



Kaiden Smith and Sareena Modi Earn Top Honors

By: Ava Varasano

Every fall, when North Shore High School's valedictorian and salutatorian are announced, students scramble to learn about the honorees' stats, extracurriculars, and the college that each plans to attend. The valedictorian, who has earned the highest weighted grade point average, and the salutatorian, who has earned the second-highest weighted grade point average, are prime examples of stellar students, people who are successful throughout their academic career and have become role models for others.

This year's valedictorian and salutatorian, Kaiden Smith and Sareena Modi, deserve this honor in full, for their academics, extracurriculars, and character. They are both extraordinary people who are kind, ambitious, and inspiring, qualities that transcend a GPA.

Earlier this year, Kaiden Smith and Sareena Modi were called to the Main Office to be told the exciting news. When asked about her first reaction to learning that she was salutatorian, Modi said she first felt "excitement and gratitude, especially for those who encouraged me along the way, like my parents, teachers, coaches, and friends." Similarly, Smith said that he also felt gratitude for everyone who helped him achieve valedictorian status, and expressed how he was surprised, because he knew that "there are lots of brilliant people in (his) grade."

Many teachers helped Kaiden Smith and Sareena Modi earn the titles of valedictorian and salutatorian by influencing them to become the best students that they could be. The first teachers who came to Smith's mind when asked which teachers impacted his life the most were English teacher Mr. Kleba, Social Studies teacher Mrs. Turk, Science Research teacher Dr. Mordechai, and History teacher Mr. Rodahan; he did add however, that he could name plenty more. They helped shape him into who he is today. Modi said that Mrs. Kelly, who she had as a teacher for AP Biology, has impacted her the most by instilling confidence in her and pushing her beyond what she previously thought were her limits.

In addition, these students have definitely taken their fair share of challenging courses. The class that impacted Kaiden Smith the most as a student was AP Chemistry. Smith stated, "It taught me how to study and showed me the level I had to bring my work up to," which motivated him to keep bringing his A-game throughout high school. Modi expressed how the most challenging course that she has taken in school is a class that she is currently taking, Physics C, which has taught her how to persevere when things are difficult.

When asked if talent or a work ethic makes a person academically successful, both Modi and Smith responded that a strong work ethic holds more weight when it comes to ensuring a successful future. Smith emphasized how "most things in life are achievable when you work hard," reminding students that success doesn't come easily, and that they should do their work.

Outside of the classroom, Modi and Smith are quite busy with their many extracurriculars and hobbies. Smith spends a lot of time playing soccer and basketball, and is on North Shore's varsity teams for both sports. He is also the Vice President of North Shore's Chapter of the National Honor Society. Modi spends her time volunteering at a local hospital, leading fundraisers, playing piano, and practicing tennis.

The future is bright for these high-achievers as they gear up for life outside of North Shore. Although he is not sure yet where he is going to college next year, Kaiden Smith plans to study Business Management; Sareena Modi plans to study Biochemistry on the Pre-Med track with a possible minor in Marketing at NYU. And, while Smith is not set on where he will be in ten years, Modi hopes to be in a residency that will help her become a physician, as she enjoys helping people and making a meaningful difference in their lives.

Wherever life takes the Class of 26's valedictorian and salutatorian though, one thing is for sure: they will thrive. Congrats to Kaiden Smith and Sareena Modi.



North Shore High School's 2026 Salutatorian Sareena Modi and Valedictorian Kaiden Smith

Photos Taken By: Ellamarie Mitchell

N.S.'s Model UN: Civil Discourse At Its Finest

By: Kate Spieler

Of the numerous clubs at North Shore High School, an extremely important one has joined the bunch: Model United Nations. Model United Nations (MUN) is a student organization that replicates the United Nations by having members role-play as delegates from different countries who debate and resolve real-world international issues. The purpose of the United Nations, which was created in 1945, includes maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations, achieving international cooperation in solving global problems, serving as a center for discourse and orchestrating the actions of nations to achieve common goals. Key activities include promoting human rights, delivering humanitarian aid, supporting sustainable development, and upholding international law. In Model UN, delegates work in different committee sections, which can include the General Assembly, Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Specialized Agencies, and Crisis Committees.

There are several important skills that participants learn from this club such as understanding global issues, speaking skills, researching skills, working towards a goal, collaborating with peers, etc. The first version of MUN was created in the 1920s, and was originally known as the Model League of Nations; it was established to teach younger adults about the League of Nations and its role, to promote the understanding of fundamental communication and debate skills, and to encourage diplomacy. MUN at North Shore High School is advised by Social Studies teacher Mr. Andrew Cross, who had a positive experience being a part of MUN when he was in high school. He wants to share that opportunity with current students. In addition, President Polina Semenka was inspired to start the club due to her experiences as an immigrant in the U.S.; she has a solid foundation of

understanding the intensity of the world right now. She thought MUN would be a good opportunity for students to have a space to learn more about global issues. Also, she believes this club is a great place for students to share their passion for political science or international relations, and develop their understanding of diplomacy, global affairs, and multiple perspectives.

North Shore's MUN meets once a week on Tuesdays in S-6, from 3:00-4:00 PM. Our agenda for the next few meetings includes receiving our specific country, assigning delegates to their UN bodies, and then beginning researching with the delegates and their understudies. Our research will focus on our assigned country's current issues, foreign affairs, and historical background. We will learn how to draft resolutions and strategically practice key skills specific to public speaking within Model UN. The club's officers are as follows: President Polina Semenka (junior), Vice Presidents Owen Frank (junior) and Kate Spieler (junior), Secretary Dylan Reisburg (junior), Treasurer Juliet Monte (junior), and Social Media Manager Sofia Tulumello (sophomore).

Along with the officers, our team will consist of other delegates as North Shore competes at a three day convention at the end of February through the beginning of March at Hofstra University. The event will begin with a formal opening ceremony and remarks; then the committee sessions begin which are where delegates who are a part of each UN body will share ideas and argue based on their country's stance; then students will shift to resolution writing which is when countries draft formal resolutions to address the specific problems discussed. Ultimately, the convention will end with a closing ceremony and awards ceremony. It will be exciting to see what North Shore's team can accomplish this year!



From L to R: Some of North Shore's MUN members include Luke Cardinale, Juliet Monte, Dylan Reisberg, Polina Semenka, Sophie Leigh and Shreeya Ramlogan.

2 NEWS

The Acoustic Cafe: A Night That Brings a Community Together

By: Mae Curiale

North Shore's Winter Acoustic Cafe recently took place on January 9th in the Cafeteria. This celebration was organized by an entire team of people, which included many different North Shore High School students and faculty members. To be more specific, the Student Government Organization (SGO) played a major role, as did Science teacher Ms. Janice Chen as well as Math teacher Mr. Charles Wankel. SGO members volunteered their time to create the setlist, set up the tables with decorations, run the donation table, and be a part of the clean-up team. In addition, students who are involved with the Theater Tech Department ran the sound board and helped create the stage setup, that was complete with amps and microphones.

The Acoustic Cafe traditionally occurs twice a year at North Shore High School, once in the winter and once in the spring, and it always brings together a large variety of talent. By sharing their

vocal, guitar/bass, drums, keyboard and saxophone skills, the North Shore musicians who participated showcased their musical talents for their peers and parents.

This winter's event had a great turnout of friends, family, and teachers. Band members from other schools even joined their North Shore friends on stage. After about 12 acts, the event ended with a dance party to The Beatles' song "Twist and Shout", courtesy of the band Keeping Jars which includes North Shore High School students Parker Snow and Metta Pollio.

The next Acoustic Cafe performance will take place in the Spring, and is typically held in the Courtyard. All students who have any musical ability are encouraged to share their talent up on stage, or simply attend the Acoustic Cafe as an audience member so that they can experience a wonderful evening of music and creativity.



Lucia Cagno showed off her musical skills by performing "Free Treasure" by Adrienne Lenker.



Ceci Reilly and Parker Snow were impressive, as usual, at this winter's Acoustic Cafe.



Mae Curiale had everyone's attention when she performed "Maine" by Noah Kahan.



Bradley DeMarco, who was accompanied by his brother, always loves to entertain by singing some country music.

