



*24 Hours:*  
*A Photographic Interpretation of*  
*Life in the Adirondacks*

*2026*





LAKE PLACID INSTITUTE  
*presents*

*24 Hours:*  
*A Photographic Interpretation of*  
*Life in the Adirondacks*

*2026*



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*Lake Placid Institute presents the 24 Hours Photography Showcase  
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Ticonderoga Central School

Ingrid Van Slyke  
Northwood School



## 2026 Juror *Jonathan Zaharek*

*This year's contest presented an unusually high level of quality across submissions. Narrowing 184 images down to fewer than 32 was genuinely challenging. At one point, nearly half of the entries were still on the table. Reducing that group by another sixty required careful consideration and intentional restraint. One of the most important elements I looked for throughout the judging process was whether a photograph felt deliberate. Images that stood out were those that showed thought, purpose, and story. Whether the moment was funny, abstract, emotional, or simply meaningful, the strongest photographs demonstrated intention in both subject and execution. It warmed my heart to read every description submission. Almost every image felt special to the photographer in some way. This is important, because good photography isn't just about a good image, but also how the photographer felt in that moment. It's part of the story.*

***Photography, at its core, is about capturing a singular moment in time, uniquely and intentionally, and under the theme of "24 hours," these students did exactly that.*** What impressed me most was the level of awareness behind nearly every image. Many strong photographs ultimately could not be included simply due to space limitations, not because they lacked merit. If your work is not represented here, it does not reflect your ability or potential as a photographer. Creative growth comes from learning how to see the world differently and more intentionally, and this year's submissions showed that many of these students are already well on that path. – Jonathan Zaharek

Jonathan Zaharek is a highly recognized professional landscape photographer and artist specializing in the extreme and diverse environments of the Adirondack High Peaks. Jonathan has also traveled to over 30 countries in his pursuits of exploration and photography. What began as a passion for visual storytelling in high school quickly became a full-time pursuit, and for over a decade, Jonathan has dedicated his career to capturing the raw beauty and untamed wilderness of the Adirondacks. His work is showcased exclusively through Arts Center Lake Placid, and his striking imagery has earned him numerous awards, features in major publications, and a loyal following among outdoor enthusiasts and collectors alike. As an author, Jonathan continues to share his deep knowledge of the region, blending adventure, conservation, and artistry in his work to inspire others to appreciate and explore the natural world.

# First Place

## *Winter on Mirror Lake*

**Jacob Slagel**

Northwood School Grade 12

*January 24, 2026 2:24 pm Mirror Lake, Lake Placid, NY*

I wanted to capture a moment that felt specific to the Adirondacks in winter. I was standing out on Mirror Lake when the sled dogs came into view on the ice, and it made the town and mountains feel connected in the same frame. I liked how the dogs, the town buildings, and the church all lined up with the mountains behind them. The scene had a lot going on, but it still felt peaceful. The cool afternoon light made the snow vibrant and the peaks really stand out.

I'm originally from Seattle, but I've spent the last four years going to school in the Adirondacks. I've grown to love being outside here, and photography is how I capture and share the beauty of this special region. Lately I've been trying different types of photography to find my style and build my portfolio.

*This image is iconic for the Lake Placid region, capturing a scene many professional photographers seek, executed here with exceptional precision. The MacIntyre Range is perfectly aligned in the background, with the church and dog sledding centered on the lake, creating a balanced composition that tells a complete story of winter, community, and place.*

*The tight framing and thoughtful use of the rule of thirds bring everything together in a way that feels intentional and polished. This photograph has clear gallery and publication potential and stands out as a professional-level representation of the region. – J.Z.*



# Second Place

## *Aerial Ski Jumping*

**Mary Coff**

North Country School Grade 9

*January 11, 2026 3:00 pm Lake Placid Ski Jumps*

I was at the ski jumping freestyle cup with my friends. I brought my zoom lens and was super excited to get some action shots of the jumping. I took a bunch of pictures experimenting with angles and zoom but this one was my favorite. It was a really fun day and I had a great time taking photos and experiencing the competition.

My name is Mary Coff, I am in 9th grade at North Country School. I take Darkroom Photography with Sierra Grennan. I enjoy photographing people and taking spur-of-the-moment shots! In my free time I love to run and embroider.

*This black-and-white film photograph from the ski jumping freestyle cup demonstrates strong technical control and storytelling. Rather than isolating the skier, the photographer included the entire slope, spectators, signage, and weather, creating a fuller sense of atmosphere and scale.*

*Capturing the skier frozen midair on film requires precise timing and patience. The classic contrast and documentary feel give the image a timeless quality, making it the strongest film submission and a deserving podium finish. – J.Z.*



# Third Place

## *The Light in the Dark*

**Mara Cossey**

Ticonderoga High School    Grade 11

*December 20, 2025    7:30 pm    Ticonderoga, NY*

I was inspired to take this photo to show the contrast in how people perceive Christmas time. On the one hand, some love the holiday and find themselves to be full of joy, spirit, and cheer. On the other hand some tend to be full of sorrow, as it can remind them of those they've lost in the past. Christmas is meant to be a time spent with family and friends, but can be a constant reminder to those grieving the loss of loved ones. The photo is intended to highlight that the holiday can be interpreted in two completely opposite ways, and depending on where you view the image it can be either cheerful, or full of melancholy.

Hi, my name is Mara Cossey and I am currently a junior at Ticonderoga Central School District. I play multiple sports including soccer, basketball, and golf, I am a member of student council, the Key Club treasurer, the National Honors society co-president, and partake in the sweethearts and heroes club.

*This image stood out for both its uniqueness and emotional intent. A softly lit Christmas tree set against a dark dusk sky initially draws attention visually, but the artist's description reveals deeper meaning, reflecting how the holidays can represent both joy and sorrow. The contrast between gentle light and surrounding darkness communicates this duality in a subtle, thoughtful way, making it a compelling and emotionally layered photograph.    – J.Z.*





*Alongside the First, Second, and Third Place photographs, the following pages present a collective snapshot of a day in the Adirondack Park, as seen through the eyes of high school photographers. Jonathan Zaharek reflects on what each piece excels in, highlighting the qualities that make each image distinctive and resonant.*

# Morning Frost

**Alyssa Denton**

Boquet Valley Central  
School Grade 9

October 10, 2025

6:11 am Lewis, NY

This photograph came to be when I was getting ready for school one morning in the fall and I looked out the window and saw the beautiful sparkles of the morning frost. It was really cold but magical. It was sparkly and frosty and magical and amazing.

I am a 9th grade student at Boquet Valley. I enjoy art like painting, drawing and taking pictures. My favorite classes are Art and Science. When I am older I would like to do cosmetology.



## Macro perspective

*Frosted grass photographed up close feels like entering a miniature world. The detail, color, and texture make this the strongest macro submission. – J.Z.*

# Morning Orange



**Carson Leibeck**  
Boquet Valley Central  
School Grade 12  
October 6, 2025  
**6:41 am** Willsboro Point

*The lake is covered in orange light from the rising sun.*

*The color spreads across the water and moves with the waves.*

*It makes the lake feel calm, yet waves crash*

*The orange overpowers the darker water and sky.*

*It feels warm, like the day is just starting.*

*The light won't look like this for long.*

I was inspired to take this photo when for some reason I was ready for school early, just this day, and I was being blinded through my window by the gorgeous sunrise.

## Sunset exposure and atmosphere

*The strongest sunset submission overall, with Lake Champlain resembling an ocean and mountains fading into the distance. Perfect exposure and timing place the photographer exactly where they needed to be for this moment. – J.Z.*

# Rose Laced With Dew

**Brayden Gigliotti**

South Lewis Central School Grade 10  
October 13, 2025 7:00 am Greig, NY

This special photograph captures a fleeting moment of natural beauty, taken early in the morning right at the end of a garden. It features a stunning bi-color rose, which blends from a soft, light pink center to a vibrant, deep magenta around its edges. The entire flower is covered in tiny, sparkling water droplets, looking like delicate jewels left behind by the morning dew.

