



The Talon

Gripping News



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Women in STEM; Right Here at Onteora

By Isabelle Wentland, Junior

From developing vaccines, to coding algorithms, the most critical innovations of our time are being driven by women. To keep solving the world’s most complex problems, we need every brilliant mind at the table. We’ve seen a rise in technological advancements, space discovery, and an increase in the participation of women in STEM fields that has inspired so many and is visibly the start of something bigger for women and young girls.

Historically, women were not directed toward STEM fields for a number of reasons: education was primarily given to men, as women were seen as “not intelligent enough” for intellectual work or “hard sciences.” Instead, women were steered toward homemaking and mothering. Additionally, women's significant contributions in science were often attributed to or stolen by male colleagues and they were almost never recognized. Fields such as neuroscience, engineering, mathematics, and chemistry have been historically male-dominated. Fortunately, this is no longer true.

Changes are already underway globally and that’s no exception here at Onteora where we see skyrocketing numbers of women who are graduating and headed for STEM related degrees. In the class of 2026 some of these individuals include:

I encourage women who are interested in STEM fields to stay true to their passions and to encourage other young girls who aspire to do just the same. This can motivate future STEM students and those who are looking to be represented in a field we’re slowly seeing more representation in.

I interviewed Fiona Green, Shelby Buryk, and Sadie Konjas, all of which gave motivational answers and impactful responses.

What sparked your initial interest in STEM, was there a specific moment that made you want to pursue it in college?

Green: “The trials and tribulations of Mr. Keenan’s AP

Chemistry class helped me to develop a greater sense of faith in myself, and ability to do chemistry, as well as working alongside my lab partner, Shelby, who helped me realize how important it is to work with other women in STEM.”

Konjas: “Learning how ecosystems work with each other has been so interesting to me as well as the human body; learning about how everything works is so fascinating.”

What’s the biggest misconception about women in STEM that you would like to break down?

Buryk and Green together:

“That women don’t have the same motivation and drive as men do, but they must understand that women change the workforce for the better.”

Konjas: “There are so many misconceptions about women in important fields, it’s difficult to pick one—that women work more with emotion and can't be as independent as others. Women are just as capable as anyone else.”

Where do you see yourself in 10 years, and what kind of impact do you hope to make in your field?

Buryk and Green: “We see each other working at Columbia research labs in NYC, doing research on the brain. Research with each other, in The Big Apple.”

Konjas: “In 10 years, I see myself completed with college and

working as a physician’s assistant. I want to be in this medical field because of the impact I will have on other people, and to help improve the lives of others, not just my own.”

If you could speak to younger girls about pursuing STEM, what would you say?

Buryk: “It may seem like a very complex field, which is true, but it is broad and you can approach it in a way that is specialized to your interests.”

Konjas: “Dream big, the possibilities are endless. There is nothing holding you back right now, it’s an amazing field with so much to learn from and so much to teach others, so beneficial in general.”

Jenny Albright: Human Biology

Shelby Buryk: Neuroscience

Hannah Cocks: Health Sciences

Ruby Gahagan: Neuroscience

Mariana Giordano: Psychology

Fiona Green: Neuroscience

Hazel Haynes: Health Sciences

Gemma Holstein: Biology and Animal Science

Sadie Konjas: Biological Sciences

Elizabeth Kothe: Health Sciences

Ana Lemus: Animal Science

Elva Marin: Health Sciences

Samantha Navarro: Biology

Julia Rosa: Health Sciences

Cameron Soter: Animal Science

Isabella Warren: Health Sciences

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Onteora's Collegiate Athletes; An Inside Scoop

By Evan Pizer, Junior

Of the 80-something Onteora students in this year's graduating class, seven graduates are continuing athletics at the collegiate level. A few of them were able to answer questions and share a little bit about each of them; here are their responses. Those not interviewed include Liam VanDeBogart, going to St. Thomas Aquinas College to play football, and Marvin Umana Alarcon, going to SUNY Ulster College to play D-3 Soccer.



Sadie Konjas, Le Moyne College, D-1 Track and Field

Sadie is a leader on the track team. She mainly throws shot put, and discus. She recently qualified for the New York State Championships and holds a state ranking. Her strength is so elite that one time, when a student enraged her, she folded them up in a ball and threw them the length of the football field.

What does signing or committing to a college program mean to you personally?

"Continuing athletics in college is especially important to me because it creates a level of satisfaction that my efforts in high school have paid off. I'll be able to continue participating in the sport that I love, which also comforts me when I look towards my unknown future in college."

What advice would you give younger athletes who hope to play at the collegiate level?

"Focus on yourself. Try to better those around you while also improving yourself. Coaches not only look for athletic ability, but for sportsmanship and academics as well. Also, don't be afraid to reach out. Be confident in your abilities and put effort into everything you do; it will be evident in time. Take risks, have goals, and strive to be the best version of you that you can be."

What aspect of college athletics do you think will be the biggest adjustment?

"I believe time management will personally be the biggest adjustment. It's difficult to balance academics with athletics already, but with the intensities of both drastically increasing in college, I'll need to learn how to efficiently adapt quickly."

Alexa Hull, Endicott College, D-3 Track and Field



Alexa runs the 400 hurdles as her main event. She also runs the 400-meter open and the 100-meter dash. She has been on the track team since freshman year, balancing it with Varsity Soccer. Alexa's ferocity and acceleration is her secret to success. When she steps off the line, a trail of fire is left behind, turning her opponents shoes in ash.

Is there any person that played a big role in your success in getting to the collegiate level?

"Coach Burkhardt has always encouraged me to run track at the collegiate level. I never once had to doubt his support and effort when meeting with coaches, or while emailing colleges. Coach Burkhardt has seen me grow as a runner since Phoenicia Elementary and has always been extremely supportive."

