

Bulldog

BULLETIN

January 2026

Message from the Superintendent

Welcome to the latest edition of the Bulldog Bulletin! In this issue, we highlight students who excel in many areas. It is such an honor to work with so many amazing young people! Thank you to the community for supporting these efforts to engage our students in a wide range of activities and focus areas.

-Matt Landahl

BHS STUDENTS Continue to Amaze!

CONGRATULATIONS TO DECA MEMBER CAROLINE DIAZ



In early January, Caroline Diaz was one of the top qualifiers at the regional DECA competition at Rockland Community College and was selected for the state competition. Congratulations to Caroline, as well as fellow BHS competitors Khloe, Miguel, Julian, and Jesse.

DECA (formerly Distributive Education Clubs of America) is a national organization that prepares outstanding student leaders for careers in business. According to their website, "The DECA experience starts in the classroom where students learn business concepts in preparation for college and careers. A powerful instructional component, DECA brings the classroom to life by empowering the teacher-advisor to make learning relevant with educational programs that integrate into classroom instruction, apply learning, connect to business and promote competition."

BHS's DECA chapter is led by Ms. Melanie Hammitt, BHS's Business and AP African American Studies teacher, who also serves as our Career and Technical Education Department Coordinator.

Ms. Hammitt shared that Caroline, as a founding member, "helped us navigate the complexities of starting a DECA chapter, from recruiting members to assisting with coordinating our first competitive events.

Caroline Diaz is a junior at Beacon High School, and on January 19th, Dr. Landahl recognized her as a Star Student!

She is a talented artist and is organizing a schoolwide exhibit focusing on the intersection of art and student mental health. Caroline is an outstanding student; she is taking a rigorous schedule that includes multiple AP/dual-enrollment courses and has a GPA of over 100. Ms. Clemens, Caroline's AP U.S. History teacher, shares that Caroline "demonstrates a genuine passion for history through thoughtful and engaged class discussions," and that her "work ethic and intellectual curiosity make her an excellent role model for her peers."



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SHOE DRIVE ◀ GLENHAM ◀ BHS

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DEBATE TEAMS KNOCK IT OUT OF THE PARK

The Beacon High School Debate Team excelled once again at the Dutchess County Debate competition at Dutchess Community College earlier this winter.



Individual performance winners include senior Oren Kelleher placing sixth, while seniors Samiha Golden and Gavin Bruno tied for

seventh. Teams did well too with BHS having three of the top six teams including Golden, Gabby Kahlil and Louise Mauks finishing fifth and seniors Kayla Selander, Marisah George and Mikaela Sanchez finishing third out of 28 teams.

Selander and George were first time debaters and researched much of what they had to discuss the night before on topics such as whether humor is more important than intelligence.

Despite the hectic nature of preparing and having to debate the humor side, which they disagreed with, Selander enjoyed the experience.

"The first round we didn't even have notes because we thought we couldn't bring notes in with us, you can, they just have to be written down," Selander recalled. "We were just scrambling and somehow we still managed to win that one."

George participated to improve her public speaking skills and found the experience not as intimidating as she anticipated. Her favorite topic to debate was compulsory voting against a seasoned team.

"I thought all three of us were really strong in our rebuttals," George recalled. "It was nice to have conversations with people, it wasn't as scary as I thought it would be."

Club co-advisers Matthew Steltz and Erin Haddeland and were extremely pleased with the dedication, professionalism, and hard-work the students demonstrated and the team looks to continue its success in the spring debate held this May.

BHS Students Hit All the Right Notes at NYSSMA Area All-State



Eleven Beacon High School students were selected for the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) Area All-State for 2025-2026 at Arlington High School in late November which sees students across from Dutchess, Columbia and Putnam counties come together to produce wonderful music.

Sophomore Shane Signorelli plays the baritone saxophone, the lowest in tone, but the largest played in a school band. This was Signorelli's second attendance at a NYSSMA event, and noted how even though he received the music score two months before the show, he did not get to meet the other students he was to play with until the day before the concert.

"You just rehearse for eight hours and then play all together. I'm probably never going to see them ever again," Signorelli said. "It was definitely a lot of fun being able to play in a band with a bunch of people that are at our level."

