OCTOBER EDITION

Magic Ink

HOCO SEASON

HERKFOOT HOCO RECAP

The 2026 Herkimer football is a young team but a good one.

By Maya Saugh

On Monday September 28, after a successful win for HerkFoot I spoke to head coach Mr. Zach Steele. During this game, the Herkimer football team came out with a big win over the 4-0 Beaver River Beavers, with a final score of 28 - 42. During the first quarter the Magicians scored three touchdowns and got the extra points to put up 21 points and get an amazing lead of 21-7. In the second quarter they scored one touchdown and extra point and in the third quarter the team scored two touchdowns and two extra points. Two rushing touchdowns came from Flint Davis, as he had 131 rushing yards for 21 attempts. Brett Saunders also ran in a touchdown after throwing 12 complete passes for 307 yards. Braysen Richard had 173 receiving yards and one touchdown and Jacob Petucci had 83 receiving yards and a touchdown. Freshman kicker Landon Palkovic had 6 good field goals.The crowd during this eventful game, roared with excitement.

Coach Steele had a lot of great things to say about the game and the season as the team moved to 3-1. Steele said, “The game went well. If they play like that for the rest of the year they should be alright.” He also said that things came together the way they wanted.

I asked him what went well and he responded and said, “Competitiveness went best, They were competitive the whole game.” The team also had the ability to care about more than themselves. Every person I have talked to so far on the team has said that the line is the biggest help and the most important. There were many great stops made by the defensive that made the game 10x better. Steele called the O line the “un spoken heroes.” The line doesn't usually get the recognition it deserves. Coach Steele said “the quarterback Brett Saunders has only gotten sacked two times and one of those times was not due to the line.”

Fun Fact: Sophomore Chase Benedict played all five offensive line positions. This is a very impressive because it is not often done.

After I talked to coach Steele, I talked to sophomore quarterback Brett Saunders and junior wide receiver Jacob Petucci. Both players said the game went great. Brett said the Offensive line really went well and the team fought through the game. Jacob said that the quarterback threw accurately and the line held up nicely . Brett also said “The pass protection went smoothly and so did the defensive line.” Brett's biggest fear is that the team will get too big for themselves and go into every game thinking they will win. Brett’s best advice is to “play every game like its 1-1.”

The student section this year has really stepped up its game., As only fall sports have happened so far in the 2026 school, Football is leading the way. Jacob Petucci said "Everyone's having a good time, seeing flour thrown everywhere, definitely makes the vibes better”. The student section got three bags of flour and distributed it and threw it up in the air when a touch down was scored. Coach Steele also said he “liked the student section a lot especially since it was loud.”

The 2026 Herkimer football team is one to remember. Between the good vibes, wins, and the bond the team shows, Just like the team wants this season will go down in history. This past Thursday October 1st ,the team took a hard defeat against the Little Falls Mounties 12-27 making their record 3-2. They take on Dolgeville this upcoming Saturday October 10th at 1pm. Hopefully that game is as eventful and fun as the Beaver River game.



The Faces Behind the Game: Senior Spotlight

Newspaper representative, Maya Saugh, interviewed senior, Brian Lindsay, about his soccer career:

Q: How long have you play soccer and how long on varsity?

A: **I have played soccer for 13 years, and have been on varsity for 5 years.**

Q: What position do you play?

A: Center midfield

Q: How many goals and assists have you had this season?

A: 17 goals and 9 assists so far this season

Q: Favorite memory?

A: Scoring the game winning goal against little falls my freshman year

Q: Pre game ritual?

A: Stretch on my own and dribble around then take some deep breaths/meditation

Q: Is soccer your favorite sport to play? If not, what is?

A: AAU basketball is my favorite but I do like school soccer more than school basketball



"My sister is definitely a big inspiration, she played division I soccer and to see all the ups and downs she went through was really inspiring."



Additionally, senior, Melinda Poplawski was interviewed:

Q: How long have you been cheering?

A: 12 years in total. 8 competing and 4 on varsity

Q: What's your favorite part?

