



THE SLATEDALE NEWS

ALL YOUR BULLDOG NEWS... UNLEASHED!



Greetings from all around the world

World traveler and educator lands in Slatington.
 Dr. Manny Gonzalez has been around the globe, shown here in Rome, Italy. He most recently worked at Moravian University in Bethlehem, but his new classroom home is at Northern Lehigh High School as a new Spanish teacher. **Lea el artículo de Lily Groover en la página dos.**

NL theater returns with audiences

Fall production sang 'All Together,' spring musical hopes to spell s-u-c-c-e-s-s

BY SUSAN GILSBACH
 STAFF WRITER

This year, theater for Northern Lehigh has evolved yet again. While last year's production of *Nonsense* turned out to exceed everyone's expectations, the shows this year have brought yet another change for the cast and crew of this year's show, *All Together Now*.

All Together Now is a celebration of musicals and the return of musical theater. With many schools doing virtual productions and many having to work with drastically reduced casts last year, no one really knew what theater would look like this year.

When asked how she felt about the return to theater, sophomore Abigail Peartree said, "I feel very nervous about being in front of people for the first time." This is Peartree's

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Marching band learns lesson in resilience, excellence

BY OWEN LEVAN-UHLER
 EDITOR IN CHIEF

For marching band, it has been a long journey from lessons over Zoom in Summer 2020 to winning our fourth consecutive Region Championships on October 23th and coming in the top 5 bands at Atlantic Coast Championships (ACC's) on November 7th. With all of the complications that came with COVID, we

refused to let it get in the way of our organization rebuilding and thriving.

One of the hardest things about the pandemic was inactivity with the band. "Students were unable to participate, and their skills degenerated. Students across the nation got into habits of not performing in band," Director Mr. David Carroll explained. For some, the motivation to practice and refine skills was taken away when the pandemic hit: "We just weren't

used to pushing ourselves [as much as we needed to] until about midway through the season." Bringing kids back into the program and encouraging new membership will be a test in the next few years, but Mr. C sees us already going in the right direction.

He was "very happy for those students who joined in 2020 with the prom-

See Band, page 2



Photo by Rob Kirk

No school homecoming?

No problem! ...Or is it?

BY HAVEN MOORE
 STAFF WRITER

It was Friday, October 15th when the cancellation of 2021's Homecoming Dance was announced. The speakers rang in our ears, and emails were sent out, delivering not only bad news but disbelief among students. Inclement weather was forecasted to spoil the next day's long-awaited celebration. Word of the cancellation spread like wildfire among students and gave rise to... well, a lot of criticism.

Many were disappointed with the school's decision. But apart from the discouraged and upset students, new ideas of how to go about homecoming were innovated. Some had the idea to postpone it, and have it later on; others suggested forms of peaceful protest. Neither of those ideas came to fruition, however, it is said that with tragedy comes opportunity

Students spread the word to their parents and

guardians once the news broke loose, and soon enough, many of the adults in the community came together to create a Homecoming dance for the students, but it was by no means affiliated with the school. It was held at the Slatedale Fire Company, supplied with food, drinks, music, and more. This seemed like a miracle, a wonderful deed done by the community, and it was—but there did lie some problems within this plan.

Though the dance provided an amazing and memorable night for students who did attend, it seemed that COVID health regulations were ignored, especially by the people who organized the event. The week after the dance, students who did attend raved about how fun and exciting the night of the dance was, posted pictures of them and their friends having a blast dancing the night away, and even agreed that this sort of event should be done again in the future. However, the pictures and videos that students shared with people online and the memories recalled from that night made it evident that COVID health regulations were not being followed.

See HOCO, page 3

STUDENTS SPREAD THE WORD TO THEIR PARENTS AND SOON ENOUGH MANY OF THE ADULTS IN THE COMMUNITY CAME TOGETHER TO CREATE A HOMECOMING EXPERIENCE

Homecoming Royalty 2021-22

Matt Frame and Sophia Lear were crowned this year's Homecoming King and Queen. More pics on page 15.



INSIDE



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 Another side of the vax.
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Egregiously and Religiously Hypocritical?
 Page 6.



A Collection With Many Leggggggggs.
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A world of experience lands in Español classroom

BY LILY GROOVER
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Dr. Manuel Antonio González López. Rolls off the tongue, right? Dr. Gonzalez is unique and refreshing and fits right into the mixing pot that Northern Lehigh is. How can someone so avant-garde want to continue to teach at a regular high school?

His parents moved to the United States as refugees from the Spanish Civil War before he was born. He says, "My parents came to the states with the intention that we would go back. We went back, and my mother hated it, because they were in the post-war era. I'm from a village in northern Spain, not from a city. We didn't have a washer, dryer, a car, so my mother wanted to move back to the states."

"I spent a lot of time in the summers coming to the Bowmanstown area because of my mother's close friend [from the village she grew up in] lived in the area."

Being familiar with the Lehigh Valley, Dr. Gonzalez decided to continue working locally. He was a Spanish and French major undergraduate at Moravian Academy (now Moravian University), while also studying Italian and Portuguese: "I am bilingual in Spanish and English, pretty fluent in French, and I can communicate pretty well in Italian and Portuguese."

And, when his parents decided to briefly move back to Spain, he attended the Universidad Complutense de Madrid (Complutense University of Madrid).

Since 1984, he has worked in education. For the past few years, he was the Executive Director of International Students at Moravian University. He taught Spanish and English as a Second Language (ESL) at Moravian and Northampton Community College, plus many high schools. He taught four years at the Lehigh County prison, mainly ESL, GED prep classes, and adult basic education.

Dr. Gonzalez has been to an absurd number of countries. He has taught internationally and has also taken many stu-



Photo courtesy of Dr. Manny Gonzalez

'He's been everywhere, man.' Dr. Gonzalez has traveled to more than 100 countries and now teaches in little old Slatington.

dents all around the world. "I've been to probably over a hundred countries, I lost count. I'm missing the Central and Southern part of Africa, and I haven't been to Oceania, but I've been pretty much everywhere else." Dr. Gonzalez lists Greece, Rome, Spain, Portugal, France, Turkey, Japan, Argentina, and Jordan as places he's taken students to, but that is a very small percentage of the countries he has traveled to.

In these countries, Dr. Gonzalez has participated in many projects that ultimately help the well-being of people less fortunate.

"I took community college students in Peru to build a wind turbine, to install it in a village that never had electricity in the Andes," he said. "We connected them to schools because that would make the biggest impact in the community. They could buy a computer, have lights, and running water. I went back to villages we installed them in, after time, and you could see it really impacted them."

Dr. Gonzalez also helped educators in Afghanistan build a community college. He trained Afghans in Jordan for 3 to 4

weeks, and they went on to become professors at the new community college in Afghanistan.

He says his past jobs required him to travel 14 to 16 weeks out of a year, and that made him reevaluate what he wanted to do for the rest of his career.

"On my last trip to India, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Ukraine, I got COVID, and almost died from it. I got COVID before the pandemic [officially] started, so they didn't know what it was. I was hospitalized for 2 weeks, and I never got a diagnosis. Months later, I got my blood tested, and I had the antibodies."

After getting sick, and staying sick for a very long time, Dr. Gonzalez rethought what he really likes to do: "I wanted to go back to the classroom, because that's what I enjoy the most." Now that Dr. Gonzalez is back to teaching in an actual classroom setting, he now knows how much he truly enjoys teaching. "As an administrator, you kind of lose sight of what you're doing. So, it's fun to be back in the classroom. My last 6 to 10 years of work, I want to do what I want to do, which is teaching."

"When I was looking for a job, I prefer to work with normal people. I don't enjoy working with 'snotty rich kids.' Because of my background, and my parents not speaking English, I prefer working with the working class. That's why I'm more comfortable with the community college atmosphere because it had a wide variety of students there, and I always enjoyed working with 'normal' kids."

He feels Northern Lehigh is perfect for him because he has a "chunk" of everyone.

"The one joy that I've always had all my life was taking kids from all different walks of life, rich, poor, you name it, to other countries. I've probably taken thou-

sands of kids abroad, and I've always seen that that's dramatically impacted their lives more than anything I can do in the classroom. So, why don't we have something at Northern Lehigh?"

Dr. Gonzalez says that the 'world of work' for the future is going to dramatically change. Preparing the new generation of laborers is his, and every other teacher's, responsibility. "So, the more all of you have exposure to cultures and languages and people that are not from the United States, the better you're marketable. So that's why I want to see if I can take you abroad."

"My hope is to stay at NL until I retire. The other reason I took the job was because I used to have a 12-month position. I haven't had a summer off since 1990, so I wanted to transition to move back to Spain." He will now have the opportunity to live in Spain during the summer and see if that is what he wants to do. Dr. Gonzalez is a dual-citizen, meaning he is able to live legally in both the United States and Spain.

"It's one thing to be a tourist in a country, and to live there on a permanent level. I want to be near my family, but the only time I fully lived in Spain was when I was 19, so it wasn't as an adult. One thing about COVID was it made me realize I do not want to be stuck at home with nothing to do, so I feel like I want to work at least another 6-10 years." Luckily for NL, Dr. Gonzalez is here to stay.