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January 2026

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The Future of Organ Transplants

By: Evan Morsi

Imagine a family member has recently died. They're an organ donor, so their organs are transported all over the U.S. to save lives. What do you feel? Bitterness? Pride? Fear? Well, imagine those organs never get used as they are discarded, all while people who need them die in a hospital bed. The shortage of organ donors in the United States results in the loss of over 5,000 lives annually, while "thousands of donated organs never reach the patients who need them," stated CBS News. "One in three kidneys recovered from deceased donors were never transplanted." This is a result of several factors, primarily the inefficiencies in the organ donation system.

Organizations that collect organs are encouraged to get as many viable organs as they can. This leads to a surplus of organs in which, as CBS News presented, "more organs are recovered...and more organs are being thrown away." Luckily, the use of artificial organs is a potential solution to the lack of wasted organs by offering life-saving alternatives.

Nowadays, artificial devices or organs like kidney dialysis machines, artificial hearts, pacemakers, and prosthetic limbs, can substitute for impaired or missing organs, and serve as a method of life support to help keep patients alive until their new organ becomes available. But what if instead of keeping a patient alive until his donated organ is ready, they could keep him alive forever without it? This is something that may come to fruition because artificial organs are less likely to be rejected than real ones.

Because artificial organs are

made from biocompatible materials, which are substances that safely interact with living systems, or the patient's own cells, the human body's immune system is less likely to reject an artificial organ than a real one which is made up of someone else's cells. This, in turn, reduces the need for immunosuppressant pills that the patient would have to take for the rest of his life, a big advantage to those who have to take multiple pills every day. While artificial organs have many positive attributes, unfortunately, their price is a reason why they are not used as often as they should be.

The National Center for Biotechnology has stated that "estimates of the cost of the artificial heart ... range from a low of \$100,000 to a high of \$300,000 per patient," while the cost of an organ donation is reported to be "between \$10,000 and \$14,000 per patient." The amount of money for an artificial heart is quite high for the average income individual. And so, that is why this person might choose to wait to receive a regular organ donation rather than an artificial one.

While organ donation is currently more efficient and accessible for patients, the effectiveness of the organ donation system is limited by significant issues. Therefore, artificial organs, despite their higher costs, present a promising alternative to address the shortage and waste of donor organs; and that's why this type of organ donation, in the near future, might ultimately become the main way to save a life.



Screens Between Us

By: Alexa Scaffa

It's strange that we live in a time when staying "connected" has never been easier, yet so many people quietly feel isolated. Social media platforms like Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram were supposed to help us keep up with one another, but most of what we get are short replies, and heavily filtered glimpses into people's lives. It creates the appearance of closeness without any real depth, almost like being surrounded by people but still feeling unseen. Regardless of a person's age, this negative effect is felt by all who make use of such sites.

Unfortunately, on whatever site a person chooses to use to connect with family and friends, comparisons are constantly being made. When everyone posts his or her best and happiest moments, it's easy to feel like your own life isn't measuring up. That pressure pushes people to hide their real emotions, struggles or insecurities and instead only present a version of themselves they think others will approve of. The more selective everyone becomes about the content that he or she chooses to post, the harder

it is to form genuine connections because no one is letting others see who they truly are. In addition, social media makes it incredibly simple to communicate without ever being emotionally honest. You can keep up a conversation without actually opening up, which means relationships start to feel shallow even when people talk every day. So there are those who end up with hundreds of followers and endless notifications, yet they still feel alone because the connections they do have aren't meaningful. They are just based on appearance.

In the end, real connection isn't about how often we speak with others, but by how genuinely we are willing to show up for each other. And until honesty is chosen over perfection, that sense of distance will continue to grow, even in a world that claims to be keeping us closer than ever.

Equality: A Pondering

By: Anne Kelly

"The year was 2081, and everybody was finally equal," wrote Kurt Vonnegut, a man and a spokesperson for an era still reeling from the atrocities and hypocrisies of war and stirring with growing currents of social justice, in his dystopian satire "Harrison Bergeron" in 1961. Vonnegut, torn in his own processing of the nature of human ego and searching for the ideal in a society seemingly inexorably tending toward destruction and suppression, ponders the nature of a society in ostensible peace, but at the expense of the depth of their humanity. He introduces a society in which all ability is matched as all diversity is mitigated, through the use of so-called "handicaps", devices intended to counter any differentiating and advanced attributes to render the population equal in ignorance and complacency. Vonnegut, whose relevance is not diminished in our current society, in which movements for equal societal standing are far from gone, introduces the question: Should there be a limit to equality sought in our society?

When considering the nature of the aforementioned inquiry, one must also consider a term that has been increasingly vilified in recent years: equity. Equity is to provide the means for all to achieve equal standing, success, or opportunities; however, it may entail providing different means for those with different experiences. Thus, equity seeks equality through considering what is required to combat disparity. In comparison, equality provides identical resources regardless of the condition of those receiving them. Therefore, equality may inherently continue systemic suppression, while equity intentionally seeks to address it.

In Vonnegut's dystopia, while tailored oppression may follow the mold of the means of equity, the perception of this necessary suppression promotes the idea that all must be the same and viewed as such: an aspect of equality, suggesting that, therefore, diversity is an enemy of peace. However, this is a blinded perspective that fuels ignorance, allowing the continuance of the prevention of the equity that may enhance strength and

comfort within society. Thus, the belief in universal potential, which stems from equity's pursuit of all reaching equal success, is the means to achieve the "final" equality without the loss of its pure intent, as is the case with the facade of equality in similarity rather than shared opportunity.

And would Vonnegut agree? While one might ask if he would see measures of inclusion in our society as their true intent of enhancing opportunity, or as entailing the prevention of others' full potential, his satire can be seen as one upon the perception of equality itself by those who seek control; in his society of limitations, Vonnegut criticizes authoritarianism, as he demonstrates that equality used to stimulate submission does not fulfill the word's aim of egalitarianism, but is rather simply another means to further suppress the diversity and spirit of the human condition. Thus, he would support modern endeavors of equity, as it continues the inherent human goal of progress, both in the pursuit of justice and the freedom to believe in its reality. Following Vonnegut's confrontation with oppression in war, he would likely see the benefits and democratic roots of equity's attempt to build collective triumph with the support of those previously marginalized. Equity is the truest equality, as it cannot become a targeted suppression of ability, because it is a collective enhancement of societal potential for peace and even power when all can share in holding it.

So, as we move into another age of activism and the pursuit of reform, let us not act to hide differences among members of our society. Instead, let us act with the goal of equity to strengthen each experience and condition with what is needed to do so. In this, we will strive to foster hope in the notion that, unlike Harrison Bergeron, our children may never be made to believe that they are without the means to expand their potential because of who they are.

Does Social Media Make or Break Friendships?

By: Lee-Ann Celestin

Friendships today versus just a few decades ago are way different from one another. For example, kids don't share things on notes and pass them in class anymore, and they rarely call their friends on the phone after school. Now it is all texting, snapping, and posting stories. Staying in touch with people has become way too easy.

Nowadays, a person can send a message to her friends so fast to find out what they are up to. And if you are not living near one another, this can bring you closer. However, when someone does not respond to a message and then the person who is reaching out sees that some of her casual acquaintances or friends are with one another, this can result in feelings of sadness or loneliness. Viewing photos of people who are actively engaged while you are not there can be too much for some people.

Even though social media can clearly emotionally hurt a user, the advantages outweigh the negatives. Not only can social media help people reconnect with old friends, but it also helps

them create new friendships and bonds with people they never would have thought they would get to know.

In addition, social media is a way for friends to support one another. A person could check in on someone who's having a bad day or just react to her story. Such simple gestures make people feel noticed. Consider if someone is having a bad day, and her friend swipes up on her posts; she is getting a message from the friend that ultimately makes her whole day better.

Finally, social media can teach people certain things. For starters, a user can learn how to deal with misunderstandings. Seeing a late reply or even one's friends spending time with other people without you may feel hurtful, but it helps teach patience and understanding. It can also teach a person how to express herself better.

When a person really looks at the pros and cons of social media, it becomes clear that a person has to be self-aware when using it in order to feel healthy.

January 2026

4 OPINIONS/FEATURES

Campground

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Your Homework's Not Gonna Do Itself (But the Latte Helps)

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AI's Potential Impact on the Workforce

By: Luke Arboleda

Have you noticed AI popping up on your social media feed? Or when you do a Google search? Have you ever used ChatGPT? AI has recently become more accessible and certainly has grown in popularity.