To truly capture this moment the timing had to be precise. The morning dew's specific nature made it difficult to capture it. I needed to take this photograph early in the morning and in the correct sun conditions. I used a special camera focus technique that makes the background look softly blurred. This keeps your eye fixed on the incredible textures and colors of the rose itself, making it stand out sharply. The soft morning light and the fresh dew give the image a peaceful, calm, and romantic feeling. I wished to capture the simple contrast of color, light, and texture that is often overlooked on a busy day. It's an appreciation of the small beauties in life that we ignore as we traverse in our own lives. It connects us to our human nature of love, not only for each other but for the things we enjoy and cherish.

Off the field, the slopes, and the green, you'll find me behind the lens. I'm an active athlete, loving soccer, skiing, and golf and I bring the same passion and focus I have for sports to my



photography. My busy schedule has taught me the value of capturing unfamiliar, interesting photos that show a different perspective, ensuring that even with my active lifestyle, I can still capture beauty. My unique perspective, blending dynamic angles with a keen eye for detail, allows me to craft compelling visual stories that resonate long after first seen.

## Floral detail and texture

*A close-up rose covered in micro droplets feels vivid and tactile. The contrast and clarity make the image increasingly engaging the longer you look at it. – J.Z.*

# Pollination



**Brayden Moynehan**

Lake George Jr/Sr High

School Grade 11

September 18, 2025

**9:45 am**

Shepard Park,

Canada St, Lake George

Often times I have an image in my head of what I want a picture to be but I can never quite replicate it. Here, I was able to get this sort of magical photo of a bee, in what feels like a different world. I was very happy with the way the colors popped in this yet still all fit together nicely.

I am now in my second year of photography at Lake George High School. In 2025 I made it into the contest book and remember the feeling being awesome, but I was really just happy to share my photo. I have come to love this hobby and seeing all the creative things people manage to do with it.

## Wildlife precision

*A sharply focused bee pollinating a flower, captured with excellent exposure and minimal motion blur. While seemingly simple, this image required precise timing, technical control and good color grading. – J.Z.*

# ***Frozen Whispers in Morning Light***

**Olivia Sage**

Newcomb Central School Grade 10

January 11, 2026 **9:46 am** Gore Mountain

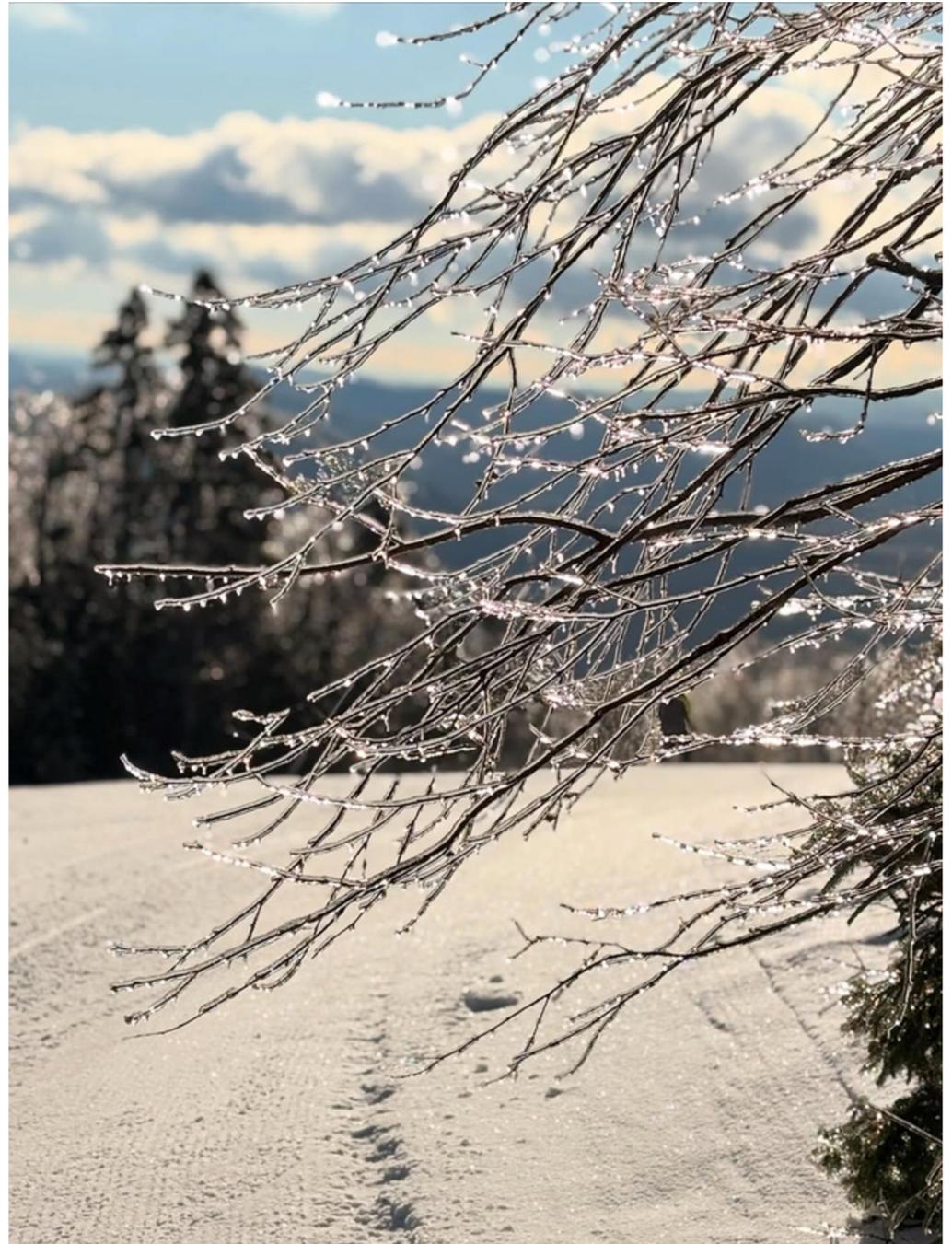
I love this photo because it shows the ice glistening on the branches and shows how cold it is here in the Adirondacks. This photo was taken while I was skiing at Gore mountain and this is on the trail Twister. While I was skiing I came across a section of these trees with ice sparkling on them and thought to myself This would be an amazing photo. I love how it shows the fresh groomed trail with the mountains in the background.

This picture tells the story of waking up early in the morning driving to Gore and going on your first run of the day. it also tells how calm skiing could be with the nice groomed trails and clear skies.

I am Olivia Sage and I go to Newcomb Central School. When I graduate high school I am hoping to go to Syracuse University with a major in sports media and a minor in journalism. I love taking photos because it is my way of "escaping" from the world. It is just me and my camera against the world. My biggest passion is skiing and I love to bring my camera on top of Gore Mountain and take photos as I go down!

## **Winter detail and atmosphere**

*Ice-coated branches glow as light hits each frozen edge, capturing winter in a way that feels both cold and warm. The fine detail gives this familiar scene fresh impact. – J.Z.*



# Lake Life



## Annabelle McBroom

South Lewis Central School Grade 10

September 27, 2025 **11:42 am** Stillwater

This picture I captured is very special in many ways. One summer Saturday evening my family and I decided to go for a wheeler ride around the ADK and we had ended up at Stillwater where we finally decided it was a good time for a break. Over the summer a lot of the ADK lakes had a major drought and Stillwater was one of them. So when we arrived at Stillwater we noticed the water had gone up but not by much. We decided to take a walk onto the raft and see how low the water really was. When we got to the end of the raft I had noticed the water was fairly low and I thought I wouldn't be able to get a perfect picture from here. I happened to look back and I saw a boat upon the shore and thought it would be an amazing picture. When I pulled up my camera I realized that I would have to get low to get the perfect view so I decided to lay on the

edge of the raft and position myself just right. I took many pictures and finally fell in love with one. I thought it was very beautiful in color but then I decided to turn it black and white and loved it so much more.

Hello, My name is Annabelle McBroom. I am a sophomore at South Lewis Central School. I am 15 years old. I have a very big love for photography. I absolutely love the nature and the beauty of outdoors. I mostly enjoy my pictures black and white. I personally feel that black and white images tell more of a story.

