



Talent, dance, and abs shine at Mr. NL

BY MADDY MACK
STAFF WRITER

After many weeks of hard work and dedication, Chase Jones, Jared Thomason, Dustin Greene, Owen Levan-Uhler, and Nate Walters took to the stage on May 14 to compete for the title of Mr. Northern Lehigh. Run by Student Council with Devon Vega as the host and Mr. Barnes, Mrs. Schmidt, and Mr.

Oertner as judges, the Mr. Northern Lehigh Competition provides senior boys a chance to have fun with their friends before graduation by showing off their best swimwear, talents, and formalwear.

"I signed up for Mr. NL because I thought that it would be fun! I figured since it was my senior year, I might as well get out of my comfort zone a bit and try to put on a fun show for the community," Levan-Uhler said. Jones also

thought Mr. Northern Lehigh would be a fun way to spend part of his senior year. "Ever since I was a freshman, I have wanted to compete in Mr. Northern Lehigh, for I have always had a passion for entertainment and art. I figured the show would be a great opportunity to explore different avenues of said passion, as I have never truly performed live in front of an audience."

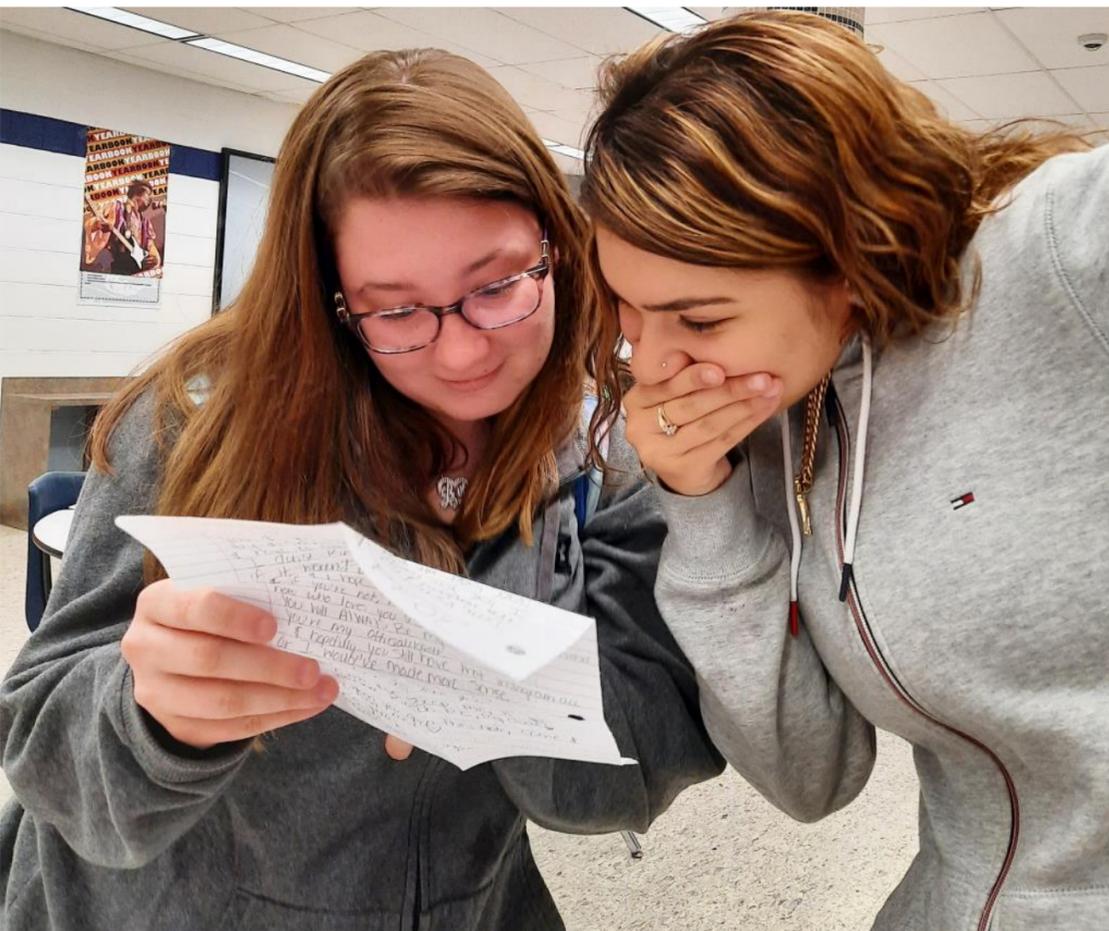
The competition starts with an open-

ing dance number. This year, the five seniors performed "The Jingle Bell Rock," a dance routine from the iconic movie *Mean Girls*. Just like in the movie, the boys sang half of the Christmas carol with help from the audience.

Following their performance, they modeled their best swimwear to the tune of "Surf Crazy" from *Teen Beach Movie*.

See Mr. NL, page 4

Time-Traveling Back to Seventh Grade



In seventh-grade at Northern Lehigh Middle School, students in Mr. Graver's Old World Cultures class have the luxury of making a time capsule filled with memories only to be opened five years later. Last week, those seventh-graders — now seniors — unearthed those memories to a wide array of emotions.

(Above) Makenzie Peckham and Nellianni Ramos revisit letters written to each other. (Left) Zach Chamberlain and Devon Vega's slime held up quite well over the years. More photos are available on our Instagram page.

Bulldogs add proud notes to County Band

BY DIEGO FENSTERMAKER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

On February 19, eleven band students from Northern Lehigh performed, not in the usual setting of NL High School's auditorium, but instead at Northwestern Lehigh High School's auditorium.

They performed with students from Northwestern, Southern Lehigh, Whitehall, Catasauqua, Parkland, Dieruff, and William Allen High School in the Lehigh County Band.

Lehigh County Band is a band that is composed of students selected from the schools mentioned before. Representing their school, students are selected by the Lehigh County Band Directors Association in December.

Chosen to represent Northern Lehigh were ninth graders Reece Johnson and Lauren Nichols, tenth grader Joshua Weaver, eleventh graders Diego Fenstermaker, Caitlin Kirk, and Cameron Kuntz and seniors Cydney Krause, Owen Levan-

See County Band, page 4

Dawg Runnin'



Photo by Caitlin Kirk for The Slate
NL's Running of the Dawgs has returned! Moose, along with Cassie and Zoey Fried and their mom, participated. More photos on page 15.

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Big Brother Wants You to Read This. Beware. Page 8.

NORTHERN LEHIGH

Prom 2022



Paige Craddock, her handsome date, Dylan Smoyer, Emily Moyer, Briana Ojeda, AJ Wittong, Sam Slack, Sophia Lear, Brendan Smay.



Camryn Torres and Trevor Amorim.



Zach Chamberlain, Ryan Lynch, Skylar Moyer, Trinity Miller, Devon Vega, Jared Thomason, Toby Frantz, and Christian Davila.



Saige Schellenberg and Alicia Quattrocchi.



Alexis Hollinger and her date with awesome hair.



Bianca Carrion and Ethan Karpowich.



Luke Wackley, Aiden Pesesko, Elizabeth Panetta, Jalyne Leshner and Alex Feifel.



Dylan Smoyer, Emily Moyer.



Lily Groover and Matt McCarty.



Lily Wanamaker, Delia Quier, Danielle Dougherty, Cadence Peters.



Tyler Fenstermaker and Brianna Hess.



Brooke Nonnemacher.



Kendall Heiney and Brianna Kuhns.

Photos by Eric Heiney, Mason Wieser, and Lifetouch Photography

Is it time to lift the lid on hats, hoods rule?

BY GIANA ROSARIO
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

For some reason, hats and hoods in school have always been a controversial topic. Many of us may be wondering why such an innocent piece of clothing can become such a “distraction” to some people. Some may say it is disrespectful or a safety hazard to wear them. For other people, it is more of a comfort item. So why is this rule enforced in schools?

Most of us would agree hats and hoods can be comforting for us. It can be a safety blanket for some people, and they feel more comfortable with it on. Without it, it may be hard to focus on their class. They feel safer in a school environment with the extra coverage.

Change.org states, “Some students wear hoods because it helps them feel more comfortable in class. A hood can act as a security blanket in this way.” The website this information came from is actually a petition to let schools allow



their students to wear hoods in class. The article explains how a student's comfort level can lead to better focus in class. Additionally, they are more productive in class, which means they are learning and actually taking in what they are being taught.

