combined the subjects she liked the most. She is grateful for the opportunity but still

acknowledges the difficulty. Either way, Farahani notes how passionate Mrs. Carpino is about the subject, which motivates her to learn as best as she can.

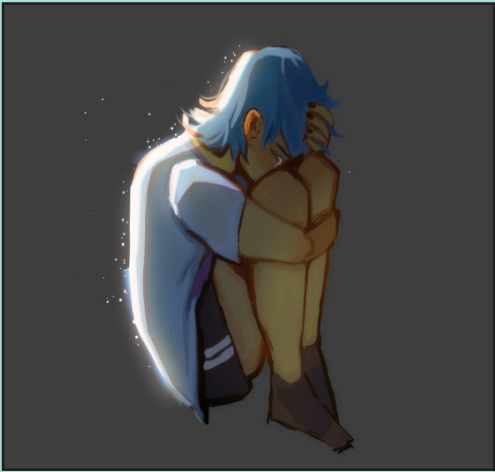
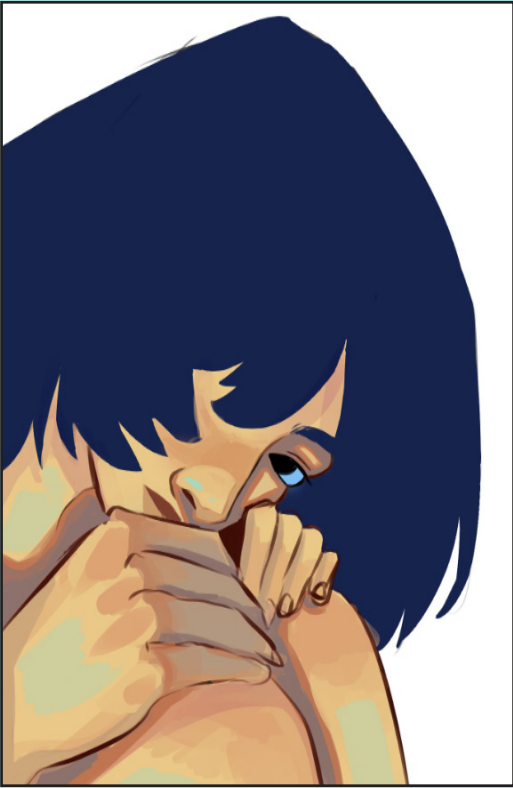
Not only does this show how easy it is for Highlanders to take classes they enjoy while also challenging themselves, but it also emphasizes the support that all students receive from their classmates and teachers.

To all the AP Arts students, good luck. And to all our amazing art teachers here at Highlands, thank you. ■

Artwork by Cai Mapes '24

Artwork by Sydney Wishik '24

"Self Portrait"



"Solitude"

"Shame"

"Piano & Guitar"



"Rainy City"



Photo Courtesy of Jiya Singh '24

Meredith Melle's classroom in the midst of the creative process.

SUMMER 2022 CONCERT CULTURE

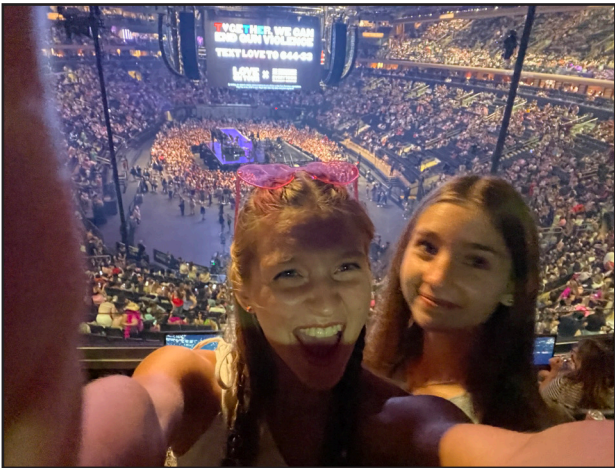
Highlands students continue to indulge in their favorite music

Isabel Malley '23

There's no better summer activity than getting with a group of friends together to go listen to your favorite artists play live. Whether the concert is be rap, country, pop, or even instrumental, the feeling of being able to take in the music on a summer's evening is unmatched. Here at Northern Highlands, quite a few of our students traveled to a multitude of concerts and are eager to share their experiences.

Senior Allie Paganessi says, "[t]his summer, I went to a Pitbull concert with a bunch of my friends. It was the best time ever. All of his songs

are feel-good and easy to sing along and dance to. I laghan shares her Pitbull experience as well. "I



Theresa and Catherina Deana at a Harry Styles Concert.

definitely want to go back next summer." Paganessi isn't the only Highlander who went to a Pitbull concert in August.