His stories, experiences, and personality makes him a wonderful addition to Northern Lehigh, and hopefully he succeeds in making a great difference. "I'm enjoying the students; you're really nice people. I'm glad I'm different, and you need different. There's not a lot of different here, and I think I can bring lots of different. In all my travels, I have so many stories. I've travelled off the beaten paths, for work, and into places you've never heard of."

Those experiences shaped him into the person he is today, and passing on those experiences to the students he teaches will generate well-rounded citizens for the future. 🌟

'All Together Now,' spelling bee later

Theater, from page 1

first show with an audience, as virtually-performed *Nunsense* was her first show ever.

This is an exciting new experience for Peartree. Ainsley Behr, a sophomore, remarked: "I missed being able to enjoy theater in my community." Behr has expressed great excitement at the prospect of the theater returning. The community as a whole has experienced great joy this year. This September marked the reopening of many Broadway shows such as *Waitress*, *Wicked*, and *Hamilton*, which are returning for the first time since March 2020. This was great news for Northern Lehigh: it looked like the school would once again have live theater.

Great exhilaration went around the theater when it was announced there would be an audience. But these spectators do not come without proper pandemic precautions. Audience members, cast, and crew were required to wear masks and social distance any



time masks were not worn, and guests were asked to social distance from people not in their party. Cast members were very cautious and did everything they could to keep everyone safe.

While the fall cabaret was in the works, Mr. Christopher Hamm and Mr. Stephen Shuey were already working on the spring musical. The musical choice this year was a difficult one. The theater is very limited in what they can do. Coming off of the pandemic, it is very difficult to find casting and to get people back into the theater.

The group had no trouble finding an audience and crew, but actor participation is low. The cast for the fall is 14 people, and the spring musical will be adding only a few more people to the cast. While it was a stressful decision to make, Hamm and Shuey decided on a musical.

The theater is planning to put on a production of *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. This is an exciting musical because it leaves room for the cast to shine while also requiring a large number of performers. The theater will continue doing amazing things here at Northern Lehigh and plans to perform the show sometime this March. See our ad, page 5! 🌟

Harmonious bonds for band



Band, from page 1

ise of a great season only to not have a season at all... [they] had faith in what we had to offer, and we were able to deliver [in 2021]."

It was in large part because of our newest members and the talent they possess, that the band was able to deliver such a high-caliber production. Some of our newbies played multiple instruments during the show, or learned new instruments to fulfill the needs of the program. New members learned how to march for the first time. The size and speed at which members march constantly changes throughout the show, those in color guard operated equipment in complex ways, and everyone learned the mental and physical dexterity to be able to march or operate a nearly-8 minute show.



The band has received virtually no funding from the district for years, and fundraising with so few people in our program is challenging. We rely on the support of our community, and the generosity and passion from our directors and advisors.

We've managed to be a top 5 band at ACC's more than almost all competing bands in our class. If we are able to achieve such excellence with limited participation and resources, imagine what we could do if the arts were facilitated throughout the district.

"I look forward to the new schedule," Mr. Carroll commented on the future of the band program and curriculum, especially in the high school. "It would be positive to have a program for the applied arts that is generated in the elementary schools and have shared goals out to the high school level... [this would help] students reach their peak performance potential." 🌟



Photos courtesy of Mr. Rob Kirk
Susan Gilsbach (left) and Cydney Krause perform with the award-winning marching band.

Academics, antiques, and... arachnids?

Science teacher in her second year at NL has a hobby with many legs

BY MADDY MACK
STAFF WRITER

One word sends a shiver down many people's spines: spiders. However, for Northern Lehigh High School science teacher Ms. Gabby Werkheiser, these eight-legged creatures are the perfect pet.

In September 2020, Ms. Werkheiser made the bold move to bring a tarantula into her home. Since then, she has welcomed nine more into her family, giving her a total of ten pet tarantulas. Her tarantulas include Epsilon, Willow, Mocha, Burger, and Meatball. "Unfortunately, some of the newer ones are still left nameless," she said. "The names 'Burger' and 'Meatball' started as a joke, but they have sort of stuck."

Ms. Werkheiser never thought that owning pet spiders would be in her future. "To be honest with you, I can't quite remember exactly what did it. I was never a huge fan of spiders, but I had a healthy respect for them, I suppose. I always thought they were a neat pet, but I never thought I would go ahead and actually do it," she said. "One day, I got the thought in my head that I could actually own one myself and thought, 'Wouldn't that be cool?'" From there, she could not stop thinking about the idea until she officially got her first pet spider. Looking to the future, she is not sure how many spiders she will want to own.

When it comes to interacting with



Ms. Gabby Werkheiser leaves her science teaching job and goes home to funky pets.

her pet spiders, Ms. Werkheiser typically watches them. "They're funky little pets. It's fun to just watch them do their thing. Most of the time, they sit around doing nothing, but they occasionally are active," she said. "Feeding them is always a fun time. The bigger ones are always active when it comes to food. Sometimes they'll rearrange their enclosure or do a little dance after eating."

A common question people ask is whether or not Ms. Werkheiser is able to hold her pets. "People always ask if I handle them, and the answer to that is gener-

ally no. I'd love to be able to hold one of them at some point, but believe it or not, tarantulas have different personalities. Unfortunately, none of mine at the mo-

ment are particularly cooperative when it comes to interacting with humans," she said.

Ms. Werkheiser does not own any other pets for now, but in the past she has owned several betta fish and greatly enjoyed it. "Sometime in the future, I'd love more fish and a bearded dragon," she said.

Owning pet tarantulas is not as different as one may think. "I think any pet is different. Tarantulas are generally not too different from other observable pets, like fish," Ms. Werkheiser said. "The spiders hang around and wait for food. Even though they can't be pet or held, they still find a way to interact with their owners."

Another one of Ms. Werkheiser's favorite things is to create stories. "I have hundreds of characters that I like to play around with. I'm actually in the process of creating a few indie games," she said. "I like creating games because it combines two of my favorite things: art and writing."

Along with spiders, many people are also terrified of antique dolls and clowns. However, Ms. Werkheiser and her partner love collecting these things. "We love collecting antiques, particularly antique dolls. Most people are terrified of them, but they are just normal to me. I like owning a little piece of history," she said.

Despite many people finding spiders, antique dolls, and other things strange, these things are normal for Ms. Werkheiser. "Never be afraid to pursue your interests, even if people think they are strange or unusual," she said. "Remember, being unique isn't a bad thing, it just makes you more interesting." 🐜

COVID, rain help wash out homecoming; community comes through

HOCO, from page 1

The majority of students partied without masks, and social distancing was nowhere to be seen. "I did not go because I felt like it would not be that safe in terms of COVID. I knew that nobody was going to wear a mask and that the fire company is a closed building," said Abigail Peartree, a sophomore at NLHS. Abby was one of the many students who did not attend the dance, even if they wanted to; moral needs had to be abided by. "I think that I made the right choice because even though I could have gone and had fun, I would much rather avoid getting myself or a loved one sick, and having one night of fun that will be over before you know it."

On the opposite side, the majority of students did choose to attend the dance and had nothing but positive feedback about the experience.

"I chose to attend because so many people, including myself, were already prepared to have fun. I know some girls who spent a lot of money on a dress, and were pretty upset that the original school dance got canceled," said Ayden Scanlon, another sophomore at NLHS.

He also mentioned that since this dance, in particular, was going to be the first dance held in over a year and a half, it contributed to giving students an even more momentous and memorable experience. "I just needed to let loose and have a good time," he says. He also added that he had "no regrets other than not

eating everything they had to offer...they had so much food it was ridiculous". From the conversations I had with other students who attended the event, I got the impression that everyone there was just enjoying themselves, laughing, dancing, and making memories.

From an adviser's perspective, Mr. Nick Sander was up against the powers-that-be.

"Student Council was disappointed to see the Homecoming Dance postponed until the spring," he said. "It's always a lot of hard work for our members to plan for a schoolwide dance, and they had really planned something special for everyone this year. This was especially disappointing after the outpouring of school spirit and involvement during

this year's spirit week. We are currently in the process of preparing a Spring Homecoming dance for the high school and we are hoping it is our best yet."

Ultimately, a choice is a choice. People are free to make their own decisions, and follow what they believe is right for them. In return, they must face the consequences.

It is evident that proper precautions in this pandemic were not taken that night, but at the same time, the dance left many attendees with happy memories and no regrets. Though this is all left in the past now; this occurrence served as a test of right and wrong, as well as what was valued over one another. 🐜

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HALLOWEEN BRINGS OUT SCARY SENIORS



Chase Jones.



Saige Schellenberg, Skylar Schellenberg, Alicia Quattrocchi, Gabby Myster.



Alexis Cotto, Clara Buck, and Brooke Delancey.



Alexis Hollinger.



Caelin Mack.



Cydney Krause, Owen Levan-Uhler, Camryn Torres.



Roz Lopez.



Angelina Betances.



Ariana Melendez and Elizabeth Panetta.



Morgan Hoffner.



Emma Niebell, Sam Slack, Sophia Lear.



Paige Craddock.



Ryan Hartmaier and Raven Klimek.



Jared Thomason.

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Bulldogs scrimmage in the Christmas City



Scholastic Scrimmage 2021: Northampton prevailed but this year's squad, advised by Mr. Mike Lehtonen, enjoyed the experience at PBS Studios in Bethlehem. Team members were Owen Levan-Uhler, Bianca Carrion, Caelin Mack, Aisha Pjetrovic, Cydney Krause, and Alivia Obenski.