Sure, it might be a safety concern when students are walking in the hallways. They could be passing as a student

when they are really an intruder, but if the students are in the classroom and want to put their hoods up, it should be fine. There is no reason they should not be able to wear one. It is not a “distraction” because it is only clothing. The only way it would become a distraction is when the teacher points it out to the class. This happens a lot at school. No one is distracted by a hood until the teacher says something about it. Then it becomes a distraction since it is being pointed out.

When asked about the school rule on hats and hoods several students gave the same answer.

Victoria Halkias says, “I honestly don't care. They don't affect my education so it doesn't matter.” This is a great point that school boards should take into consideration. Gabe Diaz says I'd say that the rule isn't necessary but more so a pa-

tron to traditional viewpoints. If someone wants to wear a hat inside a building or wear their hood they should be able to do so. People do it anywhere else, so it shouldn't be just a school-specific rule.”

He goes on to say, “There have been many times where I'd want to wear my hood either if I was cold or for the sake of comfort in class while I'm listening to the material since I'm comfortable I can focus better. It just seems obsolete.” As explained by Diaz, students are able to stay focused on their classwork when they are more comfortable. Some people just need things like hoods to function better during class.

I feel we should lift the ban on hats and hoods in classrooms. It would make people feel safer, and it would increase productivity in classrooms. There is no reason why people should not be allowed to wear them. The benefits of allowing this rule will help students be the best they can be. 🐾

College, career fair showcases paths for NL students

BY LAURENCE NICHOLS
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

On Friday, April 22, 2022, Northern Lehigh High School held its college and career fair. This fair was open to all high school and middle school students. There were many local companies, businesses, colleges, organizations, and places of employment for students to visit. Some of the careers that students were able to explore and look into were the military, nursing, manufacturing, and first responders. Some of the universities that students were able to look into were Kutztown, Marywood, DeSales, along with many others. LCTI and other technical schools also attended this event.

Employers that were attending the career fair had small activities for students to try out when they visited their table. Bechtel's Pharmacy had students practice refilling a prescription bottle with M&Ms, the fire companies allowed students to try on the uniform that they must get into while firefighting, and the Military

branches allowed students to show their athletic skills by performing push ups.

St. Luke's, among others, were offering volunteer opportunities, and possible summer jobs for students who were interested in gaining experience. They still would've been exposed to places and situations where they might be working in the future, even if in the future they hold a different position.

High school student Sarah Garcia, seemed very satisfied by what she was offered. “I went to LCCC's table, and we spoke about enrollment and what I could've done there. The people were very nice and welcoming. I really feel that this career and college fair has given me more shaping and ideas of what I might want to pursue in the near future”

The career fair has clearly affected many people in a positive way by inspiring those who might've not had ideas of what they'd want to do in the future, or wouldn't have otherwise had chances to gain experiences in their possible future workplace. 🐾



Brody Dye, Lawson Hoffman, and Jackson Van Norman check out one of the military tables at NLHS's Career/College/Military Fair.

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Do I still want to be a teacher?

The strenuous decision determining the future

BY ALEXIS HOLLINGER
GUEST CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Within every child lies a dream of what their future could possibly hold. Astronauts, veterinarians, firefighters—the possibilities are endless.

The sounds of children begging their parents for glow-in-the-dark stars to line their ceilings to simulate space, or stuffed cats and dogs with a plastic stethoscope fill the toy aisles in stores. Their imaginations paired with the multitude of themed toys helped fuel the imitation of dreams coming true.

For myself though, I always felt a gravitational pull toward the aisles filled with notebooks, whiteboard markers, and paper clips. I yearned for a surplus of supplies in order to create a classroom within the quarters of my bedroom, teaching my stuffed animals about simple addition and subtraction. I have dreamt of being a teacher since the question was initially asked in school, when the “get to know me” papers were delivered to our desks, the future profession category never faced change as I continuously wrote *teacher*.

Now, nearing the end of my high school career, the possibilities for my dream are growing closer, but as times and circumstances have changed, do I still want to be that teacher?

I always felt strongly about the profession, as I realized the importance of schooling and the people who make it happen. Teachers assist in preparing students for life, delivering lessons that are both academic and moral. I want to be able to create change around myself, and with teaching, the process of doing so leaves students exiting classrooms with information they can use for their entire lives; Being a teacher would allow me to push out the next generation with lessons they apply to each part of their lives.

I also yearn to be a teacher to change the stigma surrounding education that kids hold; many children view education as a burden and dread entering the school building. To be a teacher is to teach but to also surround children with a safe environment where they can also have fun.

There needs to be a happy medium. Those who have finished out their years of schooling and have had the opportunity to receive a teacher who changed the stereotypical idea of education will often remember them forever; those who have not received the opportunity is what I would like to alter within the realm of education.

As a senior, it is almost time for me to choose post-high school options, and I can say yes, I still want to become a teacher. However, much can change in a 12-year span, and from kindergarten to my senior year, the concept of teaching has evolved.

Many teachers are resigning from their professions due to many struggles halting them from both staying happy and afloat in their lives. Their wages, battles with school boards, and issues with students have led them to remove themselves from the career they spent years preparing for; the pandemic has only heightened this regret and removal from teacher positions.

Despite my strong desires and wishes to fulfill my dreams, I still hold continuous doubts of the profession due to the forces affecting it.

Many classrooms have a defined curriculum with little to no room for teachers’ voices to be implement-

ed in lessons, and this creates difficulties. A job like this requires the insight of personality from all parties involved, and with such harsh guidelines put in place by the administration, it becomes increasingly difficult for teachers to complete their job.

As well as harsh guidelines, there is such a nit-picked idea of how teachers should present themselves; assumptions are created based on hair colors, piercings, tattoos, and even attire. Worldly forces are also changing the teaching career, as there are bans on certain books and topics that are allowed in classrooms. In addition to bans, the public eye views education with a strong stereotype, expecting teachers to complete extreme goals yet barely handing them any recognition or a corresponding wage.

Whenever I express interest on becoming a teacher, eyes often widen from many, as if I were to have five heads. People question why I would spend my time chasing a career that will seemingly never deliver the same amount of success and fulfillment as stress and hard work was spent on it. Despite these criticisms and stagnant doubts, though, I still wish to be the spark of change that education needs.

I want to be able to allow students to be them-



‘Miss Hollinger?’ We shall see.

selves, create a safe space, and convey that education does not need to be black-and-white and become a burden in life. I want to be able to revamp education, to push the previously defined boundaries of stereotypes, to have children walking into my classroom excited and awaiting what comes next.

As graduation nears, my plans to become a teacher, though doubted at times, are not coming to an abrupt ending; in four years’ time, I plan to be within my own classroom and embarking on my career as a teacher, changing lives of the youth and the views on education as a whole. 🌟

Mr. Northern Lehigh swoons audiences again, post-Covid

Mr. NL, from page 1

This included some pool float twirling, skateboard tricks, and the audience being sprayed by a squirt gun.

After that, the boys displayed their various talents for the audience. With the help of the football team and friends, Dustin Greene showed he was a very talented fisherman. Jared Thomason performed a song on his harmonica for the crowd. Owen Levan-Uhler, with the help of Alex Feifel’s choreography, performed “Streets” by Doja Cat. Nate Walters played his drums, trumpet, and guitar for the audience. Last, but certainly not least, Chase Jones and his backup dancers performed a number to “Jailhouse Rock” by Elvis Presley. Jones says that “With a lot of help from An-nasti Turissini and my amazingly wonderful backup dancers, I was able to develop a routine to Elvis’s ‘Jailhouse Rock,’ in which I performed as though I was the King himself. It both showcased my dance moves and my acting abilities.”

Following the talent portion of the competition, the boys displayed their formal wear by wearing suits and being escorted through the auditorium to “Sway” by Michael Bublé.

The top three contestants, decided by the judges, were Jared Thomason, Nate Walters, and Chase Jones. They then participated in the Dating Game, modeled after the television show, where Kendall Heiney asked them all questions to show off their charm and appeal.

After a hard deliberation period, it was decided that Jared Thomason would take third place, Chase Jones would take second place, and Nate Walters would bear the title of Mr. Northern Lehigh. Immediately following the decision was a Viewer’s Choice Award, which Jones won.

Despite the confidence and charm displayed, the show didn’t come without a few challenges. “Mr. NL is definitely a different kind of production. For parts of the show, you have to control the entire stage. You have to make the show your own, on your own at points, which is kind of nerve-racking. And dancing. Dancing is a challenge,” said Owen Levan-Uhler.

