

The Highland Fling

Northern Highlands Regional High School | 298 Hillside Avenue, Allendale NJ 07401 | Volume 55, Issue 06 | May 2021



Michael Reifman '23

As the end of the school year approaches, Northern Highlands is gearing up for a brand new adventure.

SCHOOL FOR THE SUMMER

Northern Highlands is getting ready to host its first ever Summer Academy

Cat Corrado '23

Northern Highlands is introducing a brand new Summer Academy beginning this June.

The Summer Academy will programs for course advancement and credit recovery.

The summer academy is an opportunity for students to further expand their knowledge on specific subjects, take courses that will count towards their graduation requirement and to earn credits for courses that they previously failed or did not receive credits for due to an excess of absences.

The course advancement program will include Financial Management, Geometry, Honors Biology/Lab and Honors Chemistry/Lab.

The credit recovery program will allow students to retake Algebra 1, Geometry and English and is offered for those in grades 9, 10 and 11. To apply for the program, "students will need to go to the summer academy website which is located on the Northern Highlands website.

Then, they can go to the

registration information tab and click on the link to register, which will then direct them to a google form.

After they are registered, they will hear back in the next couple weeks as to whether or not they were accepted into the program," Robin Knutelsky, Director of Curriculum and Instruction explained.

In order to be accepted into the program, students

minimum grade of a 95 in Algebra I and must receive a teacher recommendation.

Those looking to take the Honors Biology/Lab course or the Honors Chemistry/Lab course need to have successfully completed Honors or AP Physics I with a final average of a 93 or higher for the Biology course and a 95 or higher for Chemistry.

The Financial Manage-

gram, students must have either not attended enough classes to receive credit for a class or have failed it.

All classes will be held in-person and will follow the same COVID-19 guidelines that have been followed throughout this school year.

Students must wear a face covering or mask, have their temperature taken upon arrival, and have a COVID-19 form signed by

The Financial Management program will hold two sessions each day, allowing students to choose which time works best for them. Session 1 will meet from 8:30 am - 11:30 am and session 2 will meet from 12:00 pm - 3:00 pm.

The credit recovery program will have one session per day from 8:30 am - 12:00 pm.

All applicants are required to pay a \$50 non-refundable registration fee. For the course advancement program, the full tuition cost is \$900 for the 5 credit course.

The Financial Management course is \$400 for the 2.5 credit course and the credit recovery courses are free of charge.

Although there are only a limited number of courses being offered by the Northern Highlands Summer Academy this summer, "if things go well, we would look to offer more courses outside of the traditional courses for our students in the following years. Maybe we'd even offer test preparation courses for the SAT and ACT," Principal Joseph Occhino said. ■

The Summer Academy is an opportunity for students to further expand their knowledge on specific subjects, take courses that will count towards their graduation requirements, and to earn credits for courses that they previously failed or did not receive credits for due to an excess of absences.

must meet certain prerequisites in order to ensure that a student has a solid understanding of basic concepts before they move onto more advanced courses.

For the course advancement program, students looking to take Geometry over the summer would need to have achieved a

ment course is intended to fulfill the financial literacy graduation requirement, and the only prerequisite is that the student has not previously taken a financial literacy course such as Personal Finance or Introduction to Business.

In order to be eligible for the credit recovery pro-

both the student and their parent/guardian.

The classes will run Monday-Thursday from June 28 to July 29 with the exact times varied depending on the course. For the course advancement program, classes will run from 8:30 am - 3:00 pm with one session per day.

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TEACHER OF THE YEAR: STACEY LAMOTTA

Mitsuki Uehara '22

Stacey LaMotta was named the Teacher of the Year back in December of 2020. Principal Joseph Occhino recently announced this news at a Board of Education meeting.

The Teacher of the Year is chosen through a deliberate process: a survey is sent out to students, parents and faculty who then choose the nominees.

There is a specific committee that reviews the applications and agrees on the selection. This year, LaMotta "came out on top."

After being named the Teacher of the Year, "Ms. LaMotta cried tears of joy," Occhino said, "any time you can receive some type of accolade, it just means that you have been doing something right... It meant an awful lot because she knows that she has made a difference in the lives of her students."

LaMotta is a special education teacher here at Highlands, teaching collaborative biology classes and chemistry classes this year.

LaMotta graduated with a Bachelor's degree in child development and a Master's degree in special education. She began her teaching career at a school in California, helping children who were "severely behaviorally challenged," by providing them a more structured learning environment.

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ATTACKS ON THE ASIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY

How a Rise in Anti-Asian Hate Crimes Continues to Effect Many Across the Country



Photo courtesy of Emily Gan

Emily Gan ‘23

A 61-year-old Filipino American. Face slashed.
A 64-year-old Vietnamese American. Assaulted and robbed.
An 84-year-old Thai American. Pushed to the ground. Dead.
2021, the year everyone thought was going to be the turning point. We all thought we were leaving behind memories of misery, isolation and repetition, just to step into another year full of violence.
Within this past year alone, there have been over 3,800 reported anti-Asian hate crimes (Yam). Imagine how many more went

undocumented.
The largest reason for attacks against Asian Americans is due to COVID-19.
Former President Trump referring to the virus as the “Kung-Flu” or “the China Virus” didn’t help.
One thing I’ve noticed throughout the pandemic is the way that different contries were treated after becoming a hotspot for the virus.
For example, when the coronavirus hit Italy, social media was flooded with posts that told others to “pray for Italy” or wish health and light upon them during a time of death and destruction.
When China was struggling with the virus, there was a noticeable lack of positivity coming from anyone on these sites.
The factor that confuses me the most is how people believe that the way to end the pandemic and bring back the lives that have been lost during this time is by killing American citizens who also happen to

be Asian. This generalization is extremely harmful and illogical.
Targeting and inflicting violence upon someone based on their ethnicity is the definition of a hate crime. It shocks me that some people, especially those in a position of authority, deny this.
Xiaojie Tan. Daoyou Feng. Hyun Jung Grant. Soon Chung Park. Sun Cha Kim. Yong Ae Yue. Delaina Ashley Yaun. Paul Andre Michels.
These are the victims of the deadly shooting that took place in Atlanta Georgia.
Eight people were shot dead. Six of these victims were women of Asian descent, all of whom worked at various spas or massage

parlors.
I remember seeing a press conference where Deputy Chief Charles Hampton of the Atlanta Police Department appeared to defend the shooter, Robert Aaron Long, by claiming that he was just having “a really bad day.”
The people have demanded changed. We have spoken, time and time again. But who is listening?
We all have bad days. That doesn’t mean we murder nor does it justify the desire to.
The shooter was said to have a “temptation” towards these spas and parlors because of his sexual addictions.
Asian fetishization, especially towards women, makes people view these human beings as cheap and disposable.
This hypersexualization of Asian women is dehu-

manizing and in some cases, like this one, potentially deadly.
One of the most unsettling factors of these hate crimes is how people are targeting Asian Americans who appear weak: the elders.
Many of the elders within the Asian community immigrated here for a better life for themselves and their families.
They had to work hard to climb up the ladder of success. For some of them to die violent deaths just because of their “weak” appearance is repulsive.
As I watched the numerous videos of elderly people being attacked, I realized that this could have just as easily been my grandma, my parents, my friends or even me.
I shouldn’t have to live in fear that one day, I might see someone I love, dead on my television screen.
I’m tired of seeing headline after headline detailing the racist acts that occur in this country

without proper action being taken.
The people have demanded change. We have spoken, time and time again. But who is listening?
At Highlands, we need to implement more programs, more lessons ingrained into the curriculum that will teach the next generation of children to combat racism.
It all starts with talking about the issues at hand. We as a community need to speak about them more.
We need to address them clearly, we need to say all the names of the lives taken.
How many more victims until we can finally call this country “united”? ■

The Highland Fling

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The views of the staff do not necessarily reflect the views of the administration. The administration has the right to review and alter an issue of the newspaper for five school days after it has been given to them by the staff. In the process of prior review, the original content of the paper may be changed or deleted. Regardless, the staff of *The Highland Fling* prides itself on delivering the most relevant and accurate reporting it can.

From the Desk of the Editor-in-Chief

A legacy is a funny thing. Throughout my time working on *The Highland Fling*, I have watched my predecessors forge their legacies through the passion we have shared. The chance to make a difference not only in our own lives but the lives of our staff and the school community. Anthony D’Iorio, Katie Shea, Api Dhadda and Melissa Reifman have all made me the journalist that I am today. Their support and criticism, their ideas and creativity have left a mark on this paper that will be remembered as long as it is in print. Their stoicness in the face of crisis and perseverance in times of dilemma is the reason why *The Fling* has been so successful these past four years. Even in these trying times, this community has emerged stronger than ever.

I am so excited to be your newest Senior Editor-In-Chief. I have been dreaming of this since my first article was published in Voices in the early months of my freshman year. This paper has helped me find my passion, my dream, my voice and my future. I hope that the work that my staff and I publish over the next year will help a new generation of young writers to discover their dreams and find a voice of their own.

This past year has been one that none of us will forget. The Corona Virus has left a mark on all of us that will forever remain. Relationships lost, clubs disbanded and the lack of normalcy that we experience to this day will shape our lives and the people that we will become. For all the dark that has dominated the past year, beams of light are forcing their way through. Students eligible for vaccines, more bodies roaming the halls and a new hope for the future. This pandemic will always be a part of our legacy however, it is what we did in the face of crisis that is truly what we will be remembered for.

Thanks to John Kaminski, Dhadda and Reifman, *The Highland Fling* lives on. Our staff has worked tirelessly to ensure that a new issue of this paper was published for the Highlands community these past months. Their work to continue the tradition of the paper will not be forgotten. It is now my turn to keep the tradition alive.

What will my legacy be? I often ponder this while thinking about my fleeting time in the halls of Highlands. As I complete my first issue leading an amazing team of writers and editors, it occurred to me that my legacy is not something that I can worry about just yet. I still have a year of late nights, hard work and editing in front of me. I can only do my best each day and work to ensure that I will represent myself and the school in a way I will be proud of later on in the future. For now, I will let the work that my staff has poured their heart and soul into speak for itself.

Please enjoy the first issue of *The Highland Fling* from the 2021-2022 staff. As the end of the year and standardized testing approaches, do not forget to grasp onto the light rather than the darkness of the past.

Sincerely
Sammy Lever
Senior Editor-in-Chief of *The Highland Fling*

If you are interested in joining *The Highland Fling* or have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact fling.eic@gmail.com.
If you are interetested in placing an ad or subscribing, please contact the email listed above.

National Alliance on Mental Illness:
1-800-950-6264

National Suicide Prevention Hotline:
1-800-273-TALK (8255) [24/7 hotline]
(Spanish) 1-888-628-9454

READY TO ATTACK THOSE AP EXAMS

This year’s AP testing format moves to normalcy after a year of chaos



Photo courtesy of Chahat Arora

Chahat Arora ‘22

AP Testing has been an integral part of most high schooler’s life for many years.

These tests are extremely important to many, and helps students earn college credits while in high school.

Last year due to COVID-19, all students were required to take the AP Test at home.

This test involved being on a laptop at home and was taken through a portal.

Last year, the tests were shortened in order to accommodate the special

circumstances that the whole world was in.

This year, while the testing situation has not returned to it’s original form, it is one step closer to returning to normalcy.

According to the Collegeboard, “The 2021 exam schedule provides three testing dates (Administrations 1, 2, and 3) for each subject between early May and mid-June.

In Administration 1, all exams are full-length paper and pencil, administered in school.

In Administration 2, half of the subjects are full-length paper and pencil, administered in school, and half are full-length digital, administered in school or taken at home.

In Administration 3, most subjects are full-length digital, administered in school or taken at home; nine subjects remain full-length paper and pencil, administered in school.”

As you can see, this is

extremely different from the shortened at-home tests that were administered the previous year.

This year Highlands will be participating in a combination of both paper and digital exams.

Highlands is administering the test during Admin-

istration 2, which means that half of the tests will be taken digital, and half of the tests will be taken traditionally on paper.

This year I will be taking three AP exams, one on paper and two digitally. I definitely think that for me to take it on paper it will be a little weird, as I have spent the majority of my year utilizing a digital

This year, while the testing situation has not returned to its original form, it is one step closer to returning to normalcy.

The digital testing app is also an integral part of these exams.

The app, which has been downloaded onto our school devices, makes it so that we are able to easily take the exam.

There is a practice feature available on the testing app, which has helped me familiarize myself with how the exam will take place.

From what I have encountered, the platform is seemingly familiar as it somewhat resembles the AP Classroom Practice, something that has been utilized all year as a practice resource.

This will definitely be a different experience for me as I have never actually taken an AP exam in the traditional way at its normal length.

I am sure that this is a sentiment that all juniors, and maybe even sophomores share, because we were all thrown into a very different situation.

Overall though, I am

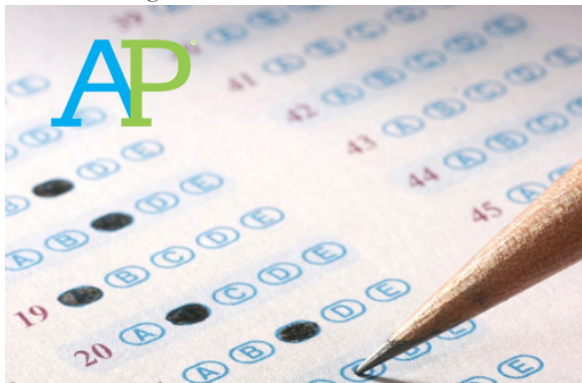


Photo courtesy of the College Board

happy with the way that Highlands is proceeding with these exams. I

think that it is important to return a sense of normality, while also being able to slowly become adjusted, with the option of having digital exams.

While we all have a long way to go overall during this pandemic, the little steps that bring us closer are extremely important and as a school and as a community we are becoming able to return to life as we know it. ■

HAPPY HOLI, HIGHLANDS!

