



# Knighly News

Glen Cove High School 's Student Newspaper

Holiday Issue

## Before Neverland: Masquers Club Brings Peter's Origin Story to Life

by Peyton Angalet



Underneath the twinkling stage lights, the cast of Peter and the Starcatcher opened their first night by taking the audience on a trip to the past. Before his famous adventures with Wendy around Neverland, Peter and the Starcatcher shares the story behind one nameless orphan.

The curtains pulled back with a brilliant applause, revealing the wood paneling of the seaside set. A disappointed Molly Aster, played by senior Kasey Miller, sails to the kingdom of Rundoon aboard The Neverland ship, a decoy, for she could not accompany her father on The Wasp ship. Lord Aster, played by Aidan Rios, is meant to safely deliver the magical cargo of "starstuff," but is unaware that the trunks on the ships have been swapped. Stowaway orphans Prentiss (Samantha Gullo), Ted (Mia DiFrancisco), and one simply called "Boy" (Aiden Van Ommeran) lament about how society has abandoned them, and Boy directs his anger towards grownups. While exploring the ship, with a clever use of a rope to imitate passageways, Molly aligns herself with the orphan boys and shares her mission as an "Apprentice Starcatcher": she and her father must collect starstuff and dispose of it.

Through quick costume changes, the crew aboard The Wasp reveal themselves to be thieving pirates, led by the infamous Captain Black Stache, played by Leo Goldstein. Black Stache learns of the swapped treasure, and pursues The Neverland Ship. He encourages the orphans to join him, even suggesting that Boy should find himself a pirate name. Inspired, the boy declares his name to be Peter. Rattling thunder and urgent music filled the theater as the ships collided, leaving the audience

feeling as if they had really been shipwrecked. Despite the building tension as everyone swims to the nearest island, the room is filled with laughter and cheers from the audience.

The start of the second act began with a comedic musical number and outrageous tropical costumes. Coconut bras, grass skirts, and flashy colors caught the audience off guard, offset when the cast began to sing a melodious tune, marking a strong vocal performance from several singers.

The curtains again opened to display Peter stranded upon the island, alone at the mountaintop beside the trunk of starstuff. He is reunited with his fellow orphans, and on this mysterious island, they encounter all kinds of island dwellers. The Mollusks, who attempt to feed them to a hungry crocodile, a mermaid named Teacher (Natalie Macnow), and a particular yellow bird that flies in circles around Peter. Stache and his sidekick Smee (Carolyne Datkhayeva) attempt to lure the children out to steal their treasure trunk, regularly leaving the audience doubled over in laughter with their hilarious banter at Stache's malapropism—the habit of saying the wrong word. Despite their seemingly foolish attempts at obtaining the starstuff, the two manage to capture Molly and give Peter the ultimatum.

In a final faceoff, the audience sat on the edge of their seat for Peter's choice. Would he give up his chance at freedom with the starstuff, or would he save dear Molly Aster's life? An emotional decision and act of selflessness, Peter hands over the trunk. Captain Black Stache celebrates his victory, but hardly before he finds it completely empty. Much to the audience's amusement, Stache slams

the trunk shut in frustration... closing it sharply on his right hand. Stache declares Peter as his eternal enemy, "the Skywalker to his Vader," among several other puns, and departs with fanfare as his hand is fed to the ferocious crocodile.

Molly Aster and Peter bid each other a sorrowful goodbye, but not before they realize Peter has been transformed by the starstuff, and must remain on Neverland island where he will never grow up. Molly herself has been changed, for she is now a fully established Starcatcher. The two promise to meet again one day, and Peter watches with his Lost Boys as the Asters sail into the distance.

This year's Peter and the Starcatcher marks another successful year for the Masquers Club. The familiar characters, humor, and coming-of-age plot kept the show engaging for attendees of all ages. The bittersweet ending of the play hits close to home for many, with its push and pull against the tides of growing up.

Congratulations to everyone involved, including the Starcatching cast, crew, accompaniment, and the staff who make these efforts possible. With the amazing performances and success of this year, we can't wait to see what comes next!



photos: Lisa Viscovich

# The National Art Honor Society's Contest Win

by: Natalie Manow

In this year's run of the GC High School Club Bulletin Board Contest, the National Art Honor Society won not only the first voting session, but also in the redo that occurred when students expressed their frustration that they had no chance to vote. This creation was made over the span of two weeks, with many drafts being shown throughout the club until they landed on the final project.

While there were many members that had participated in working on this piece of art, a lot of it had been created by members Mariah Cueva, Anghesly Hernandez, Anjhelyny Hernandez, Barbara Benitez, and Hailey Aguilar. After talking with Mariah, some insight was gained on the challenge that this painting proved itself to be.