Jones admits, “Getting all of my backup dancers in the same place at the same time to rehearse the dance for my talent section was certainly difficult, but it all came together in the end. We were also having issues filling the last thirty-some seconds of ‘Jailhouse Rock’ with choreography that could top the chair bit [a high point of the performance], so we simply didn’t. Instead, I found a great piece of ‘Suspicious Minds’ from Elvis’s ‘Aloha From Hawaii Special’ that provided a perfect opportunity to do the splits and a perfect ending to the performance.”

Devon Vega decided to be the host of this year’s show. Although he did a fantastic job, he had many challenges to face as well. “I definitely had to overcome a lot in order to host the show. For starters, I have terrible social anxiety that almost got the better of me before the show started. I’m also incredibly insecure about the way I look, so wearing a suit and bringing attention to myself was really scary.”

Although the boys enjoyed all aspects of the show, a few moments really stood out to them. “My favorite part of the show is probably the opening number. I am not choreography-inclined, so even though this is simple, it was still a fun challenge,” Levan-Uhler said.

“My favorite part was most definitely the looks on my family’s faces when I performed my talent portion, especially my grandmother’s... it was priceless,” Jones said.

“My favorite part of the show is tied between the Dating Game and the talents. The talents themselves were all amazing and extremely fun to watch. The dating game gave me an easy opportunity to make people laugh, which I love doing,” Vega said. He adds, “I just wanted to say thank you to everyone else that was involved in the making of the show and the actual show itself. The crowd was extremely nice to me and the crew did a great job of making me feel special.”

As best said by Chase Jones, “I lived out a near life long fantasy... I was the King. I got to be Elvis Presley himself for nearly three whole minutes. I was the King, but a king is nothing without his people. My people know who they are, and to all of them I say, ‘Thank you, thank you very much.’” 🌟

County Band unites musicians from various schools

County Band, from page 1

Uhler, Parker Musselman, Camryn Torres, and Nate Walters. As part of County Band, they had to practice eight selections of music chosen for the concert. Members went over *The Star-Spangled Banner*, *Flourish for Wind Band*, *Chant and Jubilo*, *Jekyll and Hyde*, *Whiplash*, *The Mandalorian*, *El Choclo*, and *Pirates of the Caribbean*. They also participated in three rehearsals before the concert.

The first and second rehearsal took place on Saturdays. Members met in the morning and warmed up before going over each tune with the director conducting for the performance. Each director from each school has a piece that they direct in the concert. This usually entailed a playthrough of the piece before focusing on certain sections to clean the arrangement. Lasting for about four hours,

students would have to go over the music again and again in order to create a great performance.

Requiring endurance in order to play for those hours. Each rehearsal also had a small snack break in the middle. It’s also important to note that members still had to practice at home on their own free time. Focusing on their trouble spots and making sure they were ready for their performance. The third rehearsal however took place on Thursday, February 17, a school day. It lasted from morning into the evening to allow for more time to focus on each piece before the performance.

This means that members also had to make up a school day on top of the other work they already had to do to be prepared. Members then showed up on Saturday, February 19th, in their marching band uniform designating which high school they are from. Only then did the

actual performance start.

The purpose of this, according to Mr. David Carroll, Band Director at Northern Lehigh, “is to promote music education in our schools, showcase the great musical talent that exist in Lehigh County, and to give our band students a unique and enriching instrumental experience which extends beyond the typical concert band settings that exist in most public schools.” The County Band usually has around one hundred members. With this amount comes the ability to do more than the average school band. Mr. Carroll commented that the County Band has “bassoons, oboes, and a section of French horns which are not typical of any school program.” This in turn opens the opportunity to do songs that require such instruments. Another aspect is that students from different schools come together for the performance. Rather than school vs. school, as in the case of

sports, County Band requires the cooperation between different students of different districts to work together.

Of course, the purpose of any school (or schools in this case) program is moot if the students themselves don’t find value in it. Fortunately, students have found value to the program. Cameron Kuntz, junior clarinetist said, “County Band allows us to advance our musical talents to a further level, as our music is both challenging and very fun to play.” On the same hand, Joshua Weaver, sophomore saxophonist, commented that, “the value is meeting new people and having the chance to be a part of a larger band.”

As of writing Northern Lehigh is slated to host County Band next year. The performance will also be Mr. Carroll’s third time hosting and his twenty-fifth County Band as a director. 🌟

Sleep deprivation can be a nightmare

BY DELANEY SZWAST
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

“Who needs sleep? Well, you’re never gonna get it.” These lyrics from the BNL song “Who Needs Sleep?” pretty much summarize the lives of high school students. Most students have various after-school activities such as sports, clubs, and jobs which, combined with homework, can keep them up late into the night. In addition to this, they have to wake up early in order to be at school on time. These late nights and early mornings quickly become a vicious cycle and result in many teenagers being sleep-deprived.

Many high school students do not obtain enough sleep and are therefore susceptible to the negative effects of sleep-deprivation. According to an article by Amy Brooks, seven out-of-ten high school students are sleeping less than the recommended eight-to-ten hours. This lack of sleep can be detrimental to their academic performance as well as their overall well-being.

Sleep is critical for cognitive function. Students that do not get enough sleep limit their abilities to learn and think clearly. They will have a harder time processing and remembering information, thinking abstractly, problem-solving, and concentrating compared to peers who do get enough sleep. This disadvantage prevents them from reaching their full academic potential and could even cause them to fall behind academically.

In addition to this, cognitive impairment can threaten an individual’s safety and the safety of those around them. The inability to think clearly can result in a person making a rash and potentially dangerous decision.

Impaired decision making skills combined with a delayed reaction time can make a sleep-deprived person particularly dangerous behind the wheel. According to an article by Danielle Pacheco, driving sleep-deprived can be just as dangerous as driving under the influence of alcohol. In both situations, the driver’s overall awareness and decision making skills are impaired which makes them more likely to exhibit risky driving behaviors.



Art by Keona Dyer for The Slate

Limited sleep can negatively affect one’s health. Do naps return to school, perhaps?

Limited sleep can also negatively impact health. Individuals that do not get enough sleep have a higher risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes.

According to an article by Stephanie Watson and Kristeen Cherney, sleep-deprivation results in a decrease in the production of insulin, a hormone that helps reduce blood sugar levels, and leptin, a hormone that decreases appetite. It also increases the production of ghrelin, a hormone that increases appetite. Because of this, sleep-deprived individuals are likely to eat a lot and have high blood

sugar levels, putting them at risk of becoming obese or diabetic.

Despite the adverse effects of sleep-deprivation, many school systems make it extremely difficult for students to obtain enough sleep. According to an article by Eric Suni, teenagers often stay up late because they have a sleep-drive that builds slowly which results in them not feeling tired until later in the evening. Unfortunately, many schools start early in the morning, so students that stay up late are unable to sleep for eight hours.

In 2014, the American Academy of

Pediatrics recommended that middle and high schools have a start time no earlier than 8:30 a.m. so that students would be able to get enough sleep. Some schools in the United States have implemented later start times, and in California, high schools will be required to start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. by the fall of 2022.

If this trend continues, high schoolers across the United States may finally be able to get the sleep that their bodies need. 🐾

Groovin’ into next year’s Editor role



Photo by Andrea Barnes

Next year’s Editor in Chief will be incoming senior Lily Groover — successor to this year’s Owen Levan-Uhler, in addition to Breanna Hoppes, Ava Rosario, and Jamie Knerr since this new regime took over in 2018. Lily contributed to the middle school’s Bulldog Bark, and has been active in martial arts for many years — currently holding the title of “Sabum” with a third-degree black belt.

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Our View

‘Did you learn anything this year?’

There is a cool teacher on the upstairs floor who ends each class with a question that, too often, gets replies of grunts and dismissed apathy. Whether Dr. Gonzalez’s classes realize it or not, it’s not merely an exit ticket but more of a challenge.

One that should be asked of all students across all curriculums. Or, dare we up the ante, one that is asked of yourself.

Look, it’s not the coolest thing to admit you “got” something in school, or understood a topic, or added some wrinkles to your brain,

but more cognitive and social development goes on than you probably realize.

Think back to August when, as a ninth-grader, you entered these big, scary halls to scamper around during the Freshmen Scramble. Huffin’ and puffin’ around the cafeteria or near the stage may not have taught you anything from a textbook or USA Test Prep, but you learned. Something. (We won’t tell).

Then when the high-and-mighty seniors walked into the building for day one of the final 180, there was

still so much real estate in the brain. The learning would happen on a constant basis.