How an Important Holiday Prevails During the Pandemic



Photo courtesy of Isha Korgaonkar

Isha Korgaonkar ‘24

The arrival of spring in late March and early April brings about a festival that celebrates love and the triumph of good over evil. Holi is a bright and colorful holiday that has a fascinating story behind it.

According to Hinduism, there lived a demon king named Hiranyakashipu thousands of years ago. He was cruel and practically indestructible.

His arrogance led to him demanding that everyone should worship only him. His son, Prahlada, disagreed.

Prahlada chose to be devoted to Vishnu, the Hindu god of preservation and maintenance. This severely angered Hiranyakashipu, so he set out to punish his son.

He was stunned to find that in each challenge, including hissing snakes and

crazy elephants, Prahlada was miraculously saved by Vishnu.

In frustration, King Hiranyakashipu devised his most wicked plan of all. He summoned his evil sister, Holika, to lure Prahlada into her lap and sit in a fire.

Holika possessed a cloak that made her immune to fire. As the fire blazed, Prahlada again prayed to Vishnu, who came to his rescue.

The cloak flew off Holika and wrapped itself safely around Prahlada. Thus, Holika was consumed by the fire and Prahlada survived.

It is this celebration of Lord Vishnu and Prahlada’s victory over King Hiranyakashipu and Holika that is known as Holi.

Holi is named after Holika and is the brilliant festival of colors, love, and spring.

It is deeply honored in the Hindu religion but is celebrated all over the world, including in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, South Africa, UK, the US, Fiji, and Germany.

Holi is not only a triumphant celebration of good over evil, but also the

beauty of love, community, and family.

As senior Riddhimaa Kothari says, Holi is about “celebrating family, coming together as one, and just enjoying each other’s presence, love and happiness.”

This year, Holi stretched from Sunday, March 28 to Monday, March 29.

Traditionally, on the night before Holi, a bonfire is held, which symbolizes the defeat of evil.

People pray for their internal evil to be destroyed, just like Holika was by the fire.

The next day, a more known and popular celebration of Holi is held. People throw color on friends, family, or strangers in their own homes, outside temples, or in the streets.

Freshman Drishti Chauhan says “When I think of Holi, I think of colors and having fun with my friends. The celebration’s always a blast!”

Many Highlanders have celebrated Holi in the past and shared their traditions with me.

Senior Api Dhadda usually celebrates in her backyard with her immedi-

ate family and cousins.

Chauhan “started celebrating with some people in a community” she was part of, but her celebrations for the past two years got interrupted by the pandemic.

I am sure many Highlanders can agree with Chauhan on this. The pandemic has certainly affected not only our physical health but also our mental health and social interactions.

Many Holi celebrations have changed, due to COVID.

For Dhadda, she was still able to have a mini celebration with her sister and parents at home. I had a similar experience -- my family and I smeared color on each other’s faces. We only had a purple color, but we still had fun!

Especially in this tough time, Holi has become more relevant than ever.

The sickness, social distancing, and ever-rising unemployment rates that have become the outcomes of this pandemic can be disheartening; but at the same time, we have grown closer to our families and have become appreciative of our friendships, and have had a chance to reflect

on ourselves.

After all, this is what Holi celebrates: love, connection, triumph, and happiness.

As Kothari says, “Families have spent more time together during Covid than they used to, especially mine, and Holi only brings you closer and reminds you of how grateful we are to be able to spend that time together.”

We may have to make adjustments, but Holi celebrations only accentuate the few positive outcomes of this pandemic.

As Dhadda says, “I think Holi, like any other

holiday, is of course still relevant during Covid, we just have to change the way we celebrate it.”

And as Chauhan shares, “...I think it’s important to everyone that celebrates maybe even more than most years since it’s usually such a bright and happy holiday, which are both things many people could use some more of this year.”

So, wishing every Highlander love, confidence, happiness, connection, and hope in this especially hard time. Happy Holi to everyone who celebrates! ■



Art by Izzy Levine '23

BASKETS AND BUNNIES

How did you spend your Easter?



Photo courtesy of Nina Riccardi

Nina Riccardi '23

Within the Highlands community, I think we can all agree that spring break is one of our most awaited breaks. It takes off of the long no-break March, and we get to celebrate with friends and family on holidays like Easter and Passover. And it's ten days!

Holidays single out on the love and joy of community. Siblings come home from college, aunts and uncles notice how much you've grown, grandparents make you eat a lot. Whether it is religious or not, it is a beautiful time to spend in celebration.

Religiously, Easter is the resurrection of Lord Jesus Christ on the third day after his burial. Lent had just ended on Holy Saturday, with Good Friday before that, and had started 40 days before on Ash Wednesday.

For nonreligious reasons, Easter can symbolize the beginning of Spring, warm weather, and the end of a winter slump.

While many churches

were open for Easter, my family decided not to go this year because of my grandparents and COVID.

Churches being closed didn't damper my family's spirits, as we were able to order food from Fino and sit in the lovely 60° weather.

After a late lunch/early dinner, we went back to my house to eat some dessert for my siblings' birthday. It was an excellent way to start my spring break, and a great opportunity to spend time with my loved ones.

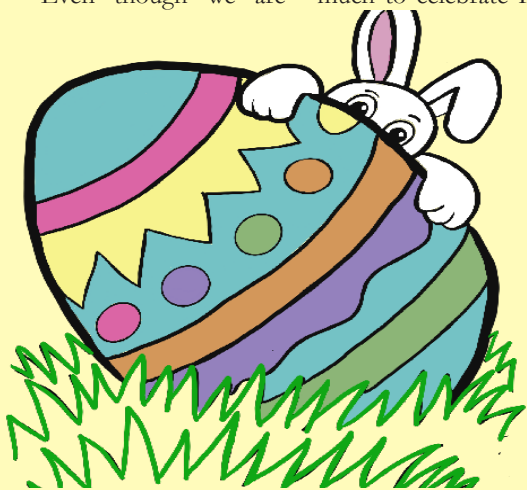
Even though we are

usually go to my grandparents' house for the egg hunt. Two hours, around 300 plastic eggs, and whoever gets the most gets 25 bucks and the golden egg!

It is a competitive event, but somehow my little cousin Danny always wins (not suspicious at all). The event is still fun despite this, especially when we can do it all together.

Springtime and the Easter season is definitely a loved holiday in my family.

Highlands can't do much to celebrate Passover



Art courtesy of Izzy Levine '23

not very religious, my family goes all in for Easter. To kick it off, we dye our Easter Eggs every year on the Wednesday prior.

Then, my mom wakes up my siblings and me on Easter to tell us the Easter bunny came (no matter how old we've all gotten); we usually get an assortment of chocolates, eggs, and peeps in a straw basket.

We meet up with my extended family, where we

or Easter, understandably because of religion, but that isn't going to stop anyone from getting excited for a break from the long days of school, virtual or not.

It is a most certainly needed break and a great way to rejuvenize students for the final stretch of the school year! ■

THE POWER OF POETRY

Celebrating National Poetry Month



Photo courtesy of Luci Campos

Luci Campos '21

Poetry has always been a passion of mine. I've been writing since I was about 9 years old. I've always been open to finding new poets and poems to read and learn from for my own poetry.

My favourite poet of all time has to be Edgar Allan Poe. He is a dark eccentric poet who writes about darkness and mystery.

The main reason why Edgar Allen Poe stands out

A Dream," and "Eldorado." I particularly enjoy these poems because of the use of bleak and cynical imagery.

I love poetry because it serves as a tool of various forms of self expression. I believe so because there are no rules to poetry.

A poem can be one line, or forty lines, extremely straight forward, or buried in metaphors. Therefore, the boundless nature of poetry allows a writer to express themselves in an infinite amount of ways.

Another reason that poetry is a passion of mine is that reading a poem allows one to see from the perspective of someone else, and momentarily feel what that person is feeling.

I enjoy reading the poems of other people to add to my own understanding of the world.

Some of my favorite

Last year I had the honor to take Ms. Barrett's Creative writing class. She introduced us to all kinds of poetry and writing styles.

It was in this class that I was introduced to poets that I still appreciate to this day, such as Emily Dickinson, Rupi Kaur, Maya Angelou, and Walt Whitman. These poets inspired my own writing and improved my techniques.

I wrote some of my best poems in her class! When I was going through some of my toughest times I was able to express my emotions to the class through my writing.

I am very grateful to my Creative Writing class for building on my thought processes and ideas so I am able to understand and appreciate poetry at a higher level.

A lot of people may dismiss poetry, but I think that's because they don't take the time to understand it. Poetry can be so beautiful, and a lot of poetry can be interpreted in numerous ways.

You don't have to be an amazing writer to try out poetry, it's something anyone can do. I urge everyone to attempt to write or read a poem because it may change your life like it changed mine. ■



Art courtesy of Izzy Levine '23

to me is that he spearheaded the horror literary genre.

My favorite poems by Edgar Allan Poe are "The Raven," "A Dream Within

english classes have been when we talked about poetry. We had numerous discussions about pivotal poets and different styles of poetry.

TESTING SEASON IS HERE

Making sure to protect our mental health during this time



Photo courtesy of Karen Bae

Karen Bae '23

Where did the time go? April is already here and I believe many would agree that it's a nerve-wracking time to be a high school student: it's testing season.

AP exams are just around the corner, and students are preparing to take the SATs and ACTs. The question I'm wondering is, how do these tests affect our mental health?

Research done by the Suicide Prevention Resource

Center, negative mental conditions like depression are associated with lower test scores and can increase anxiety. More specifically, students who get higher grades tend to develop higher levels of self-esteem. So as some of us take practice tests, our self-esteem is at risk of declination.

As a matter of fact, when sophomore Lynn Heo at Northern Highlands was asked how she felt after she took a practice SAT test and didn't meet her preset expectations she said, "I honestly was disheartened when I did not meet my expected score. It definitely discouraged me and I didn't want to work harder. Also, I got worried about my future plans (college) and felt like I was not going to get better SAT scores in the future."

I'm sure Heo's response resonates with many students.

Unfortunately, there's nothing we can do to avoid the tests. However, there is something we can do about protecting ourselves from any damage to our mental health.

In Ms. Rabadan's Positive Psychology and Happiness class, we learned about unconditional positive regard. Unconditional positive regard (UPR) is used to describe a technique that involves showing complete support and acceptance of a person no matter what that person says or does.

UPR is applicable to ourselves, and I believe it is the key to happiness during these stressful times. How we think about ourselves and how we value ourselves plays a major role in well-being.

People with a healthy mindset known as a growth mindset are open to challenges, making mistakes, and being vulnerable. We need

this mindset to give UPR to ourselves.

As an example, when I took my first practice SAT test, I ran out of time, didn't get to the last reading passage, didn't understand most of the readings and basically felt like I had failed.

My immediate reaction was that I would never be able to succeed (get into college) and I was not good enough or smart enough. With UPR in mind, I changed my interpretation and realized I shouldn't be so hard on myself.

The fact that I struggled meant there was so much room for improvement. No one was expecting me to get a decent score on the first try, and at the end of the day, my score doesn't measure all my other strengths as a student.

In simpler terms, if we want to protect our mental health, we need to be more

compassionate with ourselves because test scores don't define us.

Today, standardized tests have become a major indicator of a student's abilities and potential. But these tests are not a fair judgment of a student's talent.

For one, some students are just not as skilled at taking multiple-choice tests. In addition, Heo later brought up to me a fair point, that low-income families cannot provide tutors for their children so they're more likely to not perform as well as those who have that luxury.

Every student is wired differently with our own skills that can't be shown through testing. There are so many other factors that make a student successful outside the classroom like extracurricular activities, their leadership skills, or their GPA.

And if you get a bad

score, it really isn't the end of the world because test scores are not always the deal-breaker for college admissions. In fact, the increase in colleges going test-optional has been substantial.

Tests are just one small part of your student profile, and no reflection of who you are as a person.

I'm proud of how far students at Highlands have come and I hope we can learn to have a little more compassion for ourselves this testing season.

Please be kind to yourself. No one expects you to be perfect. Do your best now, and no matter what score you receive, just know your future will always remain bright. ■

ZOOMIN' THROUGH THE YEAR

How technology has advanced and changed our lives this past year



Photo courtesy of Yasmin Chakhman

Yasmin Chakhman '22

We are just zooming through the year 2021. Literally. A year ago none of us could have imagined how technology reliant we would become nowadays.

Ever since the pandemic, almost everything has gone from standard pen and paper to online. Technology has had to rapidly adapt and advance.

We have become even more dependent on technology than we ever had been before.

Depending on who you ask, there are varying stances on whether this has had

a positive or negative outcome.

For example, some kids feel like learning online is easier for them since classes are recorded and you can always go back and rewatch lessons you don't understand.

For others, it has been harder to learn virtually. Being online gives kids the ability to become unattentive and doze off with their work. This can greatly affect a student's ability to succeed in school.

Technology has become a means of homeschooling. Kids can only really interact with their teachers and barely have a connection with their classmates.

On the other side of the spectrum, this can also be difficult for teachers seeing as many kids online do not want to show their face on camera and often are afraid to speak on a zoom call.

This makes it harder to form a student teacher

connection and relationship. Teachers struggle with having to call on kids for participation and it really just becomes an unenjoyable class experience for both student and teacher when there is

working online and from home. Yet for many parents who aren't too tech savvy this has become an issue as well as a set back for them.

At least for us teens who have grown up with

At least for us teens who have grown up with technology, it has been an easy transition, but for many parents and adults who don't know much about technology, it hasn't been easy.

nobody willing to participate.

I feel like had the pandemic not happened we wouldn't be in the place with technology as we are today. So many companies and businesses have made things all online.

From not only schooling but work as well. Many adults have had to adapt to

technology it has been an easy transition but for many parents and adults who don't know much about technology, it hasn't been easy. This also changes the way our school days will function.

Going forward, we might not have any snow

days. Seeing as how we have become so accustomed to online classes, many school districts might just wipe out snow days completely.

Additionally, there may be many changes with how we take our standardized tests.

Students taking the ACT have been asked whether or not they would still take the test if it was still offered virtually with a virtual proctor watching your every move.