FREEBARKING

With Molly Williams

School has always had a bad reputation. I can think of very few people who genuinely enjoy it, but what could we do to make it better? I asked some students the same question, and this is what they think...

"I think they could focus more on what the students want instead of the curriculum and make class more enjoyable by not talking a whole bunch."

- Matthew Rissmiller



"Teachers could try to make the class a little more enjoyable rather than talking the whole time."

- Tyler Cruz

"School needs more socializing, communication, respect for each other, and for people to be more trustworthy."

- Clara Buck



"I think that the school should add more clubs and sports to choose from. Some of these new sports and clubs could include volleyball, golf, etc."

- Nicklaus Buskirk

"To make school more enjoyable, I think they should take time out of the school day to do something fun like activities/free time."

-Kamryn Fink



"Schools can nurture and support more of its clubs that need it the most to enable the success of them in the future."

-Nate Walters

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SCAN ME

Religion and how it's used to justify evil



Religions—specifically Abrahamic religions—are a touchy subject. Abrahamic religions are those who revere the biblical patriarch Abraham, such as Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Christianity especially is a hot topic for debate at family dinners, in social media comments, and in private conversations all over the U.S. on the daily.

I'm not here to debate whether or not one belief is the correct one to have. That is a personal decision everyone must make themselves. But I am going to discuss how some people use their religious beliefs to justify their evil and immoral behaviors.

So many times, I have seen the same people that preach, 'God loves all of His children,' use their God to moralize their ungodly ideals. They believe their God loves his children as long as they adhere to their very specific beliefs.

I shouldn't need to explain why that is inherently wrong. If someone personally disagrees with someone else's ideology,

that is fine. If they want to take the low ground and wish harm upon them—well, that is incredibly extreme, but—it is their choice. But claiming it is what a loving and understanding God would want is plain stupidity.

Obviously, I am not talking about *all* Christians, just a very select (and loud) group of them. Those who listen when the Bible says, "Love thy neighbor," are the purest and most righteous of any Christian.

The ones who say, 'I do not quite agree with what you think or do not understand what you believe, but I respect you as a person who is equivalent to me because that is what God says of humanity,' have reached a level of maturity that many on both sides of the equation could never hope to in their lifetime. It is really not that hard to simply shut up and mind your business when someone wants to express themselves or believe differently than you. You can still wish them well and even pray for them if they don't agree with your religious beliefs. As long as you both treat each other with respect and integrity.

Humanity is one global organism, and we cannot reach our full potential if we can't even get over these petty squabbles. At the end of the day, believe in what you want to believe in, but do *not* use it as an excuse to harass anyone who doesn't believe the same as you. Especially if you're going to use things such as the Old Testament to justify condemning



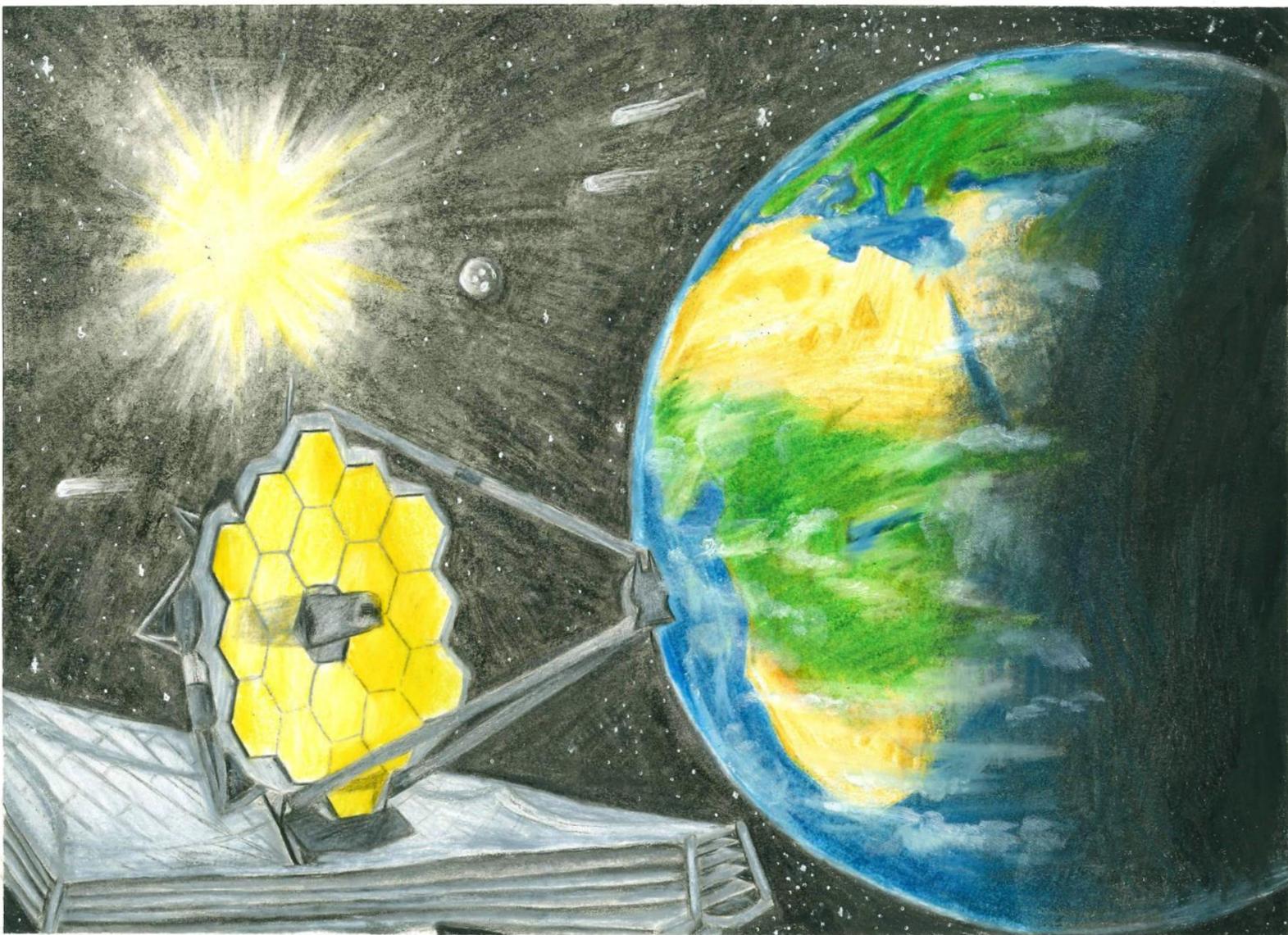
someone you disagree with to hell. There are plenty of things in both the Bible as well as other religious texts that have not aged well *at all*. Just look at the way half of all women are spoken about and treated in the first drafts of any Abrahamic book. If we can realize that women and other races aren't second-class citizens despite the fact some religious writings

say so, we can come to terms with the fact that neither are members of the LGBTQ+ community and literally anybody else who is just doing what makes them happy without hurting anyone else.

Long story short: Don't use your god as an excuse to be a twerp. That is all, goodbye. 🐾

To infinity and beyond understanding the universe's origins

By Keona Dyer



NASA plans to launch the James Webb Space Telescope into orbit on Dec. 18, 2021, to serve as the premier deep-space observatory for the next decade. The Webb telescope's revolutionary technology will explore every phase of cosmic history — from within our solar system to the most distant observable galaxies in the early universe. NASA hopes the machine will help mankind understand the origins of the universe.

THE SLATE
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For God's sake, get out!

Our View



NL graduates who flew far from home (left to right): Sydney Martin (New York), Ali Lorah (Hawaii), and Nick Valentini (Guatemala, then Pittsburgh).

Without any disrespect to 'home,' may we suggest that post-graduation, you hit the road and go far, far away.

Our headline from that famous 1979 scary classic "Amityville Horror" may not pertain to small-town Northern Lehigh life, but we are going to relate it just the same. Post-graduation, listen to the voice.

To spend an average of 18 years in the same town is daunting. Stores open and close, holiday parades come and go, friendships blossom and blow up, yet "home" is always there.

After 12th grade, however, grab your well-earned diploma, turn over that tassel, and GET. OUT. Far, far away.

This might take some coaxing — especially for the hesitant and shy — but the metaphorical leap will be so worth it.

Kutztown? Great but it's 45 minutes away. Bloomsburg? Not that much farther. New York? You're getting warmer. Arizona? Hotter. Belgium? Boom! Home will always be here for the holidays. Listen to three Bulldog graduates who share their experiences to prove this case.

Sydney Martin, Class of 2013, set her sights on the big city and has been thriving, kicking and punching ever since.

"I moved to New York City in 2018 and fell in love with it. It's given me independence that I wouldn't have found staying in the Lehigh Valley," Sydney said between martial arts workouts. "Growing up, there are standard jobs you expect to have as an adult, but NYC has shown me that career possibilities are endless. I started my career in martial arts after finding a gym that I love, became the WKA [World Kickboxing Association] national champ for my weight class, and teach my own classes. It's also exposed me to many different lifestyles that I wouldn't have come across in the Lehigh Valley and has helped me grow as a person from learning different points of view."