Even right now, think of the Doc’s question again. “Did you learn anything today?” Do not be so quick to dismiss what actually occurred at LCTI, on the bus to a baseball game in Palmerton, in the halls by the gym, or anywhere else where the school experience occurs.

His question is a great reminder that you have an obligation while here. An obligation to yourself to actually do something while in these

classes. Why insult yourself to just sit there and let the lessons pass you by? Yes, yes.. You’re bored, you’re tired, you’re never going to use this. C’mon. It’s been said for years. You can be bored, you can take a nap later, but you will use your character, integrity and work ethic right now.

¿Aprendiste algo hoy? It’s a great question that doesn’t need to be asked in Spanish class, or any other, but one we should all ponder just the same. 🌟

Depp versus Heard: Why does it matter?

BY LILY GROOVER
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The court case that is currently sweeping the country off its feet involves none other than Mr. Johnny Depp and Ms. Amber Heard. Long story short, in 2018, Heard wrote an op-ed in *The Washington Post* about being a survivor of domestic abuse. She never mentioned Depp’s name, only referring to herself as a “public figure representing domestic abuse.”

Before this, Depp tried to sue popular publishing company *The Sun* for libel when they headlined an article calling him a “wife-beater.” Heard testified against him, making 14 allegations of abuse. Depp and his legal team denied all of them, but the judge ruled on Nov 2, 2020, that 12 had been “proved to the civil standard and that *The Sun*’s headline was ‘substantially true.’”

The Sun’s article and what she wrote caused Depp to lose many things, including his most famous role in Disney’s *Pirates of the Caribbean*, costing him \$22.5 million, and his role as Grindelwald in *Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore*.

Depp is suing Heard for \$50 million for defamation of character, with Heard counter suing for \$100 million. Depp denies ever acting in a violent manner, and Heard claims she only ever acted violently in self-defense. The lawsuit trial has been broadcasted to people across America, and the internet has taken its content and attacked. Many interesting things occurred during the trial, which caused an internet frenzy. Clips and videos are being shared from the courtroom live streams across all media platforms, and are gaining much attention, turning a serious matter of domestic abuse into a

circus.

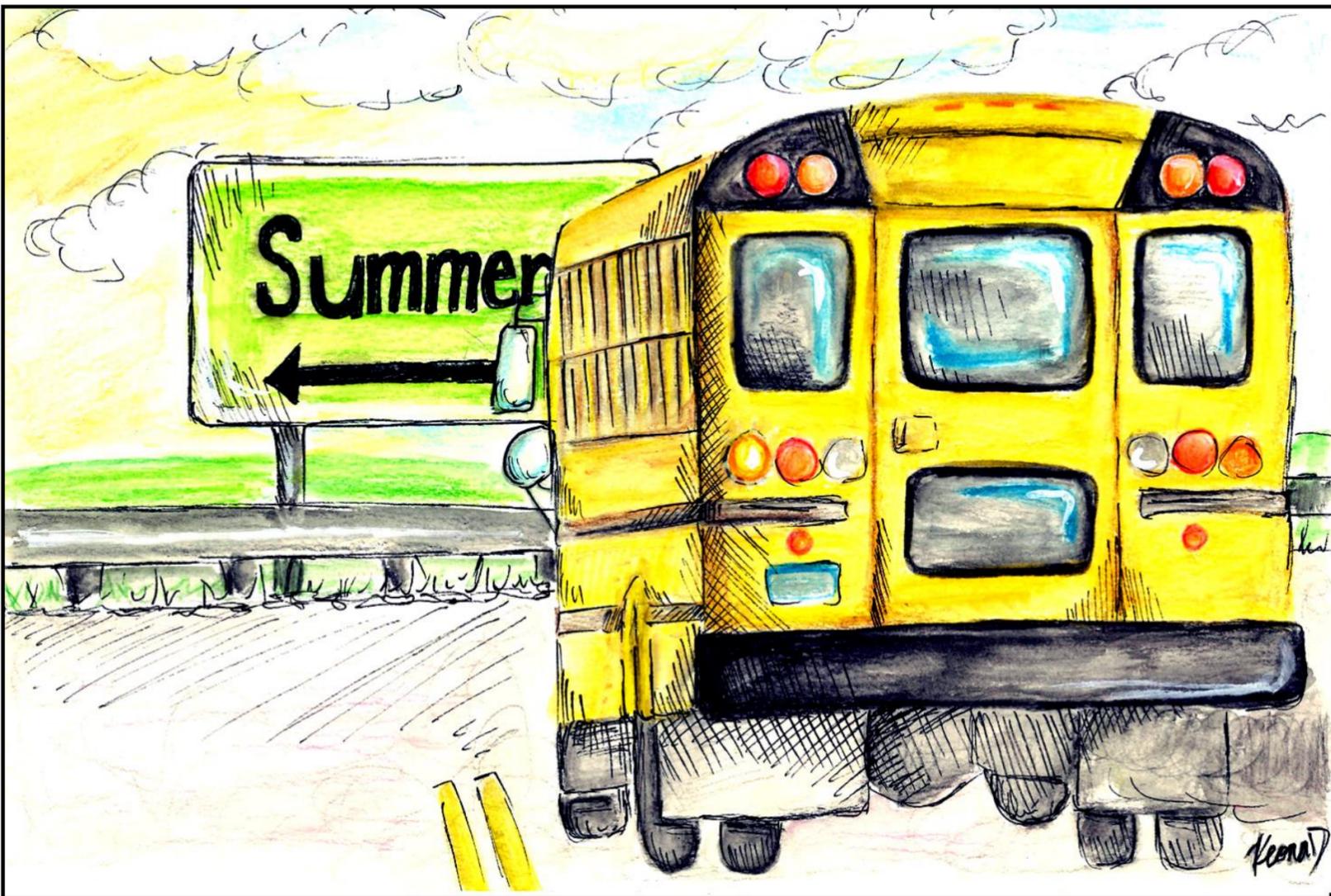
This is due to the massive amount of unprofessionalism happening in the courtroom. Heard’s legal team, Elaine Bredehoft, Heard’s main attorney, has received the bulk of the ridicule. Bredehoft has argued with the judge, negatively imitated Depp, struggled to ask her witness appropriate questions, and has reportedly been in a screaming match with Heard about her performance as an attorney. Additionally, Heard’s other lawyer, Benjamin Rottenborn, has become a target after Depp’s testimony. Each question Depp answered was interrupted by an “Objection, hearsay.” from Rottenborn. Hearsay is a legal term that describes a testimony or document that is quoting people who are not present in the courtroom. Then, during Depp’s cross-examination by Heard’s team, Rottenborn objected to his own

question, which is usually not something a lawyer does if they want to win the case. His objection confused the judge, and caused some laughter in the courtroom, furthering the ridiculousness of the trial.

Why does this matter? Whether or not people take a side, it highlights the discussion of the potential for mutual abuse in a relationship. Both sides of the story may be true, both sides of the story may be false. Since this trial is between two very public figures, it widely opens the discussion about domestic abuse in a relationship toward women, toward men, or toward both. However, the amount of jokes made about this trial completely derails the conversation. Domestic abuse is a serious matter, and though the trial might be sometimes absurd, one of them is guilty, otherwise, there wouldn’t be a trial. 🌟

NEXT STOP – SUMMER!

By Keona Dyer



Head to the left, everyone. Put up your feet and breathe. Good luck to those graduating, and we will see the rest of you in the fall!

THE SLATE
ALL YOUR BULLDOG NEWS..

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NewsMedia Foundation NSPA

The Slate, published six times a year, is the journalistic voice of Northern Lehigh High School. Support for a free press is provided by Northern Lehigh administration: Mr. Matthew Link (superintendent), Dr. Tania Stoker (assistant superintendent), Mr. Robert Vlasaty (principal) and Mr. Michael Strohl (assistant principal).

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PRINTING PRODUCTION

Times News, Lehighton

Why I write. Part Two.

BY OWEN LEVAN-UHLER
EDITOR IN CHIEF

So. This is my final article for *The Slate* as a Northern Lehigh student.

It's still hard to imagine a life without high school, much less a life outside of Northern Lehigh. It's hard to imagine not pulling 14-hour days at the school every other day. It's hard to imagine not writing an article every month or two for this community.

There's a lot more I want to say, a lot more I want to write about. But I have a life ahead of me to do that, and more people to reach than just NL.

This article is titled "Why I Write, Part 2"—the first part was about how I hate writing about crappy things going on in the world, but I'll still do it anyway because of internalized moral obligation. That's still true. I don't know where that feeling comes from, but it's not going away any time soon, that's for sure.