What aspect of college athletics do you think will be the biggest adjustment?

"I think the biggest adjustment with college athletics will be not participating in a different sport year round. I will be fully dedicated to one sport and won't be fully in-season until the spring. Although there will still be training in the fall and winter, it will be entirely new to focus all my time and energy into one area."

What advice would you give younger athletes who hope to play at the collegiate level?

"I would say to start the recruiting process early, even earlier than you would think, and to be open to new ideas and shifts throughout the process, as it is very unexpected."



Alexandra Young, Trinity College, D-3 Golf

Alexandra has been a dominant golfer since she was eight years old. She has qual-

ified for the New York State Championships five times in five years, and is the heart and soul of Onteora's golfing program.

What sacrifices did you have to make to become a collegiate athlete?

"Losing time with friends and family is a sacrifice athletes often have to make. That time seems to happen most during winter and summer seasons. Another sacrifice is that it gets lonely when you practice from when you wake up until when you go to sleep. Additionally, I do conditioning on top of training for my sport."

Tell me a bit about your recruiting

process?

"During junior year I started to reach out to colleges like Siena, Fairfield, Randolph Macon, and NYU. I received many emails, and had a lot of back and forth communication with coaches, but finally decided upon Trinity through a summer camp run by Division-3 colleges and am thrilled with this choice."

Jude Signore, Manhattanville College, D-3 Golf

Jude is a veteran golfer. He has played Varsity golf since 7th grade, and that hard work led him to be the dominant player he is today. This season, he placed 4th in the MHALs and competed in the Section 9 Championship. He was recruited by Manhattanville College's golf team for this fall.

What sacrifices did you have to make to become a collegiate athlete?

"I made a lot of sacrifices in order to play college golf: I've had to give up free time when I could have been hanging out with friends and family, I also had to learn to balance golf, school, and my other responsibilities. However, I would say all the time and practice was definitely worth it since one of my biggest goals was to play collegiate golf"



Connor Avery, SUNY Morrisville, D-3 Football

Connor Avery is an offensive lineman,

and likes to keep the QB clean.

What advice would you give younger athletes who hope to play at the collegiate level?

"One piece of advice that I could give is that you don't have to be a phenomenal athlete to play at the college level. There just may be a coach looking for a hard-working player like you."

Future Farmers of America; Senior Cameron Soter Lands First Place

By Jack Goodman, Sophomore

Each year, students enrolled in agricultural-science programs throughout the nation compete in a profound National Future Farmers of America (FFA) convention to win a title that represents their knowledge on plant and animal science. Students compete to win awards accustomed to their future careers to ensure their place in an animal science career.

Cameron Soter, a senior at Onteora High School, secured an award for her project on how hands-on learning in agriculture is more beneficial than textbook learning.

Soter discovered that hands-on learning is more beneficial by analyzing how students retained information in her BOCES Animal Science Program. She initially did this by evaluating how elementary students interacted with planting and soil, later doing an assessment about how they acted and what their skills were by the end of each month.

She asked questions to collect her data including, “Did they show what they understood?” and “Did they retain the knowledge?” Soter surveyed students as young as third graders. Using information from her animal science BOCES class, she went to Cahill Elementary School and taught lessons on agriculture. By doing so, she came to the conclusion that when students were taught subjects through hands-on ac-

tivities, they retained information significantly more than those who read it in a textbook or a packet of notes.

After gaining her information, it was time to construct her award-winning project. The project consisted of a poster compiled of information regarding her claim, followed by an extensive essay elaborating her research.

Finally came the state convention. The convention was held in Buffalo, NY, where it was composed of 3,000 students and their advisors, each with a specific poster lining the convention room. Soter then had to present her poster to a judge, explaining how the exposure of agriculture through education affects students. She succeeded with flying colours, ensuring her placement as first in the NY FFA Agriscience Fair within the Social Science Division. With remarks as stated from Soter, “We hit all the checkmarks on rubric, she didn't need information out of us.”

The National FFA convention spans throughout various districts, teaching students the significance of agriculture, animal science, and the overwhelming importance of understanding how we can interact with our environment. As proven by Cameron Soter, the exposure of agriculture on students can positively impact the way they retain information, and the way they learn.



Duolingo and Track and Field; Senior Sadie Konjas Triumphs Both

By Abby Elliott, Senior

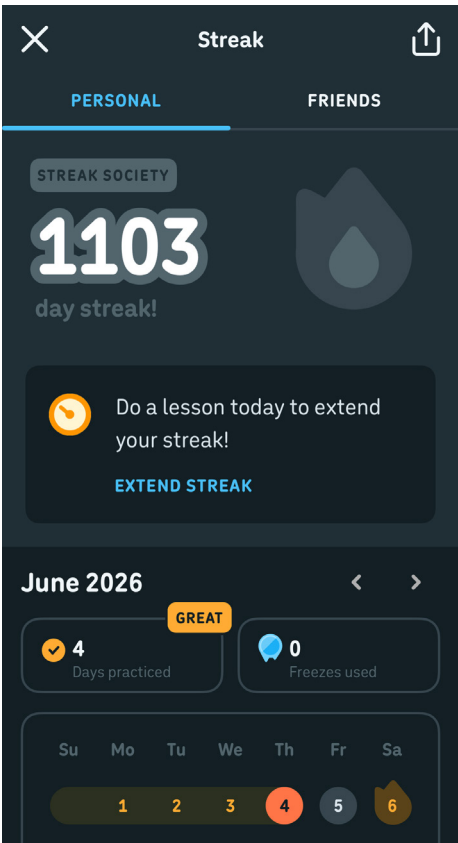
Sadie Konjas is an all-around perfect example of a star student, with her dedication to education both inside and outside of the classroom, her outstanding athletic achievements, and her continuous ability to treat others with kindness.