This also goes for AP testing. For many kids, this would be beneficial seeing as some students are just bad standardized test takers.

This would allow kids to feel more comfortable and at ease seeing as they will be taking their standardized tests from the comfort of their home.

But, this also brings upon the problem of cheating.

ing. Kids might find a way of cheating these standardized tests which would give them an unfair advantage when applying to colleges.

Many school apps have come up with anti cheating programs. These programs allow proctors to not only track the test taker but as well as having an assisted computer program track the student/test taker for any suspicious activity, such as eye movement, or if a student were to let's say click off the test and open a search browser.

Technology definitely has its positives and negatives, but we can only go up from here. There are still some kinks to work out but overall I'm excited to see where we go from here and what new things we come up with. ■

APRIL FOOLS...IN OCTOBER

One student's best April Fools Day's Prank



Photo courtesy of Jana Dabbagh

Jana Dabbagh '24

April Fools Day is said to have originated in France in the sixteenth-century when the Council of Trenta switched the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar. Due to this change, innocent people became victims to many jokes. Many weren't aware that the start of the new year now began on January 1, and not the last week of March to April 1.

Pranks pulled were used to show how gullible people were, and soon this tradition spread like wildfire throughout Europe and all over the world. This led to what we view April 1st as today, a day to have fun and pull outrageous pranks.

During April Fools Day, things become pretty suspenseful, and you always have to watch your back. Literally. This holiday reminds me of another popular holiday. What other holiday has people scrambling to save themselves before falling for

a silly prank? Halloween. Coincidentally, my April Fools of 2018 was one that haunts my family and me to this day.

I'm not usually one for pranks, but I wanted to come up with the best one yet that year. It was an idea inspired by an Instagram post that got this prank in motion, where someone had fooled their brother into thinking they slept so long, five years had passed.

So I got my mom and sister's attention, and we crafted our master plan. We were going to trick my dad into thinking it was Halloween.

My mom gathered

right (classic for a typical Halloween!).

We changed his phone time to say October 31, and we even had my cousin come over all dressed up to ask for candy. My dad answered the door, making the plan even more foolproof.

It was hysterical until we couldn't explain why someone was trick-or-treating at noon in the middle of the day, or why there was no one else but my cousin on the street... That's what I'd call the best April Fools prank ever.

April Fools is a tricky holiday to enjoy unless you've got some good

I'm not usually one for pranks, but I wanted to come up with the best one yet that year.

decorations, and my sister bought the candy while I worked on the technology side of things.

After foolproofing our plan and setting up just the night before, we waited until morning for April 1 to arrive. Or rather, October 31.

It was scary, to say the least. Not to me, but how good we got my dad. He believed it until finally realizing something was not

pranks up your sleeve. But fooling your friends or family always finds a way to bring a smile to people's faces. I enjoy telling the story of The Best April Fools Prank, and continuing to come up with new pranks every year! ■



TEACHER'S CORNER:

The Flexibility of Sports Medicine with Mr. Koeniges



Photo courtesy of Peter Koeniges

Peter Koeniges

As the athletic trainer, I am in charge of the healthcare of the athlete. However, so is the nurse, athletic director, vice principal, principal, superintendent and school physician.

The New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) and National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) have something to say about the healthcare of athletes as well.

In June 2020, I thought we would need some type of return to athletics protocol, so I wrote down my thoughts about how a return should look. Silly me.

Over the summer, the NFHS put out their statement regarding rules for return to sports.

The National Athletic Trainers Association did so as well. Then the NJSIAA put out their rules for return. I sheepishly put my

protocols in the bottom drawer. During a global pandemic, there are many voices who need to be heard in order for us to return to activity as safely as possible. It is our job to take all of these opinions and craft local protocols that will work for our school.

Like most teachers, I do not have a contract in the summer. I start working again in August when the preseason begins. However, if we were going to have summer activities during this COVID crisis, we needed to have protocols in place.

I was contracted to come back to school in July. Each athlete who came in for summer workouts needed their temperature checked by me or a coach and we accepted daily symptom forms. This continued throughout the preseason.

My routine for the last 19 years was drastically changed. I am usually in the athletic training facility getting athletes ready for practice by taping, stretching, adjusting equipment, and offering our foam rollers and Hypervolt massage tools.

Not this year. There was no locker room access. No water supplied. Athletes needed to come in for emergencies or make an ap-

pointment for rehabilitative services.

I spent my time taking temperatures and collecting forms.

This year required flexibility. Our goals were different. Safety remains a priority, but protocols needed to be altered. I wasn't focused on the best practices of an athletic trainer.

I needed to be cognizant of best practices for COVID first, then provide care for the athletes. I was also able to collaborate with colleagues more often than in the past. We come with different experiences and backgrounds. True collaboration makes our experiences more fulfilling.

With the continued rollout of the vaccine, I am hopeful we will be able to return to normalcy. But if not, I will remain flexible and do what I can to help those in our school community. ■

PUTTING PITCH PERFECT TO SHAME

Two Highlands acapella groups move on to semifinals amidst the pandemic

Christina Ahn '23

Northern Highlands offers three acapella programs; Highlands Belles, Highlands Voices and Highlands Harmonics.

The Highlands Belles is an all girls group led by Alexandra Falcone, Highlands Voices is led by Thomas Paster and Highlands Harmonics is led by Irene Lahr.

Despite challenges faced by the acapella program, two of Highlands' acapella groups made it to the Varsity Vocals International Championship of High School Acappella. Highlands Voices and Highlands Harmonics were scheduled to compete for a spot in the finals on April 17.

In the semifinals, both groups will be competing against other high school acapella groups such as the

Ramsey RamJams, Ridgewood AcapaBellas, and Free Verse Central Catholic & Oakland Catholic High School.

The winning group at semifinals automatically has a spot at finals. The groups who place second and third are then sent to the wild card bracket, which gives the groups the opportunity to make another video. The group that wins this bracket will also move onto the final.

The Northern Highlands acapella program is extremely selective. Due to COVID-19, auditions were especially tough this year.

There was a lot of uncertainty of whether or not acapella would be able to run this year. Fortunately, auditions were able to be held.

Hopeful students were able to submit a recording in

which they could submit any song of their choice.

All three groups had been practicing for the Varsity Vocals International Championship of High School Acappella or ICHSA.

Despite challenges faced by the acapella program, two of Highlands' acapella groups made it to the Varsity Vocals International Championship of High School Acappella

Every year, all Highlands acapella groups prepare vigorously for this competition, but due to COVID restrictions and multiple school closings throughout the year, practices had to be altered from their normal schedules.

Senior Penny Keeble, a Highlands Voices member explained, "Normally we would start prepping 3 songs for quarterfinals in October or November to compete in February.

videos, and then the videos would be judged prior to a livestream.

On the day of the livestream, you would be sent a link to watch it with your families. One plus with this is it made it easy for extended families that otherwise would not make it to an in person competition could watch the performance," sophomore Patrick Keeble said.

To prepare for these videos, members had to individually record themselves singing their part of the song in the sound booths at Highlands. Paster and Falcone then mixed the individual parts to make it sound like the members were all singing together.

The video also had a visual aspect attached. Some groups got together in person and made their video

more like a music video while other groups made theirs look like a virtual choir.

Members of the Highlands Harmonics "had to go into the school recording room and record [their] part with [their] director... and had an in person get together for two days at the school campus where [they] found places to record [their] visuals," sophomore Minha Park said.

Making it to semifinals alone is a huge accomplishment, especially due to the cards that all after school clubs and programs have been dealt this year. Clearly, the hard work of the acapella groups at Highlands has paid off. ■

IT'S THE NIGHT OF ALL NIGHTS

The date for the junior prom has officially been announced by the school

Rebecca Hoffer '23

It was recently announced that the junior prom is going to hold this year.

The school will be putting restrictions in place for this event to prioritize the safety of the students.

One of them being that they will insist whenever the attendees are not eating or drinking they must have a face mask on.

Another restriction put in place this year is that dates can only be brought from within their respective grades. This was to accommodate the maximum capacity while adhering to social distancing guidelines.

The tables at the venue

itself will also hold 8 people, which is lower than the usual 10-12 people per table. that has been done in the past

This will help students

out upon arrival to school and for participation in sports.

The scanners from the school will also be brought

"We are keeping our fingers crossed that we're still able to do this and all signs indicate that we will be able to."

Principal Joseph Occhino

spread out to help with social distancing and to ensure everyone's safety while eating.

There is also a required COVID-19 form that students are required to fill out prior to attendance. This is the same form that is filled

to the prom venue and there will be mandatory temperature checks to help ensure everyone's safety.

Despite the pandemic, the general consensus amongst students is that they are excited for the prom to occur. However,

there are some students who are hesitant to attend prom due to the risk of catching COVID-19.

Vice Principal, Michael Koth has a few words for those students; "If it's safe enough to come to school with our current protocols... I think it's safe enough to have our year end activities as we normally do. So we will do so in a safe and responsible manner as we have all throughout the year and we'll follow many of the same protocols we have school year round. I think it will be a good time by all."

Junior prom has been scheduled on Thursday, May 20, at the Cosmopolitan in Wayne, New Jersey. Previously, the venue for the ju-

nior prom was at the Hilton in New York.

The Honors Global Citizenship Class at Northern Highlands is holding a "Prom Makeover Raffle". This class fundraises throughout the year to help people struggling around the world.

For this specific event, the money raised will go to Glory in Kenya, Africa. The prom makeover package for this event includes a hair salon styling appointment, a manicure appointment, an LA Sunset spray tan certificate, and cosmetics/perfume by Clarins.

For students interested in winning this package they can venmo @givetoglority with their donations. A lit-

tle goes a long way for this cause and it's always rewarding to give to others. \$5 buys 2 raffle tickets, \$10 buys 5 raffle tickets, \$20 buys 15 raffle tickets, and \$50 buys 50 raffle tickets.

Principal Joseph Occhino remains hopeful that this prom will occur. "We are keeping our fingers crossed that we're still able to do this and all signs indicate that we will be able to."

Occhino also mentioned that typical end of the year activities are always fun for the students and a way to wrap up this unforgettable school year. ■

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN

Honors Global Citizenship Students Have Begun Fundraising Once Again

Julia Boydell '22

When walking through Northern Highlands, it's likely you will see a multitude of flyers advertising sales, raising money and so much more. Students hold events such as bake sales and raffles to raise money for charities and extracurriculars.

Most of these events have to do with the class run at Northern Highlands called Honors Global Citizenship.

During first semester, students enrolled in the course gain knowledge about a wide range of issues that are occurring in different parts of the world.

Some of these regional problems include things such as poor medical supplies, economic collapse, limited school resources (school buildings, etc.) and more.

While learning about these important issues, students must begin to think about how will help those struggling with these problems..

After this period of learning, the class spends the remainder of the school year focusing on a project that will help those who are in need.

This project includes researching a cause, raising money or resources (what-

ever is needed) for that specific cause, getting in contact with both the country and a specific person if that is who they so choose to help and figuring out the best way to help out.

To raise money students host events for Highlands students to gain funds and support for their cause. Any contribution is important and meaningful, especially to the people who are being helped.

In an interview with Principal Joseph Occhino, he stated that students in this class throughout past years have "raised thousands of dollars for their causes" and have been extreme-

ly successful with meeting their goals.

In the places that they are raising money for, that much money goes a long way and can make a huge difference in the lives of so many people struggling around the world.

Students that are not in this class and faculty at Northern Highlands still have the chance to make an impact by helping groups reach their goals.

The events happening and causes being benefited are easily seen through flyers around the school, or even online on the Canvas homepage. Any contribution can make a difference. ■

GIVE TO GLORY PRESENTS

Prom Makeover Raffle

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2 for \$5
5 for \$10
15 for \$20
50 for \$50

Email givetoglority@gmail.com for more information about the raffle. All proceeds will go to Glory in Kenya.

Photo courtesy of Give to Glory

ONE OF US, ONE OF US, ONE OF US

National Honor Society inducts juniors and seniors into the organization

Jessica Gao '23

On March 24, the National Honor Society (or the NHS) inducted its newest junior and senior members at Northern Highlands.

Currently consisting of 242 members, the program is focused on the four pillars of scholarship, service, leadership, and character. Students inducted are offered membership to continue serving the school and local community, largely through volunteer work.

A major setback for determining qualifications this year was the current COVID-19 pandemic. In order to accommodate the situation, the number of required service hours were reduced as well as the total number of points needed overall to qualify. The usual activities applicants partake

in such as tutoring and fund-raising have become completely virtual.

Advisor of the Highlands National Honor Society, Jeffrey D'Elia, expands

“It’s pretty much a daily job, and definitely a team effort.”

NHS Advisor Jeffrey D’Elia

on this, stating, “we have evolved and changed with the times ... we’ve been writing book reviews, video reviews, and providing technical assistance instead” in reference to changing projects within local libraries.

Another notable endeavor is the pen pal program for local senior centers.

D’Elia commented that, “some individuals might feel a bit isolated, especially when nursing homes were in

lockdown earlier in the pandemic”. Not only are seniors sent letters, but hand-made letters are also being mailed to children in many national hospitals in a partnership

with a national organization.

Making do with the reality of very few hands on projects has caused donations and drives to become a priority. The Highlands program has done multiple food drives. In fact, 425 pounds of food was dropped off to a local food bank, and a second drive was started on April 15.

“We need to make do with social distancing, and so simply putting boxes

in front of the school was a perfect way to be safe,” D’Elia pointed out.

The advisor also took care to emphasize efforts made by the club officers. Especially in such unprecedented times, he describes the work done by his students as “extremely helpful” and highlights how “we definitely would not have been able to function without them.”

President Jana Reichert is in charge of overseeing all the activities, transporting the food collected by the drive, and sending out newsletters to all 242 members. Indeed, as there were so many members, D’Elia laughingly points out that “we didn’t even try to have any zoom meetings- it would have been a little crazy”. Instead, they have been communicating using email.

Meanwhile, Vice Presidents Ryan Yu and Ines Kim are both in charge of the virtual tutoring program. At the same time, Secretary Roshan Ramamoorthy has been primarily responsible for logging service hours and communicating with other members and Treasurer Kate Darling has overseen many other resources.