## Vintage black-and-white aesthetic

*This boat photograph feels decades old in the best way. Clean framing and the decision to convert to black-and-white give it a classic documentary character. -J.Z.*

## Andrew Denton

Boquet Valley Central School Grade 12

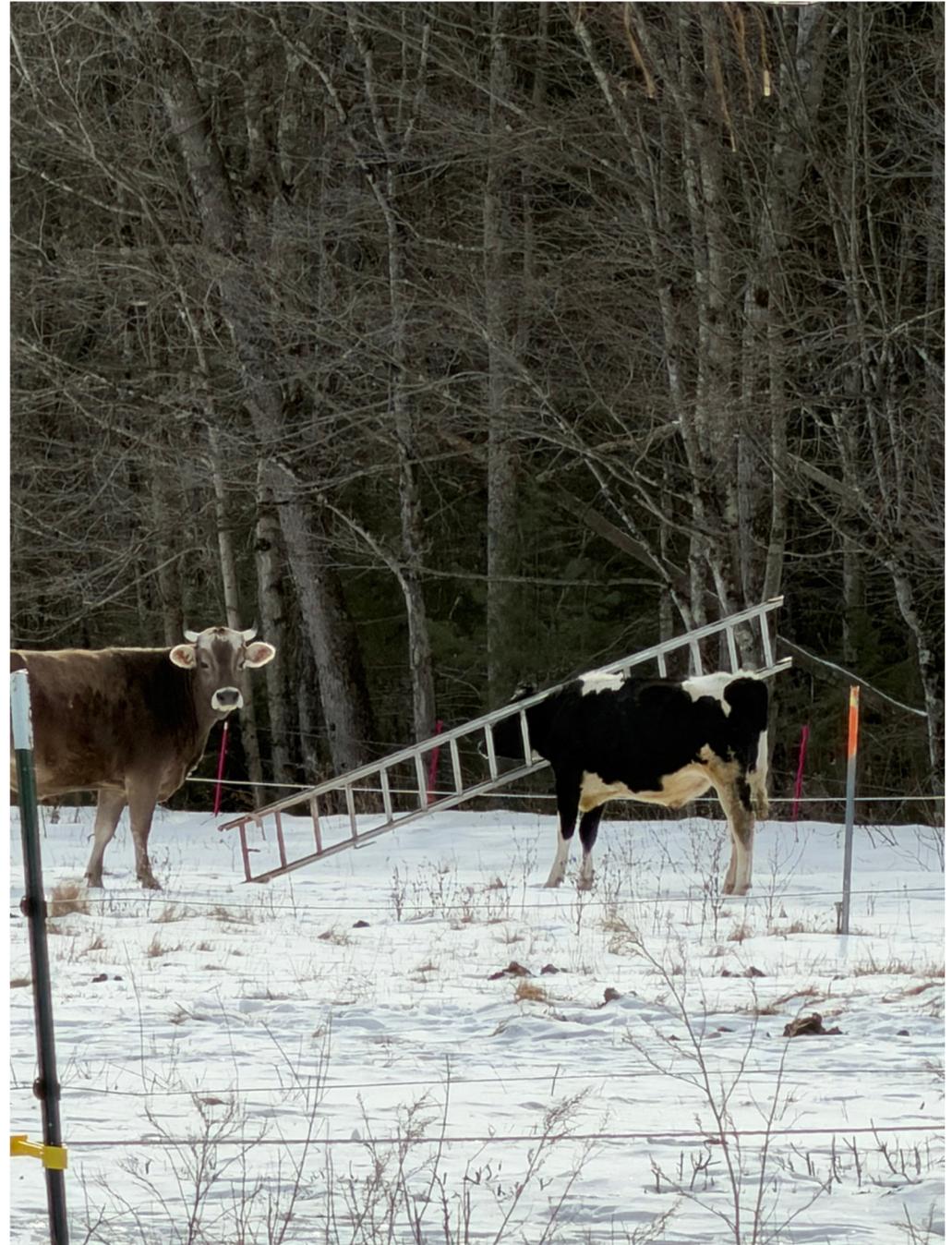
January 20, 2026 12:54 pm Lewis, NY

The ladder resting on Freddy's head feels both humorous and symbolic. It suggests burden, patience, or perhaps the strange adaptability of rural life where animals coexist with forgotten tools and human traces. Freddy does not resist it; he simply stands, accepting the moment. Evette's distance adds contrast, reminding us that not all experiences are shared, even when standing side by side. This image reflects the quiet poetry of everyday farm life. In the silence of winter, small, unplanned moments become meaningful. Freddy and Evette are not performing or posing they are simply being, and in that honesty, the photograph finds its story.

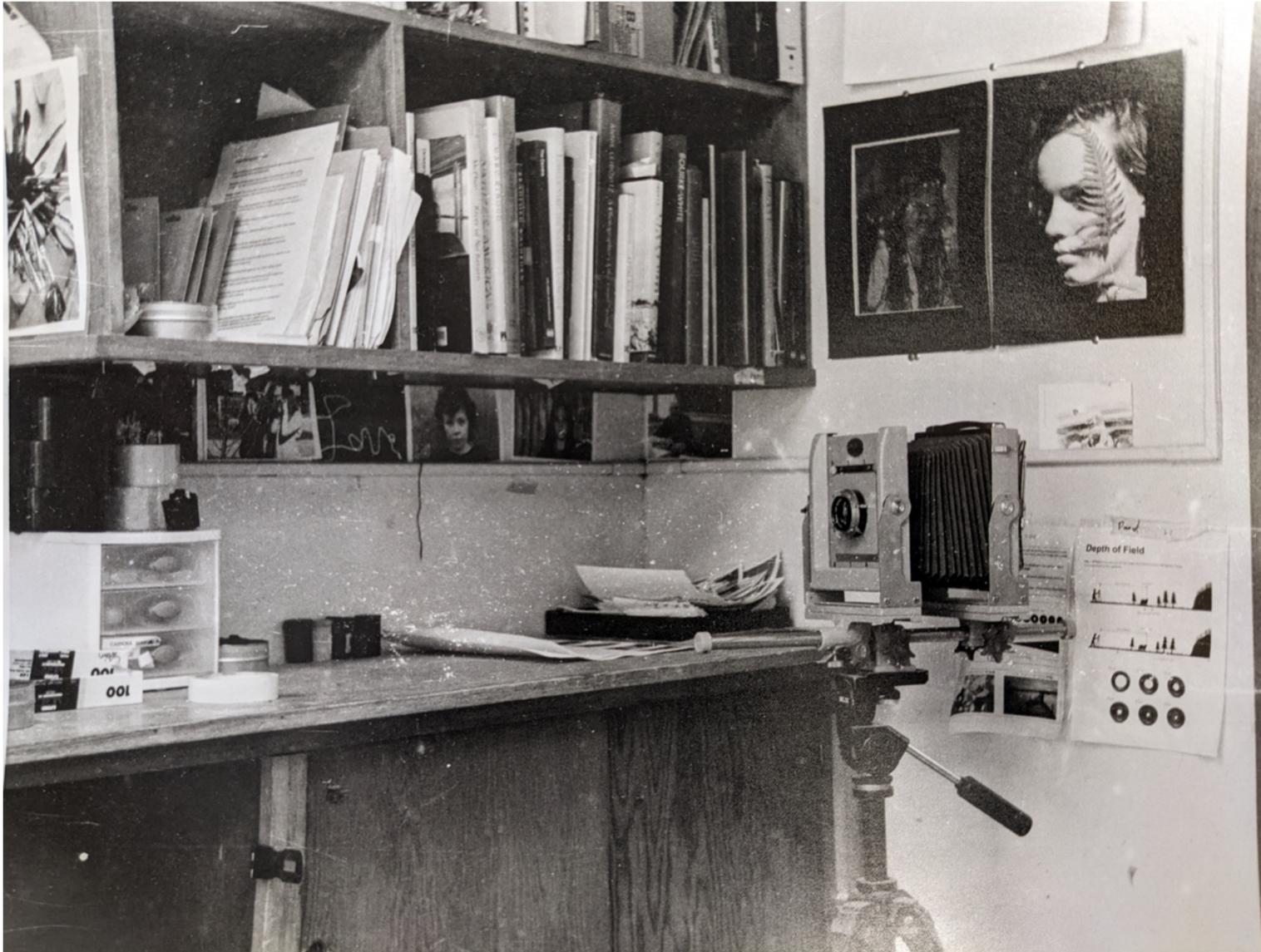
I am 18 years old. Grew up on a little farm in Lewis, NY. These are the only two cows my family owns since covid put a huge hit on our financial needs to keep our other 50 beloved cows. I attend Boquet Valley High School where I learned that I liked photography, whether it's with my phone camera or my school camera. Photography brings me joy and peace which is hard to get when you're a busy senior applying for scholarships and colleges.

