

Magic Happens Here!

Another year at HHS has brought us many great memories, fun times, school spirit, and many successful students. Our arts programs were recognized by state senator Mark Walzyck presented with a student art show, and performances from the jazz band and show choir. The ALC (athletic leadership council) was formed this year. We had our first Homecoming QUEENS in a while: twins Havonna White and Halonna White, and our Winter Weekend royalty Avery Allen and Liam Miller. Our indoor and outdoor boys track teams both won section III championships and Braysen Richard will be competing in states. Our theater program put on a production of Bye Bye Birdie this winter led by Rosie Nietes as Rose Alverez and Landon Ploss as Albert Peterson. Lastly, our 2026 valedictorian and salutatorian are Johnny Xiao and Maggie Bray. Everybody here has made this year magic!

Another Magical Year in Review

By: Melinda Poplawski





MORE MAGIC MEMORIES



Herkimer Educator Earns Statewide Recognition



Herkimer Central School District has another reason to celebrate as teacher Ms. Peyton is being honored as the New York State VFW Teacher of the Year.

This prestigious award recognizes educators who promote citizenship, patriotism, and civic responsibility in their classrooms while making a lasting impact on their students and communities. Being selected as the state's Teacher of the Year is an extraordinary achievement.

Throughout her career, Peyton has demonstrated a commitment to helping students grow both academically and personally. Her ability to inspire young people and encourage them to become engaged citizens has made a lasting impact on countless students.



Leah Peyton Named New York State VFW Teacher of the Year

To recognize her award, the Herkimer VFW will host a celebration on Sunday, June 7, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., with the official presentation taking place at 12:30 p.m. The event is open to all who would like to attend and congratulate Peyton on her success.

Congratulations to Ms. Peyton on this remarkable accomplishment and on receiving one of the highest honors an educator can earn through the Veterans of Foreign Wars organization.

CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES!

Class of '26



2026 Valedictorian

"Think about things critically. Even if they don't seem important... If you get yourself to do that more, it will be such an advantage in life in general." - Johnny Xiao



2026 Salutatorian

As another school year comes to a close, we want to celebrate the many accomplishments of the Herkimer High School Class of 2026! Graduation marks the end of one chapter and the beginning of an exciting new journey filled with opportunities, challenges, and growth, no matter what our grads are choosing to do after high school.

Over the years, this class has excelled in academics, athletics, the arts, community service, and leadership. They have created lasting memories, built lifelong friendships, and left a positive impact on our school community.

Whether graduates are heading to college, the workforce, military service, trade schools, or pursuing other goals, they carry with them the knowledge, experiences, and lessons gained during their time at Herkimer.