“It’s pretty much a daily job, and definitely a team effort,” D’Elia noted.

Another setback was when quarantine regulations impeded last year’s induction ceremony, which was supposed to take place on March 28.

This year, the decision was made for the ceremony to be on zoom, and D’Elia explains how “there were definitely a lot of different pieces, but we put it together into a cohesive ceremony

for the students”. With guest speakers and a performance by the jazz band, the ceremony celebrated the accomplishments of the new members.

Although we are exceedingly proud of the new inductees, Principal Joseph Occhino also wants them to keep in mind that they are still kids. He stated, “in the end, they have worked so hard over the year that they need to remember to sit back a little bit and take a breath, and remember to be a kid”.

Indeed, this message rings true for all students at Highlands, especially with the new academic rigor that virtual learning has brought. As Occhino aptly puts it, “ultimately, we all need to remember to relax a little bit and enjoy our high school experience.” ■

SAY IT WITH ME, SWIPER NO SWIPING

The Spanish Club Hosts a Virtual Movie Night (no, they did not play *Dora*)

Chase Vitale '23

El Club de Español, run by Profe Laura Azevedo, is up and running again.

The club was put on hold for the beginning of the year while Azevedo was on maternity leave, now that she has returned, members are as excited as ever to start participating.

Through feedback from club members, Azevedo selected a movie night as the first event of the year.

“Spanish club members were asked to fill out a Google form to share some ideas of events they would like to take part in while adhering to social distancing

rules. Therefore, we thought it would be best to have a movie night as our April event,” Azevedo detailed.

The movie decided upon, *Vivir dos Veces* (also known as Live Twice, Love Once), was picked, Azevedo says, “because it highlights what matters most right now, and always: family and health. It’s funny, it’s heart-warming, it’s emotional.”

The movie is about a retired teacher named Emilio, who discovers that he has Alzheimer’s Disease.

After reconnecting with his family, he embarks on an adventure with his daughter and granddaughter to find

the love from his youth.

With *Vivir dos Veces* having a 7.2/10 on IMDb and a 73% audience score on Rotten Tomatoes, it definitely is a movie more than worth watching.

Students inside the club are excitement for the event. Sophomore Christina Ahn said, “I’m actually pretty excited Spanish Club started doing meetings again and I think it’s going to be really fun. I get to enjoy a movie with my friends and fellow classmates while brushing up on my Spanish skills.”

Sophomore Cat Corrado, another member, agrees. “I’m very excited for movie night because this is some-

thing new that I’ve never done with the club before! I find it really exciting that we’ll all be watching a movie together over Zoom and it reminds me of Netflix Parties that I do with my friends.”

“I’m actually pretty excited Spanish Club started doing meetings again and I think it’s going to be really fun.”

Sophomore Christina Ahn

Any students outside of el Club de Español who may have been worried the event about being in Span-

ish, Azevedo made sure to reassure. “All are always welcome to El Club de Español events-- doesn’t matter what language course you’re in or not in! This club is for anyone and everyone. And all of our movie nights have

English subtitles in case there are some scenes that are lost in translation.”

Although the event

was planned to take place through zoom, it didn’t have any setbacks compared to an in person gathering. This applies generally to all clubs, with Principal Joseph Occhino saying, “because of what we’ve been dealing with, and the challenges that we’ve been faced with, Zoom, with what we’re doing now, was a perfect substitute in order to keep students engaged.”

In order to attend any event in the future, Azevedo says, “all they need to do is e-mail me and I’ll add them to our Canvas page! All meeting dates are posted with the Zoom link.” ■

TAKING THE (PROMPT) LESS TRAVELED

Northern Highlands Celebrates Poetry Month With a Series of Challenges

Sania Sadarangani '23

Along with the rest of the country, Northern Highlands is participating in National Poetry Month throughout the month of April.

In order to celebrate Creative Writing Teacher, Lisa Chiang, is hosting a Poem-A-Day Challenge. Students receive a new prompt to write a poem about every day of the month. Students may then email Chiang to submit their poems. Once all the poems are sent, the best one will be published in this year’s edition of the Northern Highlands Loch and Quay Literary Magazine.

“Highlands has been participating in activities like this for National Poetry Month for at least as long as I’ve been teaching here,” Chiang said, who has been

a teacher at Northern Highlands for 15 years.

Principal Joseph Occhino says, “We have over 40 students per year that win poetry and writing contests and it’s just remarkable to see. It’s just another area that gets to highlight the strengths of our students and gives them an outlet to do things that they thoroughly enjoy.”

Poem-A-Day organizer, Chiang, also shed light on how the pandemic and online learning has impacted the challenge this year.

Chiang explained that submissions have been lower this year than in previous years, which she attributes to the disadvantages of online or hybrid schooling and a lack of creative writing classes.

Occhino believes that the Poem-A-Day challenge

gives students an opportunity to explore and demonstrate their many creative talents. Students that have been participating in the challenge have given similar, positive feedback.

“We have over 40 students per year that win poetry and writing contests and it’s just remarkable to see. It’s just another area that gets to highlight the strengths of our students.”

Principal Joseph Occhino

Junior Sydney Hintz commented, “I have really enjoyed the prompts this year because they are a good way to stimulate creativity and spark ideas for poems that you would have never thought to write about until having read that specific

terconnected.

Hintz added that her favorite prompt so far urged students to create their own world.

“I personally took this prompt in a different direction by choosing to write about the ‘world’ inside of

my favorite game, Animal Crossing. I wrote it as if I were actually in the game and I thought it was such a fun experience that I would absolutely recommend everyone to try,” encouraged

Hintz.

Examples of other prompts used in the challenge include an introduction prompt, where students would write a poem introducing themselves, a friend, a stranger, or a situation from someone else’s point of

view, an active poem.

A “I chose to participate in the Poem-A-Day challenge this year because writing is something that brings me genuine happiness and is a creative way to express myself. I have always found joy in writing, and having a set schedule in April for writing allows me to allocate time for something that I truly enjoy,” said Hintz.

Vice Principal Michael Koth agrees that poetry is a powerful form of self-expression, and believes that it has taken on a greater meaning this year amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

“There is something to be said about being able to express yourself and when you can’t do it so verbally or in person -- poetry is another method of that, so it can be somewhat therapeutic for some as well,” said Koth. ■

TERRIFIC TEACHER!

LaMotta named 2021 Teacher Of The Year

Continued from page 1

She began teaching at Northern Highlands in January 1996. After moving to New Jersey, she could not get a teaching position until the state had certified her. So, she got a position at Northern Highlands as a teacher's assistant in the special education department while waiting for her paperwork to come through from the State of New Jersey.

Back then, LaMotta would work part time as a teacher's assistant at Northern Highlands in the morning, then during her lunch time, drive to the Oakland and work as a teacher's assistant in a kindergarten classroom in the afternoon.

LaMotta can still remember the first time she stepped into the Northern Highlands building.

She "fell in love with Northern Highlands on [her] very first day there," and "knew right away that it was an incredibly special school."

Even after all these years, LaMotta continues her love for Northern Highlands. "There is nothing that doesn't fit. It's just such a fantastic school," La-

Motta said.

LaMotta is a working mom and enjoys spending time at home with her family, friends, and pets.



Photo courtesy of Stacey LaMotta

"I'm kind of a homebody; I just like to chill-out at home and relax, pull a blanket over me on the couch, have my puppy on my lap, and drink some coffee," LaMotta expressed.

"[My] ultimate goal is just to be there for the kids in one way or another it doesn't have to be always academic. It could be personal, it could be social."

Stacey LaMotta

She would like everyone to know that her "ultimate goal is to just be there for the kids in one way or another, it doesn't have to be always academic. It could

be personal, it could be social."

Many students appreciate Ms. LaMotta's hard work and dedication inside and out of the classroom.

Junior Elana Berger stated that, "she has a huge heart for her students and she is very helpful when you need her...I truly think Ms. LaMotta deserved to earn the Teacher of the Year award because she's put so much devotion and hard work into this year even though this year has been extremely tough for everyone."

LaMotta feels honored to have received this title.

"This whole thing has

been very humbling, yet I am so honored. I am so excited and I just never ever thought that this would happen to me." Congratulations Ms. LaMotta! ■

WHO RUN THE WORLD?

Highlands participates in menstrual product drive

Irene Chen '22

From March 24 through April 16, Northern Highlands hosted a Her Drive, dedicated to collecting new or gently used bras, menstrual products and general hygiene products to donate to shelters and others in need across the country.

Based in Chicago, the non-profit organization was founded in June 2020 by two University students, who make up the executive team of Her Drive along with their Head of Fundraising. The organization was created to support those who lack those basic necessities.

Her Drive has met success as they had hosted over 100 drives across the country after the launch of the 'Host Your Own Drive' program in October 2020, in which volunteers raise money, collect hygiene and menstrual items. This is in

concurrence with spreading awareness of period and hygiene poverty.

Highlands became involved with Her Drive when Principal Joseph Occhino was contacted regarding getting involved with Her Drive.

Occhino allowed Her Drive to partner with Highlands Cares, a club at Highlands providing students opportunities to give back to their local, national, and international communities.

"There was definitely a need to organize this drive [for more] access to general hygiene products," Principal Joseph Occhino said.

Students also recognize the importance of Northern Highlands hosting the Her Drive.

"[It's] upsetting and hypocritical that [some women] don't have access to hygiene products," Junior Rebecca Steinfink said.

Period poverty is not just prevalent among those living in poverty-- 1 in 10 college students experience lack of access to menstrual products too.

"This menstrual drive can be extremely beneficial to women in need," sophomore Mia Wang said.

Seeing the need for these products in certain communities, these students don't only offer positive feedback regarding the drive but express their interests in donating, too.

"There is nothing more rewarding than using my resources and abilities for good," Steinfink said.

"I would be more than happy to donate," Wang also said.

It is hopeful that through the Her Drive Highlanders have been able to further aid in helping their community and those in need. ■



Her Drive collects products and basic necessities for those who lack the resources to get them.

Photo courtesy of Her Drive

CHANGING LIKE THE SEASONS

Rotation Schedule For Hybrid Students Changes From 2 Days In Person To 5

Anara Pollack '23

On Monday, April 12, Northern Highlands made a few changes to its schedule. Due to the start of a new marking period, the order of the class periods was changed.

In addition, the buses started departing Northern Highlands at 12:40 pm rather than of 1:00 pm to accommodate a conflict in the bus company's schedule with another town.

Finally, the rotation schedule for students participating in the hybrid schedule was changed so students would be spending one full week learning in-person and then one full week learning

virtually, instead of learning in-person for two days in a row and then being virtual for two days in a row.

The reasoning behind the change in the hybrid schedule was because "with

New Jersey, we felt this gave us the best shot at staying open for an extended period of time and our hope is that we stay open through June," Vice Principal Michael Koth explained.

"We felt this gave us the best shot at staying open for an extended period of time and our hope is that we stay open through June."

Vice Principal Michael Koth

the current guidelines and quarantine protocols that are in place in the state of

This new schedule keeps students and faculty safer while also "starts

getting students acclimated again to coming to school everyday," Principal Joseph Occhino said.

The schedule change has been well received among teachers because "as long as we didn't change the periods, we knew that teachers weren't going to have a problem," Occhino said.

"The thing that's been the most difficult this year has been the inconsistency between going in-person and then having to go back home when there's a COVID case...I think this new schedule allowing us to be in school as much as possible is going to be much more consistent," teacher Krista Carpino said.

Carpino teaches Digital Arts, Ceramics I and Honors Painting and Drawing classes and recognizes that especially for art classes, there are a lot of discrepancies when students are in-person for a couple days and then virtual. Carpino believes seeing students for a week at a time will be a lot easier to manage.

However, students have mixed feelings about the change in rotation days.

A benefit from the schedule is it "feels more normal, like how we used to go to school before covid," freshman Gianna Mundy said.

Although this new schedule more closely mim-

ics the schedule of a normal school year, going into school for 5 days in a row "is a little exhausting, and at least with the two days we had a break in between being in-person and virtual, so I prefer that," Sophomore Esha Agarwal said.

For all-virtual students, the rotation change doesn't make a difference. But, the change in the order of the periods applies to both all-virtual and students using Highlands' hybrid schedule.

Being an all virtual student, "I don't get much change...so it's nice to have something different," sophomore Emilie Chin said. ■



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COME TOGETHER (THE COVID WAY)

A guide to COVID friendly outdoor activities for birthdays

Phoebe Kaufman '22

With many Americans getting vaccinated, small gatherings with friends and family are now legal in New Jersey.

However, even if you are vaccinated, it is still important to follow COVID-19 guidelines such as wearing a mask and maintaining social distancing.

But do not worry, there are still tons of activities that you can do to celebrate birthdays or hang out with friends while still following COVID-19 guidelines.

As an example, for my 17th birthday party, I invited all of my friends over to paint outside.

I set up a tent in my backyard with fairy lights and canvases so that we could all celebrate together while being cautious.

There are a variety of fun activities that you can

host outside for any birthday or get-together.

To start, making s'mores around a campfire is a great way to hang out with

Aside from s'mores, you can make a banana split! By wrapping a peeled banana and chocolate sauce in tin foil and throwing it over the

ular in March of 2020, as they are a COVID safe way to celebrate a birthday!

Decorate your car with banners and create a Happy Birthday sign using a poster board. Then, get a couple of your friends to drive past the house playing loud music and cheering happy birthday! These drive-bys are a great way to make a birthday feel special!

Another great outdoor activity is to watch a movie. By setting up an outdoor projector or using the program Netflix Party to sync up everyone's movie from their personal computer, watching a movie is a very COVID safe activity.

If you want to be extra, you could even make the party themed to the movie you are watching!

Guests could dress up as their favorite characters or even bring famous foods that are shown in the movie!

Some popular movies that could be used are *Mamma Mia*, *Mean Girls*, the *Harry Potter* series, the *High School Musical Series*, or any classic Disney film.