Konjas is not only a dedicated student in school, but is also learning an entire foreign language on the side! Have you ever heard of *Duolingo*? Let's hear about it from Konjas herself: “*Duolingo* is an app where you're introduced into a language, which helps you learn basic words and phrases. I'm currently learning the Greek alphabet, and basic conjugation.”

At the time of this interview, Konjas had completed 1,103 consecutive days of *Duolingo*. Konjas completes her daily streak every night before she goes to sleep. I decided to ask her the question we're all wondering... “Will you continue your *Duolingo* streak while competing as a Division I athlete at Le Moyne College?” Konjas says “Yes—I'm no quitter.”

Konjas began competing on the Onteora Track and Field team in her junior year of high school. After devoting countless hours each season, she earned a spot to compete at the State Qualifiers meet where she threw a whopping 33' 9 in the shot put, sending her to the New York State Championships.

Following her extraordinary junior year, Konjas joined Onteora's Winter Track Team in her senior year where she won the Section 9 Indoor Track and Field meet and qualified for the State Championship a second time. Her success carried straight into the Spring 2026 track season, where she continued to dominate highly competitive meets, set a school record in the shot put, and currently ranks 18th in New York state in both the discus and shot put. Next week Konjas will compete at the New York State Championships for the third time! Konjas plans to continue both her athletic career and her *Duolingo* streak while at college, along with many other great feats, surely.



← Proof of Sadie's streak!



President Green's Final Address

To my devoted subjects,

I cannot believe we have finally made it; the final days of my service here at Onteora have tear-jerkingly ended. It has been an absolute pleasure serving as your president, and I will miss many of you dearly. Thank you all for always supporting Onteora’s student government.

Through my time in student government, I've learned many valuable lessons and gained experience in new fields. It pushed me to take initiative and responsibility, to work with others, and most of all I’ve learned to trust in others as much as I’ve learned to trust in myself.

I’d like to thank Mr. Edelman, Mrs. Turck, Mrs. Casey, and all administrators for their assistance during my term of service. There is also no denying the importance of my fellow government members who have made so much possible. I’d like to thank Adam Grady, our vice president, Shelby Buryk, our treasurer, Nico Stackpole, our secretary; and Delilah Lieberman, our devoted student representative from the bottom of my heart.

We are happy to say many of our initiatives have been successfully implemented to our school this year including the following: feminine hygiene products are now plentifully available in the bathrooms, a new and improved gym dress code has been added to the handbook, increased mental health support throughout the school year is available, and fun holiday decorations in the hallways!

I wish all of you the best in everything you apply yourselves in. I trust that Jade Belfiore, your next Senior Class president, will do everything in her power to make Onteora a better place. Working with others on our collective goals has been a pleasure and learning experience and I can’t wait to see what Onteora student government accomplishes next!

President Green signing off!



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A Farewell Letter From The Editor

Creating a school newspaper isn’t about how many copies we can print, or how many people will read it. Its true value comes from the people involved and the process of making a catalog of art, mementos, and historical data. Our job at *The Talon* is to print “gripping news” that reflects the unique perspectives of Onteora students, through a just, positive lens, and that we do.

The free press, often regarded as the fourth pillar of democracy, is a defining aspect of our country, and should be protected at all costs. The day the printing press was invented changed the trajectory of the entire world as we know it. Alain de Botton beautifully said, “To look at the paper is to raise a seashell to one's ear and to be overwhelmed by the roar of humanity.” Having a voice is something that people in this country deeply overlook. Use your first amendment right to share your opinions and experiences while you still can. Read newspapers and magazines and pay attention to the world around you, I urge you.

To be the Editor-in-Chief of such an establishment has been a huge honor, as I have put my blood, sweat, and tears into each issue printed. Considering the gravity of being a woman participating in this field, when both are dangerously under attack, I feel so lucky to have had this opportunity. Even greater of a privilege was to not only do this once, but twice because it means I got to make double the papers, do double the work, and double the fun. Each issue comes with surprises and challenges, which with the amazing support of the club, we work through every time. I truly don’t know what my high school career would be like had I never paid any mind to this club.

I want to thank Mrs. Sniffen from the bottom of my heart for all the time and effort she has dedicated to not just the paper, but to me as well. If it were not for her, I may not have found my passion for journalism (or scented hand creams or herbal tea). Mrs. Sniffen is a remarkable person so filled with humor and kindness and wisdom, I don't know what I would do without her. I will be leaving *The Talon* with a heavy heart, wishing I did more with my time, but I trust it will be in good hands with her.

Though my days at The Talon may be over, my journalistic career is just beginning to bloom. As I start my next chapter—or should I say issue—at Skidmore College in the fall, I will take all the lessons and knowledge I learned in high school, and put them to good use. This is precisely the beauty and purpose of extracurriculars; through them one can experiment to find their interests, and then gain experience that will lay the groundwork for their future endeavors. I greatly encourage everyone to find a club early on in high school and stick with it.

It has been my pleasure and pride to be the Editor of this newspaper for the past two years. I will miss it dearly.

Sincerely,
Talula Kirschner
Editor-in-Chief

Trap Team Opens Up to OHS Students

By Jake Slater, Junior

A new club open to Onteora students is the first of its kind (at least in Ulster County). Thanks to our dedicated Head Coach Bob Bloomer, Ulster County has its very first trap team. Endorsed by the Onteora Central School District and the not-for-profit Wittenberg Sportsmens Club, students have been given the opportunity to learn and compete in what the USA Clay Target League calls “one of America’s fastest growing school sports.”