"I remember going after school and during all my free periods to work on the bulletin board, and after hearing that we won, I was very excited for what else was in store for the Art Club. I wouldn't have ever been able to finish it in time without Anghesly, Anjhelyny, Hailey, Barbara and everyone who is a part of the Art Club that dedicated their time to painting the board. As well, Mrs. Verni, who let us use all her wonderful supplies and let all the creativity run rampant."

Anghesly had the idea of combining two famous paintings, which wound up being Michaelangelo's Creation of Adam, and Vincent Van Gogh's Starry Night. And even though there was originally some trouble with resizing the hands to fit the proper dimensions, and the blue paint not showing up at first on the black background, they still managed to create something beautiful.

Congrats to the National Art Honor Society! The bulletin board looks amazing, and you all worked extremely hard on it.



## Movie Review: Wicked: For Good

Wicked: For Good is the highly anticipated second part directed by Jon Chu of the critically acclaimed first movie that came out one year ago. Wicked tells the story of the unlikely, yet powerful relationship between popular Glinda (who later becomes Glinda the Good), and magical, yet green skinned Elphaba (who later becomes infamously known as the Wicked Witch of the West). Wicked dazzled both old fans of Broadway and new fans who had never heard of its story before. Can the same be said for its successor?

By Sarah Vivian Lee



Wicked: For Good picks up a couple years where Wicked left off. It takes place in the land of Oz, which is now in a state of a disarray with the "Wicked Witch" on the loose, and animals being silenced and deprived of their rights. In Wicked, Glinda and Elphaba make life-changing choices. Elphaba decides to stand up for what she thinks is right, and fights for the animals' rights, even if it means standing against the Wizard of Oz. On the other hand, Glinda is unable to resist and ends up siding with the Wizard and Madame Morrible, the former headmistress at Shiz University, and ally of the Wizard. In Wicked: For Good, they now have to face the inevitable consequences of those decisions, which would not only affect them, but also former school friends such as Fiyero, Boq, and Elphaba's sister, Nessarose.

Wicked: For Good features songs originally on Broadway such as "No Good Deed" and "For Good", but also new original songs "No Place Like Home" and "The Girl in The Bubble." Though the songs aren't as

memorable and impactful as the songs in the first movie, such as "Defying Gravity" and "Popular", "No Good Deed" serves as an impactful climax of the musical, and "For Good" wraps up Elphaba and Glinda's emotional farewell and conclusion to their complicated friendship well. The original songs provide depth in the character development of Elphaba and Glinda.

In "No Place Like Home," Elphaba encourages the animals to continue fighting, and not to leave because there's no place like home. "The Girl In The Bubble" addresses how Glinda feels as though she's been living in a bubble her whole life, and that her reputation as "Glinda the Good" is based on nothing but lies. When fans go back for part two, they'll be treated to breathtaking visuals, detailed and spectacular costumes, just as in part one. All of the cast's acting is stellar, making you ache and long for the characters as if you personally knew them. Though not as stunning as the first movie, Wicked: For Good remains a satisfactory conclusion to the ending of the story.

## Advice Column: Staying Organized for the Holidays

by Nicholas Cueva

Holidays can be stressful and can cause many inconveniences to people. It doesn't matter if it's Christmas or Halloween; there's still pressure to make sure everything goes according to plan. When you have too much to worry about, you can barely enjoy the things

that truly matter, like hanging out with family and taking a break to appreciate the little things. Here is some helpful advice to stay organized for the holidays. It's hard to remember all the things you have to finish before the holidays, so it's good to write them down. You can use whatever you want, Google Docs, a piece of paper, or even on

the Notes app on your phone. You can write what you have to buy, things you need to get done, and any events you are planning to do for the holidays. It's especially important to not shop at the last minute trying to find something you need. It's almost impossible to find those things, especially during the holidays when everything quickly sells out. That's why you should always order gifts, food, etc earlier. It's also good to not overwork yourself with so many events. If many events are happening and it's stressing you out, cancel at least one or two for your mental health. All things considered, make your holidays manageable, don't waste your time worrying, enjoy the holidays with your loved ones, and catch up with some old friends and family.



# Book Review: The Hidden Oracle

## The Hidden Oracle by Rick Riordan

by Isabella Dilgard Clark

“The Hidden Oracle” by Rick Riordan is part of a five-book series, The Trials Of Apollo. The book is about Apollo, who was turned into a human by his father Zeus after the war against Gaia (Heroes Of Olympus series). Zeus punishes Apollo by turning him mortal. After falling from the sky into a dumpster in an alley, he is protected by Meg McCaffrey—a young girl with an odd sense of fashion.



