

# HIGHLAND RAMBLER

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

Winter Assembly  
  
December 20th

No School

December 24th -  
January 4th

End of 2nd Quarter  
  
January 17th

Martin Luther  
King Jr. Day  
  
January 21st

## TEACHER Q&A with Jacquelyn Conkling!



What is your favorite holiday tradition?  
“We used to all get together on Christmas Eve, have a dinner and open presents.”

What is the most overrated holiday song?  
“Probably Frosty the Snowman.”

What is the most difficult part of the holidays?  
“Since I’ve worked in retail since I was 16, just seeing people be mean to each other.”

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“If all you had to eat for the rest of your life was mash potatoes. Mash potatoes are great... for like one serving, but then if you keep eating it for the rest of your life it becomes tasteless and boring.”  
-- Sofi Kenrick

See “Seasonal Depression Poses A Threat To Teens” on pg. 4

## TEACHER SIGHTINGS

**Coach Ed Lloyd was seen browsing for new threads at the Nordstrom Rack in the Sugar House Shopping Center.**



**Utah synagogue honors Pittsburgh shooting victims with powerful candlelight vigil.**  
See pg. 9



**Liki Makaui takes on leadership as a senior player on Highland's varsity basketball team.**  
See pg. 10

# Alone At The Top



Maggie Lea / Highland Rambler

**Highland football coach Brody Benson talks to his players during a football game against Timpview.**

## Coach Benson's Secret For Success Is A Whole Lot Of Hard Work

**By Peach Schilling**  
Staff Writer

On the bus trip to Brody Benson's first game as the Highland head football coach, the Rams hit a traffic jam. Northbound I-15 was a parking lot. And even though Benson and his team left at 3:30 p.m. for Mountain Crest High School -- 85 miles north of Highland -- Benson had a sick and helpless realization. It was his first game as a head coach. And he was going to be late.

Ironically, being stuck in traffic was the first time Benson had a chance to sit still since he was named head coach just two months earlier. He hasn't slowed down since, on his way to 105 career victories, making him the winningest coach in Highland's history.

But it all began with uncertainty.

### THE FIRST YEAR

In June 2006, Benson was almost on his

way out. He was unsure of how much longer he wanted to coach and was questioning if this was the best career choice for him. That same month, he was offered the head coaching position after the school decided to take a new path.

Ray Groth, previous head coach of the Rams, was let go. And he almost took Benson with him.

“The head coach that was here before was my mentor, so I was kind of on my way out,” Benson said. “That first year was hard not having Ray here.”

Benson had one other coach, Brandon Winn, to work with. One coach to talk to about his offer and what he could do with the team. But Winn was thousands of miles away in Europe.

After several late-night, over-the-ocean calls with Winn, Benson accepted. With no staff and no idea of how he was going to make this happen, he got to work.

Thirteen years down and not done yet,

Benson sits atop the Highland record books in total victories, including one state championship to his name. There was no way, sitting on that bus towards Mountain Crest in 2006, that he could have seen this coming.

Sean Swenson, the starting quarterback in 2006, witnessed the process of Benson stepping up to the plate and jumping into that year with many questions about what was ahead.

“Coach Benson took over for my senior year as the head coach, which was super exciting,” Swenson said. “We were both starting that journey together.”

Although every single person who was part of that team was nervous for the new experience, they were all confident and excited for a season brimming with what they enjoy the most.

And so it began. The Highland Rams went

See **BENSON** on pg. 5

## Negativity Surrounds Teens More Than Ever

**By Kat Schilling**  
Editor-in-Chief

With depression, self-harm, and anxiety among youth at an all-time high, teens are in the midst of a mental health crisis. Even as more meds are being prescribed to help with depression, the number of teens who seek help for thoughts of suicide continues to increase, leaving experts wondering why this is the case and what can be done to address it.

In 2010, reports of happiness among teenagers was at an all-time high. They were excited about their future, yet content with their lives in the present. But in 2011, everything changed. Following 2010, the once happy teenagers became full of worry, and happiness decreased significantly. Teenagers now are experiencing dread and anxiety more than ever. Psychologists theorize that this sudden shift in the moods of teenagers is due to increased use of social media and the internet.

Instagram was created in late 2010, and quickly grew in

popularity, with over 10 million users creating an account within a year. Shortly following the creation of Instagram was the first version of Snapchat, which was released in 2011. Experts believe that the increase in social media use is tied to the increased feelings of depression among teens. Study upon study has shown a correlation between feelings of depression and use of social media, yet nothing has been done to create a change.

Instant gratification comes along with Instagram, but so does instant shame. Even without a presence of cyber-bullying, social media can act as a conductor for negative thoughts. With Instagram came the ability to look at someone else's life and compare it to your own. Although people can actively recognize that social media produces a platform to create a persona, the envy remains.

People often feel as though there is an anxiety paradox of sorts. Using social media has been linked to feelings of

See **NEGATIVITY** on pg. 4

## Highland Wins Region Realignment Appeal

**By Eli Adams**  
Staff Writer

The battle for city supremacy is on.

Starting in the fall of 2019, Highland is joining a new region for athletics -- a region that will pit the majority of Salt Lake County schools in direct competition. The move is being embraced by the Highland administration and coaches, but it didn't come without controversy.

Every two years, the Utah High School Activities Association (UHSAA) changes the sports region for all of Utah. This is done to try and create an even playing field, as some schools increase or decrease in enrollment from year to year. But changes in region affiliation could mean changing travel distance, school rivalries, and transportation costs.

Highland is currently in region six, a region that is made up of almost entirely schools of

See **REALIGNMENT** on pg. 4

## HHS 2019-21 REGION



Graphic by Audra Welsch