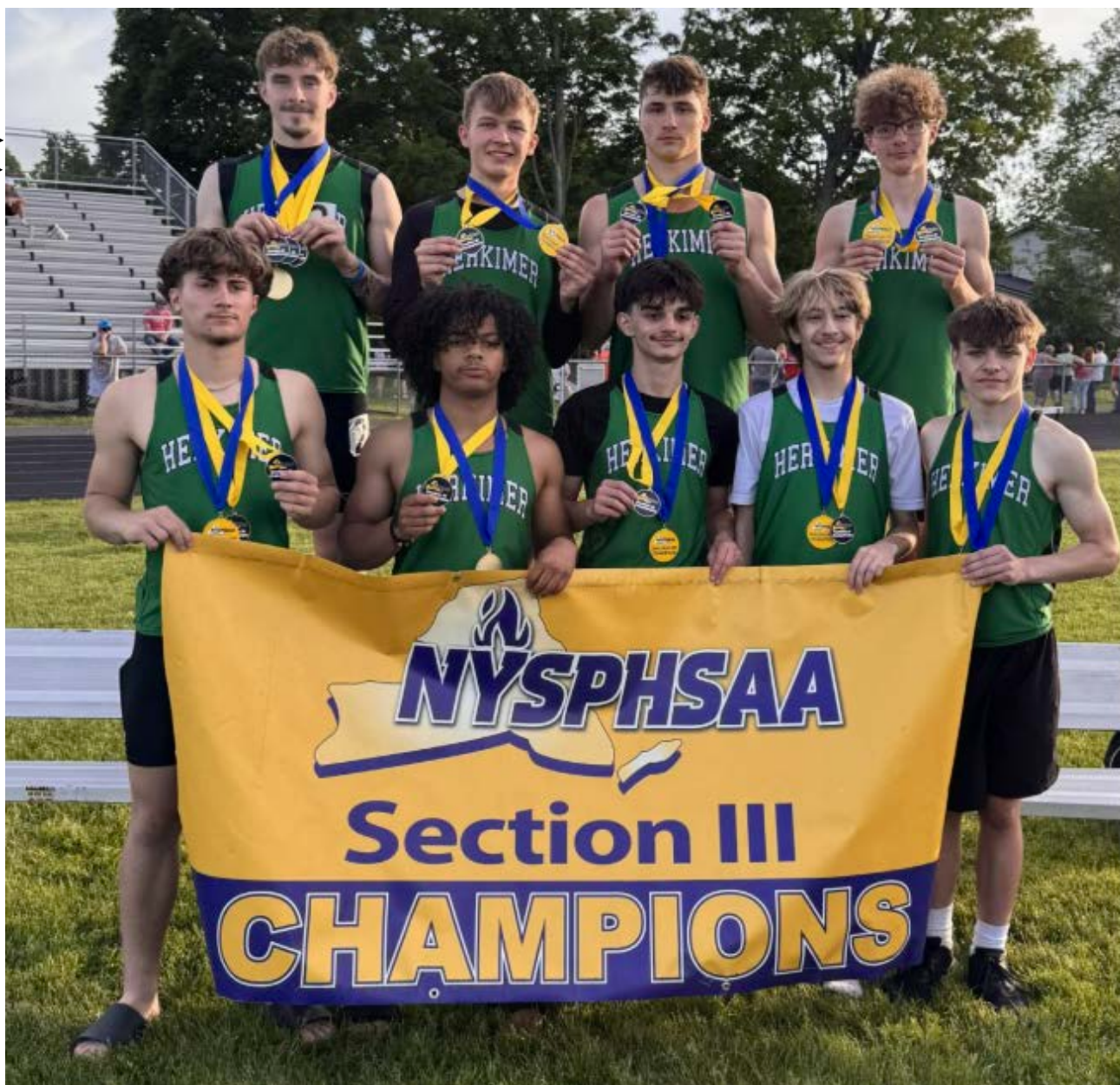
We wish all members of the Class of 2026 success and happiness in the years ahead. Congratulations, graduates! We are proud of you and look forward to seeing all that you accomplish!

"Just get all of your work done and utilize the time in class that your teachers give you – like the downtime – and don't goof off." - Maggie Bray

Boys Track Makes Waves!

The Herkimer boys track and field team made school history on May 27 by winning the NYSPHSAA Section III Class C-2 Championship at Clinton High School. The Magicians delivered their highest-scoring sectional performance ever, defeating Clinton by a score of 137-91 and bringing home the sectional title.

The championship was fueled by strong performances across the track and field events, proving that teamwork and dedication were key ingredients in the team's success. Several athletes earned sectional titles of their own, including junior Braysen Richard, who won both the 110-meter hurdles and triple jump, and senior **Shane Maxon**, who captured the 400-meter hurdles championship. Flint Davis won the 400-meter dash, while **Taylor Fitzgerald-Lamphere** claimed the pentathlon title. Herkimer also earned victories in both the **4x400-meter** and **4x800-meter** relays.



From Left to Right (Top): Shane Maxon, Logan Marusic, Braysen Richard, Taylor Lamphere, (Bottom) Flint Davis, Willie Belamy Jr., Nick Allen, Liam Miller, Gage Bassett

Coach Jason Richard praised the athletes for their commitment throughout the season, noting that the team had been preparing for this moment since March. The sectional title is the latest accomplishment for a program that continues to grow, with the outdoor team also capturing its third consecutive Center State Conference Division II championship this spring.

For many athletes, the victory was especially meaningful after coming up short of a sectional title last season. Team members credited their success to countless hours of practice, determination, and the support they received from their coaches and teammates. With numerous athletes advancing to the state qualifier meet, the Magicians' season is not over yet. However, regardless of what comes next, the 2026 sectional championship has already secured this team a place in Herkimer track and field history.

