



# Bulldog

## BULLETIN

May 2024

### Message from the Superintendent

I am so proud to have another amazing Bulldog Bulletin to share with you. Please take a look to learn about our amazing students and staff. I also want to take a moment to thank the community for their support for our budget this year and our capital project. The passage of both allows us to move forward as a community to support our students and our staff. Thank you for everything!

—Matt Landahl

### Music-in-Our-Schools Concert is a Delight



Music students from the four Beacon elementary schools and BHS got together for a special concert in mid-March in honor of Music in Our Schools Month.

The purpose of this month is to raise the importance of music education for all children, according to the National Association for Music Education.

The concert involved all elementary school choruses joining together with the high school choir to sing a warm up round together before taking turns to sing prepared pieces for each other.

“That was really special for the kids here to see that,” Forrestal music teacher John Keener recalled. “Seeing their parallels at the other elementary schools also was a really an eye-opener for some.”

Music provides endless benefits for students including social skills and expressing themselves in creative ways.

“It synthesizes a lot of different areas and types of knowledge,” Keener said. “Music can and really be all subjects at once.”

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### BHS Senior Inducted into the National Technical Honor Society

Noelle Young, a BHS senior, was one of 31 students from Dutchess BOCES' Career & Technical Institute to be inducted into the National Technical Honor Society (NTHS) during a ceremony May 2.

In order to qualify, students must complete an application with a writing prompt, provide community service hours and recommendation letters from instructors and job supervisors and have an overall career technical education average of 93 or above.



For Young, a second year cosmetology student, being in NTHS is a meaningful distinction.

“It holds you to a higher standard of professionalism,” she explained.

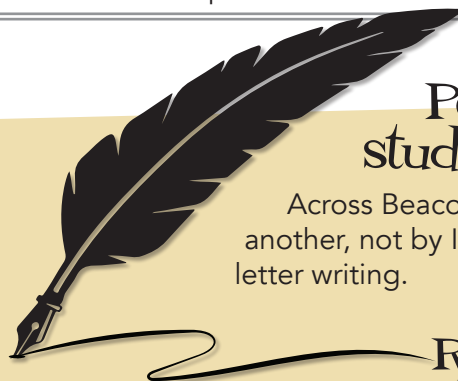
Young, who was described during the ceremony as someone who learns and

improves with every assignment, credits both CTI instructors and BHS guidance counselor Dawn Smith for her success.

“I probably wouldn't have been able to apply to CTI without her,” Young said of Smith. “Beacon has laid a good foundation for me on how to be a good student and how to have a good work ethic.”

CTI Principal Nick Millas encouraged students to be community leaders and follow the NTHS mission of advocating for and empowering all students to pursue the skills needed to build their careers and the global workforce.

“We have entered a time of unprecedented low employment rates and look to our students to not only fill the large gap in the workforce, but also provide leadership,” Millas said. “Whatever pathway you choose, do what makes you happy, give back to your community and put in an honest day's work that you and others can be proud of.”



### PenPal project connects students across the district

Across Beacon, students are connecting with one another, not by Instagram or phone, but by the lost art of letter writing.

### Rombout & Sargent

The project, which aligns with social emotional learning, was spear headed by Rombout science teacher Marisa Benson last school year as an opportunity for sixth graders to connect with and give advice to incoming middle schoolers.

“It's a real welcoming way into the middle school,” teacher Kimberly Gonzalez said. “Getting a letter from someone that's here, that's going through it is so important.”

Gonzalez was approached about doing this project from Sargent teachers this year and



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# Music-in-Our-School Concert is a Delight

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Fourth grade chorus member Teddy Embry enjoyed the experience of singing for older students and getting an idea of what high school is like.

“It’s kind of the pre-show of what we’re going to do,” Embry explained. “It was really fun.”

Sonja McCollum, a fifth grade clarinet player, enjoyed the event and appreciates music’s ability to bring people together.

“If you’re playing a song with another band, you all play it together,” McCollum said. “You’re all in the same rhythm.”

## PenPal Projects

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found that her class reveled in it because some of them, including Patrick McAvoy, previously received letters. McAvoy’s older pen pal eased his nerves about attending middle school and now enjoys returning the favor where he offers advice in a more thoughtful way than just texting.

“We can talk to them to make sure that they have a good experience with middle school,” McAvoy said. “It really shows that someone cares more than just being able to tap on their phones.”

This exercise teaches students how to formulate a letter where neat handwriting is required and younger kids brainstorm questions to ask Gonzalez’s students. “Getting them is exciting, but also writing them is exciting,” Gonzalez said.

Sargent fifth grader Mirella Digneo appreciates both writing letters and receiving advice from older students so she can more easily prepare for sixth grade. “Since I’ve got the letters, it’s helped me,” Digneo said. “It would be cool to meet them.”

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## BHS MAKES MOCK TRIAL FINALS FOR SECOND TIME

The BHS Mock Trial team impressed everyone by advancing to Dutchess County Mock Trial Finals for the second year in a row in late April.

