

The student-run news publication of Buffalo High School



THE HOOFPRIINT

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Done and Done Right

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A Note from the Editors-in-Chief

Welcome to our third and final print edition of the 2025-2026 school year! This edition of *The Hoofprint* is extra special to us, not only because it is final one we have gotten to work as Editors-in-Chief on, but also because it is the first time since before the Pandemic that we have been able to expand the number of pages we get to publish. This larger edition has allowed us to push the boundaries of the content and design elements we can showcase, and we could not be prouder of the endless work this staff has put in to bring us to this point. Throughout this year, and the many before it, *The Hoofprint* would not have come to fruition without the beacon of support from our advisor, Mr. Ryan McCallum. He has pushed us to be the most capable group of journalists, designers, photographers, leaders, and people.

Although the school year is ending, it is not the end of our momentum as a publication. We are proud to be passing the reins to the next class of editors and leadership staff. Witnessing the growth of this publication over the past four years has been a great joy of our high school careers, and we could not be more grateful for the opportunities we have been granted to speak truth to power, showcase student voice, and challenge authority in a way that advocates for positive change in our community. Thank you for allowing us to lead this publication; it has been such a privilege. Happy reading!



Adler Neu



Audyn Molesky



Play The5 daily on Hoofprint.net or the5.cc

1. At 1:20, how many degrees are in the smaller angle between the clock's hands?
A. 70 degrees B. 80 degrees C. 90 degrees D. 110 degrees E. 120 degrees
2. This verse is about which Greek Goddess? Goddess of the moon, twin sister of Apollo, she loved her dogs, she loved to hunt, With her bow and arrow.
A. Artemis B. Demeter C. Athena D. Hera E. Selene
3. An object that is in 60 feet of water is at a depth of how many fathoms?
A. 2 B. 4 C. 6 D. 10 E. 12
4. What is the term for an animal, plant, or natural object that spiritually represents a group of related people such as a clan or tribe?
A. Insignia B. Symbol C. Guardian D. Emblem E. Totem
5. Madrid is the capital of what country?
A. Morocco B. Portugal C. France D. Italy E. Spain

Answer key: 1. B 2. A 3. D 4. E 5. E

EVERYONE *is a* BISON

Rebranding of elementary school mascots brings strong emotions from alumni

Emily Larson
News Editor

Beginning fall of 2026, all schools in the Buffalo-Hanover-Monterose school district will have one mascot: the Bison. This includes the elementary schools who previously featured their own unique mascots such as the Northwinds Polar Bears, Hanover Hornets, and Parkside Eagles. All non-Bison mascots and school-specific brandings and colors are set to be discontinued after the completion of the 2025-2026 school year.

While all school names will remain the same, logos that are not currently adhering to purple and black color palette will be altered. Parkside's logo, however, will require a complete redesign as it currently features an eagle.

This change comes as a result of a year-long debate among the districts Enrollment Task Force. The decision to rebrand the schools was deemed necessary in order to maintain the long-term culture of the district and help families feel a sense of belonging, from preschool through graduation.

"We want to encourage a consistent sense of community and Bison pride, but there is currently a disconnect. Preschool

programs for Little Bison yield to a variety of elementary identities before students unite as Bison again in middle and high school," stated an email from superintendent Scott Theilman that notified the district of the change.

The email also stated that feedback gathered from elementary principals, staff, school board members, and PTO members indicated general support for moving in this direction. However, multiple alumni of the elementary schools were surprised about the rebranding, with some even mourning the loss of their beloved mascot and school song.

"It makes me sad that they're turning everyone into a Bison," said Addilyn Gerads '27. "It takes away from the individuality of the school and the culture my classmates and I grew up with. It was such a big part of my elementary experience. Its

been six years and I can still recite the entire Northwinds school song, 'We are the Polar Bears' from memory."

"The mascots are all different but they represent the same values," said Lynne Franzen '26, a Hanover elementary alumni. "Besides, everyone gets to be a Bison 6-12 grade, the elementary schools having a unique mascot is not that big of a

While the transformation will begin this summer, in order to prevent unnecessary expenses, the color scheme of the elementary schools will gradually change over time as pre-existing materials are used. This will allow for a more gradual transition from old to new.



Graphic by Juniper Lostetter

In Loving Memory



“*As a graduate from Parkside elementary school who was on the original committee to come up with and vote on a new mascot 20 years ago, it breaks my heart knowing the eagles are no more.*”

Eathan Soeffker '18

“*[My Favorite thing about Blizzard] is the joy he brings to others!*”

Carmen Tubbs, Northwinds Principal



Building Belonging

Black Student Union builds community through sharing stories and experiences

Evelyn Winger
Voices Editor

At Buffalo High School, new clubs develop every day. Whether that's Courageous Conversations, International Club, or even the Pickleball club, students find ways to involve themselves in the community in ways they find are important. One of the most recently established clubs at BHS is the Black Student Union, where students come together to meet new people, celebrate culture, and create a supportive environment.

This student-run organization was sparked by a need seen by students at the school.

For students like Santiago Washington '28, this is an essential club within the school that has an overall positive impact at BHS.

“We meet every Wednesday, where the main goal is to

share experiences of each other's culture and situations that have happened,” Washington said. “It spreads awareness for students of color at Buffalo High School.”

Students who are a part of this club find it important that there is a safe space where all members of the club feel welcome.

“The group is very welcoming and kind,” Washington said. “I think it's an important club to have here because it spreads awareness of the mistreatment of students of color.”

Members of the group hope to see the club become something bigger in the near future.

“I think the club will take off because it's a bigger thing at other schools,” Washington said.

The group will continue to meet every other Wednesday to share more stories and nurture their positive environment.

Decision Day for BHS Athletes

24 BHS students continue their athletic career into collegiate sports

Alexis Burgess

News Editor

On May 7, Buffalo High School celebrated 24 Bison student-athletes who will be continuing their athletic and academic careers at the collegiate level. Surrounded by their family, friends, teammates, coaches, and staff, these athletes were recognized for the dedication, perseverance, and passion they have shown throughout high school. Buffalo High School is proud to recognize and celebrate the following 24 student-athletes for their incredible achievements and exciting futures ahead.