Senior Bella O'Cal-

loved Pitbull. It was such a nice night, and he sang all of his best songs. But that wasn't the only concert I went to. I went to Harry Styles and Ruel as

well. This may be biased because I'm a huge Harry fan, but his concert was the best. I went three times and I still don't think it was enough."

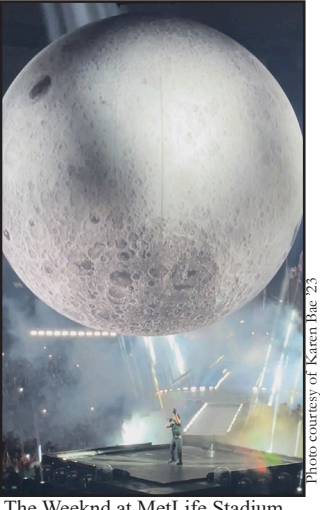
These two seniors had a lot to say about their time at pop concerts, but what about other music genres?

This summer Senior Olivia Fallon went to a Zac Brown Band concert. "I'm not the biggest fan of country music, my friend dragged me along to it. But I was so happy I went. Their music was literally made for that not-a-care-in-the-world, summertime feeling." However, not everyone had the time of their lives during these summer festivities.

Paganessi says, "I also went to a Thomas Rhett concert. I'm not crazy about country music so that could be a part of it, but I wasn't thrilled with his concert. I only really knew his popular songs and he played very few of them. I think it's fair to say that I wouldn't go back and I wouldn't tell anyone else to go either."

Though some of the concerts for students here at Highlands were a huge

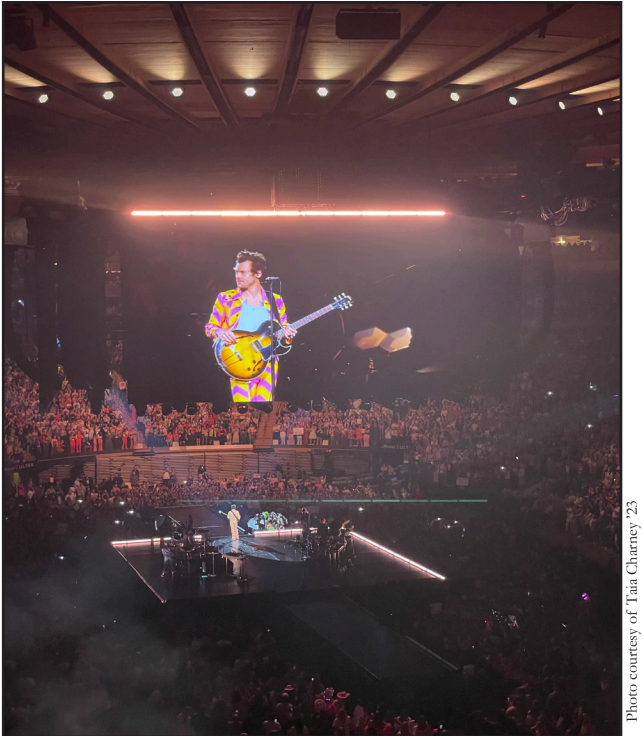
hit, and some were a miss, it's fair to say that no matter what, some of your best memories can be captured at a summer concert, and everyone's already looking forward to more concerts next summer, especially with so many venues being close, like PNC, Madison Square Garden, and MetLife. ■



The Weeknd at MetLife Stadium.



K-pop group Seventeen performing at Prudential Center.



Harry Styles performing at Madison Square Garden.

MEET ME AT MIDNIGHT

Taylor Swift is releasing a new album and Highlands is ecstatic

Ashlyn Kersting '25

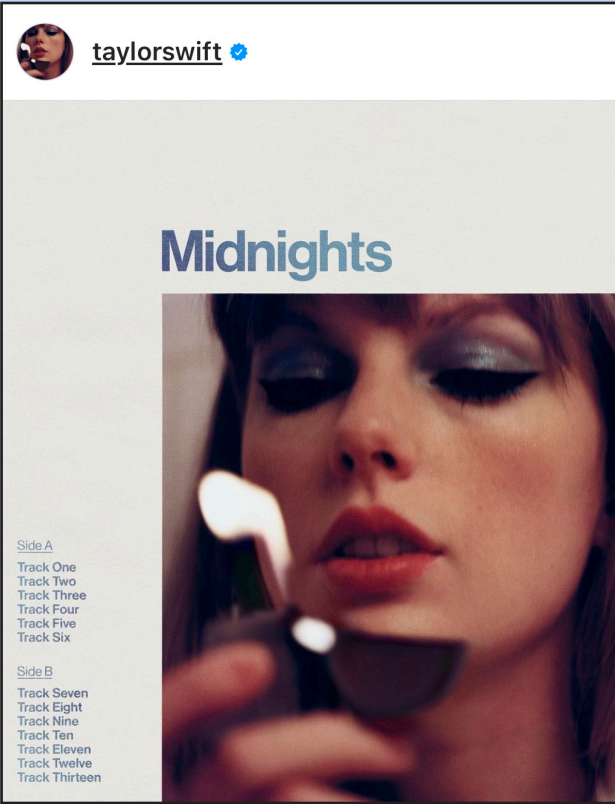
Taylor Swift is a very famous American singer and songwriter of pop and country music. Her main demographic is teenagers, but anyone can listen and love her music.