## Narrative humor and symbolism

*At first glance, this image is funny, but the story behind Freddy the cow wearing a ladder adds emotional depth. It becomes a thoughtful reflection on human impact and animal adaptation, blending humor with meaning. – J.Z.*



# Get Ready!



**Zehan (Dennis) Chen**  
North Country School  
Grade 9  
October 20, 2025  
**1:00 pm** NCS Photo Lab

At 1 pm, students of NCS go get ready for their electives. In all those students, some amount go downstairs and head into the photo room. They get a camera and get ready to head out into the wilderness and take pictures while experiencing the time outside. The cabinet behind the big camera is where we get our Pentax k-1000.

I'm Zehan (Dennis) Chen, a NCS 9th grader from China. I starting taking photos when I was young and started darkroom after coming to this school as a seventh grader.

## Timelessness and concept

*This black-and-white film image feels archival, with the old plate camera and photo department setting adding layers of history. The ambiguity of when it was taken gives it a timeless quality that strengthens its impact. – J.Z.*

# High Vines

## Emilee Tucker

South Lewis Central School Grade 10

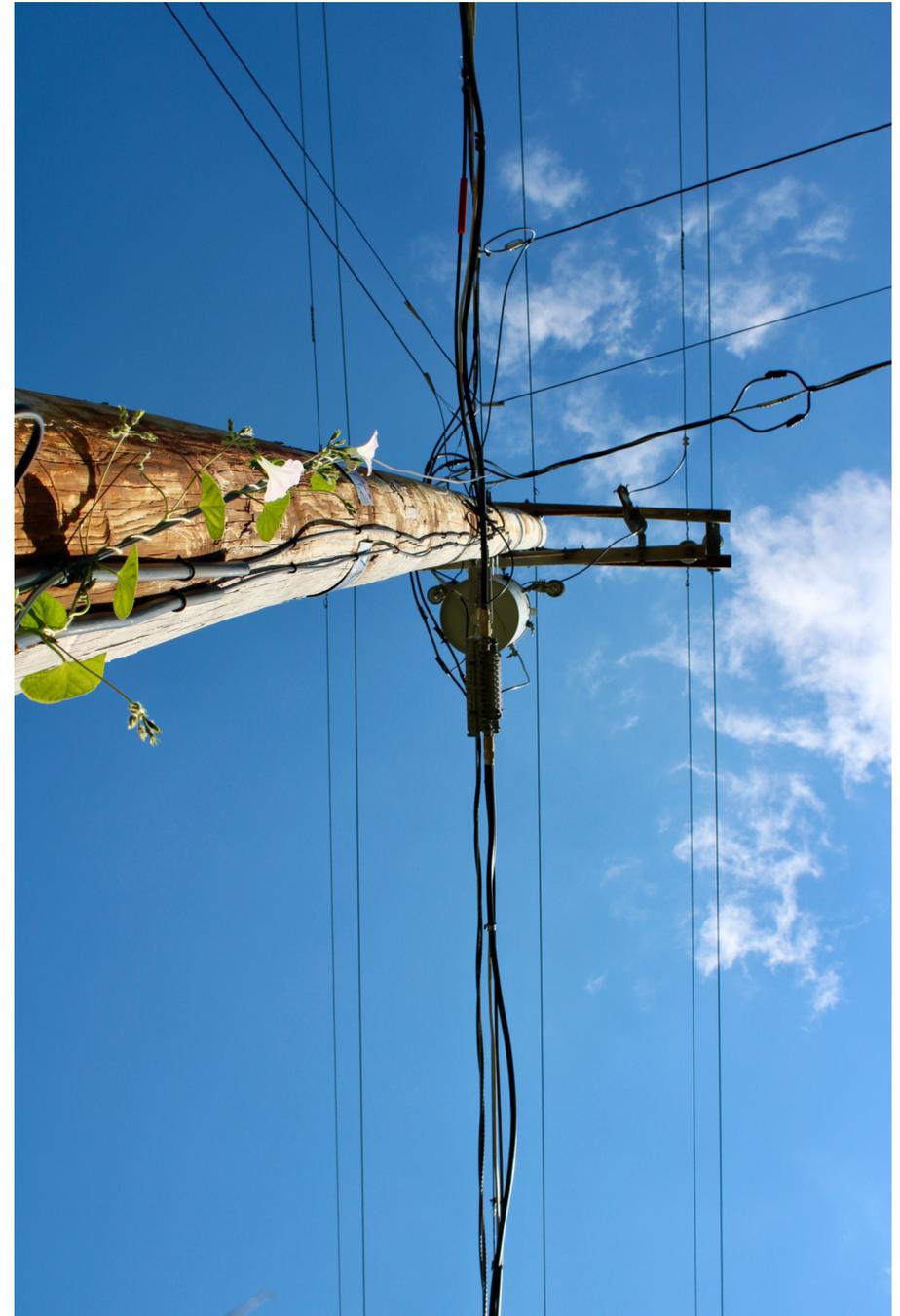
September 14, 2025 1:30 pm Port Leyden

This summer I moved houses. This picture was one of the first photos I took there. I captured it a couple days after my grandmother planted flowers all over our new house. I decided to take a bunch of different perspective pictures and I fell in love with this particular picture. I was laying on the ground, blinded by the sun but still got to capture this unique picture. I love the way my eye wanders a lot in the picture. The telephone pole and the wires keep me pulled into the picture. The flowers and vines that lead in, wrapping around the pole, is one of my favorite parts because its something I've never seen before. Its interesting and there are many parts to this picture that keep me drawn in throughout the piece.

Hello! My name is Emilee Tucker, I'm a 16 year old sophomore student that attends South Lewis school district. I've been taking pictures on my phone for years until my grandma got me my own camera for my 14th birthday. My aunt always loves taking me hiking or any outdoor nature activities in the Adirondacks. Most of the time you can find me hanging out with my friends or family, always living in the moment.

## Rule of thirds and structural balance

*A telephone pole placed off-center allows intersecting wires to become the focal point. The blue sky and climbing vine complete a composition that demonstrates strong spatial awareness. – J.Z.*



# Neon Life



## Jenna Bourgeois

South Lewis Central School Grade 12

December 19, 2025 1:45 pm Lewis County

My artwork is a photographic portrait created using blue lighting and bright colors and patterns projected across the subject's face and body. The strong contrast between the dark background and the colorful light makes the girl stand out and creates a drastic effect. I used photography and light projection to show how color can change the mood of an image and highlight different features of the face.

I was inspired by the idea that people often have emotions and experiences beneath the surface that are not always visible. The colors represent energy, feelings, and personal identity. One challenge was getting the lighting positioned correctly, but I adjusted the angles and took several photos until it worked. This project helped me improve my photography skills and understand how lighting can be used creatively. I hope viewers feel curious and think about how light and color can tell a story.

My name is Jenna Bourgeois and I am a senior at South Lewis CSD in Turin, NY. This is my second year taking photography because I enjoy taking photographs and wanted to advance my skills. I mostly enjoy taking photos of nature because there is so much to work with. In addition to loving photography I also enjoy playing sports, soccer and softball. Sports have shown me a lot of good skills such as time-management, especially with my photography. Not only do I enjoy sports and photography, I also enjoy working with children. I plan to go to college for elementary education. In my free time I would also like to be able to have a camera and further my knowledge in the photography world.

## Modern artistic expression

*A neon-painted subject in blacklight creates a striking contemporary portrait. The intentional body painting and anonymous presentation feel experimental and bold, earning its place through originality. – J.Z.*

# Melancholy Marsh



**Lily Secor**    Johnsbury Central School    Grade 11    May 18, 2025    **2:13 pm**    Olmstedville, NY

During one of my spring work shifts I was cleaning things up and I looked into the distance at the usually bright and clear view to see a cloudy and rather gloomy sky. I thought the colors and the fog were just gorgeous and breathtaking. The contrast between the gray sky and green trees show just how truly beautiful the Adirondacks can be even when it's gloomy and rainy.