AI, or artificial intelligence, is the creation of computer systems that can perform objectives that normally require human intelligence, such as problem solving, innovation, and language comprehension. AI can give people engaging content via videos, answer questions, and do quick research for a paper. This can certainly make a person's life easier. But, is it all good?

Elon Musk, the CEO of Tesla and SpaceX, as well as an AI innovator, claimed during a South by Southwest (SXSW) tech conference in Austin, Texas, in March 2018, that AI will become increasingly dangerous to society. "Mark my words, AI is far more dangerous than nukes", he said. This danger can be linked to AI's ability to take people's jobs in a number of fields.

For example, artists and animators have been threatened by the development of AI as it can quickly generate art and even animate pictures with the click of a button. AI can also answer automated calls, which endangers jobs in the customer service

January 2026

and telemarketing fields. In addition, AI is able to automate reports and documents when given information, which threatens jobs related to bookkeeping and data entry.

AI has also been linked to plagiarism within the art industry. According to BBC News, artist Greg Rutkoski saw that his name has "been used as a prompt in AI tools that generate art more than 400,000 times since September 2022 - but without his consent."

On the other hand, AI can enhance artistic creativity by generating ideas and providing drawing tools for online-based art that increase efficiency in the field. Not only will this make art easier to navigate, but it will also be more engaging for people who prefer digital art; it may even lead to new jobs that are related to AI art. Rebecca Xu, a professor of Computer Art and Animation at Syracuse University, stated that "Through innovation, AI can enhance human creativity." If AI can advance in this manner, people can use it to increase artistic quality. In addition, Professor Xu suggests that "AI can really help by offering inspiration and possible directions to explore" within the areas of storytelling, conceptual art, and

character design. AI will not only make art more advanced, but easier to create; "[Artists] can try out different visual styles and designs to see which ones best fit their idea." Clearly, AI can help artists become more comfortable with different art types, therefore widening artistic variety.

Another AI-related area to examine is its true effect on ethicality regarding work-related discrimination. "Algorithms are the backbone of AI's ability to streamline and optimize business operations," says Harvard Business School Online, "Yet, they open your organization to possible bias that can negatively impact you and your employees." If AI is using prejudiced data that promotes discrimination, many people who are searching for employment will suffer and some may even face job displacement as a result. AI "involves algorithms: prioritizing certain information, shaping public opinion, amplifying specific voices," adds Harvard Business School Online. If AI can voice public opinion, what would happen if it voices it on the basis of prejudiced data? According to DASCA (Data Science Council of America) however, fairness within AI "can be practiced by consistently evaluating and rectifying potential

biases in AI algorithms to prevent discriminatory results." Therefore, if this is done, AI should be able to avoid bias and discrimination within work spaces, therefore implementing a protective system of ethicality. So, if the right actions are taken, AI might not be a problem in this capacity.

AI's pros and cons in the workplace are still very much unknown as the things it can do keep changing. No matter what though, there has to be some kind of checks and balances when using it so that people do not get hurt by it.



FEATURES 5

From Stress to Success: What Seniors Want You To Know

By: Elsa Lanne

This fall, seniors had more tabs open on their computers than ever before: essays, applications, and questions about their future. Although junior year may have seemed challenging, the stress returned the minute summer break was over. At this point however, most seniors have completed their application process and are now either awaiting the email that could dictate their next chapter or making the huge decision of commitment. The start of senior year can be overwhelming because of deadlines, emotions, and uncertainty, but many of those challenges can be avoided with the following advice from the Class of 2026.

"What schools are you thinking about?" is a common question heard by many students who are approaching the application process. Some people know exactly what schools they want to apply to, but it's totally normal for others to have no idea. "I had no idea where to apply or what to apply for," admitted Chloe Rowell. She added, "Taking the time to research schools helped me find a list of colleges that felt right for me."

With a clearer list of schools, many seniors stressed the importance of starting early. For example, it's important to start your applications in the summer. "Do it little by little," advised Hailey Sanchez, "I got most of my applications done in the summer and went into senior year with less on my plate." Senior year will be tough, especially if you are taking challenging classes. Stress from juggling applications on top of homework and studying can be avoided by completing applications in the summer.

Beyond the deadlines, organization plays a key role in reducing stress during the application

process. "It takes a lot of thinking and time to remember all the things you've done in high school, especially [when it comes to] activities and rewards you may have received," stated Cameron Miller. He added, "My advice is to make a list of everything you have done so your application can be as strong as possible." Preparing yourself to fill out applications and what you want to include can lead to a smoother process at the start of your senior year.

When it comes to completing the applications, "The Common App will become your best friend," said senior Sophia Ancona. The Common App is the website where you fill out and submit applications to most of the colleges you apply to. Each school has basic information to fill out, and some require supplemental essays that vary in length and content. "I recommend organizing all your supplements into a Google Doc," suggested Finn Gallagher. Supplementals can be the most annoying part of the process, as they are time-consuming and require specific, unique content for each school. "Go to the Writing Center or have someone read them over," said Grady Butler; "You really want to impress the school and show who you are as a person through answering these prompts."

While supplements are important, many seniors agreed that one piece of writing stands out above the rest. While grades help demonstrate a student's academic performance, the college essay really shows who you are. The essay can feel stressful, but when you find something to write about that matters to you, it will truly express your personality. Butler reinforced the importance of feedback, explaining that "asking for advice on your essays is essential to

have another perspective on your message so that you can better present yourself." Admissions officers read thousands of applications, so the essay is often where students can stand out.

However, strong applications are not built by students alone. It is therefore important to build relationships with teachers, as seniors need at least two teacher recommendations to submit alongside their application. "I chose teachers that I knew well and looked up to," said Isa Guerrero. Before the end of Junior year, it is important to politely ask teachers to write you a recommendation. Start thinking about who to ask as soon as you can, as teachers can get flooded with requests and can only write for a limited number of students. And always provide deadlines for your applications. Additionally, keep them updated once you start hearing from schools as they are using their own time to write on your behalf and genuinely care about your application process.

Finally, one of the most important things to remember is that everyone works at their own pace. "Don't compare yourself to others," said Mae Curiale. The application process focuses on who you are as a person and what you can do to succeed after high school, so don't worry about what other people are doing or what they have in their applications.

Above all, even though the application process can be stressful, it can also be exciting. "Trust yourself," said Camila D'Amato. She added, "You will end up where you are meant to be." And, as decisions are rolling in for the Class of 2026, its members will start to celebrate their hard work. And, they hope that their tips and experience will make the journey a little easier for those who will soon be seniors.

Wicked: For Good -- How Good Is It?

By: Mac Curiale

The latest fictional world that has the public mystified is the one found in *Wicked*, a movie musical that came out in November of 2024. *Wicked* originated from a 1995 book entitled *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West* by Gregory Maguire (Heching), which served as a contrasting storyline to the familiar *The Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum. *Wicked* was then brought to the stage in 2003 after the creative minds of Stephen Schwartz and Winnie Holzman designed the adaptation from Maguire's novel for Broadway. The original production of *Wicked*, which included Idina Menzel as Elphaba and Kristin Chenoweth as Glinda, gained a great deal of critical acclaim, winning "three Tony Awards and a Grammy Award for Best Musical Show Album" (broadwaycollection.com).

Wicked took on yet another new life in 2024 when it was turned into a movie directed by Jon Chu. Starring icons Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande, and being famously split into two separate full-length movies, it gained a lot of attention. Wanting to create something amazing, Chu focused on using real sets

and effects in classic Hollywood musical style. This set *Wicked* apart from many other movies that relied more heavily on computer-generated imagery (CGI) with moviemakers who were not willing to spend the time and money constructing sets of such intricacy (Reid). For example, in the first *Wicked* film, there's a scene in which Glinda and Elphaba travel on an emerald green train, that was, more specifically, a "full-size 48-ton locomotive" complete with a "dedicated stretch of track which the train traveled on at up to 15 miles per hour", to see the Wizard of Oz. Beyond that, there were nine million tulips planted in the fields of "Munchkinland," and an actual paved road composed of yellow brick (Reid).

Clearly, no expense was spared in the creation of the movies, and with both parts being filmed at the same time, the cost of production was well over budget coming in at \$455.8 million by last February (Reid), instead of the intended \$300 million designated to be split evenly between both films. Luckily, the public was quickly enamored by the first *Wicked* movie, and with its major box office sales and widespread

brand partnerships and marketing tactics, the first movie alone brought in \$759 million. The *Wicked* marketing team went all out, from creating themed Starbucks drinks, LEGO sets, a huge press tour, a *Wicked* themed night on the popular television show *Dancing With the Stars*, and partnerships with seemingly unrelated brands like Swiffer and Gain (Masunaga).