Kahoots are cult favorites in schools across the country, as they are the perfect way to have an entertaining and competitive trivia game. I

f you're hosting a birthday party you could make guests answer trivia questions about your life or make it about a completely random topic!

Playing a Kahoot is a fun and unique way for everyone to participate and interact with each other, all while maintaining social distancing and following COVID-19 regulations. and even got in trouble once after saying a word in Lithuanian that sounds a lot like a curse word in English.

All in all, there are tons

of COVID safe activities that you can do with your loved ones to celebrate. Whether it is from watching a movie or making s'mores, just remember to have fun and stay safe! ■



Photo by Mary Ruffolo '22

Painting outside with friends is a great COVID-friendly activity

EARTH DAY, BUT MAKE IT EVERYDAY

The history of Earth Day and how to implement clean habits into your daily life

Kaiden Canariato '22

Earth Day is a holiday where our home planet is celebrated, appreciated and given back to by people all over the world.

The annual holiday falls on April 22 in the midst of springtime and during a true change of seasons.

Today, over 1 billion people use this holiday to shine light on the necessary changes people should be taking to care for the environment.

While the celebration has an inspiring message, it also unites people from all

over the globe who have the common goal of bettering the environment.

The holiday originated in 1970 to bring to light the current status of the world.

At the time, air pollution was considered normal because Americans used and released enormous amounts of leaded gas into the atmosphere. Factories also added smoke and sludge to the already polluted world.

In the 70's, there were not many laws concerning what factories could and couldn't release into the environment, so companies were not conscious of

the effects of their actions.

In fact, in 1969, Santa Barbara experienced a massive oil spill that polluted the air and water in California.

This incident sparked Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin to create the idea of Earth Day, which banded together students to stand up against air and water pollution.

Senator Nelson teamed up with activist Dennis Hayes to put together a nationwide staff for the first Earth Day.

After catching the media's attention, 20 million Americans began to participate. 20 years later, Earth Day became a global holiday, uniting 200 million people in 141 countries.

Today, 1 billion individuals participate in the holiday. In recent years, Earth Day inspires people to treat our Earth with care in any way that we can.

The Highlands community can begin partaking in small habits including taking shorter showers, buying clothes from sustainable brands, and using reusable water bottles/straws.

As a community, we should be more aware of how we can give back to our planet and help eliminate the world's carbon footprint.

How can members of the Highlands community celebrate Earth Day or contribute to saving the environment?

Junior Caroline Bodnar makes an effort to bring her reusable water bottle to school every day rather than using plastic bottles that she would've thrown away.

"Once you get in the habit of these small changes, they become a lifestyle that has a bigger impact than you think" Bodnar says.

In elementary school, I remember that Earth Day was an important celebration that kids participated in.

At a young age, schools made a strong effort to

teach us the importance of recycling and caring for the environment.

Bodnar remembers "celebrating Earth Day

our home everyday. The smallest efforts go a long way and anybody can help to keep the Earth clean.

Earth Day is a day of ap-

"Once you get in the habit of these small changes, they become a lifestyle that has a bigger impact than you think"

Junior Caroline Bodnar

by planting a tree in the schoolyard each year and wearing green. Now that [she is] in high school, [she sees] most people celebrating with an Instagram post."

While the thought behind these posts are meaningful, they do nothing in terms of giving back to our planet.

Appreciating the beauty of our Earth should motivate people to try to keep it clean and healthy.

The Earth shouldn't be appreciated one day every year; but instead we should cherish and give back to

precipitation that raises awareness for the long issues that our world faces: pollution and climate change.

Although these issues are boundless and will be hard to overcome, any effort can lead to reaching Earth Day's goal of making the planet a greener and cleaner place.

By implementing environmentally conscious habits into our every day routines, the Highlands community can make every day Earth Day. ■

As a community, we should be more aware of how we can give back to our planet and help eliminate the world's carbon footprint.



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Art by Ayana Amin '22



Layout by Grace Paolillo '22 and A

SYDNEY ELLIS



Photo courtesy of Sydney Ellis '21

Throughout the 2020-21 school year, everyone has been struggling to stay safe from COVID-19. It has been especially hard for seniors as they try to make the most of this tough time and enjoy their last year of high school with their peers.

Senior Sydney Ellis celebrated her spring break by traveling to Mexico with her friends and family. When asked if traveling to Mexico was safe, Ellis replied, "All of my friends and family needed to provide a negative COVID test in order to get into Mexico as well as being able to fly back to the United States. We never left the resort and we also got a doctor's note just in case."

Aside from traveling, Ellis also "traveled over Easter but did not have any special celebrations other than going out to dinner." Though her spring break was different than previous years, Ellis was happy that she got to travel to Mexico and spend time with her loved ones on Easter.

- Yasmin Chakhman '22

BRADEN SLAYNE

While it is definitely more difficult to enjoy spring break during these unprecedented times, it is not nearly impossible! Sophomore Braden Slayne demonstrates that it is possible to enjoy spring break while staying COVID-safe.

Unfortunately, Slayne did not travel this spring break. Instead, she "sacrificed a week in Florida with her family so she could participate in Track and Field." Slayne "stayed home to keep her teammates safe and to keep the track season going."

As Slayne learned, it is definitely possible to have a both memorable and safe spring break!

- Ciara Schulmann '23



Photo Courtesy of Braden Slayne '23

THE SUN

Art by Ayana Amin '22



Photo Courtesy of Kelly Fuchs '22

Kelly Fuchs

Junior Kelly Fuchs admits her break was rather uneventful as she spent the first half of it in quarantine due to contact tracing. “It wasn’t too fun,” Fuchs confessed as she recalled days of self-isolation in her bedroom.

Thanks to the arrival of spring, Fuchs was at least able to enjoy some time outside, where she could take walks and listen to music. Fortunately, she was saved from a dull holiday when the Easter Bunny graced her family with an outdoor egg hunt. He made sure Fuchs could participate by sufficiently distancing the eggs across her yard.

Things picked up in the later half of the break when she attended school lacrosse tryouts starting on April 7, 2021.

When asked about her ideal break, Fuchs admitted with a smile that although her time off was safe and relaxing, some time at the beach or at a restaurant would have made it more enjoyable and exciting.

- Wren Cindrich '22

Natalie Choi

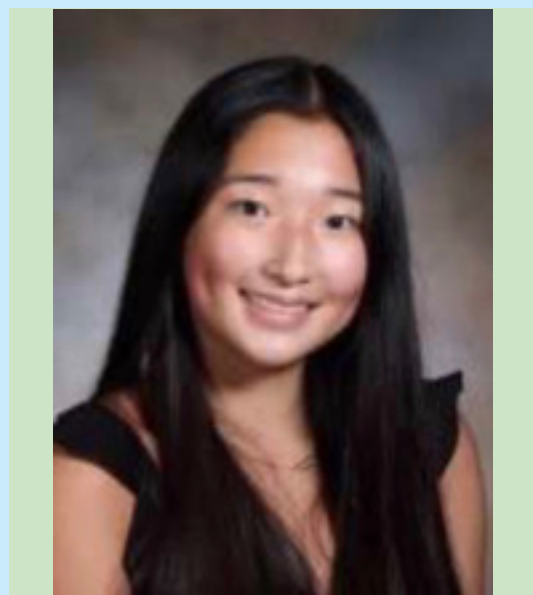


Photo Courtesy of Natalie Choi '24

During the pandemic, it has been difficult to feel at ease with the insanity around us. Freshman Natalie Choi stayed safe during spring break by staying home, spending quality time with her family and enjoying the nice weather.

Even though Choi stayed home this break, she wishes she could have traveled to Australia. Not only does Choi love one of its largest cities, Sydney, but she also has not seen her family down there in almost a year.

In addition to enjoying the nice weather, Choi celebrated Easter at the beginning of spring break with a special family dinner.

To stay sane and occupied during the week-long break, Choi was thankful that she was able to safely continue dancing at her competitive dance studio.

Choi is glad to see the world returning back to some form of “normal” and will try to remain as safe as possible until that happens.

- Caleigh Amano '23

PROMISE, WITNESS, REMEMBRANCE

A new memorial in Louisville, Kentucky honors Breonna Taylor

Kristiana Dedvukaj '23

The tragic story of Breonna Taylor has caught the attention of millions of social media users.

Nowadays, stories like Taylor's spread like wildfire, as users of social media websites like Twitter and Instagram are quick to share stories like this with their followers.

Taylor was at home when off-the-clock police officers raided her home. Her boyfriend, unaware that the people inside of their home were police officers, fired a shot. Eight fatal shots were fired at Taylor.

Social media caught wind of this almost immediately and demanded that the police officers involved in the murder—Brett Hankison, Myles Cosgrove, and Jonathan Mattingly—be charged with murder and removed from their job positions.

In order to remember Taylor and the impact

she made on society as an emergency room technician, many memorials were created in her honor in order to preserve her memory.

One of these memorials, located in Louisville, Kentucky, is entitled "Promise, Witness, Remembrance."

The main goal of this art exhibit is to honor Tay-

lor's legacy and to call for action in the hopes of making a serious change to the country's police system, who's darker sides have recently been coming into the light.

The first room of the exhibit is called "Promise." The room is filled with promises made by histori-

cal government officials in the past, examples of which include "We the People," a wall installation made of shoelaces.

Allison Glenn, Associate Curator of Contemporary Art at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, stated, "I just wanted to start a conversation around the founding of

these organizing documents that constitute our country, and perhaps help us understand how we got there."

It's important to look at a country's history in order to understand the present, which is exactly what Glenn is trying to convey with the room "Promise."

The second room is

called "Witness," which displays contemporary history and photographs from racial justice protests.

Backpacking off of the previous room, "Witness" attempts to display the gap between the promises and actions of our nation.

The goal of the room is to bring awareness to the mistreatment people of color (POCs) endure on a daily basis, in contrast to the promises made by presidential candidates claiming that they will put an end to any and all racism in this country.

The third and final room is entitled "Remembrance." This room includes personal things about Taylor. For example, the walls are painted purple, Taylor's favorite color.

In addition, Tamika Palmer, Taylor's mother, wrote a timeline of Taylor's life on the walls. The main goal of this room is to ensure that people will remem-

ber Taylor's heart of gold.

Everybody in Taylor's life has described her as a marvelous and delightful person. She even had the nickname "Easy Breezy," a testament to how easygoing she was throughout her life.

Overall, the exhibition "Promise, Witness, Remembrance" is a successful attempt at remembering and honoring Taylor, who made a lasting impact both during and after her life. Her mother, who played an essential role in the development of the exhibit, stated

that the memorial was everything she hoped it would be.

The exhibit brings light to the lives of POCs who impacted the world in a similar way to Taylor and did not get the justice they deserved.

Palmer stated, "You want people to not forget, to not move on, because the real goal hasn't been served yet." The goal, according to Palmer, is justice. ■



One of many displays featured at the exhibit.

Photo Courtesy of Xavier Burell

FOREVER FEELING FEARLESS

Re-released album carries heartfelt new meeting with it.

Kate Karoleski '23

Taylor Swift recently released a re-recorded version of her famous *Fearless* album, which debuted in 2008.

Containing thirteen songs (nineteen on the platinum edition), the original *Fearless* album has remained a cult favorite amongst those who grew up listening to it while also becoming a staple for Swift's newer fans.

On April 9, 2021, she released the nineteen original songs from the platinum album and as well as an additional six songs that Swift

had yet to released that have been sitting in what she refers to as "the vault."

While the album is still very new, it has already received a lot of positive feedback. On April 11, Billboard reported that fans had already chosen *Fearless (Taylor's Version)* as the week's favorite new music.

The album is a tribute to her old self and captures the journey of Swift growing up.

Most of the songs from this album have to do with Swift giving her heart to someone who either returns

her feelings or causes heartbreak.

She tells these stories through songs like "Love Story" and "Forever & Always." Other songs in the album include "Fifteen (Taylor's Version)" and "You Belong With Me (Taylor's Version)," as well as songs that were never released, "Mr. Perfectly Fine (Taylor's Version)" and "Bye Bye Baby (Taylor's Version)."

The songs in *Fearless (Taylor's Version)* represent the way she has changed and grown since the original was released.

Fans who grew up with Swift also get a new experience listening to some of their favorite childhood songs.

Now full of life experience, loyal fans can now understand the deeper mean-

The songs in [*Fearless (Taylor's Version)*] represent the way [Swift] has changed and grown since the original was released.

ings behind songs that they were not able to relate to prior.

On February 11, 2021, in an Instagram post from Swift that got over four million likes, Swift wrote that there were songs that she adored, but didn't release in 2008 because she didn't want too songs with a down tempo or breakup songs in her album.

She now believes that this was unnecessary and has released a total of six

never-before-heard songs in addition to the other twenty that were released thirteen years ago.

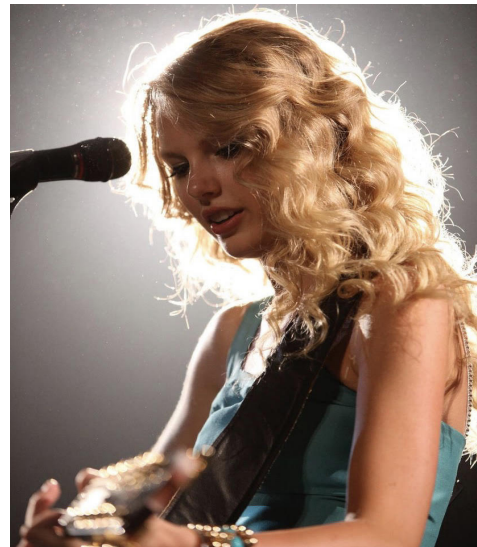
In order to tell her fans the whole story, she has announced that in addition to *Fearless*, she will also be re-recording the first six albums that she released.

Swift has made it very clear that she doesn't want to be the only one who knows her work.

She also thinks that this journey has been very emo-

tional for her, and she hopes that her fans will appreciate the album as much as she does.

If you are interested in pre-ordering the album, visit Swift's website at www.taylorswift.com. The digital version of the album was released on April 9, 2021 for \$13, and is also available on vinyl for \$39 and cassette for \$19. ■



A picture posted on Swift's Instagram from the time that the original album was released.