This year’s trial, which centered on a personal injury lawsuit, was at the Village of Red Hook Justice Court where Beacon students took the position of plaintiff against Millbrook High School students acting as defense. Real life Judge Jonah Triebwasser presided over the trial.

While Millbrook was ultimately victorious, Triebwasser called the trial one of the closest he ever saw.

Students were given legal advice and tips about trial etiquette from attorney James Kimmel, of McCabe & Mack LLP, and it showed as Mock Trial Club advisor Matthew Steltz praised the students, especially the seniors, for their performance.

“This year’s group of seniors personified the finest of Beacon High School,” Steltz said. “The underclassmen are excited about preserving the winning culture demonstrated by their leadership and commitment.”



While sophomore Samiha Golden, was slightly nervous portraying a witness, she enjoyed seeing how a court case works. Next year she hopes to be a lawyer. “It’s more fun than people think it is,” Golden said. “Everyone in their life will probably have to go to court for something and it’s cool to see that in a way where there isn’t as much pressure.”

## GUPTA GIVEN DISTINCTIVE HONOR



Senior Harsh Gupta celebrated a personal victory when he was named top attorney at the mock trial for the second year. He will be presented with the Ben Allen Breslow

Award for most outstanding attorney throughout the season at the Dutchess County Bar Association luncheon in June.

This distinction is determined by judges throughout the season who vote for the attorney who shows the highest level of litigation and professionalism.

“In my 14 years as the mock trial adviser, I don’t recall a more prepared and talented litigator,” Steltz said of Gupta. “We’ll definitely feel Harsh’s absence next year.”

Gupta has been with the club since sophomore year, where he became more confident with arguing facts in the courtroom and improved his public speaking skills.

“It’s definitely an important skill to have, to think under pressure and to say things under pressure which is an increasingly difficult task,” Gupta said. “There’s a lot of good things you can learn from this.”

## Forrestal’s Voices Roar Loud!

A group of Forrestal students have really jumped to the occasion. They are members of the school’s cheerleading club and are taking this sport by storm.



The club, open to third through fifth graders, was formed last year by teacher Pam Ciotoli who wanted to offer a program similar to one she saw at her daughter’s school in Wappingers Falls. Club members have performed at BHS’ varsity football and basketball games, as well as Forrestal’s first pep rally on Feb. 23, where they received hand painted congratulatory signs.

The club remains popular, with many students returning for another year and new kids picking up pompoms too. Ciotoli noted that cheerleaders should be recognized as athletes for the work they put in.



Ciotoli is impressed by her kids’ dedication to cheerleading and their ability to inspire many, including the BHS varsity cheerleaders they work with on events such as Homecoming. She hopes to see them continue with it at Rombout and BHS.

“They work super hard during our practices,” Ciotoli said of her kids. “Even the high school girls were so

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When it comes to science, Sargent students and staff think outside the Bunsen burner.

## STEAM FAIR

Sargent parents came to school on April 3 to see their children's varied and unique science experiments during the second annual STEAM Fair held in the school auditorium.

All students had a chance to share about their projects with parents and classmates. These spanned from a model Eiffel Tower made of uncooked spaghetti and marshmallows to a Lego robot.



Teacher Matthew Carpenter noted that many occupations incorporate STEM

elements, making a fair like this crucial for students who can focus on a topic they are most interested in. He most enjoys seeing students explain their projects with great enthusiasm.

"It's important to start get interested in it at a younger age," Carpenter said. "The fair here really helps with that." Carpenter was fascinated by the numerous sophisticated projects on display.

"An eight year old building a robot to plant seeds is a crazy idea, but it was really impressive," Carpenter said. "The



displays are looking really nice."

Fourth grader Val Winklemann's and third

grader Daisy O'Dell's project called "Powerful Air" showcased how air is capable of moving many items, including two handmade cardboard tube cars with balloons on top.

The girls were inspired by a windy day they experienced.

"We were outside one day and we saw trees and leaves and grass moving," Winklemann said. "We did it about air because of our experience outside."

What O'Dell enjoyed most about this project was seeing how the smaller car went faster than the bigger one. She loves science because her brain gets a workout.

"I like it because it gets me thinking and then I have to figure it out," O'Dell said.



## BEACON REPRESENTED at REGIONAL SCIENCE FAIR

Fifth graders Sabine Schenck and Max Staab represented Beacon at the Dutchess County Regional Science Fair on April 6 at Dutchess Community College where they presented their projects to professors, community members and elected officials.

Staab won first place overall in the fair's junior division and was a recipient of the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater's Environmental Award for his project which involved creating a Fishkill Creek biome, or area classified to according to species that live in a particular location, and testing which water is best for that area.

Schenck received an honorable mention for her project in the junior division which involved seeing which types of noodles absorb the most water.

impressed to see their skill level and how well they work together."

Sophomore Macy Alancastro admires the younger cheerleaders for their positivity and sees herself as a role model to the younger generation.