I am Lily Secor, I am from Johnsbury Central School and I'm in 11th grade. I have 8 cats and I play basketball. I started doing photography when I was in 6th grade and started with food photography. I fell in love with nature photography in 8th grade and have done it ever since.

## Emotional landscape atmosphere

*This moody Adirondack wetland scene feels raw and sensory, almost allowing the viewer to smell the damp air. The subdued tones capture a familiar regional feeling that goes beyond traditional landscape beauty.    - J.Z.*

# Revision



**Brayden Moynehan**

Lake George Jr/Sr High  
School Grade 11

*October 5, 2025*

**3:00 pm** Athol, NY

This photo is supposed to represent a literal moment captured. It utilizes a lens ball to achieve a portal-like look of what our world is, with a background placed into black and white to not only help pop the subject, but also give the photo the ability to convey deeper emotion. I am quite happy with it as it was my first time working with a lens ball which I found quite challenging.

*See Brayden's bio on page 11.*

## Conceptual creativity

*By flipping the camera and masking the background, this crystal ball image feels like a portal into another world. The inverted focus and monochrome surroundings elevate an already creative technique into something more immersive. – J.Z.*

# *The Memories, Patched and Picked*

**Khloe Edwards**

Mayfield Jr-Sr High School    Grade 9

October 11, 2025    **3:18 pm**

*An apple orchard in Johnstown, NY*

To me, this photo captures a sense of familiarity that can be felt by many individuals, in many different ways. Sometimes it's a memory of going to the pumpkin patch with your grandmother or maybe a reflection of your first time making pumpkin pie. In any case, photographs like this one can help bring unique memories to life.

## **Seasonal storytelling**

*Shot from above, this pumpkin-picking scene clearly communicates activity, color, and autumn atmosphere. The mix of gourds, lighting, and perspective tells a simple but effective seasonal story.    - J.Z.*



# The Forest's Silhouette



**Celia O'Donnell**

Warrensburg JR-SR High School Grade 10

December 27, 2025 **3:34 pm** Pack Forest, Chestertown, NY

I've lived in the woods for almost my entire life, but I don't believe I'll ever see all that nature has to offer. The forest is ever changing, on a seasonal basis and minute by minute. Daylight can be fleeting in the winter months, and that's why this picture seems particularly special. At sunset, the light just happened to travel through some path through the woods, onto this tree, leaving a temporary imprint of the forest that lasted only a few minutes.

I'm 15 years old, from Warrensburg, NY. I enjoy all types of art, literature, and music. I play soccer, basketball, and softball.

## **Observational detail**

*A simple but thoughtful capture of tree shadows cast onto bark, creating an almost recursive visual. This image stands out because it requires intentional seeing, noticing something most people would walk past. – J.Z.*

# Ducks In The River

## AJ Miner

Lake George High School Grade 12

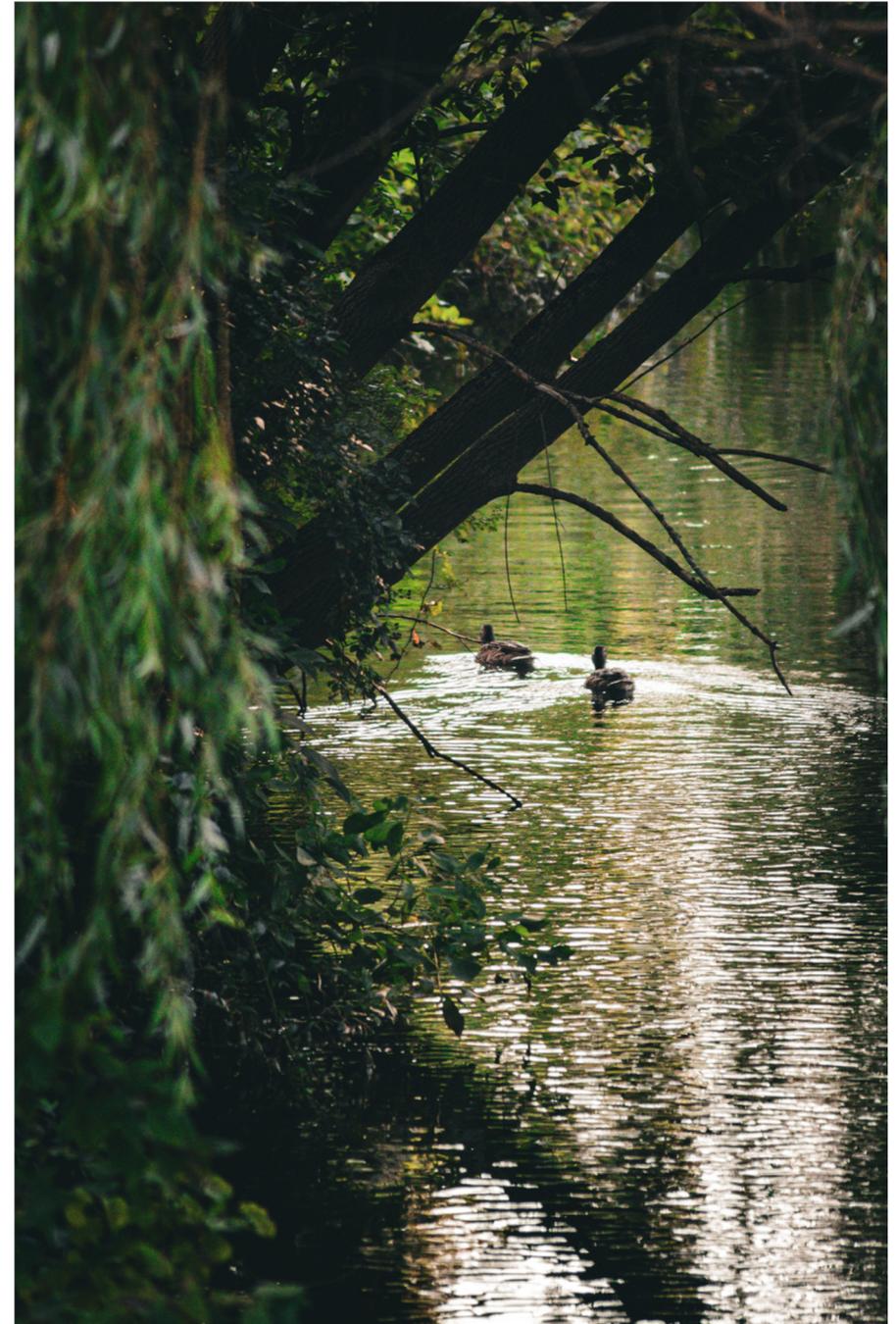
August 16, 2025 **4:15 pm** Lake George Village

I took this photo while on a walk with my friend in Lake George Village. This photo was taken near the steam boats and battle field park. Originally I was just trying to take a photo of the water and the plants, but two ducks decided to go up the river the same time I was taking photos of the water.

My name is AJ Miner and I am a 17 year old senior from Lake George NY. I was recently accepted to the University of Hartford and I plan on continuing my studies in photography and ceramics in the fall of 2026.

## Color grading and river storytelling

*Framed by vines and trees, two ducks swimming downstream create a peaceful narrative. The lighting and green tones place the viewer directly into the scene, making it highly frame-worthy. – J.Z.*



# Pet Cemetery



## Laina Woods

South Lewis Central School Grade 11

October 2, 2025 4:35 pm Lewis County

I took this photograph because I thought it was very interesting. I was geocaching with my friend and we had to go to a pet cemetery. It was raining as soon as we got there. My friend and I saw the landline phone on the tree and thought it was really odd and that it had to be the geocache we were looking for. To our surprise it was not. The landline phone on the tree was just there in the middle of a pet cemetery. The actual geocache was a little bit farther into the woods on a different tree. I made the photograph black and white to add a nightmarish look to the landline phone on the tree.

My name is Laina Woods and I'm in 11th grade. I enjoy taking pictures because I find taking photographs of vintage and strange things fascinating. I love hanging out with my friends, we usually go ice skating, go for walks, go to different places throughout the day.