Apollo travels with Meg to find Percy Jackson and make their way to camp. After they find Percy and his mom Sally, Sally gives them new clothes and food while Percy explains that he can't help them because he needs to study for college. He tries to drive them to Camp Half-Blood, but is stopped by Nosoi, which are monsters that carry diseases and pass them to people. They fight them off but Apollo and Meg end up in Camp Half-Blood's forest, lost and alone. They manage to find their way to the camp but there are voices screaming in Apollo's ears.

The camp director Chiron, an immortal centaur whose job it is to train future heroes, helps Apollo adjust to his new mortal body and figure out his skills. He is not very good at archery or music anymore, but is good enough at healing. Apollo sits at the Apollo cabin table and it is a little awkward. He talks with his kids: Austin, Kayla, Will, and the son of Hades, Nico. Meg sits with the Hermes kids. That night Meg's godly parent is found. She is the daughter of Demeter, goddess of agriculture.

Apollo has a bit of a rough history with Demeter and is not surprised that he is bound to Meg. The next day, they participate in the three-legged death race, created by Harley, an eight year old child of Hephaestus. They run through the labyrinth and end up having a close call with the Beast and Python who is guardian of the oracles. That's why communications and prophecies aren't working. When Apollo and Meg returned, there was one team missing. Austin and Kayla. Meg and Apollo venture into the woods in search of the Grove of Dadona, an ancient tree oracle, and the missing campers. They meet Myrmekes, giant acid spitting ants and have to fight them. Meg is taken away and Apollo goes to save her. Once saving her, they found the way to the Grove of Da-

dona and the missing campers. They are tied up, but before Apollo could do anything, the Beast came.

The Beast is emperor Nero, an ancient roman emperor who people thought caused the fire of Rome. Nero is Meg's step father, and Meg forces Apollo to help open the gates to the grove. Since Apollo is bound to her, he must. They open it and it is like turning on all the electronics in the house at full volume. Nero almost kills the campers but Meg and Apollo fight them off. They get a Prophecy and Meg runs, her last order is for Apollo to do whatever he wants. Apollo rushes back to Camp Half-Blood as it is being attacked by Colosseum Nero, a giant golden statue of Nero as the sun god. Apollo works with the other campers and they manage to beat him. In the end, Apollo gets ready for his quest and he learns to be selfless and focus on others. He still has some godly behaviors but is working on getting good mortal qualities.

I really liked this book and I think other middle school and high school kids will too.



# January Regents Are Around the Corner

by Knightly News Staff

As January 2026 approaches, so do the Regents exams—and while they may feel intimidating, a little preparation now can make a big difference. After winter break, classrooms across the school will shift into review mode, focusing on key concepts, past Regents questions, and test-taking strategies.

Teachers recommend starting with the basics: review vocabulary, formulas, and timelines, then practice applying them to Regents-style questions. Many students find that working through old exams helps reduce anxiety and builds confidence. Even 20–30 minutes of review a day can add up quickly.

Don't forget to take advantage of school resources. Extra help sessions, review packets, and study guides are designed to target the most commonly tested topics. Studying with friends can also help—explaining a concept out loud is one of the best ways to learn it.

Finally, remember to take care of yourself. Get enough sleep, eat well, and stay organized as exam week approaches. The January Regents are an important milestone, but they're also just one step in your academic journey. Stay focused, stay positive, and you've got this.



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by Natalie Macnow

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# New Counselor Spotlight: Ms. Iocca

by Nicole Lee

Ms. Iocca is the newest counselor of Glen Cove High School Guidance Department. Last year she was the school's college and career specialist, assisting students with their college applications and navigating their post secondary careers. The Knightly News interviewed Ms. Iocca about her career and asked for her advice on college applications.

**Knightly News: "Could you tell me a little bit about yourself and how you decided to school guidance counseling?"**

"I have master's in school counseling from LIU and I also went to the University of Albany for my undergraduate, a degree in psychology, and I did a minor in sociology and education. My experience at Albany was great, I was very involved there on campus, which has really translated into all the skills I have now and it really helped me realize this is what I wanted to do with my career, being a school counselor. Before that, though, I knew I always wanted to work in a school because I come from a family of educators. I knew being a teacher wouldn't be the best fit for me and if I wanted to do something in school, I wanted to help people on a social emotional level. It wasn't until I worked on the Middle Earth Hotline which is a mental health and suicide hotline at the University at Albany that helped me realize that I wanted to go specifically school counseling."

**Knightly News: "What do you enjoy most about your job and the Glen Cove community?"**

"Last year as the college career specialist I would help students with the college process and I love that I can still do that in this role. It's nice that in this position I can help students even more in multiple areas now like their diploma requirements, post-secondary planning, and social emotionally. Here at the high school, there's a lot of school spirit and I love it. The environment is really inclusive and as a new member of the staff here, everyone is so friendly and it's a great atmosphere."