The Trap Team meets every Sunday, and optionally on Wednesday, on the 165-acres of pristine wooded land owned by the Wittenberg Sportsmens Club, in order to participate in a high-precision sport where athletes target clay disks that are launched into the air using a voice activated system. The goal is to break as many of the 25 disks thrown per round as possible. Each student participates in two rounds that will cumulatively count as their official score for the week. The scores are then submitted to the USA Clay Target League and compared to other teams within New York State.

When I initially saw the flyer for the team, I was interested in participating but concerned because I had never tried or

even heard of trap before. I made the decision to give it one chance, and I’m so glad I did because the coaches are super friendly and encouraging. The members of the club are so enthusiastic about mentoring the next generation of players, that there are enough volunteers for each student to have their own coach. My coach is Bob, and I have learned so much from him in this short amount of time. As head coach, Bob has two rules: “Rule 1- Be safe, Rule 2- Have fun”.

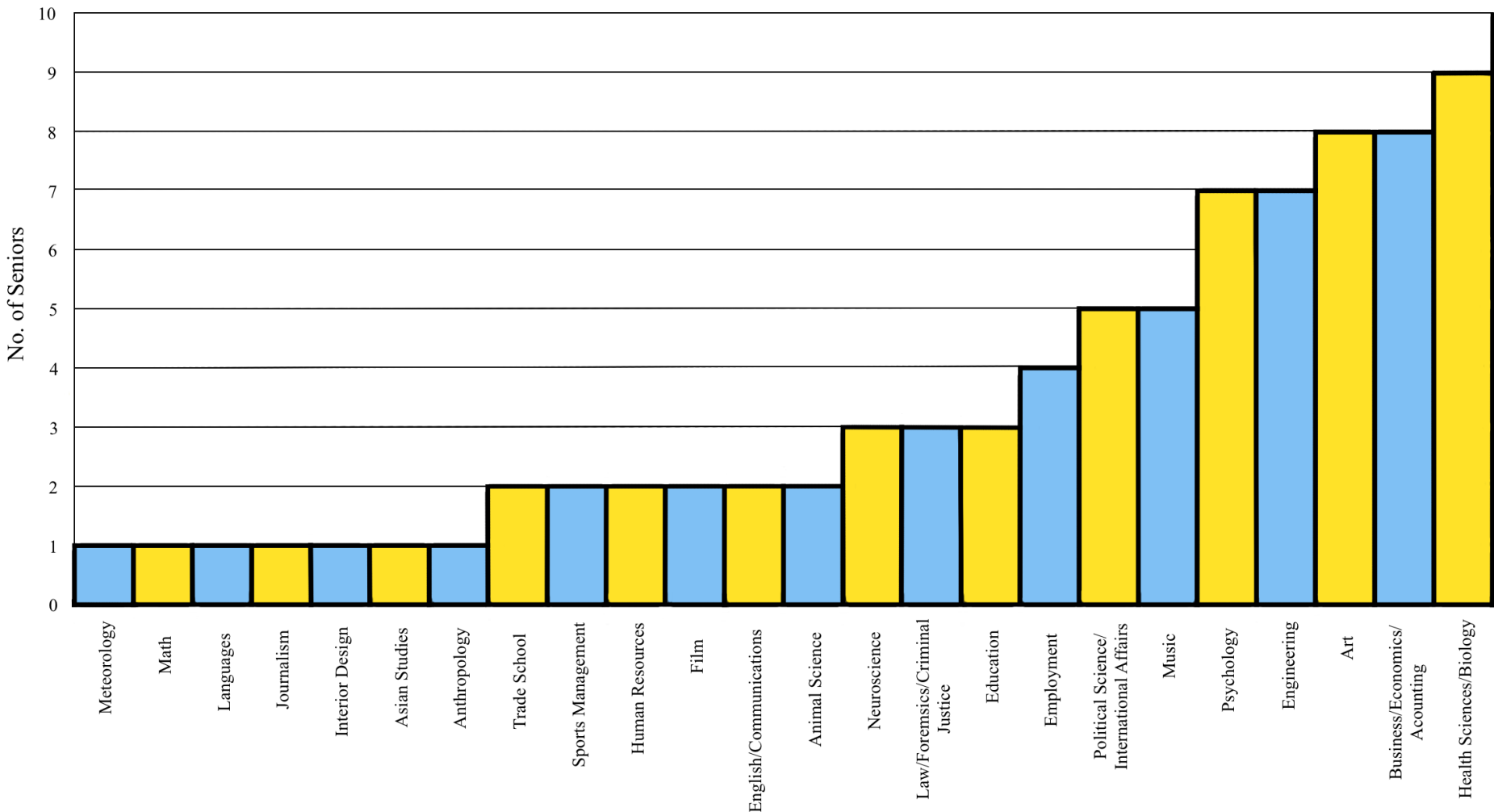


Another great aspect of trap is that one can also participate in other clubs and sports at Onteora. Since the trap team meets every Sunday, practices don’t impede on the ability to do other activities. This spring I was able to participate in trap while playing on the Onteora Tennis Team with no scheduling issues.