## Surreal black-and-white concept

*A landline phone attached to a tree feels ironic and visually strange in the best way. The image is timeless, unexpected, and could easily function as album artwork. – J.Z.*

# The Barn

## Tasia Glaze

South Lewis Central  
School Grade 12  
*September 28, 2025*  
**5:00 pm**  
*Lyons Falls, NY*

This artwork inspired me because of the abandoned look to the barn and the way nature is growing around it. I feel this artwork expresses nostalgia and decay, showing the passage of time. The viewer might feel sadness seeing a building that once held life that is now at a state of decay. The viewer may also feel comfort.

My name is Tasia Glaze. I am a senior at South Lewis taking photography with Mrs. Kleine. I really enjoy art so I have taken as many art classes as I could during my high school years. This year I am taking photography and ceramics. In my free time I like to go shopping and hangout with friends.



## Timeless black-and-white composition

*With strong contrast, rustic elements, and clean framing, this barn scene feels classic and frame-worthy. The leafless trees and textures reinforce its enduring quality. – J.Z.*

# Blind to the flame.



## Madelynne Lewis

South Lewis Central School Grade 11

January 24, 2026 5:18 pm Boonville, NY

My artwork is a photograph of my brother standing outside under a bright blue sky, wearing headphones and an Army jacket while reading a book that is lit on fire. I used photography to capture a quiet, focused moment, and I centered the subject to make them feel calm and grounded in the frame. His face is partly hidden by a hat, which creates a sense of mystery and shifts attention to the book and his body language instead of his identity. The strong contrast between the bright sky and the darker clothing helps the subject stand out and adds to the overall mood of stillness and concentration.

I was inspired by the idea of escaping into your own world, even when you're in an open outdoor space. The headphones and the book both symbolize tuning out distractions and turning inward, showing how people find peace through music and reading. A challenge was balancing the bright lighting from the sky, but using composition and darker tones helped create a clear, focused image. This piece connects to everyday life because many people use small, quiet moments to recharge mentally, and I hope viewers think about the importance of slowing down, being present, and allowing themselves space to think.

My name is Madelynne Lewis, I am a junior at South Lewis Central School. Since I was young I have always had a love for photography and just art in general. I enjoy spending time with my family and friends. I love to bake and try new things.

## Conceptual meaning

*This intentionally staged portrait uses fire, headphones, and body language to explore inward reflection and escape. The photographer's symbolism adds depth, directing attention away from identity and toward emotional narrative. – J.Z.*

# Whiteface Mountain

## Christopher Caleb Benedict-Summers

Salmon River High School Grade 10

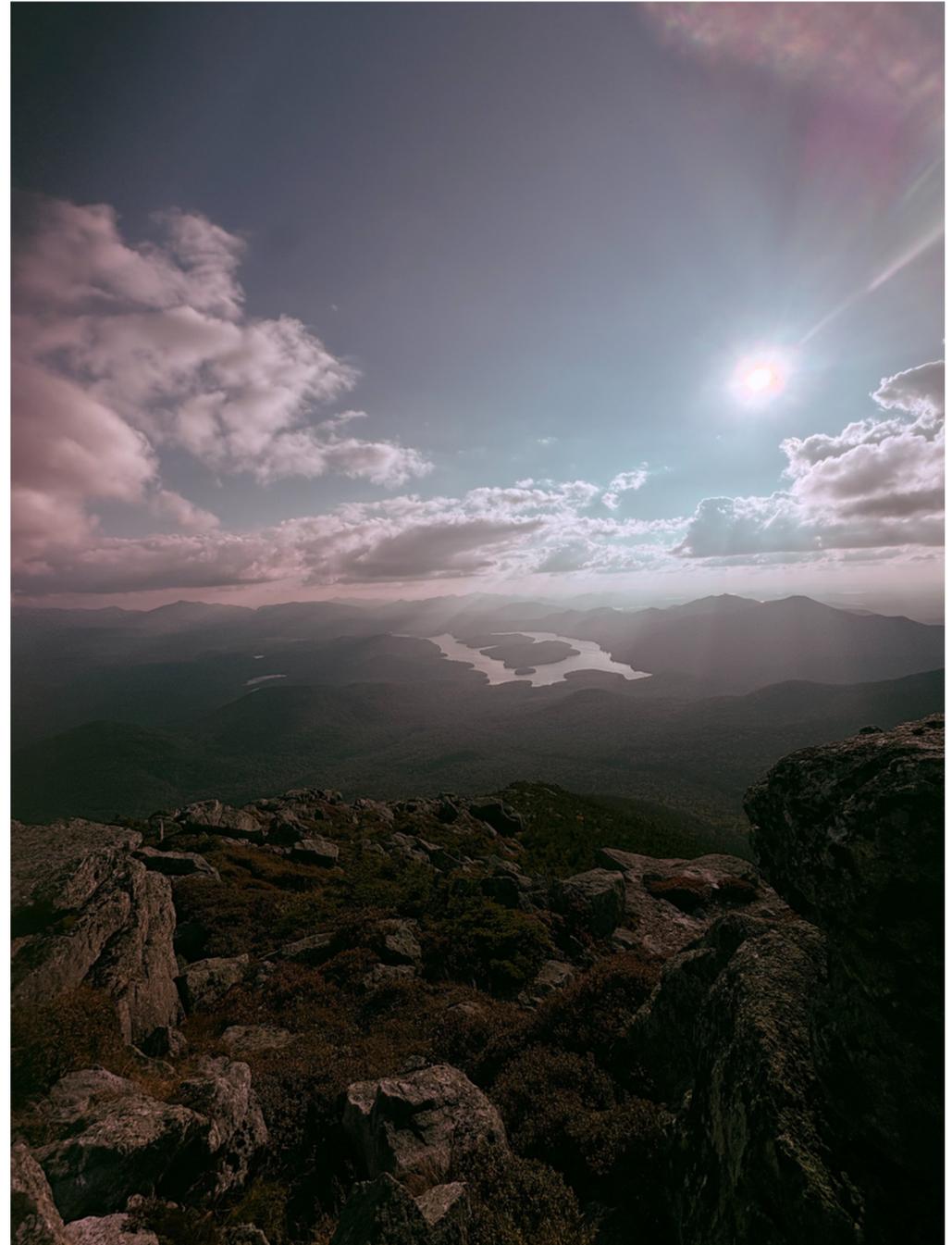
September 14, 2025 5:19 pm Whiteface Mountain

I think it looks so pretty at the summit of the mountain. The weather was perfect, and a clear view up there.