Ali Lorah, Class of 2020, is attending college in (wait for it...) Hawaii. That is 4,816 miles from Slatington.

"Moving here after graduation was the biggest risk I've ever taken, but it ultimately turned out to be the best decision I've ever made. The move came with a lot of challenges, not to mention the challenges of starting college, especially with the fluctuating Covid protocols," Ali said,

from her tropical paradise. "Over time, I adjusted and was able to overcome the challenges and settle into my new environment. Now, I've lived here for over a year and I love it. I plan on going to medical school, so most of my time is spent studying, but in my free time, I can be found either in the ocean or on a hike. The decision to come here was definitely the best move for me. I've learned so much about myself, different cultures, and life in general throughout the process."

While responding to these questions, Ali was in her Honolulu apartment, finishing up schoolwork. After that, she planned to join the surfers enjoying the waves visible out her window.

Nick Valentini, Class of 2012, has ventured out and challenged himself in countless ways. "As a senior, I was ripe with indifference toward my future," he said. "A combination of teenage arrogance and apathy left me only applying to one school — Temple University. I figured, 'Well, I'll probably get in. If not, I'll figure it out, or I won't, who cares.' I guess it was the city of Philadelphia's contrast to the community of Northern Lehigh, which I forgot to appreciate in my teenage angst and self-importance."

Temple turned out to be the right choice for Mr. Valentini. The university and its surrounding city provided him with more academic, social, and professional experiences than what was imagined. More, however, was ready down the road.

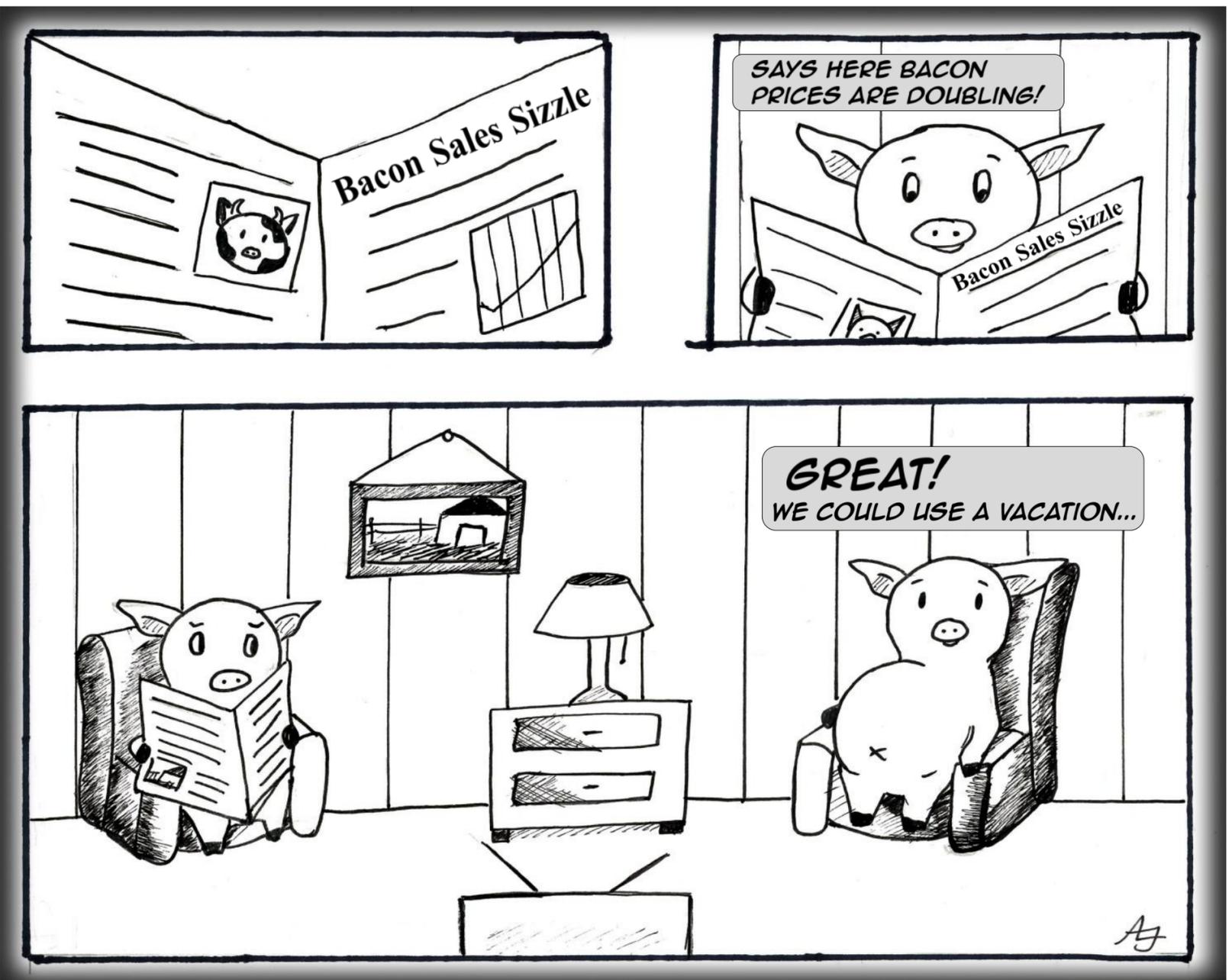
"After about a year working in Philly post-graduation, I applied for a Fulbright grant in Guatemala, where I lived and worked for 10 months," Nick continued. "Upon returning to the U.S., I resettled in the Lehigh Valley and began working. It was not long until I became restless once again, deciding to apply for a graduate program at the University of Pittsburgh. I am now currently living in Pittsburgh, set to finish my graduate studies in May '22."

So, the possibilities are endless. We mean no disrespect to the NL area, down to Schnecksville, up to Palmerton, and anywhere else within a stone's throw. But before life gets too hectic with the revolving door of job interviews, dating, settling down, mortgages, and whatever else... Get out.

Go. Search. Explore. Live. Talk. Learn. There is way too much earth to leave out there for the others. Home, or Zoom, will still be here for the holidays. 🐾

From the Farm: Pigs are thankful for economy problems

By Angelina Juarbe



Beyond the page: Why I write

This platform of a high school newspaper allows me to speak, you to listen, and everyone to discuss with 'rational' minds

BY OWEN LEVAN-UHLER
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Is it too much to say that I hate this country? Of course, I have the ability to say this because of the rights this country provides me, which is exactly the reason it is important for me to voice my discontent and disgust.

Frankly, I am tired of writing and talking about all of the flaws of the United States. I've talked about anti-queer legislation and sentiment, abortion rights, the climate, and a slew of other topics over the course of my nearly-four years here at *The Slate*.

Those with power constantly acquire issues and crises for younger and future generations to solve, while making it more impossible for us to take opportunities to fix existing ones. When in the writing process, I am finding myself more often at a loss for a topic or direction, because it is too difficult to encompass all of the resentment I have accumulated over the years in fewer than 800 words.

The original idea for this article was how the pandemic has affected the global economy. I grew extremely frustrated while thinking about the apathy displayed in the face of global unrest and damage. I began relating my grievances with societal happenings to my own experiences, so I decided to write about indiscretions and slights toward me by my community.

If you call me a communist, you would be incorrect. I am not a communist because I do not agree with its

implications of violent revolution. If you call me a liberal, I am not one, because most U.S. liberals are glorified centrists, whereas I am almost as far left on the political compass as one can be. If you call me a Democrat, I will laugh: I despise the two-party system in the United States, and Democratic politicians are no

one to be depreciative toward me, and I see myself as largely unimportant on a good day.

The point of writing something as brash as this is in a *high school* newspaper is to say that I am not the only one experiencing restlessness and fatigue simultaneously. Millions of people in this country, many of them youth like me, feel like there is nothing to do, or nothing we *can* do. The world is dying because those in power are too blinded by the selfishness embedded in them by previous generations to see that anything more than hotter summers are amiss.

Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) are still so marginalized and disenfranchised because the system that people of privilege herald is designed to hoard privilege for a select few like it is a material. The top 1% control 16 times more wealth than the bottom 50%, though the rich stockpile their wealth instead of helping to eliminate global challenges.

The welfare system designed to help the poor *keeps* them poor because as soon as you earn one dollar over the threshold for benefits, you risk losing them. And welfare is not doing all it is meant to anyway, for 38 million U.S. citizens suffered from hunger in 2020. *Cue the rabbit hole.*

If you are angered by what I write, it is indicative of *your* character and maturity, *not mine*. It is a wondrous thing to have people dislike me for being a child with an outlook that does not align with those of the typical white, conservative Pennsylvanian.

It is a wondrous thing to have people dislike me for being a child with an outlook that does not align with those of the typical white, conservative Pennsylvanian.

better, if not worse than Republicans. Do not use the word "faggot" to describe me unless you are queer yourself; do not attempt to dehumanize me. Remember that when you give me these titles, you are attempting to bash a 17-year-old. Remember that when you give me these titles, my ego is boosted. I am motivated by your protests.

Now, of course, the article I am currently presenting sounds completely self-indulgent. I must think I have *such a following*, that I must create *so much discomfort*. No. Believe me, I will be the first

I also write what I do because, if you look past your own personal biases, you will see the truths in what I present. I do not write for the sake of hearing my computer keys click: I write because I have strong opinions and morals. I know others have strong opinions and morals, as well, which is why I implore *you* to make your opinion heard. Contribute to a worthwhile and *civil* discussion, for we all have things to teach each other.