Now, *Wicked: For Good*, the second movie of the two-part series is seen as a major success, as it has earned the title of the "highest PG-rated ticket pre-seller ever on the Fandango platform," surpassing even major hits like *Frozen 2*, the live-action *Beauty and the Beast*, and the first *Wicked* movie. Its success is largely due to its appeal to female audiences, as there tend to be fewer movies designated to strike a chord with female viewers (Masunaga). With the main storyline being centered around a complicated, yet strong female friendship, its powerful message resonated with many, and its ability to attract viewers of all ages further heightened that.

Despite the success of the second movie though, the reviews were not as overwhelmingly positive as those of the first. Some critics argued that it was unnecessary turning what was initially a

The 2026 Grammys:

Music's Moment

By: Stella Cashman

The nominations for the 2026 Grammy awards were released on November 7th, 2025. There were artists who were shockingly left out and then there were definitely some expected nominations. For the Album of the Year, Bad Bunny's *DeBí Tirar Más Fotos*, Justin Bieber's *SWAG*, Sabrina Carpenter's *Man's Best Friend*, Clipse's *Let God Sort Em Out*, Lady Gaga's *MAYHEM*, Kendrick Lamar's *GNOX*, Leon Thomas' *MUTT* performed by Leon Thomas, and Tyler, The Creator's *CHROMAKOPIA* were nominated. Many of these nominations were expected due to their popularity with people all throughout the world.

The picks for Song of the Year ranged from pop songs, to a song from Netflix's hit *KPop Demon Hunters*. They are as follows: Lady Gaga's "Abracadabra", Doechii's "Anxiety", ROSE and Bruno Mars' "APT", Bad Bunny's "DMF", *KPop Demon Hunter*'s "Golden", Kendrick Lamar and SZA's "Luther", Sabrina Carpenter's "Manchild", and Billie Eilish's "Wildflower". Kendrick Lamar was nominated nine times, the most of any artist this year. If he wins four Grammys this year, he will become the rapper with the most Grammy Awards as he's already won 22.

Despite the immense talent that can be found in the pool of Grammy nominees this year, there were some artists who fans felt were left out. Alex Warren was nominated for Best New Artist, but his hit song "Ordinary" did not earn any nominations. In addition, Gracie Abrams' song "That's So True" also didn't receive any nominations, contrary to what was expected based upon its popularity. A very notable name however, that was missing from the list of Grammy nominees, was Benson Boone's. He had a busy year, with his tour and album drop. In fact, his song "Mystical Magical" gained a lot of popularity, with people flocking to buy "Moonbeam" flavored things, and taking to social media to talk about everything "mystical magical."

So, tune in on February 1st on CBS or Paramount+ to see if the list of winners makes sense, if Kendrick Lamar sets a record and if any of those who are missing from the nominee list perform. No matter what though, get ready to sing along that night.

two-and-a-half hour long Broadway show into a multi-part movie musical that collectively runs for over five hours. On top of that, instead of a traditional fifteen-minute intermission like the original Broadway show has, the movie series made audiences wait a whole year for the next act (Chang). With such extravagant marketing, skyrocketing costs, and widespread publicity, the decision to break up the movie into two parts has been questioned. Was it simply a money-making scheme? Also, though it is becoming common for movies to be longer, having both movies run for over two hours could lose those who have a shorter attention span. There are definitely moments in both that could have been cut shorter, especially considering the fact that songs were actually added to the movie that were not in the original Broadway show.

Overall, the *Wicked* franchise has taken the world by storm; even if the second movie isn't as highly regarded, its high ticket sales do not show any indication of this. With the heartfelt storyline surrounding a complex female friendship and the dazzling, eye-catching sets and effects to complement it, *Wicked*'s new life on the screen has been nothing but a success.

January 2026

6 FEATURES

From Tension To Teamwork

By: Jenna Sasso

The recent meeting between New York City mayor Zohran Mamdani, a progressive New York City politician who was recently elected after campaigning on affordability, housing reform, and economic justice, and United States President Donald Trump, took place in early December 2024; it was intended to move past political tension and focus on major issues affecting New Yorkers, including rising living costs, housing, public safety, and infrastructure. Although Mamdani and Trump come from very different political backgrounds, the meeting ended on a surprisingly positive note, suggesting that cooperation between city and federal leadership may be possible, an encouraging sign for New York City.

Before Mamdani and Trump met, tensions seemed to be high between the two of them. Trump had previously criticized Mamdani when he was preparing to take office, saying he needed to “be respectful of Washington...because if he’s not, he doesn’t have a chance of succeeding” (Al Jazeera). By saying that, Trump was expressing concern about Mamdani potentially succeeding progressive policies and having a confrontational tone toward federal leadership. Mamdani responded by saying his focus is on helping the city’s residents and that he “will work with anyone to make life more affordable for the more than 8.5 million people who call this city home” (CBS News). He continued on by stating “I will work with anyone ... so long as it could stand to benefit an economic agenda for New Yorkers” (Reuters).

Once the meeting began, the tone fortunately changed. Trump stated, “We’ve just had a great meeting, a really productive meeting. We have one thing in common: we want this city of ours that we love to do very well” (Al Jazeera). He even pointed out,

that “Some of his ideas are really the same ideas that I have ... the new word is affordability” (CBS News). Mamdani echoed that positivity, saying he appreciated the conversation and that it focused on their shared love for New York City (Al Jazeera). He added that addressing the affordability crisis was “an opportunity...to make the case to President Trump” (Reuters). The case Mamdani was making was that the federal government should provide stronger financial and policy support to help New York City lower housing costs and address the rising cost of living.

So, after the meeting took place, it appeared as if both leaders, Mamdani and Trump, had some similar priorities. Affordability was the biggest one, while rent, food, and other costs that millions of families deal with came next. According to Reuters, Mamdani plans to “press federal officials on housing support and economic policies that can ease cost-of-living pressures” (Reuters). Public safety was also discussed, and CBS News reported that Trump emphasized federal support for “resources that help local law enforcement and emergency services.” They even spoke about infrastructure and how federal funding could help improve transit systems like subways and bridges (Al Jazeera).

Cooperation is certainly possible even between people who have very different political views. A Trump and Mamdani alliance might still be fragile, but their shared focus on affordability, safety, and infrastructure suggests that they are willing to prioritize solutions over conflict. If they follow through, it could mean real help for everyday New Yorkers; and, that’s what the purpose of the meeting was truly supposed to be about.

Teen Mental Health: A Quiet Crisis

By: Lana Gaspari

In today’s world, stress has become an unavoidable part of life, especially for teenagers. Between balancing a social life, academics, a job, family, friends, parental expectations, and exposure to social media, life can be more stressful than ever. While an older generation might brush all of this pressure off as being ‘just a phase’, the truth is that a teen’s mental health struggles are extremely real and are often untreated or forgotten about, which leads to struggling in adulthood. Statistics state that childhood stress, especially Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), significantly impacts adult health, with statistics showing high prevalence as around 64% of U.S. adults had an ACE; there are also strong links to adult issues like chronic disease (heart disease, obesity, diabetes), poor mental health (depression, anxiety), and altered stress responses in relationships because coping methods were never found.

For many high schoolers, academic stress is a big part of why mental health concerns need to be addressed. With increased competition when it comes to college admissions and the pressure to earn high grades, there are those who lose sleep, resort to cheating, or simply shut down. Evan Morsi, a sophomore at North Shore High School, said his grades are a huge stressor for him “because I want to do well, and when I get a bad grade, I feel bad”. In addition, sophomore Stella Cashman stated that school adds “a lot

of pressure between family, friends, and what I put on myself. Clearly, these feelings can cause a teen to become overwhelmed. In addition, social expectations online and in person add another layer. Social media, more often than not, never makes someone feel better about themselves. People often show themselves as living a perfect life when in reality, they are just stressed. The fear of missing out and cyberbullying are also two things that only make things worse when teens use social media.