A: I really like dancing in the routine

Q: Favorite memory?

A: During a pep rally, somebody got hurt in the middle of the routine and I rearranged things so I could fill in for her and it looked like nothing happened.

Q: Pre game ritual?

A: I have a playlist for before every performance. And, I always have celcius and pink mini starbust.

Q: Is cheer your favorite sport?

A: Yes!

Q: Why cheer? Who inspires you?

A: I really love performing, I stuck with cheer for so long because I've had some really great coaches especially for competiton. Also great older role models, my favorite cheerleader has always been Rory Clanton.

Q: Did you perfer competition or varsity?

A: Definitely competiton, I miss it every day.

The cozy Corner

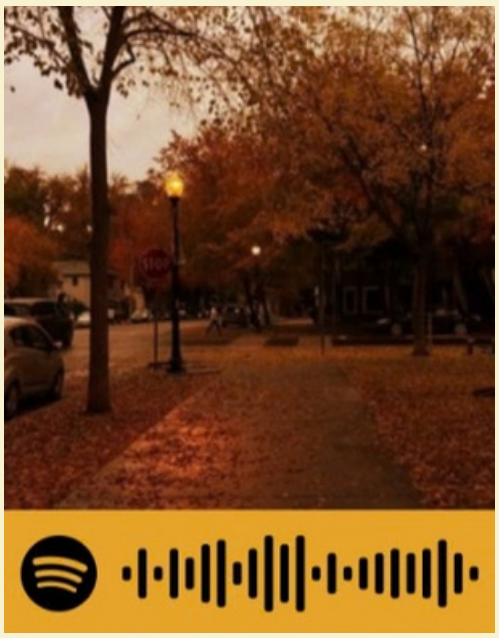
Taylor Swift's Chai Sugar cookeis

- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line baking sheet with parchment paper.
- Using a mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter in a large bowl on medium speed for about 1 minute. Add the vegetable oil. It may not fully incorporate with the butter, but that's ok. Add the granulated sugar, powdered sugar, and all of the spices. Beat to combine.
- Add the egg and vanilla, beating on medium speed until completely incorporated.
- Stir in the flour, baking soda and salt all at once using a wooden spoon or the mixer set on low.
- The dough will be soft. Refrigerate the dough for 1 hour or freeze for 15 minutes just so it's easier to handle.
- For large cookies, dollop 2 Tablespoons of cookie dough onto the cookie sheet about 2 inches apart. For smaller cookies use 1 Tablespoon for each cookie. Press the dough evenly with your fingers or palm to 1/4-inch thickness. Roll each cookie dough in a small bowl of cinnamon sugar.
- Bake for 12 to 14 minutes for larger cookies or 8 to 10 minutes for smaller cookies. Let the cookies cool on the baking sheet for at least 10 minutes before transferring to racks to cool completely.
- In a medium bowl, whisk together the glaze ingredients to thick but spreadable. Spread each cooled cookie with graze just over the center, leaving the edges of the cookie free of glaze. Sprinkle with a bit of fresh nutmeg if you have it. Store cookies in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 4 days.

Cookie Ingredients

1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature
1/2 cup vegetable oil (I like canola or sunflower oil)
1/2 cup (100 grams) granulated sugar
1/2 cup powdered sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons ground ginger
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground allspice
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon ground cardamom
1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
Pinch of fresh cracked black pepper
1 large egg

2 teaspoons of vanilla extract or the seeds of 1 vanilla bean pod
2 cups (250 grams) all-purpose flour
3/4 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
Cinnamon sugar for rolling



Glaze Ingredients

1 1/2 cups (180 grams) powdered sugar
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg, plus more for sprinkling the top of the cookies
3 tablespoons whole milk or eggnog



While you are baking your cookies, feel free to listen to the Magical Fall playlist made by HHS Students.