On October 21, 2022, Swift is releasing her 10th studio album titled "Midnights," which is about "the stories of 13 sleepless nights scattered throughout my life." In Swift's most recent Instagram post, she gave her fans even more information about the album.

"This is a collection of music written in the middle of the night, a journey through terrors and sweet dreams. The floors we face and the demons we face. For all of us who have tossed and turned and decided to keep the lanterns lit and go searching - hoping that just maybe, when the clock strikes twelve... we'll meet ourselves."

Many speculate that the main message of the album is identity. She wants the audience to re-

late to the feeling of not that symbolizes hidden



There are thirteen tracks with unknown titles.

wanting to be defined by the things we hate, or fear, but by what we love.

Swift has also given us many easter eggs throughout the years. An easter egg in media is a term used to describe a message or image hidden in a video or song

meanings about upcoming projects. In each and every one of her albums she has given us new things to look forward to.

One clever easter egg was the dress she wore at the 2022 VMA's when she announced this new album. She wore a similar

silver dress like she did thirteen years ago at the same award show. When she accepted her VMA in 2009 from Kanye West, he had shouted that Beyonce was more deserving of the win.

He triggered a long-running and messy feud with young Swift. She was nineteen years old at the time and was humiliated by West on live television. In 2009 the her moment was stolen from her, but she finally stole the it back.

Highlands student Nina Misantonis had a lot to share about Swift. "I think that Taylor is a



One official Spotify poster.

pop phenomenon, and she's just so popular that I would be surprised if she

wasn't played for music latable and inspiring. She



A description from Taylor's Instagram about the album

on Fridays. In this generation, I believe a lot of teenage girls can relate to what she's saying whether it's a breakup, mental health issues, etc."

Misantonis also said, "Taylor is the music industry, in my opinion. She's a lyrical genius, and she makes so many different genres of music besides pop. Her music is re-

shows that women in the music industry can make it to the top."

Taylor Swift has clearly made an impact on Northern Highlands and the rest of the world. Some of her albums have even had America in tears. I am so excited to see what "Midnights" has in store for the world. ■

THE RETURN TO RUTGERS

Highlands football takes a trip to Rutgers... again

Stephen Weiner '24

Coming off what many consider to be the best season in program history, the Northern Highlands football team is back and ready to continue winning.

The team returned to Shi Stadium on September 4th, the place where last year's team lost in the championship game to Irvington, ending their historic season. Sophomore Quarterback Nate Johnson won his first career varsity game in a battle against Winslow High School, winning the game by a score of 21-17.

According to NJ.com, junior Danny Smiechowski ran the ball for 31 yards and a touchdown along with 2 receptions for 9 yards. Senior Charlie Sparago put together a solid game, running for 89 yards on 15 carries. Senior Zach Chostaka had 8 tackles and senior Roman Dario had 7 along with a sack.

In order to match last year's success, the team needs to work harder than ever.

After losing some of their crucial seniors this past June, (Enzo Arjona, Kyle Major, Ian Langan, Nick Branca, Ollie Garcia, and others) the team has some big shoes to fill going into the new season. Along with losing last year's seniors, the team also lost last year's head coach, Greg Russo.

He was replaced this year by former Ridgewood head coach, Dave Cord.

When speaking on last year's team, senior Roman Dario says that, "Last year was unbelievable, but I don't see why we can't do something just as special. With that being said, we need to continue working hard at each practice and play hard during games."

Dario had a big fumble recovery in the 4th quarter that led to the game winning drive and 7 tackles in the game.

Another senior, Zach Madison said that, "Last year was arguably the best season our program has ever had. This creates huge shoes to fill but we are excited to try and take that challenge head on."

"The goal is always to win a state championship, and that is what we strive for everyday."

Last year, Madison finished with 759 yards and 11 total touchdowns, earning him some looks from colleges.

In the first game of the season, Madison had 30 receiving yards on 4 receptions.

"I would like to play in college. By using football I can try to get into a better school than I wouldn't be able to get into applying as a student," Madison says.

In the 4th quarter of the first game of the season, Roman Dario recovered a fumble in the 4th quarter with the Highlanders down by 3.

Sophomore quarterback Nate Johnson led a long drive which eventually led to him throwing a 20-yard game winning touchdown to senior Luke Saturn.



Northern Highlands football players at Shi Stadium.