Finally, there are those teens who are dealing with trauma, unstable home environments, financial worries, or their identity. All of this adds up. It is important to note that sometimes a person can’t even identify how stressed someone feels because he or she is acting completely fine. Doing that can be even harder on the individual. Physical problems like headaches, sleep problems, and chest tightness can arise. Zoning out in class, not turning in work, isolating from friends, or creating bad habits are some ways teens deal.

So, what is a good solution to help teenagers work through their worries: teaching them that it is ok to talk about it. Addressing teen mental health concerns helps end the stigma. Nobody should feel like they are being dramatic or weak for struggling. It’s a real thing, and it deserves attention. And, it’s so important that young adults feel like they have someone to go to at school to talk to or that they have a place to relax in the school building.



The Winter Dance: High Hopes, Unexpected Outcome

By: Irene Vasilatou

As the winter months drone on, students often look forward to school events that offer a break from academic stress. With midterms having just passed and the cold weather settling in, a dance would have been a perfect way to tolerate the winter season. But, despite the fact that the Winter Dance was highly anticipated, student interest in the event fell short of expectations.

The Student Government Organization (SGO) had been working toward this event for several years, especially since North Shore High School has not hosted a grade-wide dance since the early 2000’s. Students across multiple grades have repeatedly proposed the idea of a dance to the SGO. And so, after months of planning and discussion, the option to have one was finally approved.

The dance was ultimately promoted through a school assembly and several intercom announcements, leading organizers to expect strong ticket sales, especially after years of student interest and requests.

January 2026

However, the response differed from the expectation.

The attendance fell short of expectations. The ticket table saw limited activity. There was no buzz or excitement; overall, very few students seemed to have the desire to go.

Michelle Stiffler, the freshman class advisor, thought having a grade-wide dance was a great idea, recalling that a dance had long been requested by students. She added, “It was a great way to show school spirit.” Stiffler also described how the ticket system was designed. “The grades [were initially allotted] 50 [tickets] a piece, and then it [was] a first-come, first-serve basis for the rest of the tickets, [to make sure a] fair and equal number of people [could] attend,” she said. The tickets were \$15 and included free food, a DJ, and a photo booth, as long as the attendee submitted a signed permission slip.

Despite the planning efforts, the dance created mixed reactions amongst the student body. Some students expressed concern about the initial 50-ticket limit per grade, worrying that not all members of their friend groups would be able to attend. According to student Madison

Mapoy, the limitation was discouraging: “It’s [frustrating] if I can’t spend that time with my friends.” Others found it awkward to ask someone out to the dance or felt pressured to find an outfit. It looked like the idea of socialization with their classmates seemed socially uncomfortable for some students. Henry Dressler, a freshman, believed the dance did not appeal to many students as, it “didn’t seem like something people wanted to go to.”

It could also be a conflict of student interest, because for some, a grade-wide dance did not equally appeal to all grades. According to Ms. Stiffler, some students have expressed interest in a single-grade dance, rather than the one originally planned. She also noted that the price of a ticket might have been too much for underclassmen.

Additionally, the lack of interest could have stemmed from juniors and seniors preparing for their upcoming proms.

To add on, Elsa Lanne, Senior Class Treasurer, and member of the SGO, said that “I think that no tickets were sold because the way the student body at North Shore viewed the dance suddenly flipped a switch.” As students

suddenly went from being excited to hesitant, the popularity of the dance decreased significantly. Lanne added that, “there was also a lot of sudden event conflict that the organizers were unaware of when planning the date, which contributed to a lot of people not being able to go.”

Overall, despite what seemed like a lot of enthusiasm about the possibility of a dance, the sale of tickets did not go well. As of December 4, 2025, only 12 tickets were sold. Ultimately, the dance was canceled due to low ticket sales.

Perhaps the solution is to have a grade-specific dance that is advertised more. Plus, maybe it could be on an evening when there are no other activity conflicts. It would be nice for North Shore to have some more school-related evening events to go to. Thank you though to the SGO for taking on all of the planning that went into getting as far as they did in the process.



The End of the Penny

By: Kaia Pollio

When was the last time you actually used a penny? Sure, you find them floating around at the bottom of your backpack or in that coin jar you never clean out, but have you ever actually spent the small copper coin? Debates about the usefulness of the penny have been happening for quite some time; and, this year, their production officially ended.

The penny was first officially minted in 1793, and was one of the first coins produced by the U.S. Mint. The most recent design was issued in 2010, and features President Abraham Lincoln and the Union Shield, but this wasn't always the depiction. The first penny was a larger coin that displayed an image of Lady Liberty, and this rendering was altered several times throughout the years, until landing on the current illustration as a celebration of what would have been President Lincoln's 100th birthday. The composition also shifted, as the penny used to be almost pure copper, but the coin came to be made primarily of zinc with a thin coating of copper due to rising metal prices (United States Mint). Yet,

despite the long history of the one-cent coin, many people more recently doubted the practicality of it in the modern day.

The decision to eliminate the penny's production was based on two main reasons: the rising production cost and an increasingly digitized economy. Producing a single penny costs 3.69 cents, more than three times its worth, which left the government with a devastating loss of over \$85 million in 2024 (United States Mint). Also, the economy of the U.S. is becoming increasingly digitized, with only 14% of consumer payments made up by cash (Winters). It is clear that people are beginning to favor the use of credit cards, debit cards, and other electronic payment methods for daily transactions due to their efficiency. But despite the costly and inefficient nature of the penny, there are still arguments in support of continuing its production.

Some people argue that taking away pennies will lead to the rounding up of prices, potentially affecting

consumers (Beebe). In addition, it will cause inflation to be perceived as more "abrupt" because rounding to the nearest nickel is less "precise" than the penny was. But one can't only focus on its economic impacts. Others have contended that the historical relevance and significance of the coin can't be overlooked, as the penny serves as a reminder of the legacy of America and even symbolizes "national identity" (Lepecq). Pennies were also crucial in collecting money for charities because it was "easy" to ask for a small donation of a penny, which quickly added up to large sums of money when working towards larger goals. For example, in 2009 the Leukemia and Lymphoma society was able to collect \$150 million for blood cancer research and treatment just through penny collection alone (Britannica). Even though the penny is small, it clearly packs a big historical punch, and plays a huge role in daily generosity.

Overall, despite the historical value the penny holds, ending its produc-

tion is necessary to prevent further economic damage and keep up with the increasingly digital forms of payment. Even though people are concerned about the rounding up of prices or getting rid of a part of our history, it was an evidence-based decision that will ultimately benefit our economy. But, this doesn't mean it's necessary to just "throw out" your pennies. Even though the production of the coin has ended, old coins can be wrapped up and traded in, or even just used at any store that accepts cash payments (Valdes). Professionals suggest finding books to read up on your coins, as there's also a small, but possible chance that you may be in possession of a penny that has a high money value (Snider). So, yes, pennies are now out of production, but that doesn't mean they are being erased from history or stripped of all value. That's just my two cents on the topic.



Jane Goodall's Legacy Lives On

By: Josie Hecker

On October 1st, 2025, primatologist and animal activist Dr. Jane Goodall died at the age of 91. Dr. Goodall demonstrated compassion and determination through her countless discoveries, which forever changed how we view the world and the species around us. Her effect on animal research and her advocacy for self-reflection will always be seen as revolutionary additions to the world.

As a child, Goodall was fascinated with animals. She was loving, caring, and full of curiosity. Since she longed for adventure and dreamed of studying wildlife in Africa, in July of 1960, she arrived at Gombe, a national park in Tanzania, to study chimpanzees. Dr. Goodall had no academic degree or qualifications for the task, but she was immediately hired by paleoanthropologist Louis Leakey, who believed she was a good choice as she wasn't influenced by traditional scientific thought. Dr. Goodall was particularly interested in chimpanzees because of their human-like qualities. Her primary goal was to gain a deeper understanding of chimpanzee behavior and its connection to human ancestry.

In 1960, in one of her most groundbreaking discoveries, Dr. Goodall witnessed a chimpanzee making and using tools. At the time, this was an ability believed to be exclusive to humans, and through further observations, Goodall uncovered information about the complex emotions, social lives, and family bonds of chimpanzees. Overall, she changed the way in which humans interact with animals and taught the world how similar we are to them.

Ultimately, Goodall continued her work beyond research, founding the Jane Goodall Institute (JGI), in 1977, which supported chimpanzee research at Gombe. In 1991, she created the nonprofit Roots & Shoots, which included young people in her journey of ending environmental destruction.