Senior Athlete Highlights



SHANE MAXON
6 GOALS 7 ASSISTS

"THE EFFORT YOU INVEST DEFINES BOTH THE OUTCOME AND YOUR GROWTH."

H
MAGICIANS

#HERKPRIDE
CSC DIV 1 ALL STAR

By: Peyton Gillen



H
PERSONAL RECORDS
HJ: 5'1
100M HURDLES: 17.37
PENT: 2143

AVREY ALLEN

H
MAGICIANS

#MAGICTOMOOSE

By: Peyton Gillen



ATHLETE HIGHLIGHT
LANDON PLOSS
GOLF

LOW SCORE
36

AVERAGE
41.33

✓ QUALIFIED FOR
SECTIONALS

FOCUSED. DETERMINED. UNSTOPPABLE.

By: Geno Scalise



HALONNA WHITE
HERKIMER TRACK AND FIELD

H
MAGICIANS

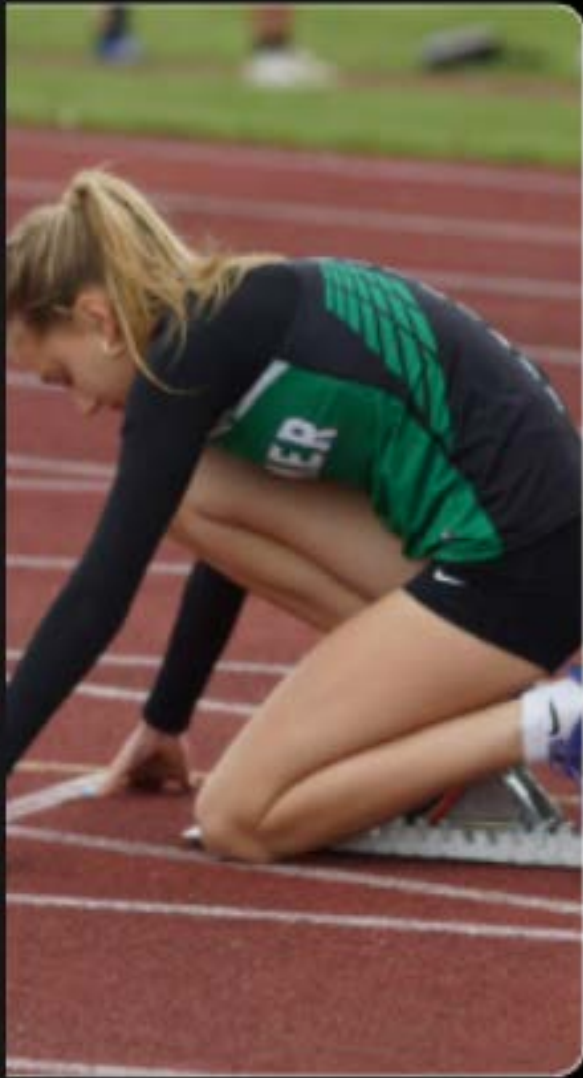
LONG JUMP: 14'2
10HH: 17.93
3RD FOR 110 HURDLES AT CS
LEAGUE MEET

By: Braysen Richard

Student Sports Spotlight

CAMBRIN
KOZMA

HERK TRACK



PR'S
2026-27

400 METER HURDLE
73.22

100 METER HURDLE
17.79

TRIPLE JUMP
31.11

Herkimer High School junior Camrin Kozma has had an amazing track season establishing herself as one of the top athletes in the program. Kozma ran the 400-meter hurdles with a time of 73.22 seconds, the 100-meter hurdles with a time of 17.79 seconds, and the triple jump with a mark of 31 feet, 11 inches. These accomplishments have highlighted the hard work she has put into the sport. Cambrin's favorite quote related to her triumphs in track is:

**"Success isn't
always a medal,
sometimes it's
becoming stronger
than you were
yesterday."**

By: Brent Blais

Track and field requires athletes to balance speed, strength, technique, and mental toughness. Excelling in multiple events is a challenge, making Kozma's achievements even more impressive. From sprinting over hurdles to competing in the technical triple jump, she has demonstrated versatility and dedication throughout the season.