Along with throwing a game-winning touchdown, Johnson also proved he could run the ball, rushing for 103 yards, including a three yard rushing touchdown.

Dario said that this year's success will come from hard work in the offseason.

"We've been working all summer, practices started before school ended last year. With the off-season lifts, we've had many players on our team get much bigger."

While last year's team was incredible, the team started this season off strong by winning their first game at Rutgers, hopefully the first of many to come this season. ■



Quarterback Nate Johnson ('25) celebrates with Danny Smiechowski ('24).

"Focusing in practice is by far the most important factor when it comes to preparation. We practice longer and harder than any other team which gives us a huge advantage."

Junior Freddy Kanning

CHEER SUMMER RETREAT

With the summer NCA cheer retreat, our cheerleaders are ready for action

Gabriel Tejeda '25

Cheerleading has always been a big part of football games at Highlands.

Varsity cheerleaders perform at varsity football games on Friday nights and JV cheerleaders on Mondays for the JV football team.

One of the many bonding experiences for the cheer team is going on an NCA retreat to New York. This happens at the end of August.

While it is a bonding experience and an opportunity to make new friends, this retreat isn't easy. Every day at 7 AM, they would wake up to eat breakfast as a team in the cafeteria. There was no stopping for these girls, it was straight into practices upon practices. With drills, activities, and energy through the roof, these girls would be pushing 13 hours of physical activity per day.

With the exception of a break for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and awards, they were constantly on the go.

They would have their breakfast at 7:00 AM, lunch at 12:00 PM, and dinner at 4:30 PM.

Any time in between would be spent working out, vigorously, perfecting form, building up stunts, and increasing technique.

This year, our cheerleaders are going to be thoroughly prepared.

"We won two spirit sticks and got to take both home to Highlands."

For those who don't know, a spirit stick is a cheerleading honor, awarded to the person or team who showed the most spirit.

These sticks, and the potential to gain them, help raise team spirit and participation.

They show a goal that all cheerleaders are heavily motivated to achieve. In the NCA retreat, every night there would be an awards ceremony.

On the first night Highlands didn't get any awards, but this motivated the team to work harder.

From then on, Highlands won multiple awards and spirit sticks. They proved themselves as the most spirited cheer team at the camp, and their awards reflected this.



The NH cheerleading team enjoying their time at the retreat.

The returning cheerleaders, incoming freshmen, and any other girls who are in middle or elementary school all have the most amazing opportunities here at Highlands to thrive in their sport with the NH cheer program. ■

It's clear that this NCA retreat greatly improves the program every year. Be sure to watch the Northern Highlands cheerleaders at halftime for their performance and watch them on the sidelines at football games, too. ■

"It was honestly the most fun I've had in such a long time."

Senior Sophia Ripps

Senior cheerleader Sophia Ripps said the retreat positively impacted her and all of her teammates a lot.

"The schedule was crazy," Ripps adds.

Every day was different for them, and they were never bored.

After the NCA retreat, Ripps claims that the team had a better flow and bonded better after this summer retreat.

NHBS IS BACK AND BETTER

The Highlands boys' soccer team is ready to compete this season

Ash Kim '25

As the new school year begins, so does the busy schedule of the Highlands 2022-2023 sports teams, including the boys' soccer team.

One of the major challenges facing the program this year is the loss of many pivotal seniors who graduated in June.

Last year's team had an overall record of 11-6-1, making many Highlanders excited for the possibility of another great season this year and the opportunity to see the team's effort and worth ethic in action.

The Highlands boys' soccer program has been a top team for years, largely due to its talented players who are filled with determination, athleticism, and skill.

Their unmatched energy and team work sets them apart from other soccer programs in their league.

The team ran many practices throughout the offseason and during the summer to prepare for this fall's season. They focused on strengthening their skills and allowing them to get to know each other better as well, because team chemistry is everything in a game like soccer.

After talking to Yuichi Hincapie, a current member of the soccer team, and getting the chance to ask him questions about this year's season and team, it was clear that the players all share a bond with each other.

Hincapie says, "Our biggest strength is definitely our chemistry. A lot of us have been playing together on a team since last January, and we've been practicing all summer together. We have all grown together and become super close."

Something that Yuichi and the other players say they are looking forward to most this season is "going out there and doing the best we can."

It seems as though all of the team members, especially the seniors, believe that they can achieve great things this season, despite "all of the doubters."

When Hincapie was asked about his personal favorite part of the season, he said that he very much enjoys "when we get into the thick of the games and the morale and energy pile on top of each other."

Clearly, the players are very passionate about playing together facing tough games as team.

During their practices, the athletes on the team have been focusing particularly on scoring more goals.

They have been doing a lot of possession training (the ability to move the ball around the field in efforts to unbalance the opponent and keep control of the ball), and they have also started to score more goals, which will hopefully reflect in their upcoming games..