**Knightly News: "Was there anything you found challenging when adjusting to your new position? What has been your method**

**for overcoming challenges?"**

"I feel like with any new job, it's always a transition or period that everyone has to go through. When not knowing how to do certain things, always just asking for help, that's how I would overcome those challenges. Asking questions is really important and taking initiative to ask for help when you need it. That's advice for anybody who starts a new position. I would give that kind of advice too."

**Knightly News: "What is your advice for students preparing for college applications and writing the essay?"**

"Start making your college list and going on Naviance and College Board as early as your sophomore or junior year. Spring of junior year, you're taking your SAT, and making sure you take those tests early on so when you get to senior year, you have your scores and you are ready with that. Also creating a Common App account early before the start of your senior year, and starting it and doing the questions so it's less stress for you. Starting your essay early and making sure you do that in the summer or start at your junior year, you have a draft at least going into senior year. That is my big advice. And applying for early action too, I always recommend it."

"Definitely writing about themselves a lot and staying on topic, like picking from one of the six prompts. I wouldn't advise them to pick the seventh prompt which is choosing your own topic. Pick one of the six so you can stay on task of what they're looking for. The admissions counselor wants to know more about you as a person: your character. They're already seeing your transcript, your activities, what you're involved in and academics, but the essay is a good opportunity to show them a little bit more of your character.... Sometimes students talk about their family or culture or the traditions they do. I've seen essays about when they were overcoming a challenge or obstacle in their life and how they overcame it."

**Knightly News: "What is your advice for our seniors transitioning into college?"**

"Definitely going to orientation for college. That typically happens in the summer, so you can get accustomed to the campus, you also get your schedule during orientation or create your schedule with your advisor. My other big piece of advice when you start college is to attend office hours if you need it. You're gonna get a syllabus your first week and what I would always do is have a huge desk calendar. I would put every single deadline for all my classes on the calendar and I'd make them different colors so I could see when everything is due and map it out for the entire semester. That was a lifesaver for me. I would always do that and I'd take a picture of it too, so it was always on my phone." "Being involved on campus is so important too. It's really going to help you

with your career development and your overall development and you can also make friends. I met so many people through all different walks of life too."



**Knightly News: "How does AI affect students' career decisions and do you think it will affect your career?"**

"There's positives and negatives to it. The positives of AI, I think, for careers like a lawyer, they have a lot of things they have to read and AI could help summarize that for them. So it can help in careers a lot, which we're already noticing. There's a growing need and this field, like cyber security, is taking off now, I think partially too, because of AI. I do think it's positive, but I guess the negative implications of AI would be that jobs that need routine data, reporting, etc., could decrease because AI could just do that." "Not really, because the counseling piece of being a school counselor can't be replicated with AI."

**Knightly News: Do you have any hobbies?**

"I love running, and I've done it since middle school. I was on the UAlbany and LIU Track and cross country teams. Even now post NCAA running, I still run and do road races. I won the Long Island Half Marathon back in 2024 at Eisenhower Park. It was such a fun race and was my first half too. I'm definitely looking to run more half marathons and hopefully maybe a marathon one day."

**Knightly News: Are there any mottos you live by?**

"When I was in high school, I played soccer too, but then I moved over to cross country. One motto my coach would always say, which has always stuck with me was, 'work hard and good things will happen'. I feel like I really carried that throughout my time. Even after high school, in college, being so involved in doing all those things to help my career development and in personal development, I've definitely come a long way after grad school and here I am now at Glen Cove."

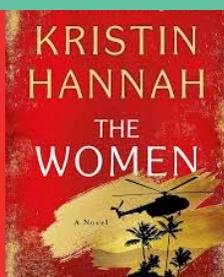


English classes at the high school use a portion of their class time for Independent Reading, where students and teachers select a book of their choice to read freely. Each month the Knightly News will talk to one teacher and one student to share their thoughts about what they're currently reading. Here's what they had to say:

## The Women

by Kristin Hannah

Mrs. Lindner



Would you recommend this book to someone? Why or why not?

*Absolutely—I would highly recommend The Women by Kristin Hannah. It is one of the best historical fiction novels I've read in a long time. Hannah weaves together vivid character development and meaningful historical detail, crafting a story that feels both intimate and universally resonant. Even though I usually gravitate toward WWII-era narratives, this novel, set during the Vietnam War, was a refreshing change and gave me a new perspective on a pivotal time in history. It also shed light on stories that are often overlooked—especially the experiences of women during war. The characters are unforgettable, the emotions feel real, and the story is both heartbreaking and inspiring. I think anyone who enjoys historical fiction, strong characters, or emotionally rich storytelling would find this book hard to put down.*

Why do you think other readers would enjoy it? Why did you enjoy it (if you did) or why didn't you (if you didn't)?