Coaches and teammates have praised Kozma for her work ethic and commitment at practice. Her willingness to push herself and continually improve has helped her reach new personal bests and contribute to the success of the team. Setting a school record is an accomplishment that few athletes achieve, and breaking three records in a single season is a remarkable feat. As Kozma continues her track career, her records will serve as a new standard for future Herkimer athletes to chase.

Congratulations to Camrin Kozma on an outstanding season and for leaving her mark on Herkimer track and field history.

GRAND March

Students took the stage at Herkimer College for Grand March on Saturday, May 30th before heading to prom at Paradise Gardens in Little Falls. There was a great turnout with 35 couples attending and a filled audience! Senior, Arthur Dadello, announced all of the couples:

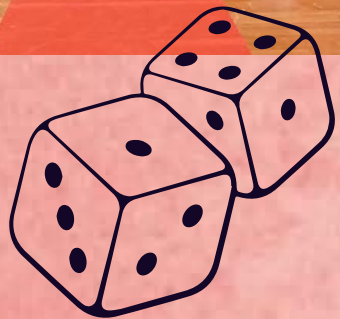
*Madison Wymes Ace Boyd
Halonna White Braysen Richard
Havonna White Jacob Petucci
Madelyn Collis Amelia Brown
Sarah Huyck Cody Cool
Isabella Filipczuk Trinity Heaton
Lily Kaszycki Landon Ploss
Jocelyn Vincent Cole Bolen
Kaitlyn Tutty Sierra Dibrango
Carmen Mankowski Julian Ruffule
Kaitlyn Pierce Alana Schlappi
Hailey Gerhardt Lincoln Kretser
Melinda Poplawski, Isabel Clements &
LeAndra Castle
Mollie Regan Brendon Kent
Maya Saugh Brett Saunders Mia
Caliccia Geno Scalise
Victoria Brinkerhoff Jack Nevills
Arijana Sakanovic Amir Sakanovic*



Announcer: Arthur Dadello

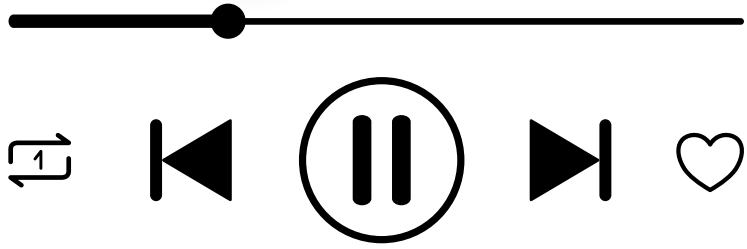
*Abbie Kane Nathan Rawley
Jenna Papke Thomas Goonan
Brooke Reddington Caiden Vogt
Katelyn Carney Devens Whalen
Maggie Bray
Avery Allen and Erika Avery
Cambrin Kozma Brent Blais
Lia Peruzzi Luke Anderson
Inara Moyer Sam Berowski
Chloe Danielski Olivia Wilmot
Madysen Ward Gregory Patrick
Roselyn Nietes Cooper Jordan
Taylor Scanlon Adam Kast
Jaylyn Gregory Makayla Warn
Liorah Belinfante
Jacob Belden
Nalla Luczynski-Perch Russell Stapf
Emily Welch Brian Lindsay
Aleyla Dygurt Logan Marusic
Lily Beers Gavin Pizer*

GRAND MARCH COUPLES



GRAND MARCH COUPLES

SUMMER DAYS



This playlist was curated from a form asking what students are listening to this summer. Featuring new hits and classics such as Midnight Sun by Zara Larson, Shabang by Drake, Summer Nights from the motion picture Grease, Uptown Girl by Billy Joel, and Man or Muppet from The Muppet Movie.