Acrobatics & Tumbling:

Macy DuBois, Augustana University

Baseball:

Aidan Marconett, Sioux Falls

Football:

Hendrix Gatz, UW-Eau Claire

Hockey:

Avery Corbin, UW-Stevens Point

Lacrosse-boys:

Jay Bimson, Maryville University
Thomas Munger, Belmont Abbey

Lacrosse-girls:

Aurora Meyer, College of Saint Benedict

Soccer-boys:

Cayce Peterson, UW-Superior
Elijah Soukup, Wisconsin Lutheran College
Gavin Johnson, Hamline University
Hunter Scott, UW-Superior
Wyatt Anderson, UW-Superior

Soccer-girls:

Cate Reineck, Luther College
Emma Marzean, Bemidji State University
Gracie Alderman, Luther College
Jeanette Bermudez, Concordia St. Paul
Kennedy Herrboldt, Luther College
Sophie Alderman, University of Louisiana
Monroe

Swimming-boys:

Cam Cich, UW-La-Crosse
Cayden Jacobs, Gustavus Adolphus

Swimming-girls:

Avery Lowe, UW-Stevens Point

Track & Field, Cross Country:

Rose Lamberts, University of Montana
Tristan Lenton, UW-La Crosse

Volleyball:

Autumn Halberg, Central Lakes College
Danika Rosenau, North Dakota State
College of Science



Photo courtesy of Buffalo High School on Instagram



Honored to Serve

NHS and Tri-M members give back as the organizations look to make involvement about more than resume-builders

Emma Lee
Staff Writer

Buffalo High School is committed to helping its students become the best they can be. This includes providing them with opportunities to serve their community, something that National Honor Society (NHS) and Tri-M do wonderfully. NHS focuses on supporting the Buffalo community around us, contrary to Tri-M, which focuses on supporting the music community of BHM schools.

This year has been eventful for both of the service-oriented organizations at Buffalo High School. To name a few accomplishments, for the first time, NHS members helped with a Buffalo Community Middle School (BCMS) Fun Night. They received requests for members to help with over 50 community events. Members collected 186 pints of blood for the American Red Cross over 3 blood drives and recruited 60 first-time student blood donors. Students raised money for the District 877 scholarship fund as well.

"It's just really cool to put that effort in for somebody else, and not really expect anything in return," Avery Russek '26 said.

Key highlights for Tri-M are: successfully growing the music program for next year, marking a key milestone in their outreach, and hosting a movie night in the Performing Arts Center.

The impact NHS and Tri-M have on students, schools, and local communities is truly profound.

"I think a lot of students start just feeling like it's an extracurricular that they can put on their activities resume," Christina Cox, an NHS advisor, said. "And once they start doing the work and providing the service, I think they start recognizing the impact that they can have within their community and their school. And it's a really big deal, and it's a really fun thing to watch people recognize for themselves."

Even though both organization have had success, they have not been without problems. NHS has had attendance issues this the year, which can end up affecting plans and activities.

"I think we always work to create an engaging experience for



Jane Jayson '27, Kinley Bechtold '27, and Ireland Morris '27. Photo courtesy of Christina Cox

students, which can be challenging when we have a group of about 150 every year," Cox said.

Tri-M has struggled because the pandemic greatly constrained the organization's performance opportunities.

"Since Covid, Tri-M is running under the national level right now," Russek '26 said. With the end of the school year nearing, both groups have had their final meetings of the 2025-2026 school year. In those meetings, members discussed goals for the next school year.

Tri-M leaders discussed adopting successful NHS strategies for their own organization.

"One of the biggest things is making it more like NHS," Lilah Dongoski '27. "So each of us leaders are going to be getting a group of kids in Tri-M." This will help leaders keep everything more streamlined. Tri-M leaders are also aiming for a more focused group next year.

"I really hope next year there's more people that are more passionate about it," Russek '26 said. "I think this year we had a really great building year for next year. I think next year is gonna just go above and beyond the expectations that we had this year." NHS leadership calls on new members to drive the future with continued dedication to service.

"I hope that the juniors carry forward a pride for being a part of NHS," Hailey Hathaway-Oxley '26 said. "And also pride for being selected as executives."

Ultimately, the success of the 2025-2026 school year goes beyond just the hours served or events performed. It lies in the lasting impact NHS and Tri-M have made on the culture of Buffalo High School. By fostering a culture of service, these organizations have set the bar high for future leaders, leaving a legacy of mentorship and community spirit that will resonate for years to come.



Garrett Iverson '26 and Jillian Pack '26. Photo courtesy of Christina Cox

Between **CHAOS** and **COMEDY**

BHS Theater's performance of The Skin of Our Teeth

Wilder Warhol
Staff Writer

On the weekend of April 16-18, Buffalo High School's Performing Arts Center lit up to debut the theater department's spring play, *The Skin of Our Teeth*. While the show might display a series of disasters, the production was not anything of the sort. This culminated in a truly unique and unconventional performance that stands out for its nontraditional style.

Through the combined efforts of the cast, crew, and tech department, *The Skin of Our Teeth* depicted a complex narrative, pushing the boundaries of what Buffalo High School students could achieve on the stage. The play follows a family that always seemed to be on the verge of falling apart or coming together.

The Skin of Our Teeth bounces from millennium to millennium, showcasing numerous disasters such as the Ice Age, Noah's ark, the death of the dinosaurs, and even a World War. With all of these disasters, the production works to tie these events into one unified plot.

"This show has quite the combination," director Debb Bestland said. "You go from act to act, but it's not in chronological order. It's just one catastrophe after another."

What made the show stand out was its stylistic commentary on both current and past events. The production creates chaotic and intentionally hard-to-follow scenes of characters breaking the fourth wall. The director needs to correct the show as it's being performed, and the set is breaking down in the opening scene, but what's shown on stage isn't so different from what happens behind the scenes.



Top: Lily Kinches '27, Avery Russek '26 Left: Russek, Sammi Baardson '27, Evelyn Marks '29, and Kaylee Anderson '27 Right: Natalie Joy '29 and Lucas Louwagie '26 Photos by Adler Neu



"Reading the script. I was like, 'Oh no. What did I get myself into?' Because auditions were the first time we got to see the script, so I was like, 'Oh no, what is even happening?'" said Benjamin Smith '29.

He said, "I watched the first act beforehand, and I was lost five minutes in.

It constantly broke the fourth wall, and it was super random."

This sentiment was shared by many members of the cast. Performers first read the script and were instantly met with the chaos of the show. The unique writing decisions and meta style caused the actors to have trouble following the

play.

"There's some very long dialogue that has to be memorized. So I think that was hard for some of our actors," said Evelyn Marks '29.

"We learned how important it is to pay attention to the show. You have to read the show multiple times before you actually do it so that you know what's going on."