YOUR PERFECTLY REASONABLE HALLUCINATIONS

By Bella Gilmore

Have you ever been daydreaming and suddenly noticed a smiling face on the front of a car, or the outline of an animal in a pile of leaves? Have you ever seen familiar shapes in the clouds that float past your window? This is a phenomenon called pareidolia. Pareidolia is defined as the perception of meaningful patterns or images of familiar things in random, unrelated objects, images, or other stimuli. Though visual images are the most common, pareidolia can extend to audio as well. For example, hearing indistinct sounds or music in random noise from an air conditioner.

Pareidolia is actually very common, with most people in the world experiencing it to some degree. Not everyone experiences it to the same extent, variations likely due to the different ways that people's brains perceive information. Some people are better at seeing patterns than others and it is especially common in people prone to hallucinations.

But why does this phenomenon exist? A long time ago, this skill would most likely have been very important for survival, allowing our ancestors to quickly identify threats in the world around them. To this day, our brains are hardwired to recognize faces, even in objects that are only slightly face-shaped. One of the most interesting things about pareidolia is the fact that once a face or pattern is seen in an object, it can be difficult to unsee because your brain will retain the information and continue to identify the image every time you see the object.

The uses for pareidolia are as varied as the phenomenon is itself. Pareidolia can be used in medicine, helping medical students to detect spinal fractures or cancer by learning how to detect specific shapes and patterns in X-rays of the spine. It can also be used to improve cognitive flexibility and increase time spent in nature. Beyond uses in medicine, pareidolia can also be used to sell weirdly shaped food for outrageous prices on eBay. A few examples being the cheeto shaped like Charizard from Pokémon, which was sold for $87,840, and the chicken nugget shaped like an Among Us character, which sold for $99,997.



Image from BBC news at https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/articles/crewjg3p2n7o

So next time you see an image in the bricks on a wall or hear someone whispering your name from the air conditioner, it wouldn't hurt to try and see if that actually happened or if it was just your eyes playing tricks on you. Just because you saw something, doesn't mean it was always there. There could be a perfectly reasonable explanation, or a scientific phenomenon, to blame.

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New to the Crew

Welcome Mr. Robinson

Mr. Robinson is the new Spanish teacher, teaching three different grades the Spanish language. Ever since he was younger he has wanted to be a Spanish teacher and he now gets to live out his dream. He went to school at SUNY Oneonta and has been teaching for four years. Mr. Robinson loves the Spanish language and wants to inspire other students to learn new languages and try new things. So far he is enjoying the school environment and is looking forward to making connections and helping others.



Welcome MS. Matte



Ms. Matte is our new 6-12 choir teacher. Our last one broke the, “Herkimer curse” of choir teachers only lasting one year. Which Ms. Matte plans on doing for a more extensive time. She graduated from RFA and got her undergraduate degrees at The Crane schoof of music for music education and vocal performance. She got her masters at The Boston Conservatory. Her dream job has been to be a music teacher since she was 12 years old. Her music teacher Mrs. Gannon inspired her so much that she knew she wanted to do this for the rest of her life. Ms. Matte is very new to herkimer, she really enjoys the small class sizes and feeling like she can connect with each of her students, something that dosen’t happen often at big schools such as RFA. She is very passionate about helping her students and even says she would like to teach a music school college prep class. Another thing she’s found in Herkimer is paradise eatery. Lastly, Ms. Matte and many other students are looking forward to the high school musical production. The show is being announced at the last night of the musical theater showcase! My personal guess is Into the Woods :).