I opened this article by saying that writing has been, at points, tiring. Allow me to rephrase this, now that some context has been provided. I am tired of writing because I feel *obligated to*, or that I *need to*. No child should have to write about the condemnable state of their society, but then again, my simple articles are more effortful than the careers of many lawmakers.

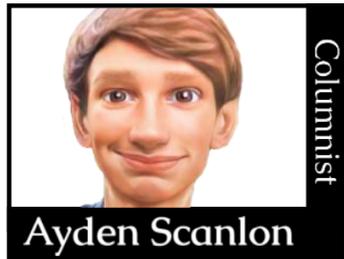
Even though writing can become taxing, I continue. I keep writing in hopes that *one* voice helps change *one person's* mind.

Writing aids in my hope of finding a semblance of importance. I write to *earn* the gratification of those who agree with me, and to communicate with those who disagree. I write to gain insight, and to give it. And I am ever-thankful to be provided a platform, albeit a smaller one, to share my thoughts and opinions on.

I write because every voice, opinion and experience matters if change is to ever take place.

But most importantly, I write because I enjoy writing. 🌟

My body, my what now?



Columnist

Ayden Scanlon

The entire world is (and has been) in the midst of a global pandemic. This started all the way back in March 2020 and is instilling just as much paranoia as it was then, if not more.

One would think that we would be nearing the end, seeing as it's been nearly two years since this catastrophe started. And for a while, it seemed as if we saw a light at the end of the tunnel.

For a considerable amount of time now, three vaccinations for the virus have been in distribution for the public: the Pfizer, Moderna, and the Johnson and Johnson vaccines. This is great news! Now people can further defend themselves against the harmful effects of the virus.

However, there have been documented cases of more harm than good coming to those who have gotten the vaccine. While these side effects are rare, they are a major factor in why some people choose to remain un-vaccinated.

Unfortunately, it seems that the current administration in the United States (along with a multitude of other nations) is not giving its citizens the right to choose for themselves. In some cases, it is either get vaccinated or forfeit employment. So why are some people choosing to remain un-vaxed? Health concerns are at the top of many people's lists. The Pfizer vaccine has had multiple reports of causing an inflammatory heart condition called myocarditis. While the chances of contracting this condition are low, they do exist. Naturally, this would scare some people into not wanting to get vaccinated. Another reason people may not want

to get vaccinated is because it just is not beneficial to them.

Many people do not experience the negative effects of the virus as other people do. People with pre-existing conditions such as diabetes or heart conditions will have a greater reason to get vaccinated, whereas someone who is not at risk will have less of a reason to get the shot. This, along with the possible health concerns, leave many people asking, 'why take any chances?' The CDC even mentioned on its website that people can still spread the virus regardless of

have employees be vaccinated (it is important to note that in this instance employees can be exempt from vaccination if they agree to weekly testing). However, this can be costly to the company as well as the employee. This has resulted in many people quitting or losing their jobs in an effort to avoid the shot.

With all the mandatory vaccinations being put into place, one might argue that the orders may infringe on a person's right to choose. This phrase can be seen as particularly ironic considering the administra-



vaccination status. While it is proven that the vaccine reduces the spread of the virus, it does not completely nullify it. Because of this, masks are still mandatory or at the very least strongly recommended in many places. Many people have taken all these factors into consideration and decided not to get the jab.

This has not stopped the current administration from enacting vaccine mandates across specific areas of the workforce. While not all jobs in the United States government are required to be vaccinated, all members of the executive branch are required to maintain full vaccination status. Workers in the medical field are also required to have received the vaccine, and small businesses with 100 workers or more will also be required to

tion's previous stances on other similarly controversial issues. The phrase, 'my body, my choice,' is a common saying whenever the topic of abortion is brought up. The current administration has not been shy in expressing this as its stance on abortion, and it has since created a double standard. Why would a government that is touting this saying be enforcing mandatory vaccinations? While there is no direct answer to this, it is easy to see the hypocrisy.

While having available vaccines is an amazing thing, we need to respect those who choose not to undergo the process. Whether someone is a Republican or a Democrat, it is imperative that we all respect the right to choose. After all, 'my body, my choice.' 🌟



LETTERS
TO THE
EDITOR

'Slate' inappropriate

To the editor:

I'm a taxpayer in the Northern Lehigh school district. I just picked up a copy of your student newspaper. Your editor in chief seems to be following in the steps of the rest of the country by bending to the liberals. An article that he had in about abortion is completely inappropriate for a high school newspaper and all it does is reflect what's going on in this country today.

If that's the kind of trash that you allow in your paper, then god bless you. And by the way, speaking of god bless you, nowhere in the article did it mention that abortion is murder.

Joe Fili
Slatedale

Four days are enough

To the editor:

How would a four-day school week benefit students? Are there any downsides associated with this approach? What about absenteeism rates?

In many ways, students can benefit from this type of school week compared to the age-old five days in terms of contribution and performance. In the way we are used to, more time was spent on hobbies, homework, jobs, and school activities, paving the way for a less-stressed day for students who work after-school jobs.

A downside to the four-day school week is learning. Three years of four days found that student growth fell short (Education Week: New Research Examines the Benefits and Drawbacks). Why not consider having a four-day school week every other week, doubling the amount of time it would take for the standard deviation to become what it would be over three years?

Doing this could prevent the need for extra time during the school day to make up the two days missed over the past two weeks if there were only four-day school weeks.

Absenteeism rates and food insecurity were not affected. Students felt more rested, and districts saved up to 3 percent, which can be enough to hire new staff or fun school-based programs.

Nathan Knauss
Junior

DISTRICT DOMINATION



Photo by Mr. David Hauser

The NL Bulldogs raise the District XI trophy after their win over Palmerton in mid-November. The victory was head coach Joe Tout's 100th win at NL and would not be the team's final game of the season.

Dawgs plow through playoffs

BY ALEXIS TRAUGHER
SPORTS EDITOR

Editor's Note: This article was finalized for press on Nov. 25th, prior to NL's round-2 game against West Catholic.

After ending a season in tears and the feeling of wanting more, Northern Lehigh's football team gave it their all this 2021 fall season. From falling just short to beating their rivals 35-0 by halftime, this star-packed team grew and showed up once again.

This past season, the team had a final record of 9-3, making it into the District playoffs as the number one seed. Dylan Smoyer, senior quarterback and record holder, led the team in passing with 1,694 yards and 23 touchdowns. Matthew Frame, senior fullback, led the team in rushing yards with a total of 1,039 yards, 124 carries, and 15 touchdowns. Trevor Amorim, senior wide receiver and school record holder, led in receiving yards with 827 yards, 40 catches, and seven touchdowns. Lastly, Nicholas Frame, junior safety, led the team's defense with 61 tackles.

Achievements, goals accomplished, and friendships have all come out of the 12 games played this season. Trevor Amorim and Dylan Smoyer both made school records: "My biggest accomplishment was breaking the school record for the all-time passing record," said Smoyer.

Making it into District finals two years in a row shows the dedication and experience of a goal-oriented team: "My biggest accomplishment this season was making it back to the District finals for a second time in a row," said junior running back Izaiah Ramos.

Austin Smyth, junior defensive end, also sees this accomplishment as something not to take lightly: "I think our biggest accomplishment would have to be making it back to the District final. Although that was our expectation, it's obviously still impressive and we plan on win-

ning it this time," Smyth said.

While in the mind of their coach, Joseph Tout, he thinks more is still to come: "Well, we hope our biggest achievement is still to come. We are hoping to bring home the 4th District Championship for our school. I'm proud that we set the goal of getting to the district final and hopefully winning the championship as well," Tout said.

Only a week after that statement did this prove to be true. Northern Lehigh beat Palmerton in the District Finals 64-34, marking their place in the State's Playoffs and becoming District XI champions.

Clearly, obstacles and difficulties have faced this team throughout the year. Specifically, playing teams new to them and stronger teams. "Our hardest game of the year had to have been North Schuylkill, but it was good that we played them because it will take a little longer down the road to play a team as good as them," N. Frame said.

Throughout rough games and anger fueled plays, this team had strong role models guiding the young players. "I'm proud of our seniors for being good role models on and off the field this year: Matt Frame, Trevor Amorim, Dylan Smoyer, Brett Misera, Dustin Greene, Aiden Carrion, and Mike Silverio," Tout said.

The overall outlook towards next season is more than bright. "For next season, I'm looking forward to seeing what my classmates and I will accomplish. Our class is very good and skillful and I can't wait to see how we do being the oldest on the team... We will be very experienced... and we will be returning our whole entire starting line," said N. Frame.

Austin Smyth knows that work will need to be done and wants nothing more than to be ready. "I look forward to bettering my game day by day in the off-



Photos by LIFETOUCH for the Reflections Yearbook

(Top) Brett Misera and Trevor Amorim, along with head coach Joe Tout, wait for the coin toss during the playoffs. (Above) Izaiah Ramos looks for a down-field opening.