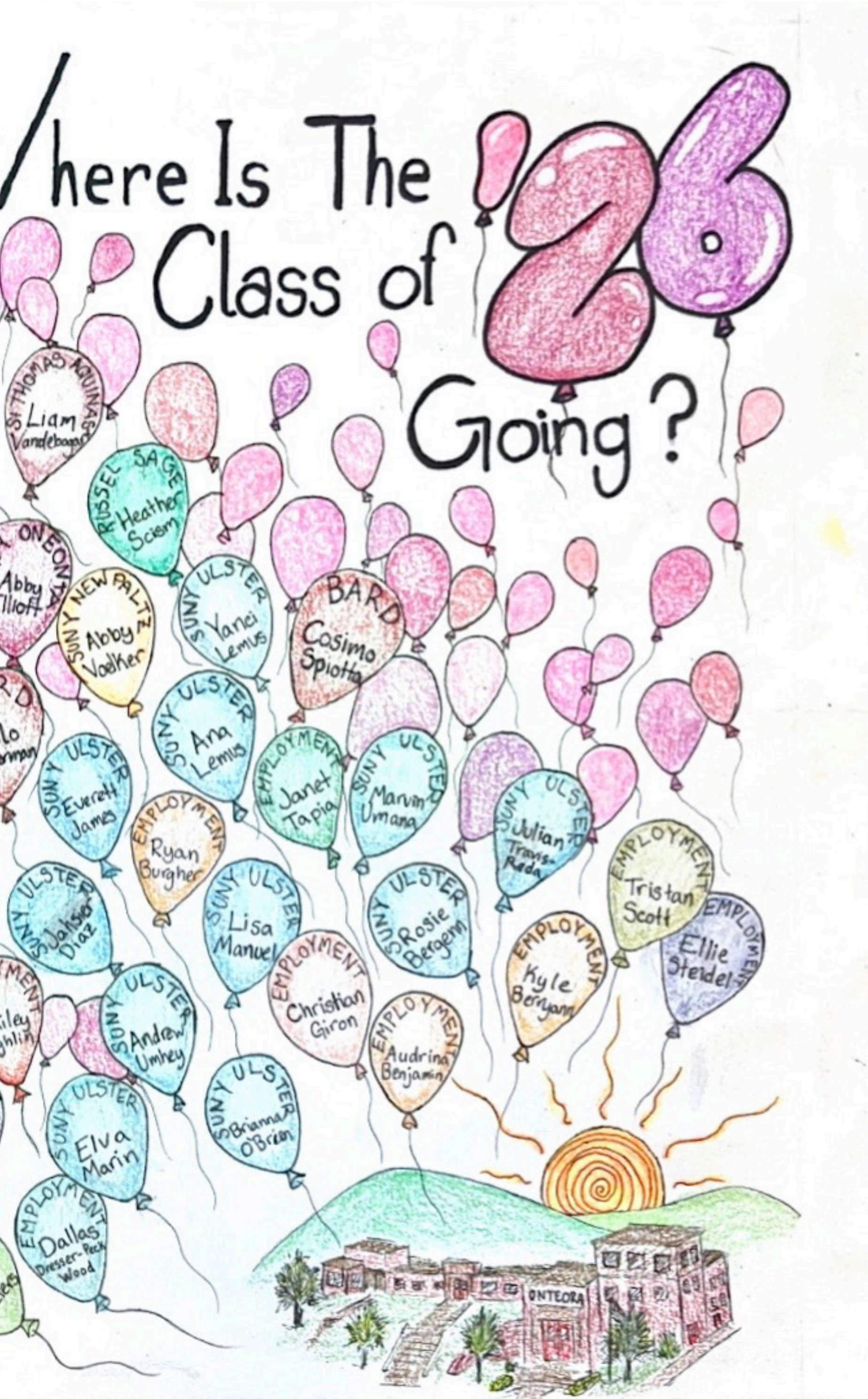
This season has just wrapped up now that the team went to Syracuse to compete in states on June 4th and 5th. Senior Donald Bloomer from Onteora’s participants holds a top-five NYSPHSSA ranking out of approximately 1000 participants. The trap team is still welcoming new members for the fall season. If you’re looking for a fun, engaging, and flexible sport consider joining us!

Informational Bar Graph: Percentage of Each Major From The Class of 2026

By Rama Gabriel, Sophomore



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The Summer Reading Matchmaker List

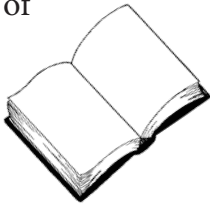
Compiled by Ms. Weisz, Librarian

Fake Skating by Lynn Painter (YA/ages 14+)

The Hook: Seeking a temporary partner to melt the ice.

About Me: I love witty banter, small-town hockey, and pre-tending to be in love to fool the public. I’ve got a bit of history with my ex-best friend, but we just need to survive senior year.

Ideal Match: Anyone who loves a good childhood-friends-to-enemies-to-lovers story.



Project Hail Mary by Andy Weir (Adult/ages 12+)

The Hook: Interstellar companion wanted. Must love science and survival.

About Me: I wake up with amnesia in deep space, and I'm the only person left alive who can save humanity. I spend my time doing lab calculations and hanging out with a very unusual, multi-legged roommate.

Ideal Match: Sci-fi nerds, space enthusiasts, and fans of unexpected friendships.

Rebecca by Daphne du Maurier (Adult/ages 14+)

The Hook: Looking for someone who isn't afraid of ghosts... or the ex.

About Me: I’m a sweeping, gothic mansion sitting by a stormy sea. I’ve got a brooding master, a terrifying housekeeper, and a shadow cast by a glamorous, deceased first wife who just won't leave.

Ideal Match: Dark academia fans, mystery lovers, and anyone who appreciates a slow-burn thriller.

Powerless by Lauren Roberts (YA/ages 14+)

The Hook: Searching for a partner willing to break the rules of the kingdom.

About Me: I live in a world where elites have magical abilities, and the ordinary are hunted. I’m currently playing a deadly game of survival while hiding a massive secret from a very charming prince.

Ideal Match: High schoolers and staff obsessed with dystopian fantasy and high-stakes romance.