Cover art for the new re-released album



Swift pictured at the 2021 Grammy Awards

Photos Courtesy of Taylor Swift

A YEAR (BOOK) TO NEVER FORGET

The Northern Highlands Yearbook wins award from publisher

Catherine Murphy '23

The Northern Highlands 2020-2021 Yearbook was awarded by its publisher, Balfour, for a commitment to excellence in journalism and creativity.

Each year, they compile a book that showcases the “best of the best” in terms of theme development, layout design, photo technique, secondary packages, and cover design. Northern Highlands is in the fewer than 5% of yearbook staff in the nation that has been recognized with this distinction.

That’s not all, in addition to this significant achievement, the NH Yearbook staff was notified that this is the first time ever that our yearbook has been selected as a featured national sample.

Doreen Albano, the adviser of the yearbook staff explains, “This means our 2021 yearbook will be used at workshops and schools

across the country by Balfour representatives as an example of excellence in journalism and creativity. Yearbook staff around the country will be looking at our yearbook to gain new ideas, concepts and design inspiration.”

This award did not come easy to the NH Yearbook staff.

Due to the Coronavirus, they had to meet every Tuesday after school via Zoom, causing this year’s yearbook to be completed virtually.

Composed of students in all grades, they work tirelessly year-round to develop the theme, plan events, run photoshoots, collect quotes and photos, interview athletes, and gather content for the yearbook.

Some students are also in the online design program and do page layout, photo placement, and enter copy and quotes. Albano explains how the “staff and advisors worked relentlessly throughout the summer, fall, win-

ter, and spring to bring this book to completion during what was undoubtedly the most difficult time in history to do so.”

The theme for the 2020-2021 yearbook was decided on collaboratively by the yearbook staff at the end of the 2019-2020 school year.

“We liked the idea that all our plans were literally up in the air, as well as the

dents to participate in, and we used those images to convey our ‘Up in the Air’ theme.”

The coronavirus had and continues to have a notable impact on the world, and the NH Yearbook Club is no exception.

Without any school events to cover, including spirit day, fall play, or any clubs and activities, the

al stories to cover. Albano sums this up with “the 2021 yearbook is unlike any before it.”

When you get your edition of the 2020-2021 yearbook, “Up in the Air”, it may not look like what you would expect a yearbook to resemble.

Because this year’s yearbook could not have any of the traditional sections and

The book will begin by covering the Class of 2020’s graduation in July and the summer of 2020 and finish at early spring of 2021.

“We know this book will not look anything like what you’ve come to expect in a yearbook, it was certainly an experiment throughout the process,” Albano explains.

When asked about her favorite section in the 2020-2021 yearbook, Albano noted the new timeline pages.

She explains that the yearbook staff “worked hard to capture history as it unfolded in our daily lives; school closures, vaccine updates, covid outbreaks. When we look back on this yearbook 20 years from now, we will truly be able to remember the ups and downs of daily life during this time.” Congratulations to Albano and the NH yearbook staff. What an accomplishment!

“This [award] means that our 2021 yearbook will be used at workshops and schools across the country by Balfour representatives as an example of excellence in journalism and creativity. Yearbook staff around the country will be looking at our yearbook to gain new ideas, concepts and design inspiration.”

Doreen Albano

virus is in the air,” Albano explains. “We combined this with a red smoke bomb photoshoot, free for all stu-

2020-2021 yearbook staff had to crowdsource the majority of our contact and dig deep to find more person-

events you would typically see in a yearbook, it was instead organized chronologically.

FRESHMEN AREN’T HERE TO PLAY

Highlands’ youngest prepare for their annual freshman production

Sammy Lever '22

The cast and crew of this year’s Freshman Play is ready to put on a show. Well, make that screen.

Led by english teacher Phillip Leib, a group of Highlands’ youngest are hard at work preparing to

the first ever to take place virtually.

This year, the term “Freshman Play” is used quite loosely as the cast consists of both Freshman and Sophomore students.

Sophomores have been welcomed with open arms as their own freshman show

behind the screens).

The Freshman Play has been a long-standing tradition here at Northern Highlands for many years.

Like freshman sports teams, the play gives Northern Highlands most junior members an opportunity to show the school community

their involvement with the company in future years.

According to Assistant Director Grace Paolillo, “the Freshmen Play is composed of eight different short skits that are all performed by current freshmen and sophomore students.

Each show is a different comedy with a unique twist at the end. Think of it as a comedial version of *The Twilight Zone*.”

Paolillo is currently a junior here at Highlands who participated in her own Freshman Play two years ago during the last time the show was produced.

“I have been involved in the Northern Highlands Theater Company since my freshman year, when I performed in the Freshman Play. I then continued to participate in the group my sophomore year when I was in the Government Inspector. This year since there is no real upperclassmen play, I

wanted to stay involved with theater so I joined the group as an assistant director and graphic designer,” Paolillo shared on why she decided to take on her role as assistant director.

This year, auditions were held virtually over Zoom. Students were asked to prepare and perform a monologue and then read for various roles in each of the different skits to see where they would fit best.

As always, no one is cut from the cast and everyone is given a role to act.

Besides the audition process, the way that practices are held has also been transformed this year. Practices are being held twice a week over Zoom.

Different groups or skits are then assigned a breakout room where they practice with the help of their directors and assistant directors. This is where the cast prepares for their indi-

vidual skits and practice for the performance.

Speaking of performances, the exact dates of the show have yet to be determined, however they will all take place virtually.

In a normal year, putting on a show is extremely challenging and time consuming. To put on a production when actors and crewmembers cannot be in the same room is unfathomable.

As the world and our school slowly return to normalcy, we are ecstatic to watch various clubs and organizations return to action. Hopefully soon productions will be able to return to their usual format.

This production is a way for students who have barely had the chance to experience high school to make connections and become involved. To the cast and crew of the Freshman Play, break a leg!

“The Freshman Play is composed of eight different short skits that are all performed by current freshman and sophomore students. Each show is a different comedy with a unique twist at the end. Think of it as a comedial version of *The Twilight Zone*.”

Grace Paolillo

make their Northern Highlands Theater Company debut at the end of the semester.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, this year’s play will be

was cancelled last year due to the start of the pandemic.

They are also joined by upperclassmen involved in the theater company to help behind the scenes (more like

what they’re made of.

The show also gives the cast and crew a taste of what the NH Theater Company is all about. Many of the show’s participants continue

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PICTURE PERFECT (LITERALLY)

Junior Ayana Amin wins prestigious photography award

Kaiden Canariato '22

The photography talents of Northern Highlands junior Ayana Amin, have been recognized as she was awarded first place in the National Photographic Society Youth Competition in the category of landscape for her breathtaking photo of the mountains in Switzerland (shown below).

Throughout her three years at Northern Highlands, Amin has immersed herself in the courses that the school provides in photography: Photography 1, Honors Photography and AP 2-D Art and Design (Photography).

In these classes, students are able to learn more about the specific details of

the photography process. Students learn to take and develop their own photos in a way that exhibits creativity, technique, and uniqueness.

Here, Highlanders can also delve into the editing side of photography and learn to take advantage of lighting, color and exposure.

At the AP level, the course continues to deepen students' understanding and practice of developing and taking photos.

This class goes far enough to create a portfolio that can be submitted to colleges and takes photography to a serious level for students interested in pursuing it in their future.

Amin's talent has been

supported by photography teacher, Mrs. Lardiere, who "has been a tremendous asset in helping [her] share [her] work and developing a stronger eye for color, composition, and other principles of design".

Amin also explains how she has always been drawn to art but the courses at Highlands have allowed her to close in and focus on photography.

The award winning photo was taken by Amin while she was on a train ride through the mountains in the Switzerland countryside on a family vacation.

Amin says that when "the train stopped, [she] was mesmerized by the view and knew [she] had to take a photo of it. At the

time, [Amin] just wanted to capture the frosty path and beautiful mountains." But recently, she decided to take a second look at the photo taken abroad.

She then transferred the image to Photoshop, which she learned to master in her photo classes, and decided to "enhance the textures of the clouds and bring out various principles of design."

Her reassessment of the photo was well worth it as it took 1st Place in the landscape category of the National Society Youth Competition a couple of months ago.

The photo is truly exquisite as it shows the majestic beauty of the European mountain ranges and the

sky during the wintertime. The sun shining through the fluffy clouds overhead onto the snowy peaks and valleys of Switzerland truly capture the landscape's beauty and tranquility and the talent of young photographer.

This realm of photography has grasped Amin's attention recently as she says that she "loves portrait and landscape photography. As [she] learns new techniques and as [her] eye for the art improves, [she] finds [herself] taking more and more photos of nature, family and friends."

Amin's prize was not the only award won in this competition. Oceane Nepola also won 1st Place in the Color Photography

category. Additionally, Mia Schaffer won 2nd Place in Photojournalism while Maxis Amos-Flom won the Judge's Choice Award for his inspiring work. ■



The photo which resulted in Amin's first place award

Ayana Amin '22

BACK TO BUSINESS FOR SHOW BUSINESS

What the reopening of New York's Theater district means for Highlands

Sammy Lever '22

The theater world is known for its glitz, glamour, over-the-top spectacles, and some of the most talented performers and stagehands in the world. Live theater breathes life into the bustling streets of the Big Apple, as well as on our very own stage at Northern Highlands. Well, breathed.

The COVID-19 Pandemic hit the economy hard. It hit the theater industry harder. On March 12, 2020, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that Broadway theaters would be shutting down due to the ever-growing threat of the Coronavirus. Over 30 shows were

running at the time, with 8 more scheduled to open before the end of April. Sadly for some of these shows, March 11, 2020 would be their last show ever.

Broadway is an extremely difficult industry to succeed in. Theaters must fill their seats each night in order to hopefully make a profit. From actors to ushers, it takes hundreds of people to put on a show 8 times each week.

All of these employees need to be paid for their labor, as well as rent payments, paying back investors, and more, which is why ticket prices have become so incredibly high. Yet, it can take months, even years

for a show to be considered a financial success. With the exception of shows like Dear Evan Hansen and Hamilton, most shows finish their runs before they are able to even produce a profit. In order to have a chance of survival, shows depend on tourists and loyal theater-goers to purchase tickets.

For theaters to be dark even for a couple of days is a huge financial setback, not only for the shows' producers, but for the nearly 97,000 employees who work on Broadway and for all of the businesses that depend on the theater-goers and tourists, such as the local restaurants and souve-

nir shops. For a show to be closed for over a year, it is nearly impossible to make a come-back.

Annually, Broadway contributes nearly \$14.8 billion to New York City and attracts people from around the world.

Aside from the financial impact, it has been extremely sad for all theater-lovers for Broadway to be dark.

Living so close to the Theater District, many of us Highlands have had the special opportunity to take a trip to the city to catch a Saturday matinee with our family and friends.

With students involved in the professional theatre

industry and for fans of live theater, the absence of the theater was certainly felt in our own community.

Last year, many Northern Highlands productions were cancelled due to the pandemic. Students who had been waiting months to take the stage had it suddenly ripped away. The lack of the arts has been something that has been deeply felt not just in our community, but all over the country and the world.

Finally, a new light has risen. On May 5, Governor Cuomo announced that Broadway shows will be able to open at full capacity on September 14, 2021. Although many shows were

forced to close prematurely, many shows have been given a second chance to touch people's lives.

Just a quick drive away, Highlanders will be sure to take advantage of the return of the arts in our area. Highlanders and lovers of the Great White Way are ready to welcome Broadway back with open arms and warm hearts. Break a leg! ■

SIMPLY GETTING STARTED

A Highlander and her sister are taking the business world by storm

Kaitlyn Shang '22

During quarantine, the number of small businesses increased dramatically throughout the country.

The Highlands community was no exception. Students here run many small businesses that sell things such as customized shoes, jewelry and clothing.

One of these businesses is Simply Sisters Design. This Instagram-based small business created by sisters Nicole and Highlands Senior Kaitlyn Sullivan sells customized hoodies, tees, sweatpants and other merchandise.

The sisters receive all of their orders through Instagram direct messages using their account @simply.

sistersdesign.

The two use their Instagram to post about their clothing, launches and upcoming events. They also manage all the behind-the-scenes work, including designing products, printing, packaging, shipping and managing social media.

The Sullivan's started their business weeks before the pandemic, back in early 2020.

Both girls noted that the inspiration grew from their "passion for fashion, design, entrepreneurship, and social media" and they were able to channel their passions through the business. In March of 2020, they officially launched Simply Sisters Design.

In May of 2020, the

girls released one of their most popular designs. It was a white hoodie with rainbow tie-dye sleeves tie-dye hoodie featuring a smiley face design on the front chest.

They "originally only planned to sell the few [they] had in stock", Nicole notes, but the "demand was so big for these [they] couldn't stop there". The design still remains incredibly popular and the girls are still busy producing and shipping arguably their most iconic style.

Currently, Simply Sisters Design is focused on promoting their college merchandise. Their designs include college-specific and customized sweatshirts, sweatpants, tees and masks.

They're also running a giveaway promotion, where the winner will receive sweatpants, a sweatshirt and a T-shirt with the college of his or her choice. The last day of the giveaway is May 25. The brand has also teamed up with Honors Global Citizenship classes to help them raise money for their causes through specially designed merchandise.

Looking back, one of the biggest challenges that the brand has faced is when the elder Sullivan sister had to move back down south for college.

During quarantine, the girls could easily bounce ideas off each other. With one half of the business nearly a thousand miles

away, it was more difficult to communicate and create.

But the girls have found a way around it. Kaitlyn actually thinks that "the distance brought [them] success in a new way". They have had to manage their schoolwork, extracurricular commitments and sports, as well as their business all at the same time.

Going forward, Simply Sisters Design will only continue to grow and produce new products for their customers.

Even as the business changes, Kaitlyn pointed out that they want to "continue to make [their] customers happy and provide unique custom clothes they love". She wants people to know that Simply Sisters

takes "pride in the journey of creating and sharing [their] designs with people all around the country."