*I think readers would love this novel because it feels so deeply human. Hannah really captures the emotional weight of war—not just for the soldiers, but for the women who served alongside them and the families who were left waiting. I personally loved the book because it gave me a glimpse into a part of history I hadn't really explored. Since this was my parents' generation, it also hit closer to home and helped me better understand what that time might have been like for them. The story moves at a great pace, the characters are so easy to care about, and it balances heartbreak with moments of real strength and hope. It just feels honest in a way that stays with you.*

What ages or types of readers do you think would like the book?

*I think older high school students and adults would appreciate this book most, especially those who enjoy historical fiction, strong female characters, or stories that explore moral complexity. Anyone interested in or curious about the Vietnam War would find the story both engaging and eye-opening. I am constantly recommending this book to my AP Language students!*

How much did you know about this book before picking it up? What surprised you the most about the book?

*I didn't know much about the story when I picked it up. I was simply looking for my next independent reading book and kept hearing great things about it. I had also read Kristin Hannah's The Nightingale—*

*a WWII historical fiction novel I loved—so I figured I'd give this one a try. I had no idea I'd end up loving it even more than I expected. I anticipated learning something new, but I didn't expect to feel so connected to the characters—their sacrifices, strength, and struggles. That emotional impact stayed with me long after I finished the book.*

*What surprised me most was discovering just how vital women were during the Vietnam War. They played an essential role, yet they're rarely acknowledged or given credit for their service. I was also struck by the sheer complexity of this war—the political tension, the emotional toll, and the impossible situations people were placed in. Learning about it through the characters' experiences was both surprising and heartbreaking.*

How thought-provoking did you find the book? Did the book change your opinion about anything, or did you learn something new from it? If so, what?

*The book was incredibly thought-provoking. It challenged my understanding of the Vietnam War by highlighting the often-overlooked contributions of women—particularly nurses, who were constantly exposed to trauma yet frequently went unrecognized. It made me reflect on how many historical narratives have gaps or silences where women's stories—and the experiences of other marginalized or overlooked groups—should be. I walked away with a deeper appreciation for their courage and the emotional toll they carried long after returning home.*

How did the book make you feel? Did it evoke any emotions? Make you laugh, cry, or cringe?

*The novel brought out so many emotions for me. There were moments that genuinely made me angry at the injustices the characters faced, and more than a few passages that brought me to tears. I found myself in awe of their strength, compassion, and resilience. Even now, as I write about it, those same feelings are resurfacing. It's one of those books that lingers long after you finish—not just be-*

*Yes I enjoy it because it is an uplifting story about I enjoyed reading The Color Purple because of the description of god in the book. It really surprised me to read such an enlightening idea in historical fiction. Even though the theme of the book is dark and depressing, through its deeper dives on multiple aspects of life in the 1920s as an African American woman, it ensures any type of reader would gain something from reading it.*

What ages or types of readers do you think would like the book?

*I'd say to completely grasp every topic this book has to offer, the reader should be above the age of 16, even better if you're older. I say this because this was a challenged book and it includes profanities, however if you have an open enough mind, it is a gem of a novel.*

How much did you know about this book before picking it up? What surprised you the most about the book?

*I knew absolutely nothing, in fact my friends chose the book before I could even see the cover. I was immediately surprised with how harsh the book was, no censorship whatsoever. But I was only surprised because it was my first time reading such a book. After getting over my initial shock, I realized that the language and style used was necessary to deliver the message, hence making me like the book even more.*

How thought-provoking did you find the book? Did the book change your opinion about anything, or did you learn something new from it? If so, what?

*I liked the book and I will not exaggerate. I consider this book will be thought provoking for anyone who reads it. It will enlighten and change opinions. However, I consider myself a very wise person already, I was not affected significantly, I only enjoyed how truthful and touching it was.*

How did the book make you feel? Did it evoke any emotions? Make you laugh, cry, or cringe?

*I had times I laughed, laughing at the cries of people. Crying at the smiles of them. Even if it sounds dramatic I have to say, this book will make you feel emotions you aren't used to feeling while reading literature, a simple novel.*

## The Color Purple

by Alice Walker

by Furkan Efe Ozdemir



Would you recommend this book to someone? Why or why not?

*I could recommend this book to anyone since I find it to be an amazing mixture of historical fiction with Feminist and African American literature additions. The book also comments on gender roles and sexuality in a 1920s South American setting which only makes the book a more interesting read.*

Why do you think other readers would enjoy it? Why did you enjoy it (if you did) or why didn't you (if you didn't)?