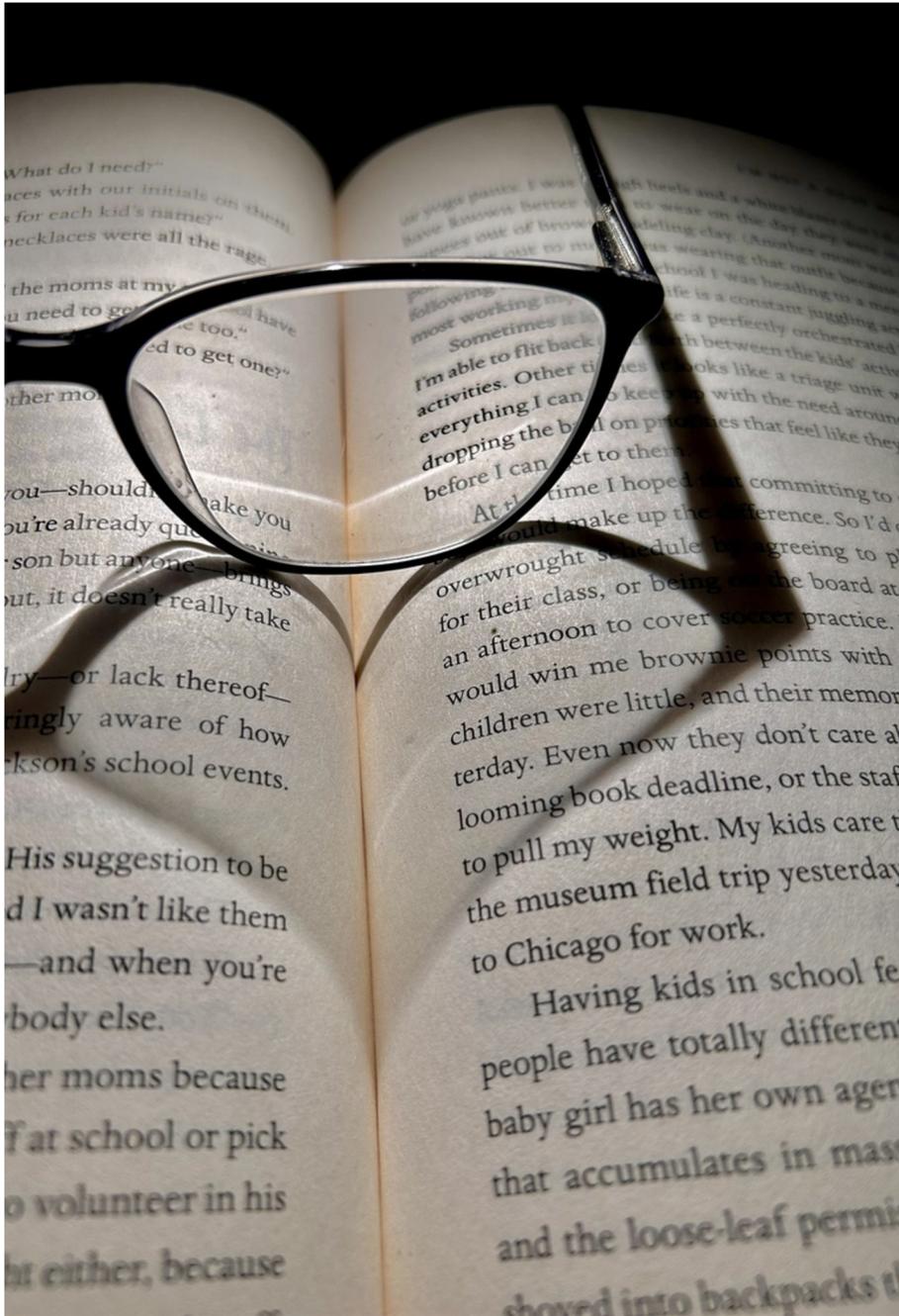
Photo class is my favorite class in High School. I love taking photos with my iPhone and also the school's Canon digital camera.

## Landscape, lighting, and iconic framing

*An impressive wide-angle summit shot from Whiteface, especially strong for being captured on an iPhone. The foreground, distant Lake Placid, and timing of light come together beautifully, creating a balanced and recognizable regional landscape. – J.Z.*



# Reading Between the Lenses



**DeLana Post**

South Lewis Central School Grade 12

January 29, 2026 5:31 pm Lyonsdale, NY

The photo shows an open book in soft shadow, with glasses resting across its pages. Light sharpens the words beneath the lenses while the rest of the text fades, waiting to be understood. The image feels calm and honest, like someone paused mid-thought. The contrast between clear and blurred gives it meaning, reminding us that understanding comes slowly and only when we look through the right lens.

I was born in Lowville, New York, and I've spent almost my entire life living in Lyons Falls. I have attended South Lewis Central School since I was little and am now a senior. Growing up, family has always been very important to me, and creativity has played a big role in my life as well. I've always enjoyed expressing myself through art, whether that's drawing, painting, or working on different creative projects. Outside of art, I like to stay busy by reading, and spending time going on walks with my family. They constantly support and motivate me to step outside my comfort zone and work toward my goals. I truly value the encouragement they give me and my love for creating.

## Creative use of light

*Reading glasses centered over a book create a heart shape through reflected light, forming a quiet visual narrative. The lighting transforms a simple setup into something emotionally suggestive. – J.Z.*

# Ronald the Possum

## Colin Preston

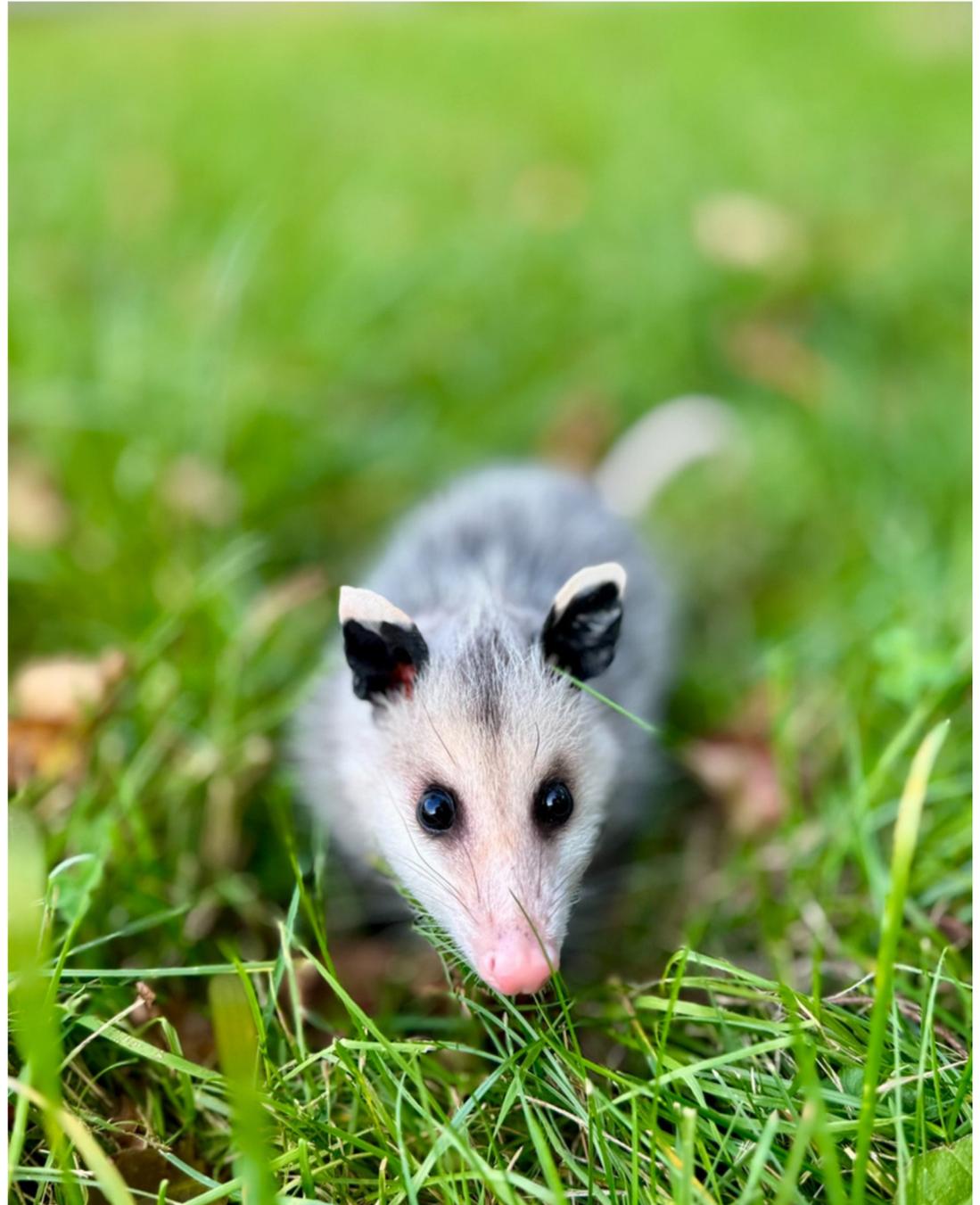
Lake Placid Central School Grade 12

September 13, 2025 5:45 pm Lake Placid, NY

My mom is a rehabber, and we were rehabbing a possum we call Ron. Ron was in a whole litter of possums and was the only one to have survived. We took him outside to let him wander a little bit, and I took photos of him on my iPhone using the portrait mode, and boy, is he a cutie. R.I.P Ronald, he lived a happy and long life, and he's probably smacking his lips as he eats his favorites.

## Character and charm

*A tightly focused baby possum staring directly into the lens creates an instantly endearing portrait. The shallow depth of field isolates the face perfectly, making the moment both cute and memorable. – J.Z.*



# The Outdoors



**Wyatt Raymond**

South Lewis Central  
School Grade 10

September 14, 2025

**6:38 pm** Glenfield

While taking an evening walk with my camera, I was looking for shapes that repeat out in nature. I saw a wet ditch and decided to climb down to see what I could find. I laid down to try out different perspectives and to capture the repetition of the color and rhythm in the weeds. The shapes of the stems are very interesting to me, to have such a straight stem with round shapes at the ends.