Even with the chaotic nature of *The Skin of Our Teeth*, no troubles were enough to stop the cast. Natalie Schmutzer '29 was able to use the strangeness of the script to motivate herself to stay in it.

"I was like, 'Why am I doing this?' Honestly, after I read the script, I was thinking, 'Is it too late to quit?' But I'm so glad I stayed with it. Even though it's hard, you have to remember that it's a theater of the absurd. The script is hard to read. The words are weird, but once you get where you're going on stage and see what the director wants for you, it's easy to just throw your lines out and see if your director says, 'Oh yeah, I like that,' or 'I'm trying a different way.' Then from that, you can grow every other part of the play."

Thornton Wilder wrote the play not only as a satire on the reception of his last play, but also as a look at the drive humans have to recover from disaster. He pulled not only from events of the past, but also from his experiences in World War I. This meant that the play kept a timeless yet retro look at humanity and its triumphs.

It's always interesting to see work from earlier decades, as it allows the audience to look at the world as those before them saw it. The antique charm that this show brought forth made it a perfect choice for the spring play. After living through a pandemic not so long ago, the audience has seen humanity persevere through difficult times, so choosing to tell this story was a smart decision. It allowed the audience to recontextualize their views on past events.

"I like to go back and see what was really beneficial. What people do over and over again because they had something in

them that made other people resonate with their ideas. That's kind of what was the impetus for what I chose," Bestland said.

Whether it be intentional screw-ups, fourth wall breaks, or meta commentary, this production shows humanity's undying ability to persist, even if it is just by *The Skin of Our Teeth*.

Banding *Together*

The Herd marching band gears up for summer performances

Hailey Hathaway-Oxley
Managing Editor

The award-winning Herd Marching Band is a prestigious herald of our school, traveling to parades across the state and country every summer and playing at numerous athletic events. The marching band is composed of a Color Guard, a drumline, and horns. Last year, with Mr. Rabehl retiring, they fell under the new leadership of Mr. Curtis and Mr. Vieth, bringing new life to the long-reigning Herd.

Many returning students have expressed excitement about new opportunities and are excited to spend the summer practicing to show off their hard work at their parade performances.

Kylie Kelm '26, 5th year Color Guard captain, says of the community that marching band has given her, "I joined color guard because I just wanted to wave around a flag, but I stayed for the community and the thing itself. It's been a lot of change this year, we have almost completely new leadership, but I think they're doing a really great job transforming certain aspects of the band but keeping the traditions and spirit alive."

Averi Hausladen '27, who's a 1st year Bass Drum, decided to join summer Marching Band after trying Winter Drumline this year and is loving it, "Drumline is very rigorous but very fun, I am excited for my first season of marching band ahead!"

Meg Reeves '28, who's in her 3rd year of being in the horn section, states that, "Being in the horn section makes me push myself harder. You can tell that people there want to work hard in order to put together the show and music. It's a great place to be, and it's super fun."



Photo By Anna Utsch



One Cord, Many Questions

Why do graduates have limited cord options?

Addilyn Gerads & Evelyn Winger
Staff Writer & Voices Editor

As we approach the end of the school year, the bittersweet sense of graduation for seniors lingers in the halls, classes, and throughout the entire school. The graduation ceremony entails a robe, a diploma, and, for some seniors, an honorary yellow chord. This symbolic cord that seniors carry typically only says one thing: academic success throughout their four years of high school.

At many schools throughout the U.S., graduates carry cords on every end of the color spectrum, showing different achievements they obtained over the countless days of their high school career. Students at Buffalo High School (BHS) similarly contribute to the school through their various activities and achievements. This makes many wonder why students at BHS only get one cord (with the exception of military and AVID); if they did not meet the grade requirements to carry this cord, they don't receive one at all.

"I think that if a student has earned a cord, they should be able to wear it at graduation because they worked really hard for it", Samantha Greig '26 said.

For every choice, there is always a reason behind it. BHS principal Mark Mischke states that the scarcity of graduation cords is driven by the goal that each and every student feels equal at the end of the day.

"They are in narrow focus in terms of trying to keep some consistency," Mischke said. "I think they are all really important,

but the further that gets away from only the academic cord, the more of a chance it will go sideways. I don't want to say that those other pieces aren't valuable, but I'm trying not to get to the point where we have cords for everything. I'm erring on the side of consistency because it's about the collective class."

Contrary to Mischke, Adalee Anderson '26 expressed that grad cords are not about fairness, but about showing your hard work throughout the years.

"I think students who completed activities at BHS over their four years deserve to display it through a cord," Anderson said. "I'm a state-level athlete and worked really hard for it in and out of school and im not receiving a cord for it. Just because someone else might feel left out, it's not the fault of the students who did meet the requirements of getting the cord."

Students also wish that their accomplishments could be shown as a way to symbolize their efforts.

"Many people have helped our school in a lot of ways, including the yearbook and running events," Taylor Whitney '26 said. "I feel like you should be able to have a cord that recognizes that hard work and dedication. It's like a symbol of your hard work finally paying off."

Agreeing with Whitney, Luke Gramstad '26 believes showing these contributions is important.

"I think we underdo it as a school," Gramstad said. "People should be allowed to have them, especially for certain accomplishments like Student Council and NHS. Some people have done more things in high school, and graduation chords are sort of like a symbol of involvement in the school."

The conversation surrounding graduation cords at Buffalo high school isn't just about what students wear as they walk across the stage—it's about how success is defined and recognized. For some students, equality in appearance creates a sense of unity, while for others, recognition is a meaningful way to honor years of their effort. Both perspectives reflect values that matter to the school's community.

Graphic by Juniper Lostetter

What is a Grade?

Grading policies impact more than grades

Adler Neu & Evelyn Winger
Editor-in-Chief & Voices Editor

In less than a week, we will leave this school for the summer, and for the nearly-400 members of the class of 2026, it is likely forever. We will leave behind four years of routines, expectations, and grades that have shaped crucial moments of our adolescence. But what do those grades actually mean?

Many students build their schedules around Senior Studies, “nice” teachers, and classes that aren’t too challenging. This, coupled with the idea that teachers need to be friendly and endlessly accommodating, has created the expectation from many that every class should be an “easy A” for meeting basic expectations. Teachers who hold students accountable for their work or pursue AI cheating most intensely are dubbed “strict graders,” and sometimes students tell friends to avoid these classes.