# State-of-the-Art Science Labs Transform Learning at Glen Cove

by Mariah Lindsay Cueva

With the introduction of the 2025-2026 school year, many renovations of the science labs were made. Compared to last year, the former science laboratories looked just like regular classrooms. The most that they consisted of were double desks or singular desks with tables in the back of the room for labs. Now the new science rooms have four seats to a large desk, with outlets on both sides and adjustable seats, as well as added safety measures like the new equipment. Now, science teachers can use their room to the best of their abilities to provide enhanced lessons.



Diana Rodriguez, a senior taking AP Environmental Science, says that the chairs and new layout are a nice touch to Glen Cove High School. With the modern look and colors of the science rooms, she reportedly feels more motivated to start the year. She appreciates the rolling chairs, which are more comfortable compared to the old desks, and looks forward to the projectors coming to the science rooms soon. Charlotte Summer de Roy, a sophomore taking Horticulture and Hydroponics, says that the new technology is a well needed tool within the rooms. She feels that everything is more put together and convenient than last year. This is due to the fact that outlets are placed on the side of the desks so anyone can charge their chromebooks, as well as power science equipment, without using a cord extender. Charlotte also expressed that the new labs have made it so more advanced experiments are possible. One thing that she would like to suggest to make the labs even better is to make the different labs accustomed to the various science courses. This idea partly came from Mr. Bilder's setup for his Horticulture and Hydroponics class, because of its eccentric detail to plant life.

At Glen Cove High School, we have a wide variation of science classes offered. Mrs. Krisch, who teaches College Health Professions and Sciences, Human Anatomy and Physiology Honors and College Human Anatomy and Physiology and Forensics, finds the new science labs better suited for her classes. She loves the cabinetry to hold her vast amount of

curated teaching equipment that the students use for class. With their ample storage and extensive space, she feels she has more room than ever. Mr. Bilder, who teaches Earth Science, Astronomy, Horticulture and Hydroponics, thinks that the setup is amazing and looks forward to the vast improvements yet to be made, such as the projector: a document camera that will allow him to do demonstrations from an aerial view. And with the addition of the sliding doors, he can choose to block stuff from class. His new Horticulture and Hydroponics class is truly thriving in the new labs. He has been able to add more advanced ways to cultivate the plants. Mrs. DiBenedetto, who teaches AP biology, Marine Biology, and Biology Regents, says that the new equipment works very well for her labs. She has even started using the ice machines for her labs. She finds that the new labs have made it easier to teach her lessons. She enjoys having more space to hang posters from her students.

Across all the teachers, they agree that the safety set up in the new labs is excellent. Around every corner there are precautions for students, such as the newly installed safety showers, eye washes, fire blankets, first aid kits, and stabilizer for goggles. Additionally, there is more room for dissection labs in biology. Some challenges that they ran into when they first started getting used to the rooms were the temperature control and electrical issues. However, everything has been addressed now. Teachers have also reported that



student engagement has increased. A factor could be the tables are centered so that at most four students could work together. This saves time when forming groups and helps students get to know each other throughout the year.

Ultimately, the upgraded labs mark a major step forward in enriching science education at Glen Cove High School.



## Winter winds

Nishka Baboolal

my blood is cold  
warmth has it in a chokehold  
in the winter it freezes  
and I turn into coughs and sneezes

the cold finds me in every place  
my breath fogs my face  
in clouds of regret  
yearning for success I never met  
the year is almost over  
I almost wish for a do-over  
I rack my brain  
for something to keep me sane

and my sanity appears, sometimes,  
right before the sun hides in rhymes  
it nestles in the crook of the horizon  
I smile as vibrant color flies in  
critters and bare trees glow  
I draw shapes on the window  
frosted up by the cold  
suddenly the glass smiles back, I fold

the nights go on for long  
the wind roars strong  
but my blood has thawed  
this year does not seem so flawed

## The KNIGHTLY Staff

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Mrs. Palazzo & Mr. O'Donnell: Club Advisors

## WANTED

Greetings from the staff of The Knightly News!  
We are looking for energetic, dedicated writers and journalists to join our newspaper team!  
Writing in other languages is a bonus as we are looking to make the newspaper bilingual! Please stop by Room 143 on Tuesday afternoons after school if you are interested! We look forward to seeing you then!  
Mrs. Palazzo & Mr. O'Donnell: Club Advisors

# Video Game Review: Sonic Racing: Crossworlds

by Kaitlyn Kielczewski

Sonic Racing: CrossWorlds is the exciting newest addition to the Sonic Racing series. Similar to other kart racing games such as Mario Kart, the game features various characters from the Sonic The Hedgehog series in a three lap kart racing game, giving players the opportunity to race in either standard cars, which can transform into boats and planes, or extreme gear hoverboards. These vehicles can also be customized physically and with a slot-based gadget system for a more personalized and thrilling experience. The new main feature is the CrossWorld mechanic which allows racers to travel to other tracks in the middle of a race through large travel portals. The game includes over 30 thrilling tracks to race on and a plethora of customization options.