Rabbit Cake by Annie Hartnett (Adult/ages 14+)

The Hook: Seeking someone to help weather the storm of a wonderfully weird family.

About Me: I am a darkly funny, big-hearted story narrated by a brilliant 12-year-old girl named Elvis.

Ideal Match: Fans of quirky coming-of-age tales, dark comedy, and books with genuinely original, unforgettable narrators.



The Climber by Shin'ichi Sakamoto (YA/T+/ages 16+)

The Hook: Looking for someone to scale new heights. Solitary souls welcome.

About Me: I’m intense, introverted, and obsessed with the view from the top. I trade human drama for the pure adrenaline of solo mountain climbing, pitting my body and soul against frozen peaks.

Ideal Match: high school readers looking for a visually stunning, high-stakes sports drama/anime.

Octopus Moon by Bobbie Pyron (ages 10+)

The Hook: Seeking an adventurous spirit who hears the call of the ocean.

About Me: I'm a heartfelt, nature-filled journey about family, healing, and the incredible bond between humans and wildlife. Perfect for a cozy afternoon escape.

Ideal Match: Animal lovers, younger middle schoolers, and staff who enjoy beautiful, moving stories.

If Only I Had Told Her by Laura Nowlin (YA/ages 14+)

The Hook: Looking for a shoulder to cry on. Bring tissues.

About Me: I’m full of longing, regrets, and different perspectives on a tragic love story. I deal with the "what-ifs" of life and the things we leave unsaid until it's too late.

Ideal Match: High schoolers who love emotional contemporary fiction and heavy heartstrings.

The First Time I Saw Him by Laura Dave (Adult) Sequel to *The Last Thing He Told Me*

The Hook: Looking for a second chance at a first impression.

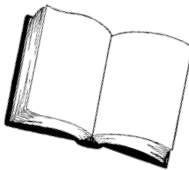
About Me: I’m a blend of family secrets, relationship drama, and a search for truth. I keep you guessing about the people you love and whether you ever truly knew them.

Ideal Match: Staff and older high schoolers who love contemporary mysteries and domestic thrillers.

Twenty-Four Seconds from Now by Jason Reynolds (YA/ages 14+)

The Hook: Seeking a patient partner. Currently hiding in the bathroom.

About Me: I am a sweet, hilarious, and completely honest stream-of-consciousness story about a teen boy named



Neon. I am counting down the exact moments before taking a massive, nerve-wracking next step with my girlfriend, Aria. To understand how I got here, we have to rewind time—back 24 minutes to a delivery of chicken tenders, back 24 days to practicing how to unhook a bra, and back 24 months to when a rogue church dog first brought us together. I am all about tenderness, dealing with the "what-ifs," and navigating the vulnerabilities of young love.

Ideal Match: High schoolers and staff looking for a refreshing, modern romance told from a deeply honest guy's perspective.

The Hounding by Xenobe Purvis (Adult/ages 14+)

The Hook: Seeking someone who stays wild, regardless of what the neighbors say.

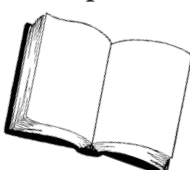
About Me: I am a dark, eerie historical parable set in an 18th-century English village gripped by a stifling summer heatwave. I focus on five free-spirited, parentless sisters who live on a farm with their blind grandfather. Because we refuse to conform to society's rigid expectations, the superstitious townspeople think we are "odd"—and a dangerous rumor is spreading that we can transform into a pack of hounds. I am full of slow-burn dread, told entirely through the shifting perspectives of the suspicious villagers watching us from afar.

Ideal Match: High schoolers and staff who love gothic mysteries, witchy folklore vibes, and stories akin to *The Crucible* meets *The Virgin Suicides*.

At the Edge of Lost by Martha Brockenbrough (Ages 10+)

The Hook: Looking for a loyal companion to navigate life's wildest storms.

About Me: I am an emotional, dual-perspective survival adventure set against the backdrop of a sudden crisis in Seattle. My chapters alternate between a witty, bright seventh-grade boy named Caleb and his incredibly loyal, dapper, aging Irish wolfhound, Ronan. When their beloved grandfather falls ill and is rushed to the hospital, a quarantine separates us across the Puget Sound. We



both strike out into the wilderness, facing dangerous predators, physical injuries, and brewing storms just to find our way back to each other.

Ideal Match: Middle schoolers who love high-stakes survival stories, animal-human bonds, and books that mix genuine heart with a bit of humor.

Horoscopes

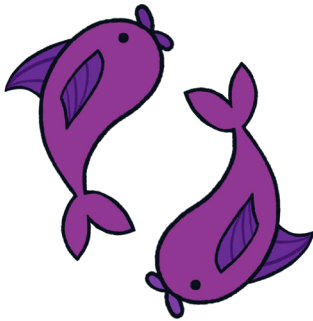
By Delilah Lieberman, Senior



Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)
Capricorn, your attendance has been quite concerning
thank God school's almost over, cuz you've been done learning
I know going to school can feel like a chore,
but maybe next year try to come in more...



Aquarius (January 20 – February 18)
Aquarius, never stop being yourself
it's okay that your clothes are in a pile, and not on a shelf
but maybe it is time to clean up your room
and try to get rid of that impending doom...



Pisces (February 19 – March 19)
Pisces, you may be doing too much but sometimes you do really be coming in clutch
just maybe think of what you're saying before it is said
cuz God only knows what's going on in that head...



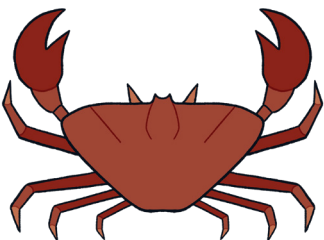
Aries (March 20 – April 18)
Aries oh Aries, you are almost there!
Take a nice drive, let the wind blow in your hair
think about all the fun times that you've had
and remember to always let the good outweigh the bad!