Every day, we are expected to be on time, pursue creative efforts, make connections with our peers and teachers, participate actively in class, and above all, excel in our academics. But should all of these things be included in your grade? Should your final grade show the *effort* you pour into drafts of essays for CIS Intro to Literature, the formulas memorized for a CIS College Algebra test, and your daily *behaviors* during a music class? Or should your grade only reflect products and *performance* on assessments?

Administration often cites the student survey results that show the strong relationships at BHS between teachers and students. This consistently positive response is something special about BHS; however, it can lead to difficulties enforcing consistent standards. Staff members are forced to walk the constant tightrope between creating personal connections and maintaining their professional responsibilities for holding students accountable for learning. This raises the question of what the role of a teacher is. Is it to educate content knowledge and skills, or to raise expectations of behaviors during class? This delicate balance of personal and professional relationships disproportionately impacts teachers whose schedules are primarily filled with electives, because when students don’t sign up for these classes because they are “too hard” or “not worth the time” these classes get cut, and the depth of high-level classes at BHS is diminished. This

can hurt the most engaged students when they run out of options or face classes with lowered expectations.

As Bison Online enrollment has skyrocketed in just two years, upper-level language classes have disappeared, and some of the most challenging technical and CIS classes have suffered drops in enrollment. Students choosing to be out of the classroom and in a fully digital curriculum puts excess emphasis on the product, not the process that goes into learning, which is where the most substantial academic and personal growth occurs. Some students have called for teachers to hold them to higher standards through increased focus on the process of learning and class behaviors instead of only the products they produce. However, an increased focus on process can create strain between student and teacher relationships, due to the unintentional bias that can be brought into the grading process.

According to the Grading for Learning system, which was originally shared with staff and families in 2021, BHS and BCMS staff are expected to follow a three-pillared system intended to maintain objectivity in grading policies. This system was used to guide a five-year implementation of new grading standards. It outlined that grades must be accurate, bias-resistant, and motivational. The system, used by BHS and BCMS, further describes how grades must be measurable, easy to understand, and exclude participation, extra credit, and effort. It states, “grades should be based on valid evidence of a student’s content knowledge, not based on evidence that can be skewed by a teacher’s implicit bias”. The Motivation pillar of the Grading for Learning system states, “the way we grade should be transparent, understandable, and serve to motivate students to achieve academic success, support a growth mindset, and give students opportunities for redemption”. Key grading practices from the

Grading for Learning include alternative (non-grade) consequences for cheating, grades

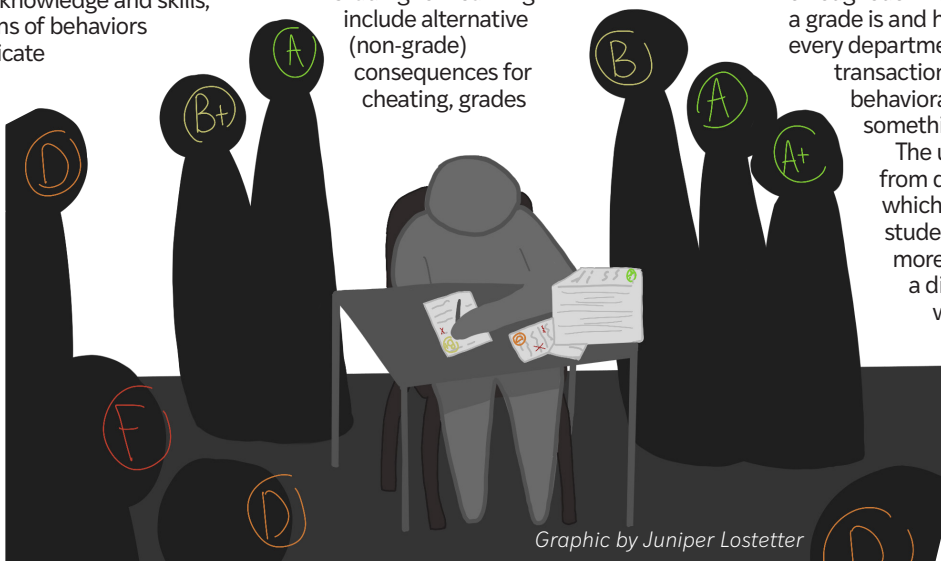
based on student work, not the timing of the work, and standards-based gradebooks. It also advocated for clear rubrics shared with students ahead of grading.

At BHS, performance-based classes in departments like Tech Ed, English, Music, and Art have been able to stretch guidelines for grading set by the Grading for Learning pillars due to the performance-based nature of each class. Without grades based on performance, participation, and engagement, the foundational principles of these departments would crumble. CIS Critical Reading and Writing was asked by the University of Minnesota to factor process above product, although it goes against many of the guidelines of Grading for Learning. These are departments whose excellence and reputation are constructed through connection, and at times, nuanced metrics that are not transferable to other departments. Students in music ensembles are graded on metrics like technique and intonation during playing tests, but these could not be applied to other departments, such as Math or English. Similarly, many students who partake in high-level elective courses, especially in the Music Department, are high-achieving and driven to maintain academic excellence, leading some to feel targeted when points are removed for poor punctuality, distracted behaviors, or improper playing techniques, all vital parts of maintaining a successful ensemble, especially at the Concert and CIS levels.

These practices raise the question of how strict teachers should be with their students and where the line is drawn between objective and subjective grading standards across every department. Should your grade in math or creative writing include participation, daily behavior, ability to focus beyond a screen, or are all of these things *already* reflected through the tests, papers, and homework?

As the topic of ethical and fair grading continues to loom, students and staff throughout BHS have begun to question what a grade is and how it should be executed in every department. Should grades be purely transactional, reflect mutual respect, behavioral issues, academic mastery, or something completely different?

The unique standards held from department to department, which build the scaffolding for students to succeed, demand a more dynamic framework from a district perspective that would allow teachers to teach without the added weight of retaliation or loss of enrollment for holding students accountable for their learning, and students to learn for the sake of expanding their knowledge, not just to check a box on a to-do list.