Once the team has reached enough practice, it is time to get the show started!

Regardless of how skilled Highlands soccer team is, every single high school sports team is bound to have competitors as long as the season lasts.

According to Hincapie, some of the biggest games of the month are against Ramapo and Bergen Catholic.

The team's game against Bergen Catholic is also the program's senior day, a game celebrating their hard work, which for some of them, goes all the way back to freshman year.

This year, there are nine seniors, many of whom have been a part of the program throughout all four years of high school.



Northern Highlands soccer players at Golden Goal.

The seniors for the 2022-2023 boys' soccer season include Justin Dario, Jai Khosla, Max Deppisch, Thomas Padilla, Yuichi Hincapie, Jack Dolan, Manuel Carvajal, and Daniel Pantello.

So far, the statistics for the season are as follows: junior Marco Mininni leads the team in goals scored with 2 goals so far, as of 9/29.

Junior Aidan Dario, senior Max Deppisch, junior Sota Shimizu, and sophomore Rishabh Tolani have scored one goal a piece.

Junior goalies Matthew Yates and Marc Putrino have made 11 and 36 saves so far, respectively

Even though it is difficult to believe that this is their last season, it is important to commemorate them for all of the time and energy they have put into practices, games, and tournaments.

Especially because during high school, it can be difficult to balance playing a sport and maintaining good grades, as well as participating in other extra-curriculars.

It's evident that the boys have been working very hard this season, starting from preseason and summer practices all the way to the Golden Goal Athlete Village soccer camp in late August.

We wish the boys good luck this season. The full boy's soccer schedule can be found on NJ.com. You can also find the team's statistics as the season progresses, as well as their power points and ranking thus far. ■

GIRLS' SOCCER CAPTAINS TAKE CHARGE

Northern Highlands girls' soccer is back with five leading captains

Ava Waller '23

When asked to list the characteristics of a leader, what do real leaders describe them as?

The Northern Highlands girls soccer team (NHGS) varsity captains responded with traits such as reliability, balance, communication, listening skills, understanding, confidence, and well-roundedness.

Captains are the role models, the example for everyone else. They are the ones to raise their hands when a question is asked, and be the first in line to take on a challenge.

The NHGS captains are here to stay and take on many of these leadership qualities that will lead their team to success.

This year, there are 5 team captains, all with various strengths. These players were chosen out of 14 returning varsity seniors, in an extensive process.

"The captain selection process was long and intense," commented Brooke Phillips, one of this year's captains.

This process started last winter, beginning with a long Google form to initially apply for the position.

The candidates from then on had to prove themselves as leaders, showing off their personal skills and ability to be role models

During the first week of preseason, the 5 captains were announced: Savannah Cosgriff, Arden Flynn, Brooke Phillips, Tess Meloro, and Marlo Zambrotta.

These players are heavily impactful both on and off the field.

Ambitious Cosgriff leads the team in fitness and outruns the other team's defense at the outside wing position, but is also able to play in any other position.

Flynn is the voice, and can be heard encouraging her teammates from the opposite side of the field. She is confident and quick, and she plays forward.

Phillips is experienced, with knowledge of her position, center back, and the game of soccer, having played for a high-level competitive club team for a number of years.

Meloro is energetic, ready to hit a cross and receive it, from the outside wing position.

"The captain selection process was long and intense."

Senior Brooke Phillips

Lastly, Zambrotta controls the field with her knowledge, organization, and trust in her teammates at center midfielder. This versatile crew is able to bring together their strengths and be large role models.

The girls have done a lot for their team in preparation for the season. They are looking to improve on many issues from last year.

The varsity team has had many different activities to bond with one another, one of which was a program-wide pool party for everyone to get to know each other.

Though the varsity team may not be playing with the JV or freshman, program-wide bonding is still crucial.

Others include poster making, pasta dinners, the infamous freshman scavenger hunt, and more.

"We also trained 4 days a week throughout the summer so this quality time helped to bond the team," Zambrotta highlights.

These girls have the skills, talent, and organization to become great players.

Their positivity and eagerness to play will be their push to succeed this season, and we can't wait to watch it unfold.

As their soccer careers come to a close, they will be able to cherish the memories and friendships they have made throughout the program. As Phillips exclaims, "NHGS FOREVER!" ■

"Last season we were not as successful or united as a team, so this year I [want] to have a more unified team."

Senior Arden Flynn

COMMITMENT CORNER

SPORT-LIGHT: ABBY HENDERSON

Abby Henderson commits to play D1 lacrosse at Bucknell University

Joe Maburg '23

As the school year starts, seniors at Northern Highlands rush to fill out their applications in hopes of being accepted into their dream college. Even after submitting an application, they will have to wait for months with crossed fingers, waiting on a decision.