Taurus (April 19 – May 19)
Taurus, you are truly a soldier
I hope this school year has given you closure
because the journey that you are about to begin
will surely be counted as a win...



Gemini (May 20 – June 19)
Gemini, it's your time to shimmer
bask in the sun, swim like a swimmer
summer is upon you and it's gonna be great
but set your timers... it's rude to be late...



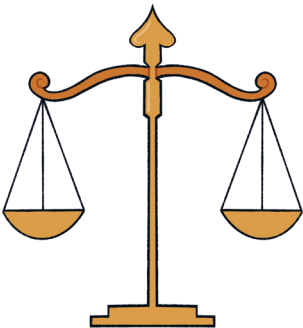
Cancer (June 20 – July 21)
Cancer oh Cancer, be careful of the pollen
with summer among us you can't stop ballin'
but you're not gonna have fun if you're sniffing and sneezing
so take care of your allergies or else you'll be wheezing...



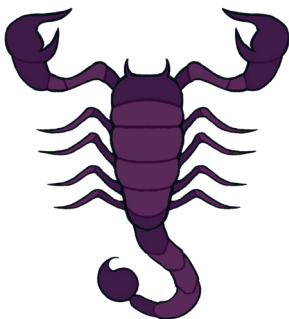
Leo (July 22 – August 21)
Leo, you must eat more green foods
it'll help you feel healthy, and stabilize your moods
right now it may feel like many things are changing
but you will feel settled once things are done rearranging...



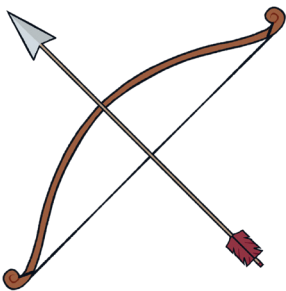
Virgo (August 22 – September 21)
Virgo, it might be time for a haircut
your split ends are growing, you look like a nut!
But you are still shining just how you are
but that being said, the barber is really not that far...



Libra (September 22 – October 21)
Libra, you always know just what to say
so check in on your friends, make sure they're okay
because your words of wisdom might help more than you know
and you'll want to be there to help your dear friends grow...



Scorpio (October 22 – November 20)
Scorpio, you are truly quite a blessing
and you always make salads with the best dressing
you're doing everything just the way it's meant to be
you are the answer to your questions;
you are the key...



Sagittarius (November 21 – December 20)
Sagittarius, you might've gotten lost in the sauce
sometimes it's okay to not be the boss
let others be a part of your newfound glory
cuz right now you're lost, you finding Dory...

Seniors Give Advice to Freshmen

Compiled by The Talon Staff

Questions From Freshmen

1. “How do you become successful while managing sports, mental difficulties, and stress with so much work?”

4. “What tips do you have for doing well/studying on tests, especially big ones like SATs. How many times did you take it? Did you do the prep class?”

4. As with AP exams and regents, the SAT has a very unique format. Because these tests are designed to measure specific skills, question types are often recycled, concepts are repeated, and the same sneaky tricks come up again and again. Being familiar with these consistent aspects of the exam will certainly give you a leg up. Find practice questions and tests to try.

Test prep classes are helpful, but they are really not necessary if you don’t feel completely committed. If you don’t want to invest time and money outside of school hours, our school’s after school SAT prep is a fantastic resource.

Take the SAT as many times as you want—it doesn’t mean anything unless you want it to! Superscoring is also a great advantage if you do choose to retake the test.

3. Taking a lot of AP classes is definitely worth it when you feel drawn to the subjects. Don’t overload your schedule with classes that demand more of you than you are capable of—that’s never rewarding. Instead, choose the classes that not only interest and inspire you, but also push you to ask questions and overcome challenges. There’s not much point in putting yourself through the stress of these classes for the sole purpose of being able to say you did. That’s not what learning is about.

It’s helpful to take classes whose curricula coincide. Combinations such as AP Human Geography and AP Environmental Science, (AP) Biology and AP Psych, and AP Calc and (AP) Physics allow you to better understand the concepts and relationships within each area of study. This may also allow you to narrow down your interests for the future!

Thoroughly familiarize yourself with the format of AP questions. You’re trying to learn the content but also take and pass an intense exam, so you must be comfortable with the nature of these tests. Many AP classes are quite flashcard-intensive, so knowing as many terms as you’re capable of is crucial to your overall understanding of broad concepts, processes, and relationships. Quizlet Plus is a great investment!

In order to truly solidify these concepts in your mind, active recall is incredibly effective. A particularly helpful method is studying with a friend and taking turns teaching each other the material. This allows you to feel confident in your own grasp on the subject while also improving others’.

2. “How do I know which and how many clubs to join? Were there any clubs that you did that you thought really helped you academically and if so which do you recommend?”

3. “Is taking a lot of APs worth it? If so, which ones benefited you the most? Also if you took some, do you have any studying tips? How do you study for AP classes differently than you would study from regular classes?”

5. “How to avoid burnout and stress about all the classes you’re taking even when having an outside life that's so clogged with other work?”

Answers From Seniors

1. Invest in a planner or calendar. Even if you don’t think of yourself as an incredibly organized person, this will help!

Utilize your time on the bus, whether that’s the ride to school or to a sporting event. This lengthy drive does not need to interfere with your time for working; it’s the perfect opportunity to complete any homework before it creates unnecessary stress.

Break down large projects into manageable tasks in order to feel adequately prepared; it is easier to tackle small tasks one by one rather than approach one giant assignment. Although it’s cliché, there’s nothing more detrimental than procrastination. Get it done!