Graphic by Juniper Lostetter

voices



spring 2026

pg. 11

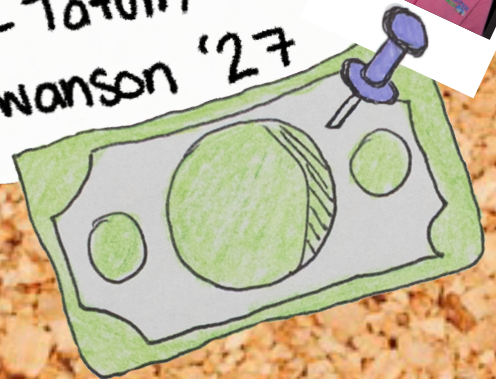
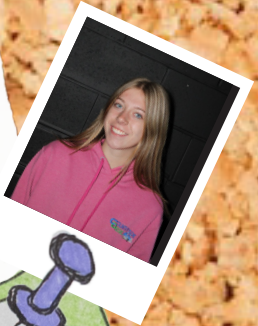
SUMMER bucket

"Go to WE Fest"

- Anna Scherber '27



"Get my money up" - Tatum Swanson '27



"Do something BIG with my sister before college and a solo trip to Chicago!" - Kat Reeves '26

'26



"Take a trip with my Pilot's license"

- Davin Salonek '27



er list

"Stargazing with
friends"
-Margot Miller '27



"Visit Yellowstone
National Park"
-Kelcie Bode '27



"Go to a drive-in
movie"
-Brinley Thoe '26



"Travel to two or more
States"
-Vanessa Perez '27



Graphics by Ireland Morris and Juniper Lostetter

To Seniors Who Feel Like They're Falling Behind

Graduation is looming, but not every senior is feeling at peace

Hailey Hathaway-Oxley
Managing Editor

It's so easy to feel like everyone knows what they're doing and you're getting lost. Wondering what your major should be, what college you should go to, and what color prom dress to get. You're probably worrying more than you ever have, trying to scramble to savor the last few days like everybody tells you that you should. If you blink, you'll miss it, and your name will be called and you'll walk down the stage in a cap and gown without even realizing what you've missed.

"I'm really excited to graduate, but there are so many more emotions I am feeling. One of which is a feeling of mourning, not only my friend group, but also the people in my class. And the fact that we're never going to have what we do now again" Skye McKibben '26 said.

For the last four years, I have thought every single day about what I will do tomorrow, rather than today, dreaming of the next thing or next year or what I will do in college, rather than looking around at what I have and feeling content. I have always been searching for more, and I have always looked ahead so far in a way that dragged me behind.

To those who feel like you're falling behind, keep pace with yourself and what you want. Not what anybody else



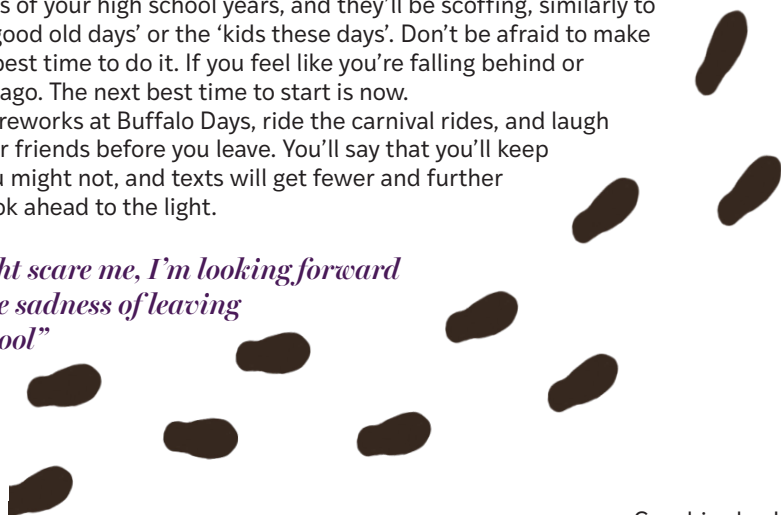
wants or what they're doing. Don't compare yourself to others, especially not at this time. You're on the exact path that you're supposed to be, and everything will work out in good timing.

Soon, you'll be telling your children the stories of your high school years, and they'll be scoffing, similarly to how you do when your parents talk about the 'good old days' or the 'kids these days'. Don't be afraid to make mistakes, to put yourself out there; now is the best time to do it. If you feel like you're falling behind or running late, the best time to start was 4 years ago. The next best time to start is now.

This summer, soak in the sunset, watch the fireworks at Buffalo Days, ride the carnival rides, and laugh like little kids. Take the last few laughs with your friends before you leave. You'll say that you'll keep in touch, but there's always the chance that you might not, and texts will get fewer and further between. Don't look back in anger; however, look ahead to the light.

"No matter how much graduation might scare me, I'm looking forward to all the opportunities ahead, despite the sadness of leaving so many memories back here in high school"
Emily Tadych '26 said.

Chances are that things will work out, and that if you're worried about it, it's just a sign that you care.



Graphics by Juniper Lostetter

It's Nerf or Nothin'

The organizers of this year's Nerf War are feeling the pressure from participants

Addilyn Gerads

Staff Writer

Many people see Nerf Wars as excitement and competition, but for the student organizing the game, it's much more than that. Even though the event is nothing new to Buffalo, there is plenty of planning, organizing, and responsibility that goes into making sure everything runs smoothly.

What may look like a simple event is a commitment that takes time, stress, and focus. Behind all of the hard work of this year's Nerf War is Simon Blighton '26, who is holding everything together. The responsibility of running the Nerf Wars starts days before the event takes place.

"I took all of the rules from last year, and then re-posted them again to start," said Blighton '26. "My girlfriend then made the spreadsheet with all the teams and players. Besides the physical preparation, the biggest preparation was mentally with the amount of people who DM (direct message) me on Instagram with problems and concerns."

Even before the game started, Blighton was dealing with constant questions and issues, showing that the Nerf Wars are just as much about handling people as it is about organizing the event.

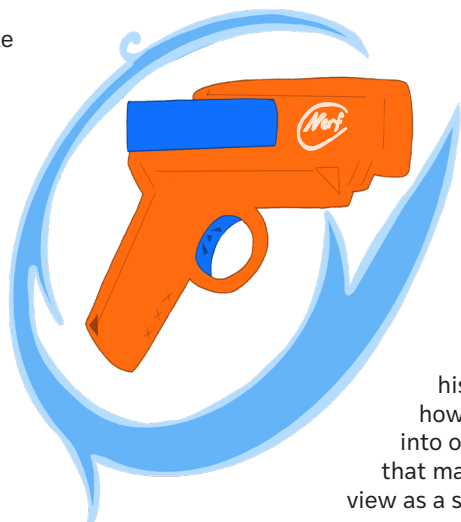
Alongside the constant preparation, there was a new level of pressure that most people didn't see. One of his biggest concerns didn't involve the event itself, but the worry of what could go wrong because of it.

"My biggest worry was that I'd get in trouble because someone else did something stupid," said Blighton '26.