The head writer of the game, Ian Flynn, is also the chief writer of the Archie comics for Sonic the Hedgehog and he includes a bunch of references to different parts of the franchise including the comics and other spinoffs. He also includes all of the characters interacting with each other at the beginning of each race based on who the player picked as their rival. I think this is a great tribute to the Sonic franchise and to fans who have been playing the games for a long time. It's also a fun way for new fans to familiarize themselves with the franchise. I wasn't able to get all of the references made but it did enlighten me on some



of the Sonic games and pieces of media I've never touched before.

What really caught my eye was the amount of characters jam-packed into this game. While the game features 24 characters from the Sonic series, additional characters are featured as downloadable content. Characters from different SEGA properties are being added for free through monthly updates. Sonic The Werehog was given as a bonus to players who pre-ordered the game. There is also a premium pass that adds other characters from external properties, such as characters from other video games and characters from Nick-

elodeon shows. The final roster is expected to exceed 50 characters, which includes characters that are available from the start and characters players can get through downloadable content. The Sonic Racing games are known for having plenty of unusual crossovers with franchises inside and outside of SEGA and this has been one of the craziest games when it comes to that.

There has been a lot of positive feedback towards Sonic Racing Crossworlds, receiving praise for its all-inclusive multiplayer modes and loads of customization. Many also see it as a love letter to long-time fans of the Sonic franchise with its writing and references to previous games. I definitely had a lot of fun with the game for it being the first Sonic Racing game I've played. I got a kick out of the way the characters interacted with each other and the maps that they race on. I also love how unique it is from other kart racing games I've played with the new Crossworlds gimmick and loads of customization options.

If you or someone you know enjoys the Sonic franchise, this is a great gift to get this holiday season. Sonic Racing: Crossworlds is now available on Xbox (One and Series X/S), PlayStation 4 & 5, Nintendo Switch 1 & 2, and Steam!

## Fates Revealed: World Cup Draw Ignites the Journey

by Mr. Flores

As the sun began to set on the Kennedy Center, and the highly anticipated FIFA 2026 World Cup Draw came to an end, 42 of the 48 nations participating in next year's World Cup hosted by the United States, Mexico, and Canada had learned their fate. The road to glory had been set. While the last six remaining spots have yet to be decided, they will be determined through a series of playoff matches, all which will be played in March of 2026.

The World Cup Draw, often held six months prior to the beginning of the World Cup, is an opportunity for the host nation to showcase their culture, their spirit, their uniqueness to the world, and to show that they are ready to welcome them in with open arms to enjoy the world's game. Yet at the center of it all, after all the pomp and circumstance of the draw itself, what billions around the globe all gather to see, is who their country will play come June, 11 2026.

Next year's World Cup will be the most expansive World Cup in the history of the tournament; expanding from 32 participating countries to 48 countries, some of which will be taking part in football's most prestigious competition for the very first time, such as the island of Curaçao. While others will be returning for the first time after decades long absence, one such country will be Scotland, whose last appearance was in France 1998.

And while the World Cup is still six months away, the draw is an amuse-bouche to the World Cup, a delightful appetizer before the main course. A main course that will see 48 nations divided into 12 groups of four. And it is at this point that narratives begin to emerge. For instance, which group is the "the group of death", a title often given to the hardest group to come out of the draw. Could that group be Group I, which has two-time World Champion France led by Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappé, already a World Cup winner in Russia 2018 and runner-up in Qatar 2022. The always dangerous Senegal, who looks to join Morocco by becoming only the second African nation to reach the latter stages of the tournament. And not to be forgotten, the country of Norway, led by Manchester City superstar Erling Haaland, who is considered by many a dark horse nation, capable of going very far in this upcoming tournament.

Then there are the favorites, can Argentina repeat as back to back world champions, a feat not done since Pele's Brazil won both the 1958 and 1962 editions of the World Cup. Another World Cup trophy would certainly add more fuel to the fire of Lionel Messi being the greatest player to ever grace a football pitch. Or can Cristiano Ronaldo finally capture the one trophy that has been alluding to his illustrious career. And how will Europe's football giants fare; can France win their third title, can Spain's young superstars Lamine Yamal and Pedri lead Spain back to football's summit? And what about England; will football's ultimate prize finally come back home. And how far can American superstar Christian Pulisic lead the United States. Is this the moment that the United States can finally show the world that they have become a footballing nation. All these will begin to be answered when Mexico takes on South Africa at El Estadio Azteca in Mexico City, on Thursday, June 11, 2026.