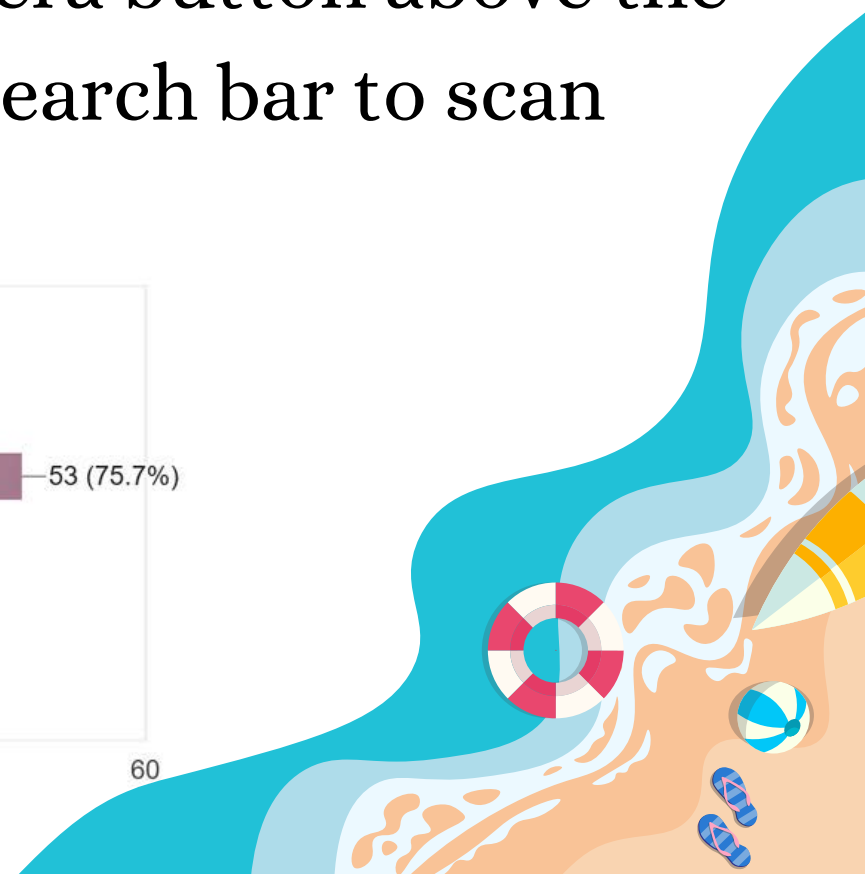
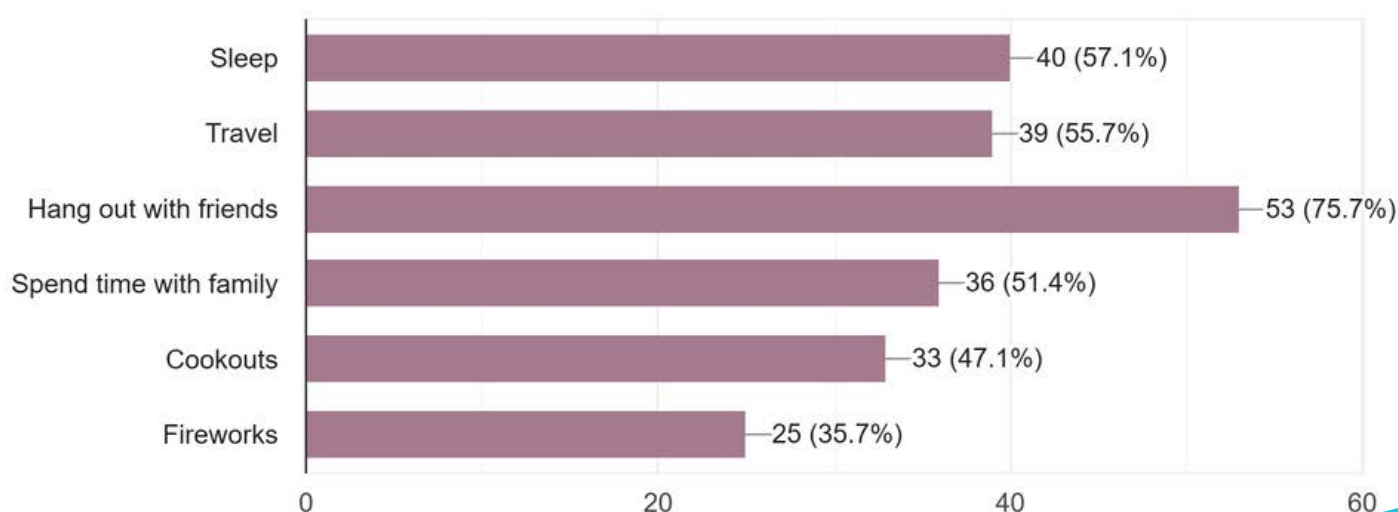


Scan for Summer
playlist!