Due to there being no official contracts, Blighton felt responsible for situations that could happen out of his control. This added another layer of stress on top of organizing the event.

Despite all of the stress, responsibility, and pressure going on behind the scenes, the Nerf War still brings excitement to the school. While most students focus on the competition, Blighton sees everything that it takes to keep it running.

Even now, as the game goes on, his work highlights how much effort goes into organizing something that many students may view as a simple tradition.



Photos courtesy of Simon Blighton @buffalonerf2026



Done, and Done Right

Bison Lacrosse historic success owed to a competitive and uplifting team

Lillian Reil & Madison Tauer
Journalism Staff



Aubrie Guida '27
Photo by Braxton Teschendorf

Within the community of the Buffalo Bison girls lacrosse team, the season has so far been defined by their winning record and great stats, but none of that would have been possible without countless hours spent together off the field that has developed the bonds that they have created that have helped led them to have this winning season, which now includes a Lake Conference Championship.

Senior goalie Aurora Meyer is one of the key players of the Bisons' great success. Meyer has accomplished a record of 700 saves and counting in her varsity career, which began when Meyer —dubbed with the nickname Bob by her teammates — was in seventh grade.

"It means a lot," Meyer said. "It's a huge honor to be able to be on this team for as long as I have been, and I'm very proud of every one of those saves and how they impacted the team and our gameplay."

Success is a team effort. While Meyer shines, the entire Bison roster has her back, fueling their wins. The Bisons' culture is built on trust and strong bonds on and off the field. Defender Aubrie Guida '27 feels the reason for their team's unique culture is their commitment during the off-season.

"My team and I spend a lot of time together in the off-season," Guida said. "Many of my teammates play on the same club lacrosse team, so they get a lot of extra touches together. We also prioritize lifting and spending time together in the off-season, so seeing each other in team bonding events and off the field has really led us to have great chemistry together."

While the team's culture is strong both during and outside of the season, it's this shared experience that builds their chemistry on the field.

"Our team's relationship is very good and strong," Midfielder Jocelyn Phillips '27 said. "We all have a close bond with each other, and I think that makes it better and easier to play together. In and out of lacrosse, all of the girls on the team talk, and I think that's what brings us close and together."

This season may be remembered for the team's success on the field, but what truly stands out is the culture behind it. From the way they support each other in games, to the bonds they build off the field, their team chemistry is what makes everything possible. In the end, it's not just about how they performed, but about who they became as a team.



Jasmine Jorgensen '28, Calista Weiche '27, Daneka Eng '27, and Coach Krista Crandall participate in team huddle
Photo by Braxton Teschendorf



Hannah Rosso '28
Photo by Braxton Teschendorf



Jocelyn Phillips '27
Photo by Braxton Teschendorf



Adellita Nelson '27
Photo by Braxton Teschendorf



Aurora Meyer '26
Photo by Braxton Teschendorf

Setting the Standard

Track seniors step-up to the challenge of leading a freshman dominated track team

Lillian Reil & Madison Tauer
Journalism Staff

The Buffalo Bison track and field team is defined by more than just winning times and top finishes. With a roster made up of mostly freshmen, the team has built a culture centered on support, growth, and energy. Despite their youth, the athletes are coming together quickly, showing that their strong chemistry can form even in a new and developing group. Elijah Soukup '26 manages the team, unable to run due to injury, and assists coaches during practice through a variety of tasks. Soukup takes photos at meets, tracks splits and race times, changes and fixes blocks, and manages the team's social media accounts. Soukup hopes his efforts behind the scenes and on the track leave a positive impression on future managers and athletes.

"I feel like I have done a good job," said Soukup. "I've stayed connected with younger athletes, so I hope that I leave an impression."

This focus on leaving a positive impression goes beyond just one person; it reflects back to the track team's overall culture, where strong relationships and a sense of community are a big part of the experience. Because of this, the team continues to stand out not just for performance, but for the relationships

built along the way. With a roster filled with younger athletes, the team's seniors have taken on big leadership roles. Senior Rose Lamberts shared her experience of being on a team mostly made up of freshmen. Lamberts, who is primarily a long hurdler, holds the school record for the 100m dash and 300m low hurdles. She feels the impact of having a team mostly made up of freshmen.

"I feel like working with an almost entirely freshman is very rewarding, not necessarily measured by wins but by experience" said Lamberts. "I get to lead by example as a senior, but I also get to teach the new athletes how blocks work— things that I was taught when I was little. It's like giving back to the seniors who helped me four years ago when I first joined track."

While seniors lead the team's younger athletes, one freshman holds an even closer senior to freshman bond. Abigail Lamberts '29 who focuses on sprints and relays, is one of many freshmen on the varsity team. Lamberts shares the significance of the young varsity team and the people who impact her most.

"Rose is a leader in other ways," said Lamberts. "She leads me and the track team in ways like staying on task, being positive in hard situations, warming up, and in general being an icon to look up to."

Rose is Abigail's older sister so being able to look up to her on track and at home is a unique experience. While having a sister to look up to, Abigail shares what it's like to be a freshman on the varsity team.

"It means a lot, not a lot of people get the opportunity to be on varsity as freshmen... let alone for their second year. I feel like it is a big responsibility and opportunity that I am very grateful to have."

This season may be remembered for how young the track team was but what really stands out is the culture and leadership behind it. From the way they connect with one another and the bonds they have created helps them compete as a younger team. In the end it's not just about how young the team is, it is about how they compete together as a team.



Abigail Lamberts '29

Photo by Rose Lamberts



Elijah Soukup '26

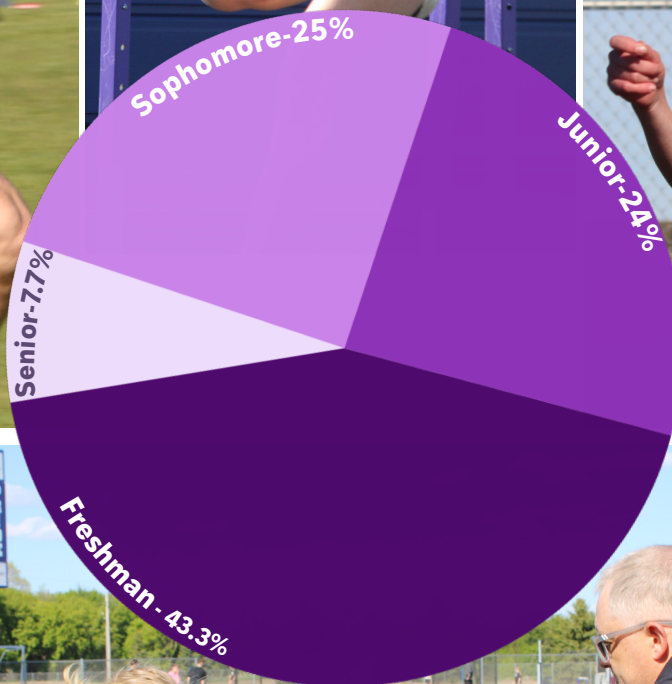
Photo by Rose Lamberts



Rose Lamberts '26

Photo by Anna Utsch

Underclassmen experiment to find where they **belong**



With freshman and sophomores making up over 70% of the track team, this year has been greatly focused on learning opportunities.