For some though, their success in sports have paved the way for a spot in college. One of those lucky few is Abby Henderson, who has committed to Bucknell for Lacrosse.

With three years, and a fourth on her way, of Lacrosse experience at Highlands, Henderson has quite the resume. Starting her highlands career on Varsity, Henderson has compiled many awards, such as 1st Team all League, 2nd Team All County, as well as being NJ.Com's 2022 Top Junior Varsity Lacrosse Team Captain.

Her accomplishments don't start off at Highlands, of course. Lacrosse has always been one of Henderson's favorite sports, "I have been playing lacrosse for as long as I can remember."

Henderson started playing in 2nd grade with the local recreation Highlands team. Once she started playing rec and learned the basic rules, she knew she loved lacrosse.

She adds that she "decided to join a club team called BBL North in 4th grade and I have been playing club ever since. I was able to play on the varsity lacrosse team starting freshman year."

Even so, Highlands has been a big part in Henderson getting to where she wants to be, whether it's in lacrosse or as a student, "Highlands has definitely prepared me for college. Highlands athletics are competitive and intense which I think will definitely

help me in the future."

The academics at Highlands are also very strong and she claims the environment has helped her learn how to be organized and balance being an athlete and a student.

Henderson also notes the people in her life that have propelled her to where she is now, "My biggest inspiration throughout my career has been the college level players and my Dad."

"The college level girls inspired me to work on my stick skills and try new things at home. I loved watching Taylor Cummings play as a young girl.

"My dad was also a big inspiration for me because he played college lacrosse at Bentley University. He showed me the game and helped me become the player I am today."

Even with the hard work, Henderson still wait-

ed for an offer. Bucknell said yes.

The reaction to the commitment came with excitement, as well as a feeling of peace, "My friends and family were so excited for me. They knew how hard I had worked towards this goal and how difficult the journey had been.

"Anyone who has pursued college athletics knows how tough of a process it is. Honestly I

think my parents were super proud but definitely relieved that the stress was over."

With a new experience to come, Henderson feels eager to choose Bucknell, "I am extremely excited about playing lacrosse in college. In my college search I wanted to find the perfect place where I could thrive as an athlete, student, and socially."

Lacrosse has always

been a part of my life and I am so lucky that I will get to continue for another 4 years. I am also excited to meet new people and build friendships for the next four years, as well as getting a great education."

Bucknell is no small lacrosse school. Competing at the top level, Bucknell plays top competitors in their sport, such as Lehigh, Lafayette, and Loyola Maryland. But even the competition doesn't deter Henderson.

"I am confident in how awesome college lacrosse will be. I know the adjustment will be hard and the D1 schedule will be very demanding. I am nervous about how I will adjust to it, but I know it will all be worth it in the end."

We at the Highland Fling wish the best of luck to Abby Henderson with D1 lacrosse at Bucknell. ■



Photo Courtesy of Taia Charney '23

Abby Henderson's recruitment to Bucknell announcement.

ROURKE SWIMS TO SUCCESS

Swimmer Meghan Rourke commits to William & Mary for Division 1 swim

Carly Simmel '23

If you are a fan of Northern Highlands sports, then it is extremely improbable that you have not heard of Meghan Rourke.

While being not only a stand out player on the lacrosse team, she is undoubtedly one of the top swimmers in the state of New Jersey.

For this reason, it was no surprise to anyone when Rourke announced that she will be continuing her academic and athletic career swimming at the Division 1 level at The College William and Mary.

"I've been swimming at a competitive level since

I was 7, so for 10 years now."

Rourke has swam for the Ridgewood breakers for 9 years, and recently made a switch to the Wyckoff sharks for her senior year.

She swims competitively year round. She even attended nationals with her club team, which is astounding.

With all these achievements outside of school, it is no surprise that she also is a star on the Northern Highlands swim team.

One of her greatest accomplishments was being named the Record's Athlete of the Week for her extremely impressive

times.

Last year, she even played a huge role in the team's 7th straight sectional title in the NJSIAA North Jersey, Section 1, Group B final, with their win over Morris Knolls.

To add onto her extremely impressive resume, she is also a starting midfielder on the Northern Highlands lacrosse team.

She has scored a total of 52 goals combined in her sophomore and junior years, and was named second team all county her junior year.

However, Rourke has always thrived in the pool ever since a young age. For this reason, she has



Photo Courtesy of Taia Charney '23

Meghan Rourke swimming in a race for Highlands.

devoted countless hours to swimming, which has ultimately led to her success.

In June of 2022, she verbally committed to William and Mary. When asked about her feelings on continuing swimming there, she stated, "I am insanely excited to continue my swimming career at William and Mary! I feel very connected with the coaches and I trust that they are going to make me the best possible swimmer I can be."