This article is another reflection, but more on what I've actually learned. Maybe someone will relate in some way to the words I'm clacking out on my laptop. If no one does, at least I've had fun, and I've been able to be heard. That's what a lot of this comes down to, isn't it? Our paper lets people be heard, hopefully for the better.

Even though sometimes I've loathed having to write another article, to find enough creativity and energy to research in-time, I've still done it pretty much every time. Of course, I'm not advocating for expending yourself on creative endeavors, because that can be extremely detrimental to one's mental health. What I'm saying is that writing can be very gratifying. It's nice to see your name and voice on the page.

I'm so thankful that this paper exists: *The Slate* helps students exercise their right to free speech. It's relieving to see this, especially since districts around us, with a lot more money and readers, aren't able to write what they want because they are extremely conservative. I hope our



paper is able to convince enough people to fight for their right to free speech in their own districts.

Yes, this is a safe space for NL students, but also a paper of opportunities, a learning tool. Opportunities to learn how

to interview, refine ideas, refine writings, research more effectively, be more critical, and figure out little pieces of identity through ever-changing views and events are all facilitated and encouraged in these pages. Most importantly, this paper

means something different to everyone else.

I'm thankful that Mr. Barnes and other teachers, my family, and my friends have been encouraging me to write for years. This paper has made me a better writer, better thinker, better articulator, and helped me propel myself in the directions I've wanted to go in terms of my beliefs and self-expression.

Of course other circumstances and people have shaped my life, but *The Slate*, in refining intellectual and practical components of me, has played its part in gently shaping some of my desires and dislikes in life, and has helped me start to determine some of my priorities.

I'll keep those to myself because then I'd have to write a whole other article, and surely no one would want that. All I'll say is finding the right balance of self-awareness and cynicism in a turbulent world has been an interesting journey.

One person who messaged *The Slate* in October after my abortion article was published commented on how my "commie, pinko, liberal, bastard parents" shouldn't be teaching me the ideas and opinions I have. The "local tax-payer" failed to realize, or maybe acknowledge, that the ideas I possess are my own. My parents definitely didn't radicalize me.

People like the bigoted messenger believe that kids aren't really allowed to have their own opinions because they're just kids. That's just wrong, for many reasons.

That's why I'm glad *The Slate* exists, so students can share their opinions and perceptions of what is going on around them, and just be themselves.

So, thanks for sticking around with me and my fellow writers, editors, photographers, and artists the past few years; I hope you continue to stick around. We have some absolutely talented and bright kids joining us and coming back next year, and in years to come. We are the epitome of what student journalism is and could be. 🌟

Never Heard of Equal Pay Day?

That's the Start of the Problem...

The issues women keep facing in the world's workforce

BY SUSAN GILSBACH
STAFF WRITER

Equal Pay Day is *celebrated* by far too few people, and unheard of by even more. The problem for those of us who shout it from the rooftops is that there are people absolutely unwilling to listen. The purpose of this date is to show how far into the next year women would have to work to earn the same amount as men did the previous year.

This year, the date fell on March 15, the *earliest* it has ever been. This is disappointing, and discouraging to the women fighting for their equal pay.

The uncontrolled wage gap (comparing salaries of every man to those of every woman, regardless of job status or qualifications) is currently 83 cents on the dollar. This means women are making 83 cents for every dollar made by men.

The obvious question here is why is a high schooler writing about this in the

school newspaper? Why isn't this something more commonly known?

And, if this is your first time hearing about equal pay day, why?

The fact that this article has taken me about four drafts should be an inclination of how confusing it is to still have to talk about this topic in 2022. Women have had to fight for almost all of their basic human rights that men have been handed since day one. The idea of *pay equity* shouldn't even be a topic of conversation in a modern world, let alone a real issue.

The problem is that equal pay is not an issue often discussed. With so many other controversial issues going on in the United States right now, pay equity seems to be pretty low on the list. Often, women try to shed light on the unfairness of the workforce through court cases and class-action lawsuits.

One of the best examples of



this is the 2011 case of *Walmart Stores v. Dukes*, where women working at various stores in the chain came together to point out the unfairness they experienced working for the company.

They claimed that they were placed in different positions based on stereotypes on what women and men could do. This includes men working in sports sections and managerial positions, while women worked at the registers and in the cosmetics department. The Supreme Court dismissed the case after Walmart claimed it was costly and unmanageable.

So, why are women still fighting for equal pay 11 years after this case? You'd think that, surely by now, women would have some sort of pay equity, right?

Well, the wage gap is smaller now than it was back then, but that doesn't necessarily mean everything is right in the world.

The wage gap is still prominent, yet there are still people who are adamant that it doesn't even exist. While the issue of pay inequity has been around for what seems like forever, it seems like the louder women yell, the less we are heard. The best we can do is keep fighting, and hope for the future. 🌟



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Oh, Hey, Big Brother.



AYDEN SCANLON
Columnist

This is one of the most well known lines from George Orwell's *1984*. It refers to ever-present propaganda and immense government presence blanketing the novel's dystopian world. The phrase has become somewhat ubiquitous whenever the subject of censorship is touched on, especially when comparing our world to the setting of *1984*. America may have just taken a large step in the process of becoming a country similar to the one conceived by Orwell.

Just recently, the Department of Homeland Security announced that it will be issuing a new Disinformation Board in order to help stop the spread of false or misleading information across various types of social media and platforms, like Twitter and Facebook. At first, this just seems like more run-of-the-mill social media censorship, but it actually has a far greater scale than anything social media has ever experienced before.

Instead of companies or moderators internally censoring posts or articles, the U.S. government will be in control of the program. This fact alone upsets many people across not only the nation, but across the world. Social media plays an absurdly large role in the lives of the average person, and this Disinformation Board simply adds more unnecessary government involvement into everyone's lives.

Possibly the biggest (and most important) question to be asked is, 'does the government have the right to determine

what is the truth or not?' Furthermore, who determines what is true and what deserves to be taken down? Especially when looking at this situation through an Orwellian perspective, the idea of this selective censorship is scary. The similarities are so striking that the Disinformation Board is being increasingly referred to as "The Ministry of Truth," the same government agency in charge of censorship in *1984*.

current administration be preparing to act against Twitter's new policies and practices? Probably not, but when taking into account Musk's right-leaning political identification, it's certainly possible.

This administration's claims that the Disinformation Board will strengthen democracy and integrity on social media are confusing, especially upon examining other countries' direct involvement in media outlets. For example, China's gov-

will come of this new "Ministry of Truth," but that certainly will not stop people from speculating the worst. In reality, there is a very low chance the United States will transform into a dystopian country like that seen in *1984*. However, that does not mean that the masses should not be weary. Stories like *1984* or even *Fahrenheit 451* serve as a warning to the world about what happens when the government becomes too big of



The timing of the situation is nonetheless interesting when considering the recent offer made by Elon Musk to purchase Twitter and privatize the company. Musk claims that he aims to restore free speech to the site. Twitter has a reputation of unnecessary censorship, so this seems completely reasonable. Could the

ernment has a very large influence on their social media output, so much so that an extensive firewall permeates the entire country. It seems that government moderation on social media may achieve the opposite of what was initially intended.

Of course, nobody can be sure what

an influence. Hopefully society will heed the warnings and signs that appear in real life.