She also wrote several books about her groundbreaking research and even had a *National Geographic* documentary made about her life, called *Jane*. Even in her later years, Goodall remained an important advocate and educator, traveling the world and encouraging people to show compassion towards animals and to care for the environment.

Throughout her career, Jane Goodall was recognized and received numerous awards, such as the Templeton Prize, the Edinburgh Medal, and the Benjamin Franklin Medal in Life Science. Beyond research, Dr. Goodall created a lasting impact on people's minds, teaching them to see animals as living beings with rights.

Now, as urbanization and resource demand lead to an increase in habitat destruction, Goodall's lessons are more important than ever. She showed humans how to respect living beings, show empathy, and protect nature.

Overall, Jane Goodall's discoveries reshaped primatology and had a major effect on the way people view the treatment and behavior of animals, specifically chimpanzees. *The New York Times* noted that, "She saw no distinction between the human and animal worlds" (Garelick). In the end, Dr. Jane Goodall proved that with enough passion and determination, anyone can make a difference.



Victory For The Green Sea Turtles

By: Lucy Jackson

For almost 50 years, Green Sea Turtles have been listed on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List as endangered. As of October 2025 though, they have been moved to "Least Concern", meaning that the years of strenuous effort to help out these sea creatures have started to pay off.

Green Sea Turtles are the second largest of seven species of sea turtles. They are the only herbivore out of all of these species, their diet consisting mostly of algae, seaweed and seagrass. They are most recognizable by their friendly manner and large, smooth shell. These reptiles can live up to 80 years and grow to four feet long. Although they are referred to as green, their shells are more of a dark brown color. Many local people call them "black shells" (WWF) and value them for their high cultural significance. These peaceful creatures live in tropical waters surrounding the Caribbean and Indian Ocean, spending their time eating and migrating long distances to find new feeding grounds. They play a huge role in the ocean's ecosystems by maintaining seagrass beds and recycling nutrients (WWF).

Before the Age of Exploration in the 1400s, there was an estimated population of 19-33 million Green Sea Turtles (Kuta). Bryan Wallace, an ecologist at the University of Colorado Boulder, mentioned that Christopher Columbus, and similar sailors at the time, were able to use the sounds of knocking turtle shells in the water and their breathing to navigate around islands at night (Wallace).

Due to the abundance of these animals, they were unfortunately hunted for their meat, skin, shells and eggs, making them a popular target for poachers and fishers around the 1800s. For years, they were seen as a delicacy in many parts of the world. And, disturbingly, hunting Green Sea Turtles wasn't made illegal until the 1970s in the

Endangered Species Act of 1973. Over the course of 150 years, the Green Sea Turtle population dropped by 95% (Kuta).

In 1978, Green Sea Turtles were first listed as endangered in the U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA), meaning that they were at a high risk for becoming extinct. Four years later, they were placed on the IUCN Red List. The IUCN Red List is a list of all the endangered species around the globe and is a critical tool for wildlife conservation (IUCN).

For years, wildlife conservationists worked hard as more and more Green Sea Turtles disappeared due to habitat loss, climate change, pollution, commercial fishing, and illegal wildlife trade (Igin). Many turtles were getting caught in fishing lines, being driven out of their homes, or confusing plastic for food.

Good hearted people started to take action by protecting nesting sites, cleaning the beaches, recycling, and limiting the consumption of turtle products which heavily decreased the pressure for illegal hunting (Einhorn). This persistence increased the Green Sea Turtle population by 28% since the 1970s (Igin).

Finally, in October of 2025, Green Sea Turtles were officially moved off of the Red List and listed as "Least Concern", meaning they are no longer seen as being threatened by extinction. This is a huge victory for wildlife conservation and a "powerful example of what coordinated global conservation over decades can achieve to stabilize and even restore populations of long-lived marine species" said Roderic Mast, Co-Chair of IUCN's Species Survival Commission Marine Turtle Specialist Group.

Green Sea Turtles are extremely important to ecosystems and cultures around the world. Although many types of turtles are still threatened, the effort of millions of people to protect these creatures is proof that hard work pays off and even a small amount of help from one person can make a huge difference.

January 2026

8 FEATURES

Senior Things Definitely Earned The Spotlight

By: Lucia Cagno

This year's Senior Play, *Senior Things*, took place on January 23rd and 24th at Glenwood Landing Elementary School. The Senior Play is a longstanding North Shore tradition and was entirely written, produced, and performed by the Class of 2026. Featuring a variety of jokes specific to the senior class, this year's play included skits about different class memories, parking struggles, teachers, and more.

Senior Things was directed and written by Mae Curiale, Delilah McAuliffe, Keira Rechsteiner, and Alexa Petulla. Luna Espinosa and Lila Frame were involved with the lighting and sound sides of the production.

This year's directorial team was in charge of casting, writing the script, and producing. Each director has typically been involved with the theater productions at North Shore High School, and provided great leadership. Mae Curiale said that "the process was long and had a lot of unseen hours," with the four young ladies scheduling rehearsals, often at the houses of

students, writing clever jokes, and creating props, among many other things. Curiale went on to say that overall "the show was so much fun and an awesome experience". Keira Rechsteiner added that "this project was super cool to help produce" and that it was "unlike any other project" that she had done prior to this. Mr. Michael Kleba, an English teacher at North Shore High School and the faculty advisor for the play for approximately the past 15 years, said that this year's directorial team was extraordinary. He loved seeing the directors "collaboratively solve problems both in the script and in the actual technical production". It was evident that the team worked well both together and alongside the rest of the senior class' participants.

Delilah McAuliffe stated that her favorite part of directing the show was "watching people from all different interests come together" at each rehearsal. Many agreed, and Mr. Kleba believes that this play is something that makes North Shore, North Shore.

He exclaimed that he "doesn't see this kind of thing happening in many other places," and it is incredibly unique to the High School. It is a time when "seniors are given complete creative control to have fun," and is overall a wonderful experience. Chloe Rowell, Co-Senior Class President, said that the play was "such a good bonding experience for [the] entire grade". 65 seniors acted in the play this year.

When asked what the show was about this year, Mae Curiale stated that "the plot of this year's show was that Mrs. Kelly, a science teacher at the High School, opened up a portal to the Upside Down for a new Biology lab because everyone was doing too well in her class and she wanted to make it harder. As a result, the whole school accidentally got flipped into the Upside Down and the teachers broke up into teams that were made up of students who tried to fight the demogorgons and escape". Clearly, the show *Stranger Things* inspired this plot as the much loved show's finale aired in December. Each student involved played his or her

role quite well and many hysterical laughs could be heard coming from the audience.

On top of coming together, the Senior Play provides a great opportunity for seniors to try new things. Sylvia Gao, who played the role of a newperson in the Senior Play, said that "it was really fun to do something that [she] had never gotten to try before, especially because [she] could do it with [her] friends". Michael Kleba also felt s that one of his favorite parts of the play was "seeing all the non-theater kids really enjoy doing theater".

Overall, the play was a huge success. Reviews included statements like the show was "the best Senior Play in years" and "a clear display of immense talent". And, who can ignore the fact that *Senior Things* brought in great audiences and was able to raise money for the Senior Class' funds, which will help the students enjoy more wonderful events later in the year. The pride that the participating group of students had in putting on *Senior Things* was apparent and they definitely left a mark on Glenwood Landing's stage.



The directors of *Senior Things* introducing the show



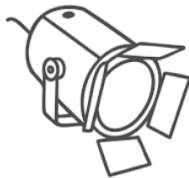
Senior Elsa Lanne, as Physical Education teacher Mrs. Huggins, tries to get the students to keep calm as Physical Education teacher, Mr. Butt, played by Brendan Freund, looks on.

Photos Taken By: Ellamarie Mitchell

January 2026



The entire cast, crew and writing team of Senior Things



Maddie Ditrapani channels her inner Mr. Bloom as she hysterically sends out emails to students about the yearbook, which the latter advises.