To support Simply Sisters Design, you can follow them on their journey on Instagram and Facebook @simply.sistersdesigns. ■



The Sullivan sisters celebrating hitting 500 followers on Instagram

Photo courtesy of Simply Sisters Design



One of the most popular items available from Simply Sisters Design

Photo courtesy of Simply Sisters Design

I'M COMMITTED... NOW WHAT?

Bed decorating parties are the "it" way to celebrate college commitments

Clare O'Connor '22

As college acceptance season comes to a close, future school spirit is at large. One of the most popular trends to celebrate an acceptance is a bed decorating party.

These parties consist of an assortment of college apparel, accessories, themed food and more laid out in an aesthetic way. The event is totally social media worthy and is the highlight of many senior years.

For anyone that is still confused, these get-togethers happen as follows: someone decides to attend a college, a close friend coordinates and invites everyone, friends show up with apparel and food, they decorate the bed, and surprise the friend.

In the pandemic world, these parties have become extra-special since many accepted student days and senior activities have been cancelled.

As pictured, friends purchase college sweatshirts, pants, blankets, shoes, and signs to commemorate their friend.

In addition to apparel, most people include snacks, such as chips or cupcakes, that match the school colors. Colorful balloons, streamers, and banners often hang above the bed, creating a picture-perfect backdrop. ■



A Highlander celebrating her commitment to Syracuse University

Photo courtesy of Rebecca Skier



A Highlander celebrating her commitment to Tulane University

Photo courtesy of Nicole Wainland

TIME TO FIND DIAMONDS

SOFTBALL TAKES FIELD FOR FIRST

Charlotte Riley '24

Girls softball season is starting up and the season looks better than ever. Led by a great group of seniors, the team is excited to start up this year after missing much of last year's season.

Senior Maren Spence talked about Covid's impact on their season, saying "Covid has changed the season by giving me a new perspective on playing. We got our season taken away from us last year and it brought us together even more through these difficult times."

In addition to Maren Spence, Senior Emma Perna has a different point of view, stating, "Covid has changed the season a lot. We had a late start to the preseason. While practicing, we are always wearing face masks. We even wear

them during the games. We want to stay safe so we can make the most out of our season since we did not get one last year."

Just like every sport, the girls softball team has many precautions for Covid. According to Spence, "we wear our masks all the time and we sanitize the equipment that we use during practice."

In all sports, Covid has made a huge impact on the players and coaches, such as a shortened season or no season at all. Social distancing and masks can be a pain, but they are so worth it!

According to Sophomore Jaclyn Paglieri, "last year's seniors walked off the field last March and never got back on it again." The team's goal this year is to be able to play as much as they can, as hard as they can and as best as they can

with the time they have together.

"We are one team and we are together through these hard times."

Senior Maren Spence

However, Covid isn't the only thing that has impacted the team this year. Senior Olivia Pettinato said that "so far, there have been many rainy days this season." Hopefully the rain can go away.

Speaking of feelings, Spence said "the team is feeling pretty good going

into the season. We have a lot of great returning and new players. We have a tough schedule this year but that won't stop us from working our hardest."

Similarly, Perna stated, "I think the team and I are feeling pretty confident. We have great players and we are friends not only on the field but off the field too!"

Unfortunately, the team lost six seniors last season, but they also gained more players. According to Spence, "the team continues to grow despite the loss of players."

Even though the season has just begun, there have been many lessons-learned. Spence said "Coach Forte started off the season by mentioning 'The Pack,' which is a book about how we have more strength as a group. This shows that we are one

team and we are together through these hard times. Our coach also mentioned 'Better Tomorrow' which means if we make a mistake today on the field, we look in the mirror and tell ourselves that we can learn from it, get stronger and be better tomorrow."

Recently, the softball team lost a tough game to Mt. St. Dominic Academy. Perna said "their team is very competitive and they have a lot of girls going to D1 schools for softball. Even though we lost, it was a good game and we learned a lot of lessons while playing them."

Despite the hard times, the players have trained their hardest and continue to train on and off the field and support each other through everything. Spence said, "this team is a second family to me and we are so

close with each other."

Spence also stated, "even though the season just started, we have already made so many great memories together. The best memories we have had were the moments we spent together as a team and family."

As I was talking to Emma, she informed me that the best moment during the season so far was when they were at practice and a song by Shakira randomly started playing. She said "everyone bonded through our love for Shakira."

Interestingly, most of the players have been playing together since fourth grade and as Perna states, "that makes for a close team. It is very special playing for one last year." ■

BASEBALL IS BACK AT IT

Connor Darling '24

Along with the melting of the last snow, warmer weather and trees getting green again, comes the beginning of another season of America's favorite game: baseball.

On baseball fields at schools and stadiums across the country, the distinctive sound of a 5 1/4 ounce baseball colliding with a 30-ounce aluminum bat will remind everyone that spring is here.

It is no different on the baseball fields behind Northern Highlands High School where this year's season is met with the greatest

anticipation of perhaps any season before. Excitement is at its highest, given what Covid restrictions have taken away from us over the last year.

The young men that were seniors from Highlands' 2020 cancelled baseball season have graduated and were unable to walk onto the field knowing they were doing so for the last time.

Head Baseball Coach Paul Albarella, in his 20 year of coaching and his 17 year coaching at Northern Highlands, summed up the situation. "As a player, you work so hard to get to your senior year and celebrate all of

your accomplishments. To have that cut short was extremely hard. I also feel bad for the parents and family members who didn't get a chance to see their kids play one last time."

The lost closure for the graduating class of ball players may not have gone completely to waste. They are all remembered by their current Highlands Baseball team, especially this year's Seniors. In a way, they are heroes who had to leave, but as a group they passed on a new dedication and appreciation to all of those that followed them.

Senior PJ Albarella said "although last year's seniors

were not able to play, they all pushed us to become better leaders and appreciate being able to play this season."

Fellow Senior Gregory Hermo said, "I am incredibly grateful to be able to play this season because I saw first hand how difficult it was for the previous year's seniors to unfortunately not get the opportunity to play. After seeing the effect it had on them, I am so thankful to walk on the field and play the game I love everyday."

Albarella added, "I want to remember this team as the most tight-knit group I have been a part of. We are all very close to begin with and hopefully we can strengthen our friendships throughout the season."

The players and coaches expect a good showing from the 2021 Highlands Baseball Team. Albarella said "we have a really good mix of players this year from all four grade levels."

The team is led by 7 seniors, 3 of which are third year Varsity players. Two seniors on the team will be taking the next step and playing baseball in college: PJ Albarella (Western New England University) and Luca Matonti (Gettysburg College).

Hermo said "this year I believe we have a great group of players and we

are expecting to have a winning season and hopefully a playoff run." Highlands season, like all seasons under Aberella, will feature games against some of New Jersey's best teams. Included on the list of this year's 21 game regular season is an opening week Home and Away series with 2019 Bergen County and Group 4 New Jersey State Champion, Ridgewood High School, a visit to 2019 North Non-Public A Finalist Don Bosco Prep and a home and away series against an always competitive Ramapo.

Coach Albarella is one of the longer tenured and most respected baseball coaches in the ultra-competitive Bergen County. Many of the top teams in the State come from Bergen County and Coach Albarella challenges his players to get better by putting them on the schedule.

It was only 5 years ago that Coach Albarella led Northern Highlands to its first State Championship in 50 years. He inspires his players to be the best they can be.

Speaking highly of Coach Albarella, Hermo said "in my time at Highlands it has been such an incredible experience playing under him and there is no other coach I would want to play with more. He leads

the team with honor and discipline and has played a vital role in shaping the players into the young men they are."

After Covid canceled Highlands baseball season in 2020, Coach Albarella and the Northern Highlands baseball t

eam will take the field for the first time since June 2019 - a span of over 600 days. This year's Seniors and all members of the team are approaching the season with contagious optimism and enthusiasm.

They know that if the timing were slightly different it could have been them that missed out on their senior year to play. Albarella said "everyone from the players to the coaching staff and family members cannot wait to start up the season and play this year."

This year the Highlands baseball team is going to do what last year's seniors weren't given a chance to do. Hermo summed up the culture of the entire Northern Highlands baseball team.

"Personally, this is my last opportunity to play the game I love and have played for my whole life. This year for me is about leaving it all on the field with nothing to lose." ■



Freshman Gavin Soares getting ready for a pitch.

Photo Courtesy of Maren Chikman

LAST SECOND TAKEDOWN

Wrestling Season Winds Down

Joey Manberg '23

As many of Northern Highland's winter sports teams wrap up their seasons, there are some lucky teams that were so successful that even more awaits them. That could not be further from the truth for the Northern Highlands Wrestling Team.

Led by Coach Dan Re-hain, the Northern Highlands team has been on a tear this season, posting a dominant 8-0 record. They are one of only 7 teams to post an undefeated season as of the writing of this article, but the only team with 8 wins. Northern Highlands is Ranked #1 in their Division, Conference and is the

best team overall.

The Wrestling Team is as good, if not better than last year, where they posted a 14-2 record, and also went undefeated in their division and conference and ranked #1 overall.

The Wrestling team is led by Seniors Alberto Ribe, Erick Narvaez, Matthew McCoy, Vincent DeMaria, Nicholas Patel and Nicolino Berlingieri. Though the 8-0-0 record may sound like an easy schedule, don't let it fool you. The team had multiple close calls throughout the season, including having to overcome an 18-0 deficit against Ridgewood. The Highlanders won the meet 45-21, finishing with a 33-0 run.

Their dominance is due in part to the diverse talent all across the roster. Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors have all seen playing time this season. Along with that, Northern Highlands has talent in every weight class from 106 to 285.

Northern Highlands will have its final match on Thursday, April 22nd, away against Wayne Hills, who currently hold a 4-5 record. The last time these two teams met was in February 2019, where Northern Highlands narrowly won, 34-31.

Though the team season will end soon, that doesn't mean the individual season of each player ends. Some

were eligible to wrestle in a postseason, where they can continue to wrestle in their weight class. These wrestlers are: Nick Patel, Logan Hurwitt, Vinny DeMaria, Nico Berlingieri and Justin Gradski. Some will be competing as underdogs, while others are expected to make it far into their brackets and could even compete in states.

Each bracket consists of 16 wrestlers of the same weight class. Four rounds make up the bracket: a first round, a quarterfinal, a semi final and a final round. If a player loses in the bracket, they are put into the consolation bracket, where they can compete for third place.

Due to the pandemic, many matches have been postponed, with many teams not even wrestling a single match yet. Northern Highlands was lucky enough to wrestle a decent amount this year.

While some look to compete in their individual brackets, some players look to reflect on the ups-and-downs of the pandemic-filled season, including one player, Sophomore Chase Fishman.

Throughout the season, many obstacles had to

be overcome due to the pandemic, including many times where practice or games were suspended or cancelled due to outbreaks. Fishman said that "this season was very different compared to last year. Normally, we'd start our season in late November, however, due to Covid, we didn't start until March."

However, this didn't stop the Highlanders. Fishman said "we trained 6 days a week for 2 hours like we did all last year, although we had less time to train before our first match. This season, we had 2 weeks of training before our first match, whereas last year we had around 5 weeks to train."

Although the late start seems very bad, it had a few upsides. The later start allowed the team to get outside and run throughout our season.

Practice and training was different as well, with Covid Protocols having to be followed. Fishman said that "the biggest challenge the team faced this year was definitely having a shortened season. We had way less matches this year than we had last year, and there were barely any

tournaments and competitions like there normally are during the season."

With the region tournament being select-pick this year, there was no District tournament. Fishman expressed that he feels like a lot of kids on the team that could have made it didn't get the proper chance.

But, through thick and thin, there was one moment during this amazing season that stands out the most. When Northern Highlands beat Jefferson Township, a team that was ranked number 19 in the state at the time of the meet, everyone went wild. According to Fishman, "the entire meet came down to the last match. Justin Gradski got a pin and everyone erupted in celebration. We were all going wild."

The journey of the Northern Highlands wrestling team this year was unlike any other. They had to improvise, adapt, change and learn new ways to go through a regular day of work, training and meets.

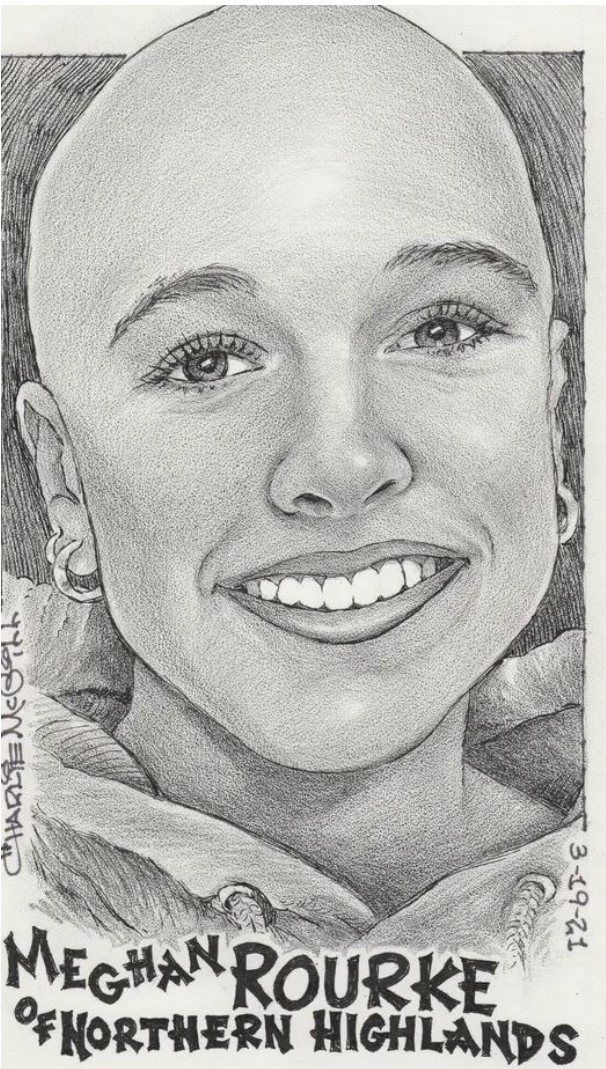
Hopefully next year's season can be much more routine for the Highlanders, so they can continue their success and dominance. ■



Junior Justin Gradski gets the takedown.