# Glen Cove Winter Sports Preview

## Boys Varsity Basketball Coach Falen



**Key Players/Captains:** Mark Reeves, Eli Jorge, Mason Foster, Owen Hall, Micah Allen

**Key Games/Opponents:** Garden City, Hewlett, Roslyn

**Coach's Take/Season Expectations:** "The Boys Basketball team led by Captain Mark Reeves, last year All County player, has their work cut out for them as Nassau County Power houses Roslyn and Garden City are the elite of the conference they play in. A tough non-conference schedule including teams like Valley Stream North, Locust Valley and Bellmore JFK will help make this team play better as the season goes along. First year player Jordan Robinson will be added to a mostly senior squad. Height is certainly something we have a lot of this year as we hope this helps to achieve one of the final two playoffs spots within our conference."

## Varsity Wrestling Coach Kocienda



**Top Wrestlers:** Aiden Ham, Anthony Fernandez, Mayson Davlatshoev, Gamar Letellier, Matt Jackson, Phil Delfino, Emiliano Zuniga-Canales Jr, Ben Napolitano, Elijah Gooden  
Girls Team- Alexa Benitez, Victoria Useda, Stephany Yanes, Halle Sanchez

**Key Matches/Tournaments:** McCullough Tournament at Glen Cove Cove Cup

**Coach's Take/Season Expectations:** "The Varsity Wrestling team looks forward to an exciting season. Led by returning All-Conference wrestlers Aiden Ham, Anthony Fernandez, Mayson Davlatshoev, Phil Delfino and Moamen Mosbah, We also have senior veterans Gamar Letellier, Matt Jackson, Emiliano Zuniga-Canales, Elijah Gooden and Ben Napolitano. With a talented group of younger wrestlers filling in the weight classes the Big Red look to score very well in the McCullough Tournament as well as the Cove Cup. Down the road, the team looks to qualify a large number of wrestlers for the Nassau County Tournament and look to score big once we get there. The girls look to improve upon their 5th place finish at the Nassau County Girls Tournament last year. County finalist Alexa Benitez eyes the top prize this year and a trip to the states."

## Varsity Cheerleading Coach Gehrich

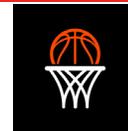


**Captains:** Caroline Dasilva, Makayla Chestnut, and Angele Serano

**Key Competitions/Tournaments:** Cheerleading Competitions in Massapequa, Freeport and Cold Spring Harbor

**Season Expectations: (Quote Please)** "The Glen Cove Cheerleading team is coming from a successful sideline season in the Fall and looking forward to the competition season this Winter. With many of our seasoned cheerleaders returning and some new athletes, we are excited and working very hard for an hopefully successful season."

## Girls Varsity Basketball Coach Freitag



**Key Players:** Brooke Simmons, Siena Scagliola, Sarai Fernandez, Jahlia Barnes, Sophia Gonzales.

**Key Games/Opponents:** Oyster Bay Holiday Tournament. All league games.

**Coach's Take/Season Expectations:** "The Girls Varsity Basketball Team looks forward to a competitive and action packed season. The Big Red are returning many players from last season, and look to build off of last season's success! The Big Red look to take home the gold at the Oyster Bay Holiday tournament, and compete for a playoff spot in league play. The Big Red looks to continue building the program as it has been growing in popularity over recent years."

## Boys and Girls Track Coach Rosario



**Top Runners/Captains:** Cam Allen, Giuliana Portaro  
**Key Matches/Tournaments:** Invitational (Bishop Loughlin Games), County Finals (February), State Finals (March)

**Coach's Take/Season Expectations:** "We're looking forward to another big season from our runners. Last year we had a lot of new personal bests and even a County Champ. We have a great group of kids and are looking forward to another great winter track season."

## Rifle Team Coach Bryggman



**Top Marksman/Markswoman:** Ayva Colato, Michael Mecca, Luke Benzinger

**Key Matches/Tournaments:** All League Matches and Nassau County Championship

**Coach's Take/Season Expectations:** "The Glen Cove co-ed rifle team is excited to begin a highly competitive league schedule this season. With a strong core of returning athletes and a promising group of newcomers, the program is set for continued growth and success. Key returners include Ayva Colato, Luke Benzinger, and Michael Mecca, who bring valuable experience to the lineup. As my first season as head coach, I am enthusiastic about our direction and confident in the dedication our athletes demonstrate each day. We look forward to a rewarding and competitive season ahead."

## Kickline Coach D'Ambrosio



**Top Members/Captains:** Isabella Damiano, Michelle Pinilla Hernandez

**Key Competitions/Tournaments:** Kickline Dance Tournaments

**Coach's Take/Season Expectations:** "The team is looking strong! We are excited to compete January 10th and February 7th." The team has been working hard and we are excited to bring home a trophy!"