Chloe Rowell, as former N.S. Math teacher Mrs. Lempenski, and Jacob Ludmar as Biology teacher Mrs. Kelly, were amazing in their roles



The Viking View's senior editors before they take the stage. From L to R: Mae Curiale, Lucia Cagno, Ava Varasano and Elsa Lanne

Photos Taken By: Lucia Cagno and Mae Curiale

January 2026

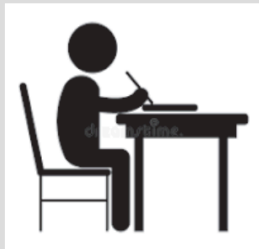
10 FEATURES

Midterm Time

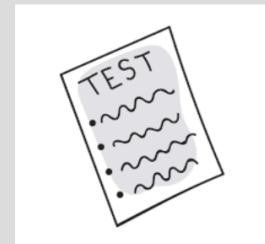


Juniors Lila Archer, Charley Spence, Ashley Levy, Hailey Colbert, Maddie Petersen, and Lana Gasparri chat a bit before taking their first early morning midterm.

North Shore High School administered its midterms and Regents exams during the week of January 19th. Students could be seen studying and meeting with their teachers all around the building. Extra help sessions were definitely well-attended.



Freshmen Gia Bono, Gianna Famiglietti and Anastasia Bacarella could not even look up for a picture because they were studying so hard.



Midterms help teachers evaluate their students' understanding of material covered up to that point, among other things. Students also really learn how to study during this time.



Since so many students showed up for midterm extra help, Physics teacher Sara LeMar had to move her group to a different space.

January 2026

The World is Coming to America

By: Nicholas Nyffler

The World Cup is one of the most important sporting events in the world. It happens every four years and the location is decided upon by the FIFA Congress, which is made up of representatives from all 211 member associations. In the summer of 2026, the World Cup final will be held at Met Life Stadium in New Jersey but the progressive games will be held in the United States, Mexico and Canada; the entire World Cup competition will take 39 days (FIFA).

In order to qualify, there is a multi-stage tournament within each continent. There are a total of 48 spots available. These teams were determined on December 5th, 2025 through a draw not based on abilities. And so, there are now 12 groups A-L that have four teams in each group; each team plays three matches and the top two move on to the next round of 32-teams (ESPN). These matches can be seen on various streaming platforms such as Hulu and Peacock.

It's clearly very exciting for the Tri-State area that New Jersey was chosen to host, but what exactly are the negatives and positives of receiving this honor? One negative could be the cost. For example, CNBC stated that the World Cup held in Qatar in 2022, cost \$229 billion and the country's economy was hurting. The main reason why this World Cup cost so much is because of the construction, transportation, airports and metro systems that were needed.

Los Angeles is Where the Action Will Be in The Summer of 2028

By: Chase Conzelman

The Olympic Games are celebrated as one of the most prestigious athletic competitions in the world. Everywhere you look someone is sporting his country's colors. And so, a plethora of countries want to host these games.

Most recently, in 2024 France hosted the summer Olympics and in 2022 China hosted the winter Olympics. The next winter Olympics is set to be held in Italy in 2026, and then the United States is hosting the 2028 Summer Olympics. Hosting the Olympics is a massive undertaking for a country and its people. In fact, seven to eleven years in advance of the Olympic Games, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) decides who will host the next Olympic Games. In order for a country to host the games, it needs to meet a set of requirements set by the Committee. Requirements for the winter and summer Olympics include acceptable weather conditions and having enough venues and parking for every sport. The country should also have a stable and safe environment for all of the tourists who will travel to the country.



On the other hand the countries that host make money off of the tourists and the ticket sales. In fact, during the 2006 Germany World Cup, 50,000 people were employed which really helped out not just many people, but the country as well. (Supplier.io). And, of course, another huge positive of hosting the World Cup is that it can bring the country together thanks to a strong feeling of national pride. Finally, who could forget that hosting such a big event is critically important when it comes to helping people embrace soccer (football), especially in a country like the United States where soccer isn't the biggest or most popular sport.

The World Cup tournament begins on June 11th, 2026 and it's the 23rd one. Mexico will take on South Africa. The United States is in group D with Paraguay, Australia and a yet to be determined fourth opponent. USA's first game is against Paraguay on June 12th (ESPN). This group gives the United States a better chance to make it further in the World Cup than it did in the previous one because in 2022 the country was in group B and had to go through England which was nearly impossible to do without experience and players like Marcus Rashford and Bukayo Saka. Some players to look for on the U.S.'s team include Christian Pulisic and Weston McKennie. So, will you watch this summer as the world comes to New Jersey?

Bad Bunny's Super Bowl LX Halftime Show: Is It A Game Changer?

By: Daniela Agustin

On February 8, 2025, the most anticipated football game of the year, the Super Bowl, is set to take place. Global sensation Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio, who is also known as Bad Bunny and was crowned Spotify's No. 1 Top Global Artist for the fourth time in 2025, will take over the stage for the halftime show. The Puerto Rican rapper, singer, and songwriter has been recognized in the music industry since 2013 and has released hit after hit. Bad Bunny emerged from humble beginnings, bagging groceries at an Econo supermarket in Vega Baja, Puerto Rico, and recording music on his lunch breaks. At the time, he posted his music on SoundCloud, an online audio platform primarily used by independent artists to build careers and for listeners to discover new sounds. In 2016, his self-produced track "Diles" gained the attention of millions and was discovered by DJ Luian, a Puerto Rican producer, launching his highly successful career.

By allowing Bad Bunny to perform on one of the world's biggest stages, this Super Bowl will be a win for the Latin community and a symbol of progress in America. However, controversy has arisen as some argue that Bad Bunny is "not popular enough or the ideal choice for the Super Bowl audience" (*The New York Times*). Some worry that his music is "too political, as it attacks social issues that might be too controversial for the NFL's image" (*Intelligencer*). The NFL's image consists of "symbolic patriotism and representation of a big night in competition and entertainment" (NFL.com). Furthermore, the idea of patriotism fuels controversy surrounding Bad Bunny's nationality: "Fox News host Tomi Lahren mistakenly said Bad Bunny isn't an American artist" (Complex, 2025). The argument being made is that if Bad Bunny is not American, he should not be performing at an American football game; however, Puerto Rico is, in fact, a U.S. territory, and its residents are American citizens.

Moreover, contributing to the controversy over patriotism, Bad Bunny's music video "Nuevayol," which was released on July 4, 2025, U.S. Independence Day, conveys pro-immigrant ideas and critiques the administration's immigration policies by including an AI-generated sound clip of President Trump apologizing to immigrants for harsh anti-immigrant policies. The clip states, "I made a mistake. I want to apologize to the immigrants in America... I mean the United States. This country is nothing without the immigrants, without Mexicans, Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, Colombians, Venezuelans, Cubans..." ("Nuevayol" music video). Due to Bad Bunny's firm political stance, he attracts opposition from those with differing political views who feel challenged by his beliefs. His stance was further emphasized when he announced that he would not tour in the United States, citing fears that ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) would be present outside of his concerts. Following this statement, he received significant public backlash. Newsmax host Greg Kelly even called to boycott the NFL, stating, "Bad Bunny hates America, hates President Trump, hates ICE, hates the English language! He's just a terrible person"

(*The New York Times*).

The lack of common ground largely stems from Bad Bunny's outspoken stance on American politics. His music conveys themes of love and nationalism for Puerto Rico, highlighting struggles related to colonialism, gentrification, and corruption. These themes appear in songs such as "El Apagón," which features a documentary-style video exposing power issues in Puerto Rico, and "LO QUE LE PASÓ AHAWAII," which "serves as a warning against losing identity, culture, and land, comparing it to Hawaii's political history" (*The New York Times*).

While he addresses social conflicts that many listeners relate to, he also sings about heartbreak and partying, much like other pop artists. Bad Bunny himself is an American who, similar to Kendrick Lamar's 2025 halftime show, is expected to deliver a politically driven message while still entertaining the crowd. His performance will help define how the NFL shapes audience perspectives and brings diversity to its stage.

Despite the controversy, this is not Bad Bunny's first Super Bowl appearance. He performed as a guest alongside Shakira and Jennifer Lopez at the 2020 Super Bowl. He has already brought Latin representation to the stage, something many viewers found exciting, nuanced, and energetic. This time, Bad Bunny will perform alone as a fully realized and culturally significant artist, reflecting his status as the No. 1 global artist. Jay-Z, rapper, songwriter, and the NFL's live music entertainment strategist, explained, "What Benito has done and continues to do for Puerto Rico is truly inspiring. We are honored to have him on the world's biggest stage" (*The New York Times*). Bad Bunny is also expected to be an advertising success, as he is one of the most popular entertainers in the world. It is important to consider what the NFL gains from this decision: "They are trying to maintain their status as the most-watched broadcast" (*Intelligencer*), and they believe Bad Bunny is the best fit to achieve that goal.