SWIMMING TO SUCCESS

Interview with Meghan Rourke Athlete of the Week



Courtesy of Charlie McGill

Marlo Zambrotta '24

Sophomore, Meghan Rourke, has been a standout swimmer her last two seasons for Northern Highlands.

With an undefeated record at 8-0, the team has found success despite the limited pool time and meets caused by the pandemic.

This past season, the team won their 16th straight league title, with Rourke swimming in five races.

Her contributions for the team have been extremely impactful. Rourke won all four of her individual races, as well as her relay, helping the team secure the league title.

For her stellar performances, Rourke was named The Record Female Athlete of the Week.

Rourke swam undefeated this season and only lost one race as a freshman. Rourke says she has managed to improve a lot, and

doesn't plan on stopping. She currently has an impressive 24.21 second time in the 50 freestyle, setting her sights on breaking 23 seconds. It is her strongest event.

In addition to swimming for Northern Highlands, Rourke has been a part of the Ridgewood Breakers since she was seven.

Here she has developed into a dynamic swimmer, and hopes to continue to grow.

This past February, Rourke qualified for nationals with her team.

Although stressful at times, her favorite part about swimming with her club team is how her teammates make her better.

They have fostered an environment where everyone pushes one another, and are there for each other when things get tough.

She attributes much of her success in the high school season to her training with the Breakers. The

team requires a lot of dedication—they practice six days a week.

Swimming for the team means "being able to skip hanging out with friends".

It's about "finding motivation to keep going even if you don't want to. When you don't want to go to practice, it's finding the motivation to still try your best".

Even with the challenges of being an elite swimmer, Rourke says she needs it, "It keeps me sane, gives me energy."

Her love of the sport came early. She started because her brother did it and wanted to try too.

She ended up really loving to swim because of all the people she met. "Swimming is a really hard sport to love all the time just because of how mentally and physically challenging it is. However, my teammates always make it worth it."

Although she's a dedicated swimmer, and spends

most of her time with her club team, Rourke says she loves the environment high school swim provides.

Her favorite part is when the team wins and celebrates together.

"Cheering each other on: the atmosphere is really fun. Everyone is always having a good time."

The high school team gives her the opportunity to destress and have fun with a sport she loves.

With two seasons left in her high school career, Rourke looks forward to growing as a swimmer and having fun with her team.

Although undecided about where she wants to go, she hopes to continue her swim career in college. ■

LAX TO THE MAX

Boys lacrosse is hungry for a huge and successful season

Emma Starr '23

Boys' lacrosse is finally returning to fields all over New Jersey after a canceled 2020 season due to the pandemic.

New Jersey was committed to ensuring spring season (under covid protocols) to these athletes who got the plug pulled from them last year.

After such a big disappointment, the boys didn't stop working. The cancellation gave them motivation to work harder and become the best players, teammates, and competitors they could be.

According to a recent announcement from Governor Phil Murphy, limited spectators are invited to attend the games, which is an exciting privilege that was not given to some fall and winter athletes. A crowd can make all the difference!

The Northern Highlands boys' lacrosse team can finally get sticks back in their hands this season and

get to work!

The team has great leadership from all the senior athletes that are ready to capitalize on their final season and make up for the time that was lost. Sophomore midfielder Charlie Sparago mentioned, "A clear strength of the team this year is the leadership of the seniors; they have

on the field and to have "no regrets." The players emphasize leaving everything out on the field.

The team has been preparing and practicing for their first game on April 19, 2021 versus Don Bosco High School, a very tough opponent that will put the boys to the test. They believe they are ready.

two scrimmages versus Pope John and Montclair. They didn't go the team's way but the boys are ready to make a mark on the regular season.

Santoro also explained that the team is working on limiting mental mistakes on the field which hurt them in their scrimmages.

Don Bosco is the first opponent in a twelve game season. On top of twelve regularly scheduled games including Wayne Valley, St. Joseph (Mont.), Mountain Lakes, Wayne Hills, Ramapo, River Dell, Bergen Catholic, Ridgewood, Pascack Valley, Mahwah, and Bridgewater-Raritan, the team has a County and State tournament to finish off the long awaited season.

Some of the upperclassmen on the team are even taking their talents to college and continuing their lacrosse careers.

John Santoro is furthering his career at Christopher Newport University in Virginia.

TJ Buono will be playing at Canisius College in New York, and Matt Hamrah is committed to play at Franklin & Marshall College in Pennsylvania.

Danny Coleman is committed to play at Misericordia University, which is also in Pennsylvania. It is clear that the team is led by some very talented seniors!

Many other team members have interest in playing in college as well. Charlie Sparago stated that, "Colleges are not permitted to talk to lacrosse players until September 1 of the

player's junior year according to NCAA rules and regulations."

The boys' lacrosse team has players who are focused on having a successful season. They have a team mentality and understand the importance of working as a team in order to win games.

They have a bright future ahead of them and the Northern Highlands family is rooting for them! We wish them the best of luck! ■

"A clear strength of the team this year is the leadership of the seniors; they have really stepped up."

Charlie Sparago

really stepped up."

One of these great senior leaders, standout midfielder John Santoro, stated that the team has implemented a new saying, "Be Here Now." He went on to further explain that this reminds the team that tomorrow is no longer guaranteed

Santoro added, "our offense is looking very good as we have great weapons who have been playing together for many years."

The players are getting back to full speed through practices and scrimmages.

They have played in



The boys lacrosse team in a huddle ready to discuss plays during a game

Photo courtesy of Charlie Johnson

GOLF SEASON READY TO TEE-OFF

Boys and girls golf teams are ready and excited to begin their spring seasons

Leah Rimland '23

Ever since last year's cancellation of the golf season, the players are eager to get on the course and make up for lost time.

Senior Ryan Phillips states that he is looking forward to, "playing golf with my teammates which we have long awaited given the missed season last year. As a senior along with two others, I can't wait to embrace the sport and spend time playing competitive golf with the team and the coaches."

Junior Krtim Shah says that there will be many matches this upcoming season, occurring almost every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

He feels that "with the condition of the world and the pandemic, the fact that there are this many matches for the season is amazing. I'm ecstatic that we get to play this much."

The coach of the varsity girls golf team, Karla Idunata, shares that even though "last year no team had a spring season," that "this year for everyone just to be playing is a way to be grateful and to look at how things are getting back to normal."

This past year has been difficult and has made people hope for some sort of escape from reality. Both Shah and Phillips find this in golf. Phillips states, "My favorite thing about golf is that it completely distracts me from the real world. It is something I can do that I love and that I can do for hours."

Shah mentions, "When I play, whether I play well or not, golf always provides me an escape from the stress and worries of school and life."

Sophomore Eleanor Ha describes the best parts of golf as a form of clarity.

She explains, "You get to clear your head for those 9 or 18 holes and play off any anxieties you have outside of that round or math."

The teams have already had a few practices, but because of the delayed season and short time limit, there are not as many practices as a typical season.

Golf differs from other sports in the sense that when their matches start, they do not have any more practices.

A typical practice according to Phillips "includes hitting around 90 balls at the range working on all types of shots. Then it finishes up with some work around the greens whether that be chipping or putting."

Practice makes perfect, but since golf is such a mental sport it is especially important to go into a match mentally prepared and feeling relaxed.

Idunata states that, "the most challenging aspect of coaching high school golf is keeping my kids mentally focused and positive."

Idunata also explains, "I like to motivate my players by always making them see how great they are, focus on their own game and own strategies, stay always positive no matter what the

outcome of the game is."

Dean Rayside, the coach of the varsity boys golf team, says that before a match, "I like to talk to the guys about visualizing the shots they're going to hit on the course that day. They need to see success in their mind's eye. So it's more about keeping them calm and in a positive mindset than anything else."

Phillips shares his secret to a good mentality: "to prepare for a game I like to listen to music and physically see putts go in the hole on the practice green to boost my confidence and keep my mental health strong throughout the match."

Meanwhile Shah says, "I know that if I approach a match the same way I approach a round with my father, I will play much better. I know that this is easier said than done, but golf is all about confidence."

Even though golf is an individual sport, the amazing part of high school golf is that everyone is part of a team. Ha says, "I love being on the team and meeting new people through an otherwise individual sport."

Phillips says that while being part of a team makes golf a lot more enjoyable, it can also be challenging be-

cause "everyone has to contribute to making a good score."

To overcome this challenge you have to believe in your teammates and focus on what you can control, which is your game."

Everyone on the team needs to pull their own weight in order to have the best season they can. Shah states that "golf is an extremely hard game to pick up and can be discouraging at the beginning, but with hard work and patience, it really becomes worth it."

Phillips states that "what motivates me the most are other teams we compete against or the professionals. This is because I am constantly learning new things and to know that

there are people better than me only shows that I have so much more potential."

Similarly, Shah says that, "what motivates me to become a better golfer is simply watching my friends who are better or even just watching the pros."

The players of the girls teams have been working extremely hard and are eager to get out on the course this spring. Rayside comments, "If we can all put a good round together on the same day, we can be a very dangerous team. I like our chances." Let's hope their practice and motivation will pay off and they will have a successful season! ■



The girls golf team getting ready to swing into action

Photo courtesy of Charlie Johnson



GIRLS LAX IS HERE

The girls are ready to kick off yet another promising season after being shut down

Carolyn Simmel ‘23

The Northern Highlands girls lacrosse team is back and is looking for a chance to show their stuff as their previous season was cancelled due to COVID-19. Now, the girls are looking to make up for lost time.

Both the varsity and junior varsity teams have been working very hard in the off season leading up to the spring.

Many players participated in an indoor lacrosse league in the months of January to March in order to prepare for their upcoming season.

The girls started their season with tryouts on which began on Wednesday, April 7 and have been practicing non-stop since then.

Assistant Varsity Coach Michael McCabe says, “the first week of practice has been exciting! Last year we only got to practice for a week before the country went into a lockdown so it has been close to two years since we have played in an actual scrimmage or game.”

The team is extremely excited to be back on the field once again.

Looking ahead into the

upcoming season, Head Coach Michael Menzella explains that “We have the potential to have a good season, but, we are a young team having only returned three players who have played any significant minutes in a varsity team. From what I can tell already there is already a lot of chemistry. It is now just a matter of shaking the rust off, learning how to play as

ward to heading into the season. Senior Charlotte Fargis explains that, “Since there wasn’t a season last year, I am a lot more excited and motivated for this season. I’m excited to work with all of the new players and play against tough competition. Because it is my last season, I’m motivated to leave it all on the field!”

Even with COVID-19 still

Junior Varsity is ready to bring home some wins as well.

JV Coach Lindsey Beatty is back coaching the team after a break during the 2019 season. She was not able to return to her coaching position last year due to the virus.

Beatty also coaches field hockey here at Highlands and has played lacrosse at both high school and collegiate

strong stick skills, and obtain a strong on-field team dynamic.”

One key aspect of having a strong dynamic on the field, that will lead to victories, is the activities that take place off of the field. For this reason, the team made it one of their goals to have at least 3 team bonding events each month.

Coach Menzella said that, “In the unprecedented situation we find ourselves in, it is imperative to be creative for our team. We hosted a trivia night during the first week of the season where the girls got to enjoy some team bonding.” No matter the sport, team bonding activities, like a trivia night, builds trust and improves morale among the athletes.

In addition to team bonding, Senior Lindsay Sparago explains some other goals that the team has set for the season.

“Some of the team’s goals this season is to win the majority of our games, and to be the most hardworking team in each game.” She continues, “Our league is tough and to be able to get those wins, we need to be the better team and the most hardworking

team each game.”

The goals that Sparago mentioned will play a very important role this spring. The work that is put into each minute of every practice and game will be the key for a successful season.

After the cancellation of last year, the girls will not take any moment that they have on the field for granted.

As for the seniors, their leadership will definitely be missed greatly next year. Fargis says, “I am going to miss everything about NH girls lax. I think I’m going to miss the team and coaches the most. Throughout the 3 years of playing on the varsity team, I have gotten close with a lot of teammates and the coaches and I’m gonna be devastated when the season comes to an end.”

All of the girls lacrosse players are feeling similar emotions: excitement and motivation to prove themselves as a team. Sparago states, “I think that we can be really successful and we are all excited and ready to put in the work to be successful.” ■

“Since there wasn’t a season last year, I am a lot more excited and motivated for this season. I’m excited to work with all of the new players and play against tough competition. Because it’s my last season, I’m motivated to leave it all on the field”

Charlotte Fargis

a team, and executing on the field.”

The team has a very challenging schedule ahead of them. They are battling some of the top teams in the state, including Ridgewood and Mountain Lakes. Their first game is scheduled for Monday, April 19 vs. Kent Place.

There is a lot to look for-

being a concern, the varsity team is still competing in both the state and county tournaments. They will face very tough competition, and are working hard to try and take home the title from both of these tournaments.

Varsity is not the only team who is looking to become victorious this season.

levels. She is ready to share all of her knowledge and experience with the players.

Beatty explained that this year, they have a fairly small roster. She says that, “The program is a bit small this year, so I think this will make our team very close.” As for her goals for the year, she would like to “develop



Two players rush for the ball



Two players fight for possession of the ball



The girls lacrosse team in action during a practice



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your PANDEMIC friendly guide to celebrating Earth Day

Art and Layout by Ayana Amin ('22)



1. Take a trip to a local park or nature reserve and pick up trash
2. Start an at home garden
3. Make an Earth Day resolution! Consider...
 - a. Using reusable grocery bags
 - b. Turning off the faucet while brushing your teeth
 - c. Using reusable water bottles
 - d. Walking or riding a bike to school
 - e. Using a reusable straw
 - f. Shopping at sustainable clothing stores rather than fast fashion
 - g. Eating vegan or vegetarian for a couple of days!