Open spotify and click the
camera button above the
search bar to scan

Favorite thing to do over the summer?

70 responses



Summer

WORD SEARCH



Can you find the summer words hidden in the puzzle? Once you find them, say or write them.

A	S	W	I	M	S	U	I	T	E	R	V
B	A	H	G	B	E	A	C	H	O	T	A
S	Q	D	O	N	N	L	E	C	P	N	C
W	A	O	N	T	E	D	C	S	O	I	A
I	G	S	U	M	M	E	R	B	P	C	T
M	B	R	U	T	U	D	E	E	S	K	I
S	I	K	H	H	D	P	A	O	I	R	O
U	K	O	S	S	R	O	M	B	C	O	N
I	I	V	T	A	O	B	O	J	L	H	U
T	N	S	U	N	N	Y	A	R	E	L	I
E	G	C	U	D	F	L	T	J	S	L	T
S	U	M	B	R	E	L	L	A	N	A	P

SUNNY

BEACH

ICE CREAM

SWIMSUIT

HOT

SUMMER

VACATION

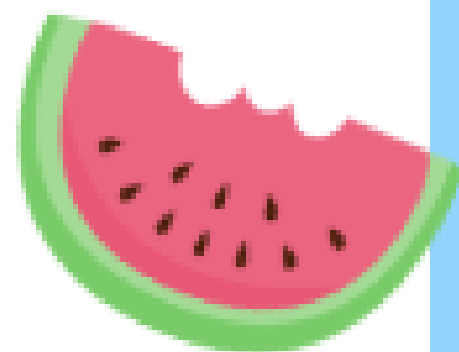
POPSICLE

SAND

BIKING

OUTDOORS

UMBRELLA



A crossword puzzle grid consisting of white squares for letters and black squares for empty space. The grid is defined by the following coordinates (row, column) where (0,0) is the top-left square:

- Row 0:** (0,0), (0,1), (0,2), (0,3), (0,4), (0,5), (0,6), (0,7), (0,8)
- Row 1:** (1,3), (1,7)
- Row 2:** (2,3), (2,7)
- Row 3:** (3,3), (3,4), (3,5), (3,6), (3,7), (3,8), (3,9), (3,10), (3,11), (3,12)
- Row 4:** (4,3), (4,4), (4,5), (4,6), (4,7), (4,8), (4,9), (4,10), (4,11), (4,12)
- Row 5:** (5,3), (5,4), (5,5), (5,6), (5,7), (5,8), (5,9), (5,10), (5,11), (5,12)
- Row 6:** (6,3), (6,4), (6,5), (6,6), (6,7), (6,8), (6,9), (6,10), (6,11), (6,12)
- Row 7:** (7,3), (7,4), (7,5), (7,6), (7,7), (7,8), (7,9), (7,10), (7,11), (7,12)
- Row 8:** (8,3), (8,4), (8,5), (8,6), (8,7), (8,8), (8,9), (8,10), (8,11), (8,12)
- Row 9:** (9,3), (9,4), (9,5), (9,6), (9,7), (9,8), (9,9), (9,10), (9,11), (9,12)
- Row 10:** (10,3), (10,4), (10,5), (10,6), (10,7), (10,8), (10,9), (10,10), (10,11), (10,12)
- Row 11:** (11,3), (11,4), (11,5), (11,6), (11,7), (11,8), (11,9), (11,10), (11,11), (11,12)
- Row 12:** (12,3), (12,4), (12,5), (12,6), (12,7), (12,8), (12,9), (12,10), (12,11), (12,12)

The numbers are placed in the starting squares of the words:

- 1: (0,0)
- 2: (0,3)
- 3: (0,7)
- 4: (2,12)
- 5: (3,3)
- 6: (3,7)
- 7: (5,7)
- 8: (7,3)
- 9: (7,6)
- 10: (8,9)

1. Summer shoes for your feet
5. They protect your eyes
7. Eating food outside
8. A place with sand and sea
10. Very warm

2. A frozen, sweet treat on a stick
3. A place to swim with clean water
4. It has short sleeves, you wear it
6. To move in water
9. You wear it on your head

Editor in Chief Send Off



Two years ago, members of the Herkimer staff came together to create something special: the acronym MAGIC. Standing for Mindset, Attitude, Grit, Integrity, and Choices, MAGIC reflects not just who we are as the Herkimer Magicians, but also the behavior and values we want to represent as a school. The idea started as a way to highlight the pride we have in being Magicians—our identity and the way we carry ourselves. But as the committee, which included Mrs. Paul, Mr. Schneider, Ms. Klink, Mrs. Jory, and Mr. Valesak, discussed it more, they realized MAGIC could become so much more: a guide for our school culture.

Here's what the committee members had to say about how the project came to life and what it means for our school community.

"I've been working here for such a long time and with that comes a lot of spirit and I just thought it would be a great idea to spread some of that to our middle school and hopefully our high school as well."

- Mrs. Jory

"I thought it would be a great idea to do something positive for the school and really be a part of the whole team magic thing."

- Mr. Valesak

"We decided this should give us some sort of identity. Instead of it being, 'They're the magicians, this is where we're from'. It should be more like 'This is the type of person that goes to this school'. I was especially interested in the mindset aspect of it because I have been promoting it to 7th graders since the class of 2026. Because I know math is stressful so I wanted to introduce them to the American mindset and give them options and reasons."

- Mr. Schneider

"We started the committee. We wanted to find a more mature guide for how magicians should act. It took months, for a while it was just a bunch of us throwing out words trying to figure out one for each letter in 'magic.' The hope was that the whole school would act this way and know that magic is more than just a mascot. To find a common language, to know our values, lead us to be the magic team. As Mrs. Tomasso once said, 'All roads lead to Herkimer.'"

- Mrs. Paul/ Ms. Klink



IN THIS ISSUE:

Influence in Herkimer

Any resident of Herkimer ends up on the edge of their seat when they hear, "Herkimer student" on the

Musical spotlight
Interviews about students in our 2025 musical "Footloose"

Video Game Reviews
Some video games you should play recommended by herkimer students!

Deep dives
A special look into some students and teachers at our school



Herkimer student is selected to attend a Journalism and Media Conference at George Mason University in Washington DC

Which is why our staff, students, and alumni should be compelled to share the achievements they've seen take place in our school to lift our school's name, reputation, and inevitably, graduation rates. So, for future newspaper endeavors, Melinda is submitting an extension of this article on an application to a journalism and media conference she was selected to attend at George Mason University in Washington DC in order to represent HHS and New York state. So, don't tell them she wrote the article after she was selected and that she wrote this caption about herself, by herself in the 3rd person.

So, Melinda, will be reaching out to staff students and alumni to share any Herkimer accomplishments of themselves, their parents, their children, etc. Please feel encouraged to recognize yourself, or any other remarkable scholars, athletes, musicians, or anyone with any talent or accomplishment that is worth sharing and spreading. The goal is to increase student confidence, school pride and spirit, and construct a sense of community that revolves around the positive accomplishments of Herkimer.

I joined Newspaper because I wanted a way to spread authentic, student made work that people will want to see. The newspaper started with so many people I felt there was too little work to do for so many people. Then later in the year I became one of very few people if not the only person at meetings. I beleive news is one of the best ways to put out information that can help or entertain them and I realize that my dedication to this paper over the past 2 years conveys my love of journalism devotion to that cause.

Melinda Poplawski



From First Bell to Final Bow

By: Melinda Poplawski, student writer

6:30 a.m. – Wake up. Get dressed. Mentally prepare for the chaos.

6:45 a.m. – Breakfast, pack lunch, grab my bag.

7:00 a.m. – Final checks: hair, perfume, deodorant.

7:10 a.m. – On the bus.

7:25 a.m. – Arrive at school and finish homework in the MG.