Bad Bunny himself acknowledged and responded to the backlash during his *Saturday Night Live* monologue on October 4, 2025, for Season 51's premiere. Speaking in Spanish, he said, "It's more than an achievement for myself; it's an achievement for all of us. It shows our footprint and our contribution to this country, something no one will ever be able to take away or erase." He followed up in English, stating, "If you didn't understand what I just said, you have four months to learn" (*Intelligencer*).

Regardless of the message Bad Bunny brings to the stage, his halftime performance will be revolutionary. The NFL's grip on American culture will not change; however, whether you are a die-hard Bad Bunny fan or completely new to his music, his presence at the Super Bowl and on television screens nationwide will be a culturally undeniable moment. Bad Bunny's music celebrates and represents Latin culture, bringing people together through catchy lyrics and infectious rhythms. This is a performance whose anticipation alone will be discussed for years to come. Brace yourself for a captivating show in which culture will take center stage, delivering vibrant tunes and 30 minutes of nonstop entertainment.

January 2026

12 SPORTS

The Women's Cross Country Team: Running Towards Success

By: Lucia Cagno

In the fall of 2025, by winning its 18th County Championship title over the course of the past 20 years, North Shore High School's Women's Cross Country Team had another successful season. The team had an undefeated regular season winning all 14 of its meets. In fact, the team has not lost a single meet within its regular season since October 10th, 2007, creating a win streak of 238 meets.

At the heart of this success is ultimately the team's sense of community and dedication. Captains and seniors Chloe Connolly and Joanna Kenney have both been running since ninth grade, and have truly been standouts on the team. In fact both ran at the State Championship meet last year, and Kenney was named All-State Honors at the State Championships this season. Connolly said that the team was collectively inspired "to run for each other and for the legacy of [the] program". The legacy of the team was threatened last year, when it lost the County Championship meet to Cold Spring Harbor High School. Despite this unexpected outcome, the team members let this loss motivate them to succeed during the 2025 Cross Country season. Connolly described how they "bonded as a team, overcame tough weeks, and reclaimed [their] County Championship". Senior Hannah Checo said that being named County Champions was a highlight of their season because it proved that their hard work and perseverance paid off.

In addition to the dedication of the team, the friendships that could be found on it were apparent and seemed to have brought the runners to a new level. From hosting pasta parties to having lunch together, the team built an unbreakable bond. Connolly added that they were "closer than ever". Additionally, Coach Neal Levy described how the team had "the greatest number

of seniors [they] have ever had on the team at the same time". The seniors' veteran leadership and helpful guidance created an environment where success was imminent. Freshman Sloane Bonvicino was new to Cross Country this year. She recounted how she saw "the team come together as the more experienced runners took the new freshmen under their wing". She said that she was "supported so much this season" by everyone around her. Bonvicino ultimately qualified with Kenney to run at the State Championship meet - an incredible accomplishment, especially as a freshman. The support and mentorship from everyone on the team clearly contributed to each individual's success.

Now during the winter and spring, many returning runners have the goal of setting new personal records and further strengthening the program. Connolly and Bonvicino look

forward to competing with the team at the Nike New Balance National indoor and outdoor meets, which typically take place in March and June respectively. Overall, Checo, similarly to Sloane, is excited to create "new memories as a team". With so much of the team graduating in June, Coach Levy has a goal to "rebuild with the younger athletes to be prepared for next fall". A number of athletes will also continue to run at the collegiate level, such as Hannah Sadowski who will go to SUNY Geneseo and Joanna Kenney who will attend Boston College.

The success of the Women's Cross Country team has been ongoing and has created an incredible legacy at North Shore. Levy knows that "despite the number of titles won, each year has a new meaning and provides different emotions for everyone involved". This year's team has been grounded in mentorship and friendship, setting a high standard for years to come.



Members of the 2025-2026 Track Team and Cross Country Team

Photo Taken By: Ellamarie Mitchell

Miles and Miles of Dedication

By: Jenna Sasso

There's dedication, resilience, passion, drive and only thinking about one thing: victory. The New York City Marathon is one of the biggest and most celebrated traditions that brings all five New York boroughs together. In fact, according to the New York City Road Runners' website, "The 2025 TCS New York City Marathon welcomed 59,662 starters.", making it the largest marathon that's ever been run. The race, whose five borough trek started in 1976, begins on the Verrazano Narrows Bridge and ends in Central Park; however, not everyone who wants to run gets to. In fact, *Runner's World* reported that "More than 200,000 runners entered the drawing for the 2025 TCS New York City Marathon, one of the largest application pools in the event's history". "Guaranteed entry [however] is available through a number of methods, including the 9+1 program, time qualification, and official charity partners" (nyrr.org).

At North Shore High School, English teachers Dr. Caitlin Kirmser and Mr. Michael Bishop know the New York City Marathon better than most as they both have run it. For Dr. Kirmser, running the NYC Marathon was a bucket-list dream. "I've always loved running since high school," she said. After years of watching the race, she finally committed to training and followed a strict six day-a-week plan **January 2026**

"exactly to the T." As far as Mr. Bishop was concerned, he felt inspired by the energy of New York City itself. "Seeing the energy of the runners", I wanted to be a part of it". His training included high mileage, speed workouts, and hill sessions, which he described as "all-encompassing". "Pretty much every day, you're doing something." Dr. Kirmser did love however, how inclusive the NYC Marathon felt, and Mr. Bishop emphasized how meaningful the accomplishment is, especially in a race you "can't just sign up for."

In the end, Dr. Kirmser and Mr. Bishop's experiences on race-day demonstrated how demanding the Marathon really is. Dr. Kirmser mentally prepared for the famous "wall" which appears around mile 18. Meanwhile, Mr. Bishop said the hardest part was waiting hours before the start of the race on Staten Island. This is because "you have to get to Staten Island early in the morning and then wait for a few hours before it's your turn to run. You could be waiting three hours", which is a long time especially when you're tired. But, when all was said and done, both said they would run more marathons in the future like, as Mr. Bishop mentioned, a "flat and fast marathon like Chicago or Philadelphia".

Overall, the NYC Marathon is a test of dedication, patience, and the

belief in oneself. Whether you are running or cheering for someone in the NYC Marathon, this particular race reflects what's possible when someone decides to push his or her limits. So, never be afraid to get involved, but definitely know what you are signing up for.



English teacher Mr. Michael Bishop, Orchestra teacher Mr. Jason Domingo and Choral teacher Mr. Brian Messemer are all smiles after completing a local marathon.

Photo Submitted By: Michael Bishop

The Craziest World Series' Endings in History

By: Tyler Harding

The World Series is meant to crown the best team in Major League Baseball, but sometimes it is remembered more for how it ends than who wins. Over the years, some World Series have finished in ways that are so shocking that fans still talk about them decades later. Whether it's because of a huge mistake, a clutch hit, or a team that refused to lose, these endings are what make October baseball unforgettable.

One of the most famous endings came in 1986, in a series that Mets' fans will never forget. The New York Mets faced the Boston Red Sox in Game 6 and were on the verge of elimination. Boston was one out away from winning the championship, but everything quickly fell apart. After a few hits, a routine ground ball rolled between first baseman Bill Buckner's legs, allowing the Mets to win the game. The Mets then went on to win Game 7, completing one of the most unlikely comebacks in World Series history and creating a moment that still defines the series.

Another dramatic ending happened in 2001, when the Arizona Diamondbacks faced the New York Yankees in Game 7. The Yankees had dominated the late innings all postseason and were leading in the ninth inning. Against one of the best closers ever, Mariano Rivera, Arizona managed to load the bases and win the game on a bloop single by Luis Gonzalez. It was shocking because Rivera was nearly unbeatable. This ending proved that even the greatest players are not immune to pressure.

And then in 2011, the St. Louis Cardinals delivered one of the wildest endings fans have ever seen. In Game 6, the Texas Rangers were one strike away from winning the World Series not once, but twice. Each time, the Cardinals tied the game. David Freese eventually hit a walk-off home run, and St. Louis went on to win Game 7. The constant huge swings made the ending feel unreal.

World Series endings are clearly often remembered because they show how unpredictable the game of baseball can be. No matter how close a team is to winning, the game is never over until the final out. For fans, those moments are what turn a series into history.