Beyond the Big Lizards

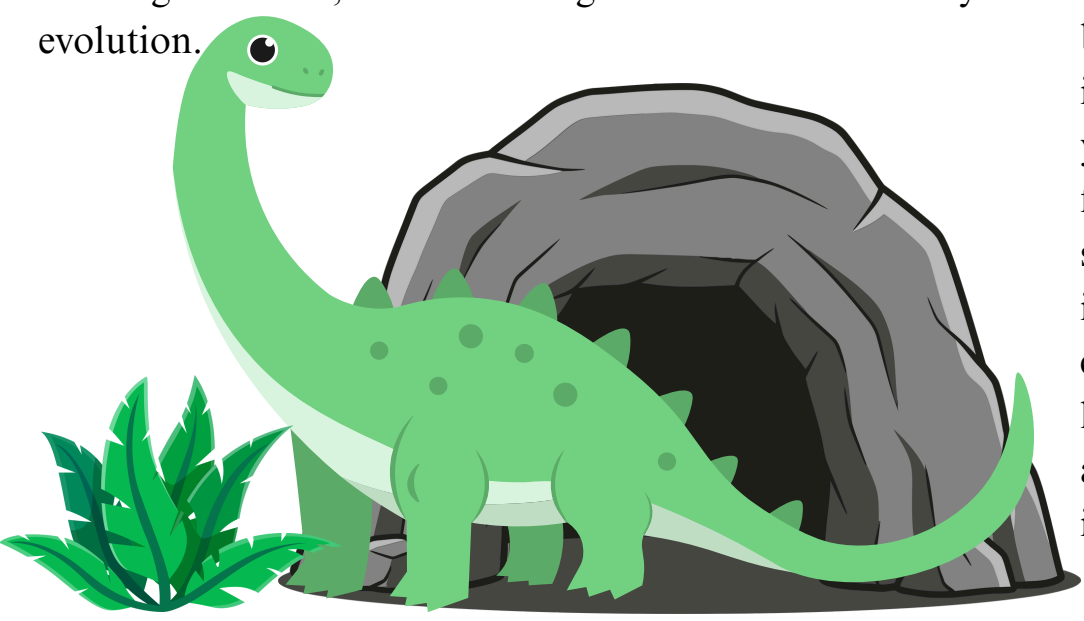
By: Gage Bassett

"The more you learn, the more you realize that everything is interdependent." MS. Kane

Learning about what you are passionate about, should be implemented more into school.
Sure, schools have tons of different electives and classes, but do they really cover everything? Does anybody truly want to take another boring math class? My and students' interests matter as well and I speak for anyone who likes or has interest in sciences. Our school should have more science electives, especially about one topic…Dinosaurs.

Dinosaurs are an untouched topic in many schools, but that doesn't mean they don't matter. Three teachers have similar opinions on the matter. Biology teacher, Ms. Kane, Chemistry teacher, Ms. Posey, and Earth Science teacher, Mrs. Lister.

Kane stated that dinosaurs are an integral part of the life that existed before and exists. Little kids really love dinosaurs and they almost become mythical creatures to them because they are extinct. When she was in college, she took a Natural History of Lower Invertebrates course, and dinosaurs a major part of the course. Additionally, Lister thinks that in order to understand evolution and understand earth's history you have to include that in any historical evidence. Finally, Posey thinks it's scientific data, it's understanding of bone structure and fossils and how they all work, it allows us to understand evolution. But it's a controversial topic because it can lead into religion and people's beliefs. The reason she thinks that is because it leads into religion and peoples beliefs on god and evolution. Some people may believe or may not believe in evolution and that could possibly cause issues in the future with the class due to parents or kids not wanting their kids, or not wanting to believe in the theory of evolution.



Now, how would this be implemented in our school? An elective, having an elective for this class would allow for people to find out more if they are interested in this topic. When asking the interviewed teachers they all had almost the same feedback. Kane said, "Yes, we should have more courses available as electives, however sometimes teachers who are most equipped to teach those courses are over scheduled with the basics of either earth science or biology. It's a big thread of biology and geology that never gets addressed"

Lister thinks, "Yes, it would be great", but she doesn't know how many students would be interested in that type of history of the earth, or geological history and it could go into many different things about it you could go into the precambrian, cambrian, you could do all the different types of history that they are, if you start to talk about just the dinosaur aspect, like the jurassic, triassic those eras or epochs would be very important.