Girls soccer season ends with positive reflections



BY HAYLEY THODER
SPORTS WRITER

The Northern Lehigh Girls Soccer team, coached by Jason Reinhard, held a record setting season. Throughout the entire season the team held their heads high and continued to fight. Coach Reinhard says "The girls had a record setting year. This was because of their dedication and commitment. I'm very proud of them all!"

In all sports, there can not be one individual who does it all, this team brought themselves all together and made sure to do what they needed. Doing this they achieved the record setting season going overall 13-8 and in the league go-

ing 8-4.

While the Northern Lehigh Girls soccer team held a great season, many are sad to see the team's seniors go. Aicha Salih, class of 2023, says "It was a great season and we accomplished so many things as a whole. It is sad to see the seniors go, best of luck to them in the future." There are many well wishes for the seniors and their journeys forward.

With many high hopes for future seasons to come, the team is looking forward to continuing breaking records. They are continuing to work hard and become a stronger team. The team hopes to continue into next season with the same and if not better abilities.

"It was so exciting to have such a successful season," said junior Danielle Dougherty. "We have had many great players for a couple of seasons now and it was rewarding to make it as far as we did. Of course, we all wish we could have gotten to the district finals, but we still played our hearts out alongside one another."

Junior Caitlin Kirk agreed, saying that teamwork aspect both on and off the field helped the season stay positive.

"Every player on the field gave 110% in every game. Our sidelines, both our parents and our bench provided a very encouraging environment," she said. "Overall, the team bonded very well,

which may have been our biggest aid in succeeding this season. Although every game was hard fought, the team always managed to have fun during the games. Even during our toughest losses (Semifinal vs. Moravian), the team lifted one another's spirits. We never left people out, we worked hard for one another, and we left everything we had on the field.

"The seniors this year will be truly missed. They always brought a fun and positive atmosphere to practices and games. However, they always worked hard and encouraged everyone else to work harder. They respected their positions as leaders and did what they needed to do to help us succeed as a team." 🐾



Amorim, Smoyer break records during season

BY ALEXIS TRAUGHER
SPORTS EDITOR

Sprinting past the defense into the endzone and throwing a breathtaking pass to their star receiver, both senior quarterback Dylan Smoyer and senior wide receiver Trevor Amorim broke school records this past season.

Smoyer broke the school record for career touchdown passes and total career passing yards. This record, set in 1970, was held previously by Don Rubright. Exceeding Rubright's 2,561 yards and 30 touchdowns, Smoyer claimed this title with 33 career touchdowns and has thrown 2,669 yards.

Throughout the past couple of years, more specifically his junior year, Smoyer started to come alive and grow into the confident athlete he is. "I always felt like I had the potential to become the record holder for our school, but after my junior year, my confidence improved and I became a better athlete all around," said Smoyer. His coach, Joseph Tout, started to see the young player evolve and transform into the quarterback his team needed. "We have been throwing a bit more the past couple of years. However, last year we realized how accurate Dylan is when passing. He also has a bunch of players to throw the ball. I just knew we had a special player who was really accurate and made good decisions," Tout said.

With his team and a strong support system alongside him, gratitude towards his fellow players and family is widespread. "I am thankful for my offensive line; they give me the time I need to push



the ball downfield and complete the passes. Also, without my receivers catching the ball, I wouldn't be where I am now. They are all tremendous athletes. I would argue that I have the best receiving core in the league. Finally, I would like to thank my coaches and family. They help me to be at my best before every game so I can focus on what I need to do without second-guessing myself," said Smoyer.

Smoyer's fellow player, Trevor Amorim, broke the record for all-time receiving yards. This record, set in 1968, was previously held by Duke Lilly. Amorim's 81 career receptions with a total of 1,627 yards exceeded Lilly, who had 73 career

receptions for 1,443 yards.

As early as his freshmen year, Amorim was already catching eyes. By sophomore year, he really started to shine like he does on the field today. "I knew Trevor could be a very special receiver during his sophomore year while we were playing Palisades. It was later in the year and Trevor took a short pass to him for about a 30-yard touchdown. Trevor came out as a freshman and had raw ability. It was during his sophomore season that he started putting it all together and it clicked," said Tout.

The chance of beating the school's

receiving record started to become a reality in the beginning of this past season. While working alongside Smoyer, this goal was accomplished. "Beating the record became a goal of mine as soon as I became aware of it earlier this season. I broke the record during Homecoming against Pen Argyl. I am thankful to my best friend, who doubles as my quarterback, Dylan Smoyer. Without him throwing me the ball, none of this would be possible," Amorim said.

As our two-star athletes leave their mark on our school's history, we continue to watch them during Districts and wish them well in their lives after NL. 🐾

Cross country runs hard during fall season



Gabe Diaz



Ayden Scanlon



Jared Thomason

Girls cross country this year were 8-16 dual meet record, and placed 5th place team at the Colonial League Championship Meet. The boys team had a rougher time, scoring 0-24 dual meet record. Un-scorred team at the Colonial League Championship Meet (fewer than 5 runners).



Emily Moyer



Stef Steckel



Emma Smith



Kasia Dos Santos

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Tara was willing to go out of her way to help. Since I'm in FL, she was instrumental in coordinating with the vendors for the small fixes that were needed on the property. She was also very good at communicating with me and providing updates throughout the process.



Marlene Romany

On behalf of Tara Banninger
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Working with Tara Banninger was the best experience I've ever had with a Realtor. From start to finish, Tara made the process smooth and she was always available to guide me and answer all of my questions. I'd highly recommend Tara to anyone interested in buying or selling a home.

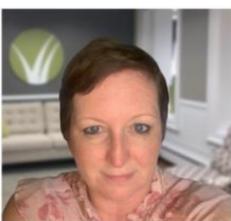


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Girls Soccer Seniors



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Food for sensible thought: Overcoming Overeating

BY DELANEY SZWAST
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

It's that time of year again. The holiday season is approaching, and with it often comes celebratory gatherings with friends and family members. A variety of tempting foods with an excessive amount of carbs, fats, and sugar can be found at these events in the forms of snacks, appetizers, multi-course meals, and desserts.

Many people overeat or practice unhealthy eating habits during these celebrations. It can be challenging for one to decide which of the many foods to eat at a party. Because of this, many people end up overeating so that they do not have to decide between the various food choices. Some people also choose to eat less before a gathering so that they will have "room" to overeat later.

While overeating once does not lead to any serious long term effects, it can cause a person to experience temporary bloating, gas, and stomach discomfort. In addition to this, a person may feel guilty or upset with themselves after eating too much. These experiences make it more challenging for one to enjoy the remain-



der of the celebration. However, there are multiple strategies that can be used to prevent oneself from overeating.

Although some believe in eating less before a gathering, eating in advance is often a better solution to overeating because it will minimize future hunger. A

person who eats less beforehand will be more hungry and more likely to overeat later because they will be very hungry. Another method to prevent overeating is utilizing a small plate. According to familydoctor.com, research shows that people typically fill their plates, no matter what size they are. By choosing a small plate, an individual is able to fill it without creating an excessive serving of food. A smaller plate also requires someone who wishes to try everything to take small samples of each option. Small portions of multiple foods instead of traditional serving sizes can help reduce overeating.

While consuming less to prevent overeating is advised, it is also important for individuals to consider what they are eating. Although it may seem ideal to come to fill a plate with traditional holiday favorites, such as candied yams, green bean casserole, fruitcake, and cookies, these foods often contain an excessive amount of carbohydrates, fats, and sugar. Starting with eating healthier foods such as fruits and vegetables before indulging in these foods is recommended to maintain a balanced diet.

Traditional holiday dishes can be made healthier by preparing them with more fruits and vegetables and less butter, oils, and other fats. For example, vegetables can be added to casseroles, and spiralized vegetables, such as zucchini, are a good substitute for pasta dishes. A salad is also a great side dish with less carbohydrates than a dinner roll. Fats can be reduced by cooking with less butter and baking, broiling, and grilling foods opposed to frying them.

In addition to this, there are several dishes that could be swapped with a very similar dish with more nutritional value. For instance, green bean almondine contains less fat and more antioxidants than green bean casserole, and shepherd's pie contains less carbohydrates and more vegetables than a pot pie.

As you attend parties this holiday season, remember to consider the quantity and the nutritional value of the foods you will consume. If you are preparing a dish to bring, get creative with new recipes that incorporate additional fruits or vegetables, or try a different, healthier variation of a traditional holiday dish. 🌱

Homecoming decisions, Red Ribbon Week, and theater's return



Columnist

Abby Peartree

Our school recently held its homecoming football game, which is usually a very joyous time as students get ready to go to the accompanying dance.

This year had a very different turn of events. The day of the dance was rained out, and, as homecoming was going to be

outside, our dance got canceled. Many people were distraught until a write-in candidate for the school board decided to create a separate homecoming dance at the Slatedale fire company.

As much as this seems logical to some, I cannot agree. They decided to pack students into a crowded room without a mask requirement which isn't the best idea during a global pandemic. Although it appeared to be fun and games, was it really the best option? Everyone had the opportunity to get a refund for their ticket, so was the risk of sickness really necessary? Although many people enjoyed it, there could have been other options to still hold a dance or something equally as fun that didn't have as much risk factor to it.