7:53 a.m. – AP U.S History.

8:39 a.m. – Algebra II.

9:25 a.m. – Chemistry.

10:30 a.m. – Spanish IV.

10:55 a.m. – Lunch (finally).

11:27 a.m. – Musical Theater—performance day, so energy is high.

12:13 p.m. – English.

12:57 p.m. – Chemistry Lab.

1:43 p.m. – Study Hall.

2:30 p.m. – Head to rehearsal at the college.

5:45 p.m. – Leave rehearsal and go straight to dance.

6:00 p.m. – Acre class.

6:30 p.m. – Ballet.

7:00 p.m. – Help teach younger dancers.

7:30 p.m. – Leave dance.

7:45 p.m. – KFC after dance (a necessity).

8:00 p.m. – Dinner at home.

9:00 p.m. – More homework.

9:30 p.m. – Sleep.

Between classes, rehearsals, and dance, the days are long, but doing what you love makes it worth it.

Song of the month

Drama Spotlight: Anna Marquisse

1) How many shows have you done at Herkimer?
2) What roles have you played
Rafiki, Sour kangaroo, Ali, Lulu, Deborah Sue, Hortensia
3) Favorite role you've played
Ali in Mamma Mia!
4) Favorite show you've been in
Mamma Mia!
5) A show you wish Herkimer would do?
Little Shop of Horrors
6) Past Herkimer show you wish you were in?
Newsies.
7) What's your dream role?
Audrey from Little Shop of Horrors and Lydia from Beetlejuice
8) Why do you do theater?
The people, it also helps me stay active, and I always have fun!
9) Do you plan on staying active after high school?
Yeah I want to continue to do shows.
10) Most important thing you've learned?
No matter what role you are, you can still have fun!

Guess

Mrs. Bello's book of the month:
A Good Girl's Guide to Murder
A high school student decides to solve a murder for her senior project.

Stage crew

Mrs. Sommer's book of the month:
We Were Liars
A girl with a head injury can't remember anything from summer vacation.

Russel Staph

1) How many shows have you done crew for? For 12 shows, including middle, high school and LF summer shows
2) Why did you start doing stage crew? He wanted to be part of the show without being on stage and his Baker made him.
3) Does the cast ever get on your nerves? Last year, the cast often got on his nerves because there was lots of strong personality.
4) Favorite musical you've done crew for? Matilda was his favorite musical he's done for crew because of how fun it was.
5) Have you learned anything important? He's learned lots of painting, lighting, and sound skills throughout these productions.

Influential Teacher

Mrs. Wolanski

Mrs. Wolanski has recently chosen as teacher of the month for being an academic role model. She feels very honored to have received this. She teaches algebra standards for 9th and 10th graders, pre-calc and calculus for 11th and 12th graders, and personal finance for 12th grade. She says she likes having the opportunity to teach every grade in high school and have the variety that comes with it. After 23 years of teaching Mrs. Wolanski makes math engaging by using a variety of lesson activities, lots of color coding, and not giving homework (except for the calc and precalc students). She also makes a great effort to connect with her students by doing things like belting out, talking and relating to her students and simply having fun. Students enjoy having Mrs. Wolanski because she makes an effort to get to know all her students and is very involved in the school. She has even kept in touch with a few students she's impacted over the last 2 years!

Mrs. Wolanski chose senior Sydney Bell as a student she's influenced. Sydney has taken both pre-calc and calculus with Mrs. Wolanski. Math has always been one of her favorite subjects because it had always been easy for her, however as she began taking more challenging math classes she started to dread going to math class. This changed when she had Mrs. Wolanski for pre-calc because she would make her excited to come to class everyday. Sydney likes Mrs. Wolanski because she is very generous and understanding, while also being a great teacher. She makes the most challenging subjects worthwhile. Mrs. Wolanski has impacted Sydney in many ways but one in particular is how understanding and caring she is. This impacted her because she has always been willing to help her students with any problem that may arise, and check in on them or try to help when they are overwhelmed. Sydney says Mrs. Wolanski is definitely her favorite teacher, and plans on attending the University at Buffalo in the fall for Biochemistry.

Senior: Sydney Bell