Athletes with little track experience have been encouraged to experiment with different event areas. All with the desire of finding where their specific talent lies. Whether throwing, jumping, pole vaulting, sprinting, or doing distance running, there's something for everyone in track and field.



BUFFALO royalty

Graphics by Juniper Lostetter and Ireland Morris

Ambassadors share lessons they have learned beyond the crown

Evelyn Winger
Voices Editor

The city of Buffalo offers numerous activities that students can get involved in, but for BHS seniors Erika Torres-Gutierrez '26 and Ameira Dunn '26, few have been as impactful as being a part of Buffalo Royalty, a program that holds a special place in their heart. Selected as royal ambassadors for the 2025-26 year, Torres-Gutierrez has taken on the role of Miss Buffalo, while Dunn has taken on the role of Buffalo princess. What originally seemed like an opportunity to represent their communities quickly became a pivotal experience in their high school career that went far beyond local parades and tiaras.

When Torres-Gutierrez first joined the program, she did not know much about it, yet it had piqued her interest; as getting out of her comfort zone was important to her.

"I joined Buffalo Royalty because I had the social media team

coordinator reach out to me a few times,"

Torres-Gutierrez said. "My friend was also really interested in doing it, so I wanted to give it a shot; it looked really fun. I also just wanted to get out of my comfort zone, so I think that would also be a really big reason why I did it."

Dunn also joined for similar reasons; she has found her experience to be one that has improved many skills.

"Before I ran, I was usually more reserved," said Dunn. "A family friend who had been in the program encouraged me to try, so I decided to take the chance. Since I joined, I've grown a lot in my confidence and have become open to new challenges."

Many people often see members of the Buffalo Royalty at the annual parade in downtown Buffalo. This event is one that means a lot to Torres-Gutierrez, along with the Anoka Halloween event.

"One of the biggest events we do would definitely be our own Buffalo Days," said Torres-Gutierrez. "It's a whole week where we will be up really early in the morning and possibly get home very late, and we're just all over town. Another big event is the Anoka Halloween celebration. It's very fun and we get to dress up. We get to decorate our float, and overall, it's just really cool to see how the town celebrates, and also how other communities decide to dress up."

For Dunn, her favorite event is not one of a parade, but the Hopkins Wild Goose Chase.

"The best event I've ever done was the Hopkins Goose Chase," Dunn said. "We had this photo shoot scavenger hunt, and it was so fun. We took so many photos, got to meet the Hopkins mayor, and had a blast running around downtown Hopkins doing their scavenger hunt. Afterwards, we attended Hopkins Coronation, and then they hosted a Ball. We played musical chairs and danced all night long. It was a blast!"

Like many organizations, the Buffalo Royalty community holds many traditions that are unique to them. For Torres-Gutierrez, the traditions that are focused on building a stronger community are ones that she feels drawn to.



Photo Courtesy of Erika Torres-Gutierrez

"A tradition that we do is during coronations, when the candidates are about to get crowned, we interlink pinkies which I know sounds kind of weird, but that is just our way of saying good luck to every single girl and cheering them on," Torres-Gutierrez said. "That was one of the first things that the older girls taught us during my first coronation as Miss Buffalo."

The Buffalo Royalty program has a strong sense of community. For Dunn, one of her favorite aspects of the program is simply the people involved.

"The people I've met through the program have to be the most 'girls girls' to exist," said Dunn. "The people are so nice and welcoming, and once you get to know everyone more, it feels like a party with them wherever you see them again."

Throughout their time in this program, both of these royals have grown in numerous ways. Torres-Gutierrez has found herself coming out of her shell and building strong relationships with others in her community that she never thought she would have.

"This program has truly made me grow in ways I did not think that I could," Torres-Gutierrez said. "I was somewhat shy before starting Royalty, but now, I love talking to new people, and I love just interacting with my community. Being able to be involved and give back to my community has really impacted me, and I've made so many lasting friendships that I would've never made if I weren't in Royalty."

For Dunn, a major aspect of being a part of the program is the opportunities brought forth that have helped her create an idea of what she wants for her future.

"This experience has helped shape my future goals," Dunn said. "Through the program, I've had the opportunity to speak with professionals like principals, business owners, the mayor of Buffalo, and nurses. I'm especially grateful for the chance to connect with nurses who helped guide me in understanding different paths in healthcare. Overall, Buffalo Royalty has helped me grow personally and has supported my decision to pursue a career in nursing."

Torres-Gutierrez emphasizes trying out Buffalo Royalty even if students are in multiple events; she expresses that the activity is very flexible and important for growth.

"Something I'd want to share about Royalty is that there are a lot of girls who think 'oh I can't do this because I'm in so many activities,' but both my princess and I work, and I participated in around seven extracurriculars," Torres-Gutierrez said. "I was still able to go to many events, and Royalty is just very flexible. It's able to work, and I suggest that any girl who wants to give it a shot just do it because you'll never know who you'll meet or how you'll grow as a person."

As Buffalo days approaches, the reign of the current royalty will soon come to an end, but the lessons they have learned are something they will carry with them forever. Anyone who is interested in the program is encouraged to apply to be a part of Buffalo Royalty next year and continue the program's legacy. More information can be found on the Buffalo Royalty Ambassador website.



Photo Courtesy of Buffalo Royalty

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Graphic by Juniper Lostetter

Emily Larson
News Editor

Adalee Anderson creates a small business utilizing creativity

Adalee Anderson '26 is currently a senior at Buffalo High School where she keeps herself involved by being engaged in a variety of activities such as student council, National Honor Society, and Yearbook. Despite her busy schedule, Anderson has found the time to pursue her passions by starting her own business: painting ornate banners for a variety of occasions.