Something slightly less controversial

that happened in our school was SADD's Red Ribbon Week -- the nation's oldest drug prevention campaign. It has been going on since 1988 and has stayed strong ever since. The days this year were Proud to be Drug-Free, Say "Peace-Out" to Drugs, Voting for my Future to be Drug-Free, Drugs are Whacky, and Northern Lehigh is Drug-Free.

On the Friday of Red Ribbon week, students could sign a poster stating that they were drug-free. SADD is run by Mrs. Sarah Kunkel who you can email for more information at skunkel@nlsd.org. I believe this campaign is truly important as many schools struggle with students abusing drugs and this is a way to make understanding the harmful effects of drug abuse a little more enjoyable. It helps advocate awareness in a way that everyone

can enjoy.

Lastly, Northern Lehigh Little Theater presented "All Together Now," a show about bringing theater back to its former glory. Since COVID started, live theater has been gone. This year we can finally have people back in the auditorium to watch the show. The show was created by Music Theatre International, also known as MTI, and is a mix of songs from famous musicals as well as several speeches and a video from several famous composers and actors. As a theater cast member, I hope this production helps bring us back to the way live theater was before.

The show was full of upbeat singing and dancing that is sure to help cheer people up. I hope that things only get better. 🌱

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NL playoff domination

Football, from page 9

season. We have a lot of talent on this team, but if we want things to go our way, we just have to work," Smyth said.

Most importantly, the team has several returning starters to keep their team alive. "We have a large number of starters returning this year. This includes our offensive and defensive lines: Jackson Van Norman, Lucas Farmer, Ethan Karpowich, Sam Frame, Jayden Krempasky, Austin Smyth, and Jack Tosh. We also bring back skill positions with Nick Frame, Aiden Parvel, and Izaiah Ramos," Tout said.

With next season looking promising, all the students and coaches will keep hope and always remember the winning game in their hearts. And as the team battles off in a fight for Hershey, the student section, parents, and family will cheer them along during more record breaking plays and mind blowing passes. 🌱



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MONUMENTAL MOMENTS IN HISTORY

Honor, Courage, Commitment: The Navy Sea Cadet Way

BY CALLUM BRYCE ZIMMERMAN
SLATE HISTORIAN

Established in 1962, the United States Naval Sea Cadet Corps (USNSCC) is a youth leadership development program sponsored by the U.S. Navy and the Coast Guard. Its mission, according to seacadets.org, is to build leaders of character by offering young men and women hands-on and experiential training in partnership with the Navy and its sister services, in order to imbue the highest ideals of honor, respect, commitment, and service.

Lt. Travis Wilkinson, Commanding Officer of the Lehigh Valley Division of the Naval Sea Cadets, states that the program teaches youth, "self-discipline, respect, [and the idea] of putting in what you get out of it." The year-round program includes more than 6,400 cadets spread across two groups: the Navy League, for ages 10 to 13, and the Sea Cadets, for ages 13 to 18.



League Cadet Petty Officer Adam Stratz joined the Lehigh Valley Division when he was 10 years old. His experiences so far "exceeds my expectations." Through monthly drills, Stratz and the other cadets in the Lehigh Valley Division unit work on physical fitness, team work, military academics, marches, and military bearing.

In addition to the local drills, cadets

can participate in seven- to 14-day boot camps centered around military instruction and team-centric activities. They also attend advanced training camps in numerous fields, including seamanship, field operations, scuba and explosive ordinance disposal.

Other programs include: leadership training, STEM, aviation, field operations, vehicle maintenance, cyber security, culinary arts, SCUBA certification, photojournalism, JAG, robotics, naval special warfare/SEAL training, and more.

When reflecting on some of the trainings he has attended, Stratz talks about the time he attended a seminar and talked to an admiral. "That was really cool because you could hear how they got to where they were."

Villante explains, "I had a lot of different training experiences. I had the experience of [working with] three different command styles. It all helped me to prepare for the Navy."

Locally, the Lehigh Valley Division

participates in Color Guard services, attends parades, and support area military efforts, such as Wreaths Across America*, and National Poppy Day.

While the U.S. Naval Sea Cadets' primary mission is not to convince young people to enlist in the military or consider attending a service academy, they train on naval and military installations. Navy SEALs assist with the program, as do other active-duty, Reserve, and former service members among the corps' 2,600 volunteers.

When asked to identify some unique characteristics of the program, Lt. Wilkinson describes, "We are more structured and run things like the Navy." The environment is generally "more mature-like". He goes on, "the Unit is all on the same team, one Big Ship."

Perhaps former Chief Petty Officer Anthony Villante explains it best "The Sea Cadets is a leadership program that will help you fuel that drives you to be a

See Cadets, page 16

Child development class goes straight to the source



Mrs. Frew's child development class, including (above) Lucas Farmer, Ariel Kern, and Maylin Pinto Ramirez, visited Peters Elementary School to work with younger students.



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Going back to musical roots

BY DIEGO FENSTERMAKER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

It was only two weeks before the 2021-22 school year would start. However, for some high school students, they would have to make a quick stop at Slatington Elementary School before stepping into the high school. The reason: to help a group of elementary kids to learn and perform four pieces of music within the course of five days.

The week starts with an icebreaker to introduce everyone and then continues with practicing all four pieces of music: *Cousin Louie*, *Haydn Seek Fanfare*, *Dixie Two Beat*, and *Dragon Slayer*. A brain break is usually inserted within the practice to stretch out and have some fun. The last day follows a different procedure. A quick run-through of some of the more difficult parts in the gymnasium. After that a snack and the SpongeBob episode "Band geeks" is played to get rid of some of the jitters before the performance. The kids then travel down the steps to play in front of an audience composed of their parents and the principal of the elementary school.

Mr. Steven Jonkman, music teacher and band director of Slatington Elementary, has run the program ever since he's been at the school. The program itself is aimed at developing musical skills over the summer months. "It gives my students an opportunity to keep striving for something over the summer months. You know it's very easy over the summer for a student to give it a break for three months and lose focus," he said. On the first day, none of the musicians have played together for two months. Many also honestly admit that they have not spent too much time with the music either.

They are not as fluent with their instrument as at the end of the prior school year and wrong notes tend to squeak out on the first day. By the end of the week, a concert is performed, and skills have been expanded upon. Only recently though has Mr. Jonkman started having members of the marching band helping with teaching the kids. Every year around the start of band camp a sign-up sheet is posted and around three to five seniors usually write their names down.

The volunteers usually sit with the band members reading the music and giving notes and advice to the younger musicians. The help is an important part of encouraging the students to practice their music. "I believe that you get better by being surrounded by better musicians. You can see these older students who have been playing for far longer and who can do some pretty incredible things," Mr. Jonkman said. He notes a time when he was the younger musician in a school band. "When I was a freshman in high school and I started playing with seniors, I really looked up to those kids and it gave me something to strive for."

The older kids also highlight the aspects of band after elementary school. Jazz Band, Percussion Ensemble, and Marching Band tend to leak a bit into the summer program. High school members will usually play their music from these bands to have fun and show off. Showing that band is more than four pieces of music for two concerts but something that can be expanded upon according to Mr. Jonkman. "That's a huge reason why I want high school kids, even middle school kids, to return. You can see there is a future to the program. It doesn't end with Mr. Jonkman, it continues with Mr. Carroll and there are other cool things that you can do."

It is not only the little kids or the band program benefiting either. The high school kids that do help learn how to be leaders and teachers throughout the week. "It teaches you responsibility and kind of lets you see where the skills of these kids will be in what sort of areas they will progress as they get older," said Owen Levan-Uhler, a senior in marching band. When asked how vital such a program is to band as a whole, Owen said, "I think it's really important. One, it encourages kids to practice over the summer on their own because they have an actual concert to prepare for. It's not like, 'Oh, we don't have anything to prepare for because the winter concert is six months away'."

Cydney Krause, a senior and Drum Major in marching band also said that the program builds upon leadership skills. "For the older kids who help volunteer, it's a good lesson to really reign in on being a teacher and to be a mentor to these kids in an appropriate manner." The most important lesson: "It's about taking initiative, especially at a summer camp where you don't have a lot of time to learn a lot of the music. Especially for the little kids, it's a good lesson about responsibility and time management."

A summer band program that has helped many generations of Northern Lehigh musicians and brought older students back highlights the idea of band as a community. The SpongeBob episode reflects this, as the titular character brings together a band to help Squidward through the motivation of community. Those who help out remember when they were the ones learning everything. "Enrichment, I learned some notes that I didn't do during the school year. I also got to do some challenging work and still get help with it," said Owen. When asked about the community part Cydney said, "After being in a band for eight years, I made friends in the program. These are some of the people I'm closest to, and we get to share memories that no one else can."

The summer program is only hoping to expand. More students joining to practice their skills over the three month summer and more high schoolers coming back to help is the plan.

Elementary school students have had this summer program for many years and now, Mr. Carroll hosted a week this past summer as well. Perhaps the summer program for band will expand in the next years, however Mr. Jonkman would still like to host a concert outside, no matter what happens. 🌱

Homecoming Royalty



Photos by LIFETOUCH for the REFLECTIONS YEARBOOK
Homecoming King and Queen from last year: Joey Abidelli and Julia Wanamaker.



Photos by LIFETOUCH for the REFLECTIONS YEARBOOK
Brooke Nonnemacher and Emily Moyer.