"It's really cool because we get to see how little kids are influenced by us," Alancastro said. "They're really cute in general."

Third grader Natalya Zingone-Redfield most enjoys performing stunts in a pretty uniform with white bows, as well as learning new moves from Ciotoli and the varsity cheerleaders.

"We usually do some tumbling out at the end of it and we just pop out," she explained. "I definitely want to do this all throughout my school years."



Third grader Autumn Arroyo loves learning from the varsity cheerleaders and seeing their routines up close. She has some advice for future athletes. "Be confident, be brave and try your best," Arroyo said.

## Glenham Event is Miles of Fun

Glenham students walked, ran, jogged and even attempted a conga line on a gorgeous late April day as part of an annual fundraising effort known as the Fun Run.

The run raised \$14,150 to go toward bringing in guest speakers and any materials teachers need for their classrooms. Adrienne Zolotas, special education teacher and the Glenham PTO's fundraising coordinator, helped organize the run. Families registered their children to participate through Booster, a school fundraising company, and donations were made through its website.

"We appreciate everything that our community of Glenham gives to us," Zolotas said.

As students ran, they were cheered on by parents, staff and Glen, the school's loveable tiger mascot. The kids reciprocated by giving Glen countless hugs.

Making it even more special was when students showcased personalized flags they made in their respective classes.

"Students got to be with their friends, with their teachers and it was a beautiful day, so it worked out very well," Zolotas said. "We have wonderful families that support us every day."

Second grader Duke Faust enjoyed running numerous laps around the field and cheering on everyone who participated. "I loved it and I also got to be a cheerleader on the side," Faust said. "It was awesome."

Second grader Will Moss completed 33 laps, which he counted as one of his favorite aspects of the run. "My favorite part was running around and giving everyone high fives," Moss said.







**Forrestal Promotes Autism Acceptance**

“Awareness is knowing that somebody has autism...Acceptance is when you include (a person with autism) in your activities. Help (them) to develop in that community and get that sense of connection to other people.” says Christopher Banks, President and CEO of The Autism Society of America.

The Forrestal community spent the month of April celebrating Autism Acceptance Month in ways that are as unique as the students.

## Morning News Update

Alexis McKoy-Yakle, assistant director of pupil personnel, participated in an interview with the school’s morning news show hosts and fifth graders Luna Punsoda-Drew and Morgan Jamin, explaining what autism is and how to support special needs students.

“If someone doesn’t speak to us with their words, they might speak with their body,” McKoy-Yakle said. “We should be open to all that different communication.”

## Walk for Autism



The month went out in style with close to 75 people participating in a Walk for Autism on May 9 as a way to promote autism awareness and equity. Participants walked or biked from The Roundhouse’s parking lot to Forrestal. Students who take the bus got dropped off on Liberty Street and walked from there to school with supervision.

For physical education teacher Thomas Zehner, it is important to be involved to show that just because students are different does not mean they should be excluded from activities. He appreciates the support from local families who helped promote the walk. “The school community has been awesome since we started it,” Zehner said. “Students being themselves is what we’re pushing for.”



## PenPal Projects

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### Glenham & Sargent

Fifth graders at Glenham and Sargent wrote to each other to get better acquainted in anticipation of the annual overnight trip to Sharpe Reservation in late May.

Samara Friedman Quinn, of Sargent, has written both to Rombout and Glenham students and noted that it is a great way to break the ice with future classmates.

“You already know about them, so it’s not that hard to start a conversation,” she said. “It’s a good way to learn more about people you’re going to meet next year.”

Henry Allee, of Glenham, enjoys learning about students from other Beacon schools by asking questions about their life in the mailed out letters. While this is a slow process for some, Allee finds it exciting.

“It’s fun waiting for them because then we’re like, ‘Oh, I bet they’re working on them right now,’” Allee recalled. “I always like getting the letter back from them, because I see the questions that they answered.”



# SOLD OUT



## Phantom of the Opera boasts a Sold Out Show

The Beacon Players hit out of the park with their elaborate and elegant rendition of the Andrew

Lloyd Weber musical “The Phantom of the Opera” for three performances between April 19 and 21 at BHS’ Seeger Theater. The first Friday show sold out with many community members leaving positive comments on the Players’ Facebook page.

The story revolves around the Phantom (played by Jonah Espinosa) who, in a mask to hide a disfigurement, schemes to get closer to budding starlet Christine (played by Molly Lyons) by strong-arming management to give her key roles. However, when she falls for arts benefactor Raoul, he enacts a plan to keep her close by.

Junior Messiah Gardner played André, a new owner of the Paris Opera House. He said being involved was a natural choice because music has always been with him.

Senior Vanessa Piciacchio, a B-flat clarinet player, joined the pit orchestra for the first time because she is a “Phantom” fan and loves playing in the school band. The role was daunting, but Piciacchio was excited for the opportunity. “It’s been really amazing,” Piciacchio said. “I’ve learned so much from everyone and watching the show has been a phenomenal experience.”