Senior Jonah Espinosa was part of the mixed choir as a Tenor 1 vocalist and said this was one of the more fun NYSSMA experiences. "It was intense, but seeing how in such a short span we came together and were able to create the music that we did and performed, literally the next day, it was amazing," Espinosa recalled. "This was my last hurrah."

For future NYSSMA participants, Espinosa recommended that singers try to find a connection with the song they are singing, noting that his favorite piece he sang at this show was "Emerald Road" for its sea shanty vibes.

"If you can find your own way to connect with the music, that will propel you so much more," Espinosa said.

LAMPON ACHIEVES ARTISTIC GREATNESS



BHS senior Carlos Lampon was selected in late fall as a winner in a visual arts competition through YoungArts, a national program identifying and supporting artists, between ages 15 and 18. He is a previous recipient of the regional and national Scholastic Art Awards.

Applicants had to submit 10 pieces with an overall theme, as well as artist and portfolio statements. Lampon's pieces, including a mattress he painted on, focused on how sleep affects his life.

"I knew from the start I wanted to do something based off emotions," Lampon explained. "I've definitely had a complicated relationship with sleep ... Based off that alone, I felt like I could dive into a lot of separate pieces."

"Cooper Union has reached out to me saying that they recognize my talent," Lampon said. "I'm glad my hard work's paying off."

Lampon was accepted to colleges such as Massachusetts College of Art and Design who offered him a half tuition scholarship. He appreciates the support from his family and art teacher Mark Lyon.



"He pushes me, all in my best interest," Lampon said of Lyon. "He's been my biggest help."

Lyon said Lampon getting this distinction is a reflection of what he has worked toward since he was a freshman. Lampon was inspired by classmates who won art contests and has spent much of his free time perfecting his craft.

"He's being rewarded for the energy and effort that's been going in," Lyon said. "He's been taking the initiative seriously not only in school, but during the summers."

FAIRBANKS NOTCHES "JAZZY" AWARD

BHS Senior and student musician Teo Fairbanks was named a winner of YoungArts for a Jazz/Competition in the performing arts.

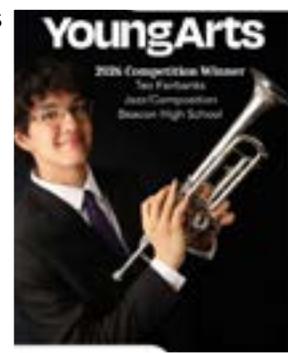
Fairbanks, who plays trumpet and drums, submitted three songs for the competition called "42," "Dilemma" and "Ching Ching" from his band Sticks Squeaks and Keys' 2025 album "Let Them Float." The album can be previewed on Apple Music. While plenty of jazz artists are legendary for improvising, Fairbanks wanted a fixed form for his songs, but allowed some jamming to occur.

"It's a mix of jazz freeform and stuff I wrote," Fairbanks explained. "I play in a lot of non-jazz settings and I think that influences how I would write a song."

Jazz drummer, composer and Frost School of Music professor Dafnis Prieto is one of Fairbanks' musical influences and music has always been a big part of his life. His parents are both musicians who studied jazz in college and his brother plays saxophone.

"It's a musical family and that influenced me, but I wouldn't say that I was forced to like jazz," Fairbanks said. "It came naturally to me, the more I played drums."

If Fairbanks could offer advice to aspiring musicians, it would be to practice as often as they can and listen to all kinds of music for inspiration. While he did not play as much prior to applying to colleges such as the Manhattan School of Music, he has returned to practicing daily. "Now that my applications are done, I'm just playing all day and every day," Fairbanks said.



Dictionary Donations Wow South Ave. & Glenham Third Graders

Just before the winter break in December, Elks Lodge members delivered dictionaries to third graders at Glenham and South Avenue as part of an effort that goes back 21 years. An average of 264 dictionaries have been donated to Beacon students every year.

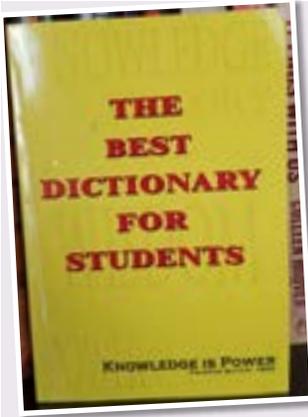
When Elks Lodge members visit the schools, including Past District

Deputy Carl Oaken, they like to talk to third graders about their knowledge of the dictionary and encourage them to utilize the books. Oaken has sometimes heard that the dictionary is their first book.