Photos by LIFETOUCH for the REFLECTIONS YEARBOOK
Paige Craddock and Owen Levan-Uhler.



Kendall Heiney and Ian Molina.



Chase Jones and Brooke Delancey.



Photos by LIFETOUCH for the REFLECTIONS YEARBOOK

Sophia Lear (homecoming queen) and Sam Slack.

Footloosed

A Northern Lehigh Epic

By Chase Jones

It was Friday, Oct. 15, around 11:15 in the A.M. I was sitting in Apocalyptic Fiction wearing my finest navy-blue toga, which the ever-knowledgeable Mr. Prive had tied for me the previous block. (He always knew how to perform the most obsolete and obscure task such as this one.) A champion of ancient cultures and medieval fashions, it often seemed that Prive was the only surviving heir to the knowledge of their ways of life.

I sat at the desk alongside the "Walking Party" himself, a man of charisma and charm, not unlike my ever-humble self. His name was Nick Schweitzer. We were persistently and belligerently clowning upon the book *Miss Scheckler* was having us read at the time. It was called "The Road," but it was better known to us as the unofficial sequel to the *Communist Manifesto*. This had been an ongoing joke in class, one which came out of a conversation in no way to be taken seriously, fueled by a strange anger toward this novel and its poor composition. I believe it to have been myself, Nick, and Kendall Snyder who first compared the story's writer, Cormac McCarthy, to a vicious communist leader.

Suddenly, amidst our obnoxious verbalization of the mental anguish McCarthy had been causing us, the P.A. system keyed up and, for a moment, no sound came through. But then came the bark of the Big Dawg's voice as he began to give the most apathetic and undoubtedly the most poorly-timed announcement in the history of Northern Lehigh High School.

This was the moment when we got, for lack of a better term, "Footloosed?" Yes, that is exactly what it was — the perfect way to describe this moment of absolute disappointment, we had gotten Footloosed.

In other words, the executive decision had been made that the next night's Homecoming dance — scheduled to be outdoors under a tent — would be cancelled due to a supposed chance of rain. Upon hearing the shocking news, I whipped my head to my right and placed my yellowed gaze (as I was wearing my famed tinted aviators) on Nick Schweitzer. "Good God, Man!" I exclaimed out of anger. "Did you hear the Dawg Man? Cancelled he said, not postponed, but cancelled! What kind of foolishness is this?!" No one had a response as the entire room fell into a complete state of utter depression and with it a fury began to brew — one worse than any that Mr. McCarthy could have brought out of us with his grammatical mess of a wannabe commie manifesto.

Five minutes later, it was 11:20 a.m., and the B lunch bell rang. The halls flooded with a lunch period's worth of disgruntled students; all of them attempting to form some sort of get-together amongst themselves, there were even rumblings of a protest of some kind. Yearbook contributor Jalyn Leshar even sent out an email posing the idea

that everyone wore their finest Homecoming garb on the following Monday, as well as a silent pep rally to take a stand against the Big Dawg's premature dance cancellation. Meanwhile, as Jalyn was sending emails trying to put something into motion, I was outside the library amongst the yearbook crew. It was here where we spelled out our dissatisfaction

luloid would and the world before me suddenly returned. The message was from my mother.

Plans had been put into motion, mogul moves had been made, and parents were making things happen. The dance was back on!

We may have gotten *Footloosed*, but we were about to Footloose them right

around. It was a sight to behold after nearly two years of tragically cancelled events — events that define the memories of one's adolescence, events we would never get back. Looking around, watching this all unfold, suddenly I heard it. "Good God," I gasped. "Is that...? Oh, yes it is!" I shouted with pure excitement.

It was the opening guitar riff to none other than Kenny Loggins's *Footloose*, famous for being in the overly-complicated and slightly-stupid 1980s dance movie (again starring the still-beloved Kevin Bacon) *Footloose*. I practically sprinted to the dance floor and jumped right in next to Nick "the Walking Party" Schweitzer and started doing my finest James Brown shuffle.

In tune with the lyrics and the ever-so-timeless vocal stylings of Mr. Loggins, I dropped to my knees, bouncing right back up as he sang, "Please, Louise, pull me up from my knees..."

That's when people began to notice my dancing and they actually began to gather around, but what really got their attention was when an unknown voice hollered, "Do a split!" Everyone looked in the hopes that I would, but I waited a moment and kept shuffling.

I was moving quicker and quicker in anticipation as the music's pace rose and Kenny yelled, "Or else I'll tear up this town!" He entered the chorus with a big, "Tonight I gotta cut loose, footloose!" and I dropped down into a split, which superseded that of John Mellencamp's and rivaled that of James

Brown's.

It went on like this for the whole song, I did an entire number. I thought to myself, "This really is Footloose and that makes me, just for this moment — this perfect, untouched moment — well...that makes me Kevin Bacon."

This is a thought I would hold onto for the rest of my life — an incredible instance that would make its way onto the highlight reel of my adolescence and I owe it all to the hard talking, no nonsense parents who worked to make that night a purely joyous point in our shared history as a class, as a school, and as a community.

It was now 7:00 in the PM and the night had come to a close. The lights were back on, the excess food was distributed amongst those who wanted it, and I was headed back to the Lehman residence for pizza and video games. As we all stepped outside, ready to go home and kick off our dancing shoes until the coming spring, we were more than pleasantly surprised with fireworks.

One wondrous display of light in the black sky of night. It was quite an extravagant way to end a most extravagant evening, surpassing the final dance of Footloose and all of its glimmering confetti dusted through Kevin Bacon's glorious hair, by a mile. Solidifying that night as the night that we all kicked off our Sunday shoes, got back, before we cracked, lo our blues, and everybody cut



for all to see — teachers, parents, and most certainly the administration. Aiden Peseko, Cecilia Serfass, Annasti Turissini, and I wrote up and down the sidewalk along Bulldog Lane in protest — the exact route that would be taken to the stadium for the pep rally. From beginning to end, the walkway was covered in bold lettering, written in bright sidewalk chalks, saying, "Save Hoco," "We want a dance," "Talk Hard to bring back Hoco," and "FOOTLOOSE?" in the most exclamatory fashion.

Though nothing would come of any of this, at least we made it known that we would not willingly accept such absurdity. However, little did we know things were about to look up in a big, epic, overly-complicated and slightly-stupid 1980s dance movie (starring the beloved Kevin Bacon) kind of way.

It was a quarter to 1:00 in the PM, and I was waiting below the stadium bleachers, as I mentally prepared myself for the skit I was about to perform at the pep rally. I was set to go on first with my inherent ability to entertain in the most extravagant Chase Jones style known to mankind. In my head, I repeated, "Dodge, duck, and kick. Search, block, and punch," running the masterful choreography through my head like an instructional athletics film of the 1950s.

I felt the buzz of my phone in the front pocket of my adventuring slacks. The film reel in my head burnt up as cel-

back by throwing our own dance. A dance which would set the precedent for all other dances, raising the bar so high that you would have needed to call the fire department to get it down.

Ty Moffitt and the gang would have had to bring their finest fire fighting vehicle with their finest go-go-gadget ladder to even reach the bar, like an overweight cat stuck in the highest branches of the tallest tree in town, too afraid to climb down on its own.

The next day, Saturday, Oct. 16, at 4:00 in the PM. It had been just over 24 hours since the dance's cancellation, and despite the odds, the livid parents of Northern Lehigh put together an event which seemed to be straight out of an 80s teen comedy. There was more food than any of us knew what to do with lights, balloons, and a DJ who actually played the requested tunes we so desperately wanted to hear. It was truly something to be marveled. A moment in time where a community came together and brought nothing but absolute joy to its youth population. Moments such as these seldom come about and, therefore, are seldom forgotten.

As the lights went down in the old Slatedale Fire Company, the festivities began and the dance floor was dominated by a gaggle of good-timing teenagers doing the Cupid Shuffle. Everyone was bopping and moshing to the music; nothing but smiles and untamed laughter all

Remember the fallen with Wreaths Across America

Cadets, from page 14

better person overall."

If you are interested in exploring the opportunity to join the US Naval Sea Cadets Lehigh Valley Division, please contact Lt. Travis Wilkinson at email: lvdiv042@hotmail.com or visit our website at www.lehighvalleyseacadets.com.

**Wreaths Across America
Fundraising Event**

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OR those who Serve. . . TEACH our children the value of Freedom. On December 18, 2021 at 12 p.m., U.S. Naval Sea Cadets Lehigh Valley Division will be helping Fountain Hill Cemetery to Remember and Honor our veterans by laying Remembrance wreaths on the graves of our country's fallen heroes.

Every year, Wreaths Across America and its national network of volunteers lay over 700,000 memorial wreaths at over 1,000 locations in the United States and

beyond, including the Pearl Harbor Memorial, as well as Bunker Hill, Valley Forge and the sites of the September 11 tragedies.

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Please help us honor and remember as many fallen heroes as possible by sponsoring remembrance wreaths, volunteering

on Wreaths Day, or inviting your family and friends to attend with you.

Thank you for supporting the US Naval Sea Cadets Lehigh Valley Division and Wreaths Across America! Please visit our dedicated website at www.wreathscrossamerica.org/ PA0083P if you would like to sponsor a wreath and/or to gather more information about the Dec. 18th events. 🐾