She continues, "I also feel like the swim team itself is a huge welcoming family and I can't wait to be a part of it."

There is so much to look forward to, but Rourke still has one more season left at Highlands to lead the team to even more victories.

When asked about how Highlands has prepared her for the future, Rourke stated, "I definitely think that Highlands has prepared me for college. The rigor of classwork here is definitely going to be mirrored at W&M and I feel like I can handle it here, I can handle it there."

It takes a lot of hard work and dedication both in and out of the classroom to achieve such a great achievement of swimming

Division 1 at such an academically rigorous school.

Rourke is extremely dedicated, and always pushes herself to be better.

Rourke's coaches and teammates are also a very important part of her life, and have also been key factors in her success in the pool.

Though Rourke is an inspiration for many people, she also states that she has been inspired by another young swimmer, similar to herself.

Rourke says, "I would say one of my biggest inspirations now is Leah Hayes, who is a 16 year old World Championships silver medalist who also has alopecia."

"It's weird because she is a year younger than me but the fact that she is that fast is extremely inspiring." She continues.

We know that Rourke is bound to do amazing things at college and beyond. Congratulations to Meghan Rourke on her commitment. We wish you nothing but the best. Go tribe! ■



Photo Courtesy of Taia Charney '23

Meghan Rourke preparing to dive into the water for a race.

NEHA DRIBBLES TO COLLEGE

Neha Anvar to continue her soccer career at Carnegie Mellon University

Alexa Denburg '23

Senior Neha Anvar's hard work and dedication has paid off as she has committed to Carnegie Mellon University for soccer this past summer.

It takes a tremendous amount of discipline and hard work to play any sport at the collegiate level. Lucky for Anvar, she has lots of experience playing soccer.

Anvar explains, "I have been playing soccer since I was 5 years old for local teams, and I have been on a club soccer team for the past 9 years."

One of Anvars biggest

inspirations is Tobin Heath, a player for the US National Women's Soccer Team. Heath assisted her team to three olympic medals and two world cups. Anvar has "always looked up to her playing style and work ethic," and applied that same dedication to her own life.

Anvar has had a very successful soccer career at Highlands. The Highlands girls soccer program, led by Coach Tara Madigan has been very successful over the past years.

As center forward on the varsity team for three years, Anvar has made many important contributions to the team.

Last season, the varsity girls soccer team made it all the way to the state semifinals beating both Parsippany Hills and Ramapo.

In fact, Anvar's favorite memory from her time on the girls soccer team was the win over Ramapo.

Anvar mentions, "We worked really hard and stayed disciplined and ended up beating them in overtime. I will never forget celebrating in a dogpile on the field."

During the 2020-2021 season, which was Anvar's first year as a varsity player, the Northern Highlands girls soccer team had an outstanding record of nine and three.

The team also won the Northeast Division finals for the state with victories over Paramus, West Essex, and Millburn.

It is no question that Anvar had a successful career during her time at Highlands.

Anvar attributes much of her success this season to the support of the Highlands coaching staff.

She also attributes her

enormous success to having a solid support system and gives her family and friends on the soccer team much of the credit for her success.

The commitment process for Anvar was long and challenging, but her hard work paid off in the end. Anvar explains, "The commitment process started freshman year for me. I started talking to potential college coaches around then, and took all of my standardized tests early so I could send my test scores to these coaches." "It was stressful but in the end it is definitely a relief to know where I am going to end up."

When choosing a college to further her soccer career, Anvar ultimately chose Carnegie Mellon University "because of its great academic program and competitive soccer team."

Carnegie Mellon is a division III athletic school, competing in the same league as Emory University, New York University, Case Western, and other division III schools.



Neha Anvar guarding the ball from the opponent during a game.

Competing at a division III level can be difficult, but Anvar thinks that Highlands has prepared her not just for soccer, but also academically.

Anvar said, "I think highlands' high academic level and overall availability of college level courses is preparing all of its students for college."

There is no doubt that Carnegie Mellon has gained a dedicated and hard-working student and athlete.

Anvar is excited for the challenges ahead as she states, "I am excited to be able to continue my soccer career at the college level. I really like all the coach-

ing staff at CMU and am really looking forward to challenging myself going forward."

Anvar has played an important role in the Northern Highlands girls soccer program and she will continue to showcase her talents as she brings her athletic skills, dedication and work ethic to Carnegie Mellon University for the next four years. Congratulations, Neha. ■



Neha Anvar's Carnegie Mellon commitment announcement post.

CARLY BECOMES A PHOENIX

Carly Simmel verbally commits to play lacrosse at University of Chicago

Sophia Makhoul '26

There are many talented lacrosse players at Northern Highlands, but one stands out: Carly Simmel.

Simmel is a senior and is one of our many talented players. She has been playing lacrosse since third grade and is very dedicated to the sport. She says she enjoys playing lacrosse

and has stuck with it for almost ten years.