Hi my name is Wyatt Raymond, I am a 10th grader from South Lewis high school and I like to take pictures. One of my favorite hobbies is riding my dirt bike. I love to play outdoors. My favorite meal is steak and potatoes or seafood. I am a good old country boy through and through.

## Pattern and natural repetition

*Straight horsetail weeds form unexpected lines and shapes rarely seen in nature. The strong green palette and thoughtful composition bring order and structure to an organic subject. – J.Z.*

# Orange Sky

## Mary Gao

North Country School

Grade 9

September 18, 2025

7:30 pm

Round Lake, North Country School

The photo was taken at the Round Lake at North Country School, and it was shot at the second Homenight of the year. Homenights are a typical NCS traditional activity. Boarders or day students in the house will do all kinds of activities together. My house and another house went to Round Lake together and hung out in the afternoon. It was a beautiful sunset I captured as we were about to finish up the activity that night.

I'm Mary a 9th grader from China that is attending North Country School since 8th grade. I play basketball, guitar and I'm also really interested in photography. My photography interest was inspired by my dad since 4th grade and I want to continue to do this in my whole life.



## Silhouette storytelling

*An underexposed sunset beach scene turns people into silhouettes, revealing moments of play, conversation, and quiet duty. It captures the feeling of summer evenings and everyday life unfolding naturally. - J.Z.*

# *Never Ending Road*



**Maeghan McKinney**

Johnsburg Central School Grade 11

August 27, 2025 **7:30 pm** Ticonderoga, NY

I took this photograph on the evening of my final summer softball game while driving with a friend to McDonald's afterward. The colors in the sky were breathtaking, and I felt compelled to capture the moment. The vivid sunset reminded me of the richness and color of life itself. After taking the photograph, I spent time reflecting on it and was drawn to the way the vibrant sunset mirrored itself on the hood of the car. The winding road in the image represents the journey we take through the Adirondacks, echoing both the physical landscape and the personal paths we travel.

## **Familiarity and visual balance**

*A classic sunset drive perspective with strong color contrast, leading lines, and subtle motion blur. Whether intentional or instinctive, the composition feels naturally balanced and relatable, especially impressive as a phone photo. – J.Z.*

# *An Evening Wander*

**Charlee Orciani**

Boquet Valley Central  
School Grade 12

*August 28, 2025*

**7:42 pm**

*Elizabethtown, NY*

The vision I saw when I took this photo was freedom. The horses moved as they pleased, and wandered about. I was inspired to take this photo because it captured a rare and quiet moment between both the animals, and the landscape. It also represents a sense of calmness among the horses as they moved through life with no urgency and no immediate concern.



## **Classic pastoral storytelling**

*Three distinct horses grazing at sunset with a mountain backdrop create a scene many longtime artists would appreciate. It feels peaceful, nostalgic, and like something people would proudly hang in their homes. – J.Z.*

# On the Farm



## Sophie Gooszen

South Lewis Central School    Grade 12  
October 17, 2025    7:42 pm    Turin, NY

As an exchange student, we like to take pictures of things that we don't usually see in our home country. Places like this farm stand out to us because farms back home often look very different. Taking photos helps us remember these experiences and appreciate the differences between cultures. We also enjoy sharing these pictures with our friends and family in our country so they can see what our daily life and surroundings are like while we are abroad.

Hi, my name is Sophie Gooszen, and I'm an exchange student from the Netherlands. I chose to do an exchange year because living in the USA has been a dream of mine for long as I can remember. I wanted to experience a different culture, meet new people,

see what everyday life in an American high school is really like. Even though it can be challenging at times, I knew this experience would help me grow, learn more about myself, and become stronger and more independent.

In my country, we bike everywhere—to school, work, and to visit friends and family. Everything is really close by, most places are about 5-10 minutes by bike. Back home I did many sports, such as field hockey, gymnastics, ballet, musical theater, and going to the gym. I love hanging out with my friends and family, baking and cooking, shopping, and travelling. The Netherlands is really flat, and we have more bikes than people. Our food is really fresh. We don't get snow in my country; our winters are usually around 40-50 degrees. So I'm not used to this weather.

I also love taking pictures of things I'm not used to seeing in my home country, like this farm. In the future, I hope to live in the USA and become a real estate agent.

Being an exchange student you can feel lonely sometimes because everyone has known each other for years, and they know you will only be here for 10 months. Sometimes, you may feel like a second option to others. But I love the friends that I made.

## Cultural perspective

*This black-and-white farm scene gains strength through the photographer's personal context as an exchange student. The image becomes a meaningful record of experiencing unfamiliar environments and appreciating cultural differences. – J.Z.*

# Craftsmen

## Elyse Siegrist

South Lewis Central School Grade 12

November 5, 2025 8:00 pm Lewis County

This photo was taken in the shop. I was drawn to this photo because of the composition and the play of light on the tools. Creating repetition, reflections and shadows. The way the tools are lined up gives a sense of order and precision, which is visually appealing to the eye. It seems like such a simple photo, but showcases the beauty in an object you wouldn't think of as beautiful. I grew up around lots of tools because my family was full of mechanics and farmers. Whether in the shop with my dad or on the farm with my aunts and uncles we were always around tools. While I never really showed too much interest in them because I thought of it as a "boy thing", I now see that looking at things through different lenses and lightings can show a more beautiful and appealing picture. Sometimes you just have to look from a different point of view in order to find the beauty in things you wouldn't originally find beautiful.

My name is Elyse Siegrist, and I am a senior at South Lewis. I have always been drawn to photography. In tenth grade I took the class and loved everything about it. My aunt and uncle are both photographers in Lewis County, it is more of a side thing for the both of them and done more out of enjoyment. When my teacher Mrs. Kleine first reached out about taking it as an advanced class my senior year I knew immediately that it was something I needed to do. It's not just something I love to do but find so much interest in it.

## Black-and-white lighting

*Wrenches hanging in a dark garage are transformed by a single light source tracing their edges. The contrast and metallic highlights make this the strongest black-and-white submission overall. - J.Z.*



# Fire Flowers



## Lighting and dynamic range

*One of the strongest light-based images submitted, with perfect exposure and striking contrast. The red flowers illuminated against a dark background create a dramatic, polished result. – J.Z.*

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## Sarah McRae

South Lewis Central School Grade 10

November 9, 2025 **9:11 pm** Lyons Falls, NY

My teacher, Mrs. Kleine, assigned my class a project on dramatic lighting. This was a 3 week project and every week I would have to do a different theme of pictures with lighting. My *Fire Flowers* picture was the first week of the project. I had to get a picture of any object and add lighting to the side to light up the object, in a dark space. At first, I couldn't find objects to light up. I tried a bunch of different objects. I tried bracelets and necklaces. I couldn't figure out what to do. I went back to my room ready to give up for the night and then I got an idea. I saw the flowers I had on my dresser and I thought, what if I put a candle behind the flowers to light it up? So I went out to my dining room, a dark place where I can take pictures. I set the flowers on the table and I tried a variety of angles to take photos. I tried up top, to the right, to the left, and upside down. Then, I put it on the table and I made my phone level with the flowers, and from that angle it made me think the flowers were on fire. I found it so cool. It reminded me of the summer when me and my family had bonfires in the backyard. It also made me think of the flowers in my backyard that surround the areas near the bonfire pit. And how the flowers would light up with an orange tint.

I was born in Greig, New York. I have been living in Lyons Falls, New York since I was 1 year old. I've gone to South Lewis Central School my whole life, I am currently a sophomore there. I've always had a big family and a big interest in art. I've grown up always painting, drawing, or creating stuff. When I was 10 years old my younger sister was born and I like to help her express her creativity. And it helps bring out something nostalgic for me. Other hobbies I like to do are swimming, reading, playing card games with my family, and so much more. I'm a very big family person and it's helped me a lot in my life. They encourage me to express and push myself to the boundaries of everything. I probably wouldn't be the person I am today if I didn't have them. I truly cherish them and my passion to always create.