"I started my first banner almost exactly a year ago to take pictures with for prom," said Anderson. "We actually didn't end up taking pictures with it, but it led to other people seeing my work, asking about it, and wanting a banner for themselves."

Anderson didn't originally plan on her hobby becoming a successful business, but her creations caught the eye of many.

"For my first couple of banners I had to borrow a projector from my friend Syke McKibben ['26] because I didn't have any materials to paint banners," Anderson said. "Eventually I felt so bad borrowing it all the time I bought my own. Then I started to get so many orders that I decided to set up an Instagram page and make a business out of it. I didn't plan on

it becoming a business, but I'm so glad it happened."

Since then, Anderson has created thirteen banners for various occasions including back to school, Christmas, Valentine's Day, birthdays, graduation parties, and prom.

The process to make a banner starts by collaborating with the customer to create a design. Once that design has been approved, Anderson uses equipment that is set up in her basement to project and sketch it onto a piece of banner paper. From there the painting begins, which usually takes two to three hours to complete. Once the banner is finished, the customer picks the banner up from Anderson's house or she delivers it to the customer.

"It feels good knowing people will come to me to get something they can hang up at an event and I can give them something they will definitely like," Anderson said.

Anderson has gained valuable insights from her experience as a business owner such as how to promote her business, advertise products, as well as understand and predict customer's buying patterns.

In addition, Anderson's business has opened many doors for her, offering unexpected opportunities. One of those was the chance to paint a banner for this year's Unified Prom which Anderson regarded as an honor.

"It meant a lot to me because it's serving a bigger purpose than decoration and it's something a lot of people will get to enjoy."

While Anderson's time at BHS is coming to a close, her plans for the business are doing the exact opposite. She hopes to continue to create her banners during college, and perhaps, the rest of her life.

"I think I've found something that will stay with me into adulthood. I could keep doing this forever," Anderson reflected. "This is a business I don't plan on dropping anytime soon."

You can check out her work or place an order via her Instagram account @banners.by.adi!



Photos Courtesy of Adi Anderson

Triumph in the Tunes

Dongoski finds purpose in playing the trumpet

Rosary Gilbertson
Spotlight Editor

Many middle school students pick instruments every year for a variety of reasons; some because people in their family played it, others influenced by friends, and others still because they are simply fascinated by it. Lilah Dongoski '27, is of the latter, deciding to play the trumpet at a young age, and never looking back.

"I started playing trumpet before I was even in middle school," Dongoski said. "I always wanted to play the trumpet. Nobody in my family [knew] anything [about it], I just was

always very fascinated by it."

Since beginning her playing career, Dongoski has used her passion to get involved in a variety of meaningful activities. Throughout her time at BHS, she has been involved in jazz one, two and three as well as concert band and studio band. She also serves as a trumpet section captain in marching band. Throughout her extensive involvement, one activity has stood out as being particularly impactful.

"Out of all those things I do, my favorite thing is probably jazz," Dongoski said. "I actually love playing jazz so much. It is just so fun, and the music is always so upbeat, it's really just a joy to play."

Playing the trumpet has not only been impactful in Dongoski's high school career, but has also influenced her decisions beyond.

"I currently want to go to Eau Claire in Wisconsin and major in music and probably become a band director, which is probably something I would have never considered doing if I hadn't started playing trumpet," said Dongoski. "Some of my closest friends I've met through band and I've even started branching out. When I go to these honor bands, I meet other trumpet players that are just spectacular people, and I've just gotten to do things that I wouldn't have been able to do if I wasn't playing trumpet and doing the music."



Photo Courtesy of Lilah Dongoski

A Poet at Heart

Kaylee Anderson navigates life through poetry

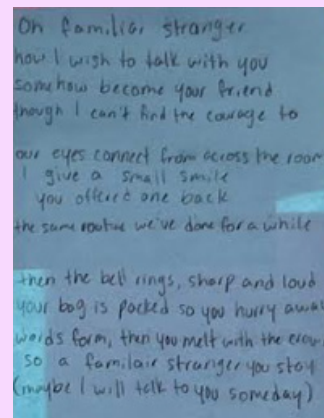
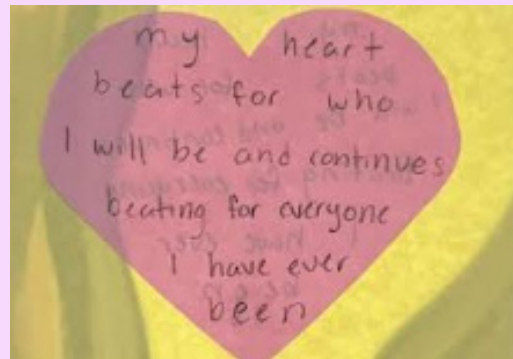
Kelcie Bode
Spotlight Editor

In a fast paced culture of texting and posting, it can often be difficult to slow down and fully process and explain one's emotions through writing. However, Kaylee Anderson '27, has found a way to do just that by expressing herself through poetry. Inspired by the LLC's "poet-tree" contest, Anderson has grown to love the art form and the chance that it gives her to be creative.

"My favorite part of poetry [is that] not everyone has to understand the exact situation you've gone through to understand your poems," Anderson said. "It's used as a kind of a translator in a way; you write down something that you feel and people are able to relate it to something that they have felt or experienced. I think there's just something very beautiful about that."

Poetry has also helped Anderson to embrace the imperfections that life and writing can bring.

"Poetry has allowed me to be more comfortable with creating things I don't deem as perfect, especially with school. Oftentimes I feel the need to put out work that's the best that it can possibly be," Anderson said. "Making art allows me to be okay with making errors because it just makes it more human. Poetry has allowed me to be more in touch with my emotions and [gives me] better ways to express them. Even if I can't find the perfect words to say them often, I can find an image or a phrase that I think captures it well, which allows me to explore more deeply when I'm feeling."



Photos Courtesy of Kaylee Anderson

spotlight



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Staff Picks of 2025-2026

Most Viewed Hoofprint.net Stories

1. *Over 150 Students Participate in Walk-Out Protest, 1564 views*
2. *A New Dynamic for Boys Basketball, 1023 views*
3. *Mr. Monson: A History Teacher, 987 views*
4. *Pages of Passion, 946 views*
5. *Mrs. Alberts Shows Love for Languages Through Teaching, 908 views*



The Snacks that Fueled our Stories

1. *Trader Joe's Takis*
2. *Frosted Sugar Cookies*



3. *Taco Bell*

4. *Trail Mix*



5. *Donuts*