Finally, Posey thinks it should be an elective, for kids who decide to go into a scientific background and want to understand fossils and topics like that. Also Kane said in regards to teaching an elective like that "if i had time, which i never do" she would be interested in it. It would not be difficult to create the curriculum and implement it, it would just take time and creativity, not something you just purchase a workbook series or textbook series for kids to follow. It would be a class that would have hands on fun creative things because it isn't tied to a standardized regents exam test that needs to do your due diligence as a teacher, you have to get students ready for that regents and can't go off to do and teach those fun subjects. Lister thinks it is interesting because she doesn't know if there is a curriculum already out there, probably a half year course. With how things are set up now she said she wouldn't have time to teach it in her schedule, it would be interesting to add that elective for sure. She thinks a lot of kids in general are interested in dinosaurs.

Beyond the Big Lizards Continued

Does anybody see the problem? It's both that teachers don't have time and that we don't have enough openly available teachers that are well equipped to teach this elective. Especially when a class like this has important knowledge that should be taught to students that blends into their classes already!

Kane believes that dinosaurs are important but she didn't have a lot of exposure to dinosaurs or rocks and geology, never had the most dynamic earth science teacher in high school, very disciplined and typing up her own textbook at the time, and gave out boring vocab to do, so dinosaurs and rocks were a turn off. In college she took a course as an elective called the natural history of lower invertebrates, which covered the reptiles, and the fish and the birds, and their evolutionary pathway, and the professor who was a "no nonsense, old guy" he taught through story telling, leaving each class off on a cliffhanger which had everyone wondering what happens next. He had them go buy a package of plastic dinosaurs, to study their anatomy, because they were very anatomically correct. Then realized as an adult that kids are highly interested in dinosaurs, and why they don't teach dinosaurs,also realizing that she doesn't know much about rocks, fossils, and layers because she was never exposed to it. She also had some knowledge she thought was pretty important, such as fossil fuels, and where they came from, whether its coal or oil or natural gas, it all comes from the dead layers of biological material wiped out all at once. Also having knowledge of the size of our planet and finite resources that no average person walking around thinks about, like drilling for natural gas in new york state, she argue with somebody on this topic who thought they should do it saying "we would have 20 years of natural gas" but 20 years is a blink of an eye" compared to big time scales, or something lasting longer.

In conclusion, opportunities should be available to students, this elective could change a student's future by opening up these opportunities to them. In Addition, Ms. Kane goes on to say, when someone says you don't need a math course or you don't plan on taking chemistry, it totally severs of a pathway of something interesting, always being told you don't need high math skills stating that if she had taken the chance to go inter higher math, you can go into higher science, having people on lower levels saying that they don't want to dissuade you of learning anything that too overwhelming, so they try and make your pathway easier, then there is a little bit of snobbery, needing you to be the best of the best of the best to take those higher sciences, the message that she trying to convey is that everybody should take physics and chemistry in high school, and algebra 2 and precalculus, though not everybody will have a career that will not use calculus but, you can have opportunities open to you.

So, I leave all readers with one thought:

"If third graders are so psyched about dinosaurs, why don't we teach dinosaurs to third graders?"

More than a Magician: Maya Saugh



Hello I am Maya Saugh, I am currently a Senior at Herkimer High School.

A surprising fact about me is that I recently broke my brakes in my car and am currently driving my grandma's car because mine is unsafe to drive.

I have been a part of a yearbook for two years and last year I got into pictures and took pictures for almost every sport and I photographed a wedding. I am a member of the Student council and I am currently the vice president. I am also in the Youth summit and I am a leader. I am in the Athletic leadership council and am on the board of directors. I am a mentor and have two mentees and I am a trained peer mediator. I am also in the national honor society and may possibly be the president. I am a captain of my softball team and have played all four years of high school. Although my freshman year I was not able to play due to intensive knee surgery.

My interests are watching and talking about sports (as you may entail from my photography), I enjoy being involved in the community and helping others. My favorite thing to do is hangout with my friends. The time I spend with my friends are my favorite memories. I also love going to the beach and on vacation, especially with my best friend Katie. My family is also very important to me.

A topic I would like to investigate is school sports and the school community.

Magic Fundraisers



Do you want your class or club fundraiser to be advertised in the school newspaper?

If so, please contact Melinda Poplawski or Mrs. Rosenburgh!