2. Go to the kickoff meetings at the beginning of the year and find a club that really interests you. Don’t join ten clubs and barely go to any. Instead focus on a select few, build up leadership positions, and find your passions.

Harvard Model Congress was very helpful for government classes and to those interested in pursuing political science.

5. When juggling school, work, sports, and personal time, it’s important to create boundaries between each and not let them impede on each other. Meaning, when you’re at school don’t think about after school stuff; focus on paying attention to your classes now. At sports, don’t think about school or work; focus only on playing well and being a good teammate. At work, don’t think about sports or school; focus on doing good at your job.

Personal and social time is super important and while it shouldn’t take precedence over school, you should try and find time on weekends to let loose and have some fun. Most importantly make sure you put yourself first by sleeping and eating well and not pushing yourself to a breaking point.

Top-15 Upstate Summer Activities

By Alexa Hull, Senior

1. Natural swimming holes or local pools—free and refreshing on a hot summer day.

2. Flea and farmers markets in Woodstock, Phoenicia, Kingston, and Rhinebeck—Support small local businesses.

3. Get some ice cream at Boice Bros or Jolly Cow (Kingston), The Ice Cream Station (Phoenicia), Sweet Dreams (Woodstock), etc.

4. Complete a local hike—see Lucia’s hiking list for recommendations.

5. Visit Katerskill Falls—a beautiful local waterfall.

6. Backyard camping with friends.

7. Saugerties Lighthouse—striking architecture and a brief hike to a secluded lighthouse right on the water.

8. Roast some hot dogs or marshmallows over a bonfire.

9. Visit local fairs in Margaretville, Dutchess County, Ulster County, etc.



10. Spend an evening on The Kingston Waterfront—see the lights under the bridge and enjoy a nice walk along the water.

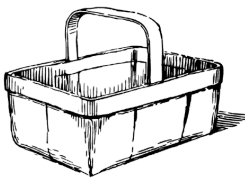
11. See bands and performers at places like The Colony, Bears-ville Theater, The Hoot, or The Pines—all extremely scenic locations with great food and ambiance.

12. Phoenicia Playhouse—Be thrown back in time and enjoy an evening summer movie.

13. Picnic at your local park—Parish Field (Phoenicia), Davis Park (Olive), The Comeau Property (Woodstock), etc.

14. Have a dinner/lunch potluck with friends—try some new recipes.

15. Sleep-in late—you deserve it.



Local Hikes From an OHS Expert

By Lucia McDonagh, Senior

Kaaterskill Falls to Inspiration Point
A popular and well known waterfall in Hunter that has a beautiful, oftentimes overlooked hike behind it. To get to a Point, one would take the Escarpment Trail to the Kaaterskill Falls Trail, and follow it up to this stunning viewpoint that overlooks the forest below, and mountains surrounding. It is a loop trail that is 5.5 miles. The waterfall is a perfect swimming spot for after the hike.

Vernooy Falls
This short, moderate-level, 3.5 mile hike is rocky, but well marked and maintained. The real reward of the hike are the waterfalls. There are a bunch of falls, and many stop at the first one, however if you continue up, there is a bigger one with a deep pool. Here, you can cliff jump (carefully) and slide down the waterfall, allowing for lots of fun.

Twin Mountain
This is a hard hike that is 8.2 miles, and has two peaks. There are beautiful views along the way, as well as many steep inclines. It is a loop that can be done in either direction. Dogs are not recommended on this hike due to its harsh and steep terrain. The view is well worth it!

Westkill Mountain via Diamond Notch Trail
This is a specific trail on a popular mountain for hiking. Most trails on this mountain are longer, and this one is 9.0 miles, however you can turn around once you reach the view if you want a shorter hike. The view is called Buck Ridge Lookout.

Along the trail, there is a lean-to and lots of beautiful foliage. When you have finished the hike, there is a river to swim in, and Westkill Brewery, a nice place to hang out and have food, is right down the road.

Giant Ledge and Panther Mountain
This difficult out-and-back is 6.7 miles, with a 2,030 elevation gain. The views are absolutely breathtaking, and is one of the favorites in the Catskills. The hike presents no unusual obstacles. It is to be



taken into consideration that the parking lot fills up quickly, and is the only space where you can park.

Slide Mountain
Slide mountain out-and-back is a 5.4 mile difficult yet beautiful hike with amazing views of the Catskills. It is the highest point in the Catskills and is perfect for fun hiking with groups. The hike is steep at points, yet overall pretty manageable.

Devil's Path
Devil’s Path Predover Road to Mink Hollow is a 7.4 mile section of the longer 22.5 mile Devils Path hike. It is a point to point hike, so a car drop is needed. This

hike presents amazing views and is a portion of a famed backpacking hike. If one did want to backpack the longer Devil’s Path, they’d need to look into permits and proper gear.

Wittenberg
The Long Path: Wittenberg Mountain to Phoenicia is a long yet moderate point to point hike. It offers beautiful views of the Catskills, and is a peak that can be approached by many different trails, however this specific trail is not too long. For camping, one should look into permits and lean-to arrangements.

Artists Rock
Artists Rock and Sunset Rock via Escarpment Trail is an easy to moderate 2.1 mile hike. It offers beautiful views and is perfect for kids and dogs. There is a view of the lake and the surrounding foliage and mountains. There is a fee to park, so if you go, come prepared.

North Lake South Lake
This is another very easy 2.4 mile loop hike with a waterside view throughout the entire hike. While there is a parking fee, it isn't a very large one, and the preserve is worth funding. This is a loop around the lake, and is a perfect easy walk/hike for anyone of any age and/or skill level.