"That's why we do it, because we think it's important for the children to read a physical book," Oaken explained.



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"In today's day and age because of the internet and Google, children do not own many books. Oaken remembers his mother encouraging him to look

up a word in the dictionary each night, its meaning and how to use it in sentence and he challenges students to do the same.

"We talk with kids about looking at the meaning of words," Oaken said. "Hopefully it's helping the children be more creative in their writing."

The Elks Lodge is engaged with the community in numerous ways including naming Students of the Month and the Year at Rombout, as well as offering scholarships for graduating Beacon High School students.

"We really enjoy what we're doing and we try to give the best we can for the community," Oaken said. "The kids have positive feedback about all the initiatives."

At Glenham, Nayla Baez used her dictionary to good use recently by looking up a word in her math homework that she was not familiar with. "If you really don't know a word you can just go in it and find the letter," Baez said. "I looked up a lot of new words that I never heard of before."

Isla Suckow, of South Avenue, plans to use her dictionary this year, noting that it will come in handy for writing assignments. "It's important so we can learn more words and more meaning of words," Suckow said.

INDUCTION INTO SPORTS HALL OF FAME



ADDISEN RUTKOSKE, CLASS OF 2015, GIRLS SWIMMING



During her five year tenure on the swim team, Rutkoske participated in four consecutive

Seven exceptional Beacon High School alumni athletes and a strong girls bowling team were 2025's inductees into the Eric J. Romanino Athletics Hall and were recognized for their efforts during a ceremony at a St. Rocco Society Banquet Hall on Jan. 9. The hall of fame recognizes athletic achievements in the district, but also at the local, state and national levels and was named after Romanino, a retired BHS wrestling coach and teacher.

ROBERT ATWELL, CLASS OF 1982, FORMER VARSITY BASEBALL COACH

Atwell was one of the most successful coaches in BHS history as his teams won six league championships and appeared in three section finals. He also coached 16 players who earned All-State honors, as well as two New York State Baseball Players of the year and five players given All-American Honors. His teams won 365 games and finished his career achieving the most wins for a single sport in school history.

PAIGE BAISLEY, CLASS OF 2016, TRACK & FIELD

Baisley could not attend as she is obtaining her doctorate in crop and soil science from Michigan State University, but her proud parents accepted the plaque in her place. She contributed to her team's success by competing in distance runs, hurdles, jumps and relays, all while being the class salutatorian. She was regularly named an All-League, All-County and All-Section athlete.

KATHLEEN DAVIS, CLASS OF 2011, SOFTBALL

Davis was an outstanding pitcher who during a 2010 sectional win, struck out 16 batters while only giving up three hits and also struck out 13 batters in sectional semifinal 4-3 loss against Henrick Hudson High School. She was rewarded All-League, All-Section and Poughkeepsie Journal All-Star honors during her junior and senior years.

KEVIN DAVIS, CLASS OF 2013, SOCCER & WRESTLING

Davis earned many honors in his junior and senior years including All-League and All-Section by scoring 11 goals with 23 assists as a junior and 17 goals with 13 assists as a senior. He became a coach himself and took the Arlington High School soccer team to a state championship. As a wrestler, Davis won over 100 career matches and placed third in the Section One championships.

DEREK DECANDIA, CLASS OF 2008, FOOTBALL & WRESTLING



DeCandia earned numerous awards during his high school career and was named captain for the football and wrestling teams because of his stellar work ethic and leadership skills.

He later played at SUNY Brockport, making it the All-Conference sectionals. Football Coach William Castaldi also presented DeCandia with a recruiting video he filmed during his senior year for him to look back on fondly.

Section I Championships in relays and individual events. She was also a two-time state Championship participant in 2012 for the 200 Free Relay and 2014 for the 100 Breaststroke and named an All-League, All-Section and Poughkeepsie Journal All-Star during her BHS career.

SELENA VIRTUOSO, CLASS OF 2020, BOWLING

Virtuoso was considered one of the major contributors to her team's success that went undefeated with a 36-0 record over the course of three seasons. She helped the team win two league titles and was a leader to her team who always had a positive attitude. Virtuoso was named a State Qualifier in 2018 and finished with a 195 average, a 279 high game, and a 666 high series.