At the end of the day, the U.S. government controls large areas of American life, but one thing is for certain: the government has no right to jurisdiction over the media. 🐾

Bursting the religious bubble

BY ABBY PEARTREE
STAFF WRITER

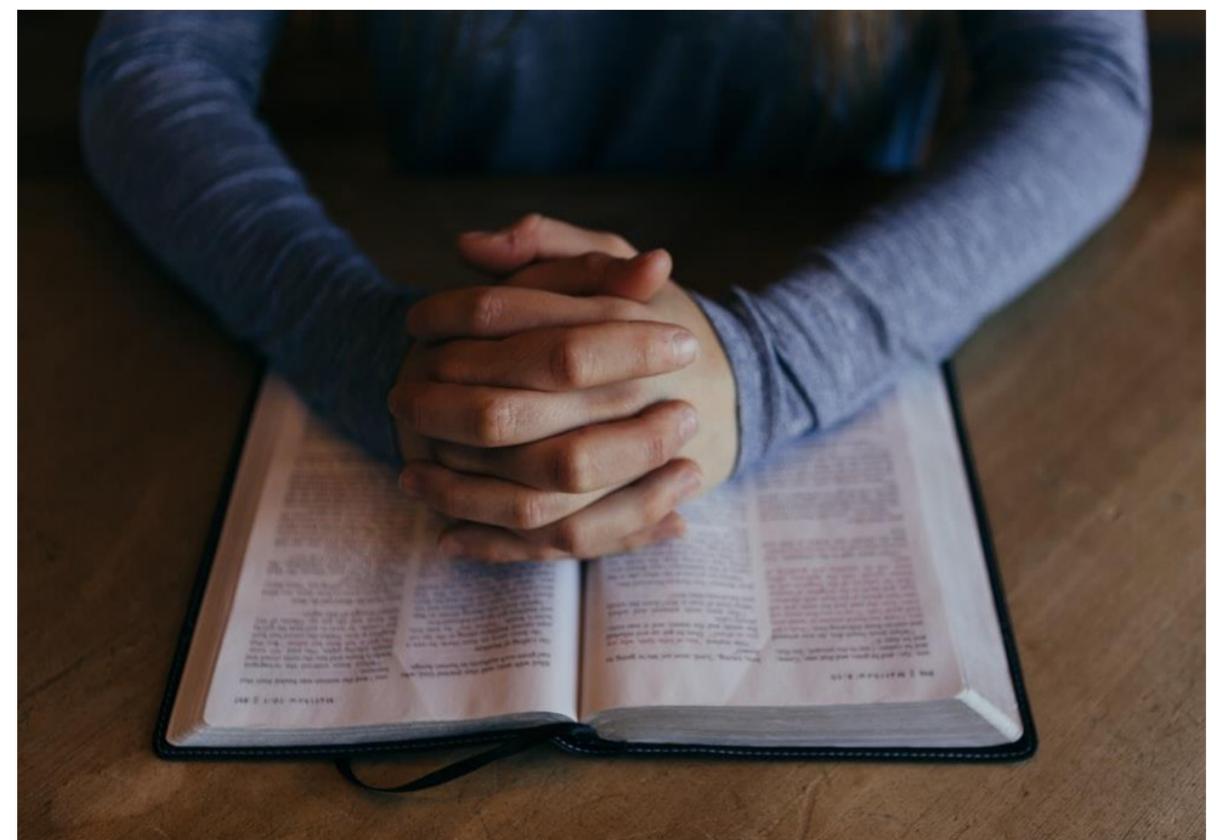
Across the world, there are many different religions. These religions can either be very carefree and open or incredibly strict and closed-off. Some religions even have different sects that follow things in different levels of observance. Although having a religion can be fulfilling for adults, how is it for children?

Children often are not given a say in their religion as they are brought into whatever world their parents want them to live in. Some faiths even manage to indoctrinate non-religious adults into celebrating with them. According to the public religion research institute's 2020 census, 70% of Americans are Christian. However, about 85-90 percent of Americans celebrate Christmas.

This is quite a significant increase and it goes to show that some religions can indoctrinate people from all walks of life. People are so surrounded by religion that they begin to become part of the religion and celebrate its holidays. Alongside this, people within the faith will seemingly only surround themselves with people of faith. This is something called the religious bubble.

This is a metaphorical bubble in which religious people only talk with other religious people. This could be their own faith, in a positive light, or another faith in a not-so positive light. People will struggle to talk to people who are undecided in religion and will take it upon themselves to influence those who don't agree with them. Another example of this is the tragedy of September 11th, 2001, in which the twin towers were struck down killing millions. Osama Bin Laden's motive was to create a large Islamic state. While being a religious person usually does not lead to insane acts of terrorism, the fact that it can is frightening.

Who are we as humans to decide that our own personal beliefs should mean war? Destruction and murder in the



name of a god is still destruction and murder. The fact that any religion can sometimes augment people's minds to the point of terrorism should be disturbing, but in our world, it almost seems normal as there has always been based in religious endeavors. Not only are adult minds being augmented, but children's as well.

A study was done at Boston University by Kathleen Corriveau, Eva Chen, and Paul Harris that observed the difference between religious and secular children. These children were told to read three different stories: religious, fictional, and realistic. The realistic story was easily recognized to be realistic by all children. The religious story was different depend-

ing on the religion of the child.

But the fantasy was deemed realistic by many religious children. This shows that, while sharing your religion with your child could be a nice bonding moment, it may not be good to be teaching them everything about one singular faith at a young age without the knowledge of other ideas. The knowledge of other ideas and religions and the fact that no religion is inherently bad is good for kids as they need to learn to be respectful of others and understand that you cannot take everything at face value.

If one becomes too obsessed with their religion and it being the only good religion, they could become as dangerous as Osama Bin Laden. The religious bub-

ble is a toxic area in which people only trust those similar to them and loath those who differ. The saying may be commonly known as "great minds think alike," but it is not as well known that the proverb ends with "but fools rarely differ".

To stay hiding away with people of your own faith and not be open to teaching yourself or your children about other religions is to remain a fool with a closed mind. It's time to be open to the prospect of learning and letting people be who they are.

I hate to burst your bubble, but it's time to be open-minded and let people have a choice. 🐾

SPORTS



Funding, budgets spike volleyball dreams

BY HAYLEY THODER
SPORTS WRITER

Northern Lehigh High School is one of many schools that does not have a volleyball team. The nets, the room, the desire to play are all evident — but what remains?

Marisa Maehrer, class of 2025, says, “I think we should start a team because many of us have off-seasons in sports and not many sports to do. As an athlete in the spring season it is hard to find sports to do in the other season.”

NL has basketball and soccer teams, but they are not options that are completely fulfilling to what most girls want.

For some it is not all about having another sport to do, it’s a way of connecting to who you are.

Kaylyn Lugo, class of 2025, says, “Since I can remember, I wanted to play volleyball. My mom played and got a scholarship and my dad just played for fun. I grew up with it and would love to continue with it.”

If we have so many girls wanting to play, why don’t we have a team?

“I have a list of about 20 freshman girls that said they would love to have a

team,” Lugo said. “Mr. Cunningham [phys. ed. teacher] told me that he would coach. The problem was Mr. Geist told me it is not possible. He said there is not enough money to have another team. He said they can barely fill in the teams we have,” Lugo said.

However, it’s more than just having enough players to fill a team. In order to create a whole team and have the space to do so, we must also have the equipment and the approval from the athletic department.

Mr. Cunningham says, “We do not have the expensive equipment or the proper holes drilled into the gym floor.”

Is it all about not having the proper equipment or is there more to it? Athletic Director Mr. Bryan Geist says, “There is data-driven decision-making to do with it. We already do not have enough girls interested in the other sports held in the fall season. On top of that, we don’t have the paint for the volleyball lines, the space, and other preparation for a volley-



ball team. Another aspect would be money-wise. Coaches’ salary, uniforms, and supplies would all be expected costs, which we are unsure if we could fill.”

Mr. Geist also made it clear that he would gladly put together a volleyball

team, if he were able to have the correct data to support the adding of another sport.

Maybe at some point we will have a volleyball team to fulfill all the hopes of many people. 🐾

Full transparency needed on see-through women uniforms

Can more be done to keep athletes ‘comfortable’ in school-issued gear?

BY ALEXIS TRAUGHER
SPORTS EDITOR

Aggravation and anger pulses through my veins as I read email responses, hear first-hand instances, and make connections that are all too visible. Outside of the made-up world humans hide in, reality is far too close for comfort. Many at our school feel as if they are a second option and are placed behind any form of testosterone that shows they need assistance.

Humiliation, self-consciousness, and just overall disgust is nothing new to Northern Lehigh female athletes. Uniforms tight as a second skin, made for society’s vision of the perfect female, fuel eating disorders, starvation, and thoughts of appearance over the game occurring around you. Yet, it takes countless complaints ignored with needs unfulfilled and five to eleven years for change to happen.

Over the past couple of years, uniforms have become thin, see-through, and overall unflattering to the NL athletes. However, it has become clear that neither complaints nor the budget will change the system in place. For now.

According to Athletic Director Mr. Bryan Geist, uniforms are renewed every five years; this has been an ongoing NL tradition. Since the Covid-19 pandemic struck, five years has been pushed to six.

Each sport will have to go through this six-year waiting period to help answer their athletes’ concerns. Softball and baseball have received new jerseys in this 2021-22 school year. Boys and girls track will receive new uniforms next year. After that, in order, cheering, field hockey, cross country, basketball, soccer, football jerseys, football pants, then wrestling will receive new uniforms. After the last team, the five-year period will be reinstated.