"I started off playing rec lacrosse for Northern Highlands and I still play with a lot of girls who were on that team." Simmel says.

She also has been playing club lacrosse since fifth grade which has helped her become the amazing player she is today.

Her experience and dedication to the sport has helped her to succeed in high school and ultimately berecruited to one of the most prestigious schools in the nation.

Simmel's biggest inspiration throughout her career has been her coaches and teammates. "I would not be where I am without the many amazing coaches that I have had throughout the years."

Her coaches and teammates have pushed her to work her absolute hardest on the field. For her, her teammates aren't just teammates, they are also her family.

"They have always been there for me through the bad and through the good," Simmel says. "They are all people who I know that I can always count on." She expresses her love for her teammates because of how much they support her, especially through the recruitment process.

Her coaches also has helped her become the best possible player that she can be and Simmel says she will be forever grateful for the support from both her

coaches and teammates.

This past summer, Simmel comitted to continue playing lacrosse at the University of Chicago, a Division III school.

"The recruiting process is definitely not an easy one, but I am so glad that I did it." She explains that she went to visit the University of Chicago over the summer and she instantly fell in love with the campus. "I knew right away it was the school for me." she states.

Simmel will be attending her dream college and is thrilled to get to play another four years of lacrosse. "I definitely think that Highlands has prepared me for college," she adds.

Simmel's two coaches not only help her play on the field but also guide her in the classroom. Not only did Coach Menzella and Coach McCabe help her come a long way on the lacrosse field, but they have also helped her with her personal human skills and student skills.

"All of my teachers have pushed me so far in class, and for that reason



Carly Simmel running with the ball during a lacrosse game.

I think that I am very prepared for what is to come."

A lot of support clearly has gone into helping Simmel with her lacrosse career which is a very important factor in her overall success as not only an athlete, but also as a student.

As Highlands has guided and supported Simmel throughout her career as a lacrosse player, our community can only hope for the best for her during her college years.

As one one can tell, Simmel is a very dedicated student in the classroom and player on the field.

Great job Carly and best of luck to you in your academic and athletic career in college. ■



Carly Simmel guards Ramapo from scoring a goal at a home game.

SENIOR TRADITIONS

Class of 2023

Lauren Perez '25
Layout by Kaitlyn Harle '23

Senior traditions are a big part of our school. It is something the whole senior class participates in to show spirit. These traditions also allow seniors at Highlands to enjoy their last year a little bit more.

I interviewed Leah Rimland, a senior here at Highlands, so that we could go more into detail about these special traditions. While interviewing her, she said it was hard to pick her favorite senior tradition because she is looking forward to all of them, but if she had to pick one, it would be the days off after prom.

It is popular for the seniors to take a couple days off of school after prom and rent out a house with friends. Rimland has older siblings that graduated from Highlands, and they have told her how enjoyable the experience was. They said some fun activities that take place are grilling, playing games, and just hanging out. She hasn't experienced it yet, but she is super excited for when she does!

Similar to many of the seniors at Highlands, Rimland participated in the kid backpacks tradition. She thinks it's really funny how the class starts off their senior year of high school with the backpacks that they started their academic journey with. The backpacks are quite small; students only end up using them for a few weeks until the backpack can't fit the growing number of binders and papers students acquire.

With Rimland's reasoning on the finicky nature of the backpacks, it is ultra popular for the first week of school when the workload is light. Despite the seemingly low efficiency of this tradition, Rimland doesn't think the tradition will ever stop because students have been doing it for so long that everyone grows to look forward to it even if it's impractical.

Senior car decorating is another popular tradition that the seniors at Highlands partake in each year. Rimland opted not to decorate her car due to the rain on the first day of school, however she loved how the pictures turned out of the cars her friends decorated.

She also mentioned that it is great to have these traditions since it can be disappointing for some that it's their last year, so it's great to have positive events to look forward to.

Overall, Rimland and her friends have had a memorable time partaking in all of the traditions so far; they are looking forward to many more as the year progresses.



A senior friend group poses on top of a red jeep decorated with the saying "Roll Landers"

Photo courtesy of Candice Massimi '23



Seniors Lauren Rowland, Ava Gamburg, and Carlie Barsanti pose on top of a colorfully decorated jeep.

Photo courtesy of Ava Gamburg '23



Seniors Candice Massimi and Madi Lees pose with their backpacks on top of a car

Photo courtesy of Candice Massimi '23



Seniors Bella O'Callaghan, Ava Mercurio, Grace Khowaylo, and Nina Riccardi posing for pictures in the school parking lot.

Photo courtesy of Ava Mercurio '23



Seniors Candice Massimi posing with a jeep door stating "I'm like 2023% done"

Photo courtesy of Candice Massimi '23