2017-2019 GIRLS BOWLING TEAM



The teams were two of the greatest teams in Beacon history

achieving an extraordinary level of sustained excellence. During the 2017-2018 season, the team finished 16-0, achieved the DPIL League Championship and recorded an average score of 852. The following season saw the team keeping the 16-0 record and earning a second league championship and surpassed the previous average score to 853.



GIRLS BASKETBALL CLINIC IS A SLAM DUNK

The Beacon High School Girls Basketball program ran the first ever one day skills clinic for girls from kindergarten to sixth grade as a way to get them interested in the sport.

Varsity Girls Basketball Coach Carolann Del Bene thought it would be extra fun to have some of her team players help run the clinic so they could meet the 25 attendees and show them their love and dedication to the sport.

“We want to continue to provide opportunities for students in the area to work on their basketball skills, and learn more about the game,” Del Bene said. “We want to make sure we have as many girls involved as possible in basketball for our future program.”

Reaction from the younger girls proved positive with some wanting to have another clinic, while others learned crucial moves and had a blast playing with the varsity team.

BULLDOG TEAMS AND ATHLETES RECOGNIZED BY NYSPHAA

The New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHAA) honored Beacon’s varsity teams and individual athletes by naming them scholar-athletes for the fall 2025 season.

To qualify as a scholar-athlete team, the average of 75% of the roster must be 90.00 or higher for the marking period, according to NYSPHAA’s website. The Boys and Girls Cross Country, Boys and Girls Soccer, Girls Swimming & Diving, Girls Tennis and Girls Volleyball teams were named scholar-athlete teams. Eighty two students from across teams such as football and girls tennis were recognized as individual scholar-athletes.

“That’s a testament to our student athletes for recognizing that achieving high grades is extremely important,” Athletic Director Mike Carofano said. “Being dedicated to their studies while also playing a varsity sport is not easy, so to be recognized as a scholar athlete and also for the team to be recognized as a scholar-athlete team is certainly one of the best recognitions you can get.”

Elementary Students Make Big Impression During Annual Essay Contest



The Beacon Sons and Daughters of Italy held its fifth annual Scholarship Essay Contest and awarded seven Beacon students whose essays were excellent!

Fifth graders Lydia Behrens, Leana Soltish, Gabriel Reavey and Makai Fitzgerald, of Glenham, and Maurice Hamilton, of South Avenue, and Nicholas Ferris and Rhys Donnelly, of Sargent, were the winners who received a certificate for their essays on notable Italians and Italian Americans.

Hamilton thought it would be fun to participate in the contest and enjoyed researching about Nobel Prize winning neurobiologist Rita Levi-Montalcini, who discovered the nerve growth factor. He picked her for a peculiar reason.

“It seemed like somebody wouldn’t pick her because she was a lot different than everybody else,” Hamilton said.

Donnelly wrote about iconic crooner Frank Sinatra, who he

thought would be an interesting person to highlight and rated his music as “not bad.” He was surprised, but excited to win. “I thought there was a third of a chance I would win,” Donnelly said. “I thought it would be a good accomplishment for my life.”

Ferris was happy to learn that he won for his personal essay about how his great grandparents emigrated from Italy to New York. He interviewed his grandmother and parents and shared one fact that stood out.

“They did not know how to speak English and they had to learn how to speak it,” Ferris said. “My grandma said, ‘It would be really good if you could do it, so you can tell everyone about your great grandma.’”

Ferris had this advice for students interested in entering the contest. “They should persevere and be brave,” Ferris said.

Job well done!

Cleaning Out Your Closets? We need your shoes!

Location Glenham ES **Dates** January 12, - March 13 **Contact** glenhampto@gmail.com

Help us raise funds just by donating gently worn, used and new shoes! Be sure to ask, friends, family, neighbors and co-workers to donate too!

Collected shoes not only help support us, but they will be reused and given a second life by those in need through #microenterprise. It's a WIN-WIN!



Need an excuse to clean out your closets? Did the shoes you got for Christmas did not fit? You can donate your gently worn and new shoes for the Glenham PTO’s Shoe Drive through March 13.

Shoes of any variety, including sandals, boots, sneakers and kids’ shoes, can be donated in donation boxes at both Glenham and Beacon High School.

It will help the PTO raise funds while also giving a second life to shoes by being given to those in need.

The PTO looks forward to seeing how many pairs of shoes it can collect.