To accommodate the athletes, Mr. Geist would order particular items to get the teams through the season. For example, in the 2021 season, softball and baseball needed new pants.

“In 2020-2021, baseball and softball

were not getting uniforms. They needed one more year. So, I spoke to both head coaches, and they said they needed about five new [pairs of] pants. So we ordered five new pants for each team, just to get them through the year,” said Mr. Geist.

He has also done this for the track compression shorts this past season. This article of clothing brought upon aggravation and embarrassment to many athletes. Mr. Geist was able to order a small number of pants for girls who came to their coaches and asked for more.

The shorts were not given based on superiority or ‘most uncomfortable’. If you actually complained *enough* you might have been able to get what was needed. However, many girls just sit back and deal with it because we feel unfavored and are not likely to get more than 10 total. The way NL females have become accustomed to ‘sticking it out’ and dealing with it is ridiculous. Yes, this was their choice, but, sadly, one often made.

If the sport wants to change the uniforms before their five-year period, it is not allowed. Teams can fundraise for t-shirts or clothes, but if they want to fundraise so a bra does not show through a white jersey, or have other teams harass the players because of how bad the jerseys are, they will receive a ‘no’ from the PIAA board. Parents are not recommended to purchase game-day uniforms or help advertise due to PIAA rules. “There cannot be any advertising on jerseys and/or anything used for warm-ups. If it is pre-game you cannot have any advertising. The PIAA does that allow that,” said Mr. Geist.

One of many things that confuses female athletes is the bias toward the football team. NL has full respect for them fundraising to purchase their jerseys and how they have done well throughout the past couple years. But what does not

make sense is if fundraising and purchasing uniforms for pregame or the actual game itself is not allowed, how are they able to buy jerseys they wear throughout the game.

Would that jersey they wear in the game, *throughout the game*, not be considered a jersey or even pregame material? That is what a uniform is — distinctive clothing worn by members of an organization or team? Last time I checked, the uniform was what the athletes wore during a game and sweat on.

“Football on the other hand gets many different, new uniforms for different nights. Their different jerseys are also worn maybe three times a year, give or take,” said Zoe Hathaway, junior field hockey and track athlete.

Those jerseys are worn for a single game, while other teams are forced to put up with what they have for an entire season. The rest of the sports have to fight to get even the smallest change.

Track compression shorts brought upon aggravation and embarrassment to many athletes. Mr. Geist was able to order a small number of pants for girls who came to their coaches and asked for more.

“During this track season, my mother and I fought for months to get the girls new track shorts,” said Hathaway. “We have had the same track shorts for seven years. At first, Mr. Geist refused to give us new ones. I did also bring up how the football team gets many new jerseys. These track uniforms have been see-through since I was in seventh grade. These track shorts are beyond embarrassing to wear. I was told that if I am uncomfortable that I could wear the loose-fitting ones.”

Hathaway is not the only person continuously fighting for this issue. About two months ago, a parent brought up this

issue during an NL school board meeting. The matter is still ongoing with minor changes in place.

How can someone tell another person to settle with being uncomfortable? Why do we have to protest by not wearing the supplied shorts to actually make something happen?

These uniforms continue to belittle our athletes and make them self-conscious. This should never be an issue. “I feel very uncomfortable and have low confidence in these uniforms. I am more worried about whether the jersey looks good because my shorts and jersey are riding up because they are so tight and small, than I am about the game. I feel that the last thing a player should be worrying about is their jersey while playing,” said Caitlin Kirk, junior soccer and track athlete.

Last year, Hamburg’s football team harassed our girls soccer team by cat-calling, name calling, and telling vulgar jokes based on their uniforms. This male team was harassing our own, yet this continues to be ignored and never brought up. In my interview with Mr. Geist, I asked if there were any personal experiences with other schools harassing or saying things about these uniforms, and his response disappointed me: “I have not heard anything.” *We* have.

Each soccer player was called down to meet with Mr. Geist, be interviewed, and then give incident reports. Our school also contacted the Hamburg school’s administration, but nothing has been heard of since then.

Before that interview, myself and others knew about Hamburg. The girls soccer team experienced a cruel and disgusting event that not even our athletic director will address. Apparently, our image and reputation of being great is stronger than honesty.

So how will we change this? How will we get our teams justice and fairness? Will our female athletes be treated like the strong, determined women they are and just another issue? And to Hathaway and many others, “the athletic department overall needs to do better and do what is right to keep their students comfortable.” 🐾

Dawggs on the Diamond



Zach Chamberlain



Cole Hausman



Connor Martinez



Josh Kistler and (back) Davyn Hankee



Head coach Mr. Greg King and Jack Tosh



Jack Tosh



Tyler Fenstermaker



Nicklaus Buskirk



Cole Hausman



Jackson Van Norman

Athletics are no stranger to mental health issues

BY CAITLIN KIRK
STAFF WRITER

Sarah Shulze, Brittany Stevens, Sean P. Bonner, Jr, James Peek, John Chambers, Morgan Rodgers, Bryce Gowdy, Zoë Rogers, Tyler Hilinski, Augustus "Gus" Lee, Robert Martin, Sean Locke, Austin Weirich, Madison Holleran, Evan Hansen, Katie Meyer, and Lauren Bernett.

While this list is not representative of the individuals we have lost, it shows that there is a deeply rooted issue at the hands of college athletics. Every one of the names has been ruled "death by suicide". They all were hardworking, college athletes with families left to mourn their sudden deaths. Each of them has left behind a grieving team wondering what *they* did wrong or how *they* did not catch the signs.

The question now is, how many more before enough is enough? How many more outstanding athletes, hardworking individuals, and loved characters have to take their own lives before something changes? How many more?

The pressure that coaches put on their athletes can become very overwhelming, putting them in a very tough position. Mentally, they start to put themselves down, making it very hard for them to focus during competition. When they are not mentally checked in, it is proven that they cannot perform at their best. This catch-22 serves as the main factor in the elevated suicide rate among collegiate athletes.

While this is mainly focused on the collegiate level, however, this type of pressure is put on all athletes, regardless of their age or level of play.

The mental health of every athlete around the world matters and needs to be considered. It starts at the highest levels and trickles all the way down. It starts



with the NCAA, the colleges, coaches, teammates, parents, and then the athletes themselves, which put an unhealthy load of pressure on them to always excel at the highest level. Many forget that even the highest athletes need a break from training, schooling, and reality every once in a while to cope in healthy ways. No one should ever have to resort to suicide to make themselves happy again in something they love.

College is a difficult time for many,

and being a college athlete means a particular set of stressors and expectations are added. It may have nothing to do with your athletic competition at all, it may be that you believe you must be perfect in everything you attempt and any perceived failure is unbearable. The thought of losing a scholarship, either academic or athletic, or the embarrassment of letting down your hometown while away at college can bruise the mental health of the competitors. The fact

that more than 30 athletes within the last couple of years have committed suicide to make the pressure and stresses of college sports subside, shows the critical problem in college athletics. The depression epidemic raging through college athletics needs to be noticed and addressed.

Within the past two months, five distinguished college athletes have committed suicide. Sarah Shulze, Katie Meyer, Jayden Hill, Robert Martin, and Lauren Bernett, unfortunately, took their lives between March and April of this year.

These athletes who, from the outside looking in, may have seemed like they had a life made for themselves, were not okay. Away from the field, these five could have been struggling with severe mental health issues that no one knew about. Athletes, and everyone, should not have to hide their emotions to 'appear strong' to their fans or team just to prove that they are good players. Their mental health should not validate if they are a good or bad player. The stresses that come with always feeling the need to perform well for an audience wear on them. This alone shows the horrifying reality of college athletics.

Every person should know that they matter and are loved no matter what they feel. Even when it seems that everything is against you, you need to know that you are not alone in the battle.

Your teammates, friends, and family will always support you through the rough times.

No one should ever have to resort to taking their gift of life away to feel wanted or happy again. You should never be embarrassed to ask for help or to talk to someone about how you are feeling during tough times. If you truly need help, find someone to talk to and get the help you need before it could be too late. 🐾



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Stacy Hall, Palmerton
On behalf of Tara Banninger
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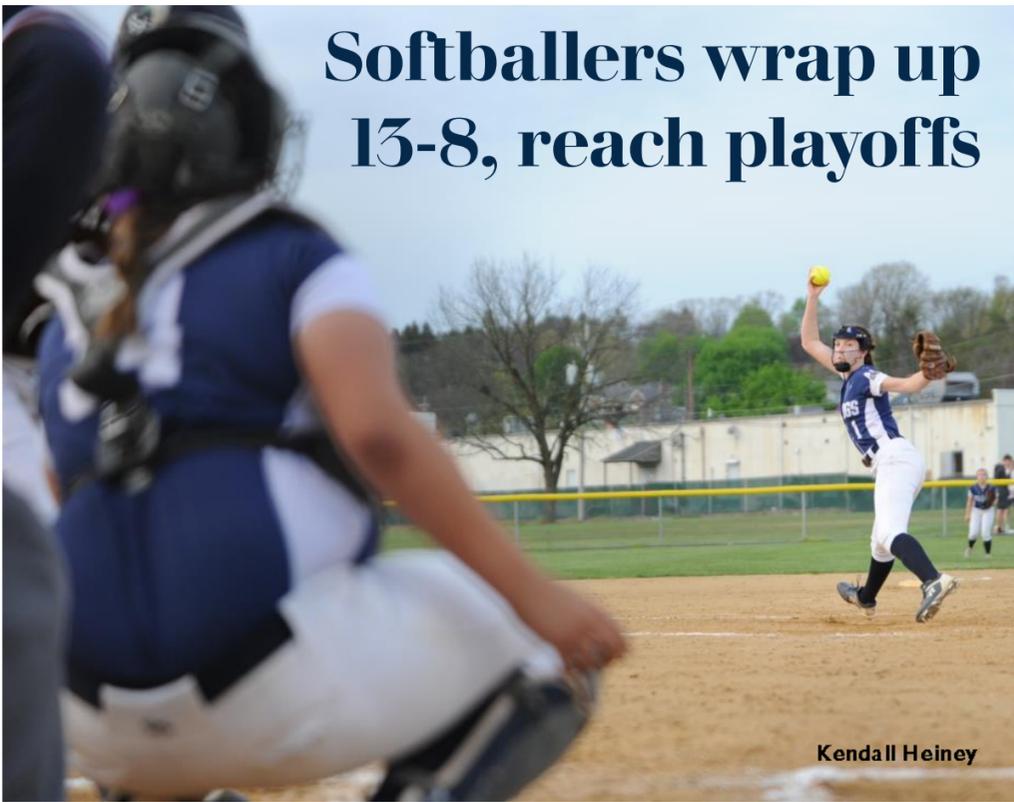
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Softballers wrap up 13-8, reach playoffs



Kendall Heiney



This year's softball team qualified for the Colonial League playoffs as the 5th seed (only 6 teams in the league qualify for this) and they qualified for the District 11 3A tournament as the 5th seed out of 10. (Above) Brianna Hess talks strategy with Coach Smith.



Brianna Kuhns, pre-game, with her softball family.



Cadence Peters



Marisa Maehrer



Arabella Heintzelman



Jordyn Hemingway



Kaitlyn Stock

SPORTS

Early-spring chills did not stop track/field



Kasia Dos Santos

Stef Steckel



Trevor Amorim



Zoe Hathaway



Keona Dyer



Gabriella Smoyer



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Conspiracies haunt the 27 Club

BY HAVEN MOORE
STAFF WRITER

The everyday lives of celebrities can be comparable on some levels to those of the average (non-celebrity) person. But it is a given that these stars tend to live life in the fast lane, and are faced with obstacles that many can't even begin to imagine. Celebrity culture is quite fascinating to observe, but as everyone knows by now, many struggle behind the scenes,

its history may give some insight into why this phenomenon is—well, a phenomenon.

One of the first 27 Club members is Robert Johnson, an American blues singer, who died on August 16, 1938. Though he wasn't very popular throughout his life and career, his music was a huge influence on many following generations of musicians.

The next member, Brian Jones, the founder and original leader of the band

cease to end. Approximately three weeks later, singer-songwriter Janis Joplin would pass away from her accidental heroin overdose. Joplin is still recognized to this day as one of the most influential female rock and blues singers.

Around a year later the lead singer of rock band The Doors, Jim Morrison, unexpectedly and mysteriously passed away in Paris, his death remains somewhat of a mystery. It was marked as an accidental heroin overdose, but many still

Cobain died at 27 and reawakened the 27 Club idea. Another celebrity who had the same effect was Amy Winehouse, a soul/jazz singer who is said to be one of the UK's best singers of her generation. She very sadly died of alcohol poisoning in 2011 and is the last well-known celebrity to have been involved in this club.

There are many theories that have been brought up to explain the 27 club. Some are far-fetched, such as the idea that the celebrities sold their souls for



and some even leave the world too soon. Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Kurt Cobain, Jim Morrison, Brian Jones, and Amy Winehouse were all incredible and influential celebrities who all passed away at 27 years-old. This occurrence has in the past, given rise to an idea known as the "27 Club."

This group of singers, actors/actresses, musicians, etc. that fit into this club has fascinated people for decades, and even caused some conspiracy theories about the closeness and obscurity of the possible relations to all of these celebrities' deaths. Understandably, it sounds somewhat far-fetched and irrelevant. However,

The Rolling Stones, may be more recognizable. Jones was found dead, drowned at the bottom of his pool. This was the final verdict of his death, however, some still believed that this was not the cause of his death, as he suffered from heavy drug addiction, and odd factors relating to his death did not add up.

Fast forward into the future, after the death of Alan Wilson (a member of legendary blues band Canned Heat) who died of an accidental acute barbiturate intoxication, Jimi Hendrix passed away from asphyxia while intoxicated with drugs just only two weeks later. This was upsetting for many, but tragedy did not

dispute this idea to this day. At this point, the idea of the 27 Club came to fruition. Though only a few were mentioned so far, many other well-known celebrities died at the age of 27 in this period (1969-1971), and there, people began spreading the idea of this cultural phenomenon of a club.

Years later, Peter Ham of the band Badfinger died by suicide, and after that, the idea of the 27 Club wore off for a bit of time. It wasn't until 1994, when lead singer and songwriter of Nirvana, Kurt Cobain, passed away in his home in Seattle by suicide. While there are multiple conspiracies around his death specifically,

fame. Others are astrologically-based, which refers to the belief that the position of the planets are in correlation to the phases of a person's life. This is a science, and does provide factual evidence, but there lie many other ideas to be considered too.

All of these theories are open to interpretation, but an important takeaway from this club is the pathways enabled for the young and famous to explore, and potentially end on. These stars in the 27 Club, like many others, have experienced stardom and popularity, but their fame came with serious consequences. 🐾



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Photo by Caitlin Kirk of The Slate
Dylan Brocius and Brielle Brocius with their mom.



Photo by Caitlin Kirk of The Slate
Smokey with Anna Karetsky (light blue shirt) and Zoey Slade (plaid shirt) with their mom.



The Stephens family, including Matt Stephens (first place winner for the men) and Beth Stephens (second-place winner for women).



Photo by Caitlin Kirk of The Slate
Jessica Kirk, mother of the photographer!

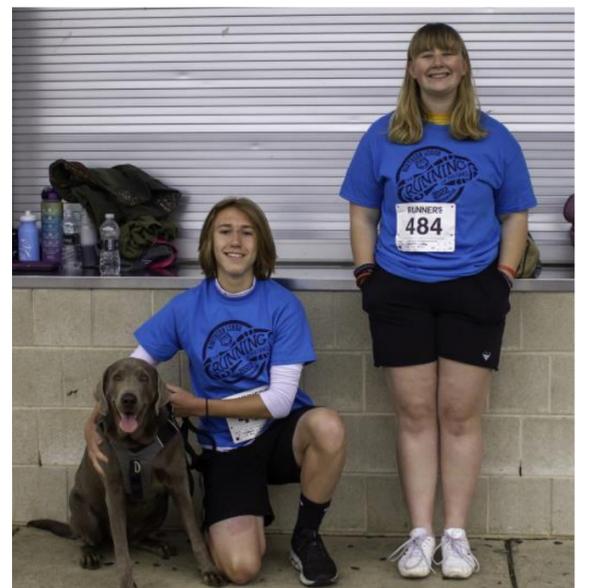


Photo by Caitlin Kirk of The Slate
Cassie with Seth and Olivia Schaeffer.

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Jonesin' for a final back page



Chase Jones started contributing to the middle school's Bulldog Bark newspaper in seventh grade, in addition to drawing in all of his teachers' classes, before continuing as a 4-year contributor to The Slate. We wish him well as he flies off into his super future.



Pledging Allegiance to the creativity that paved the way

BY CHASE JONES
SLATE COMIC GUY

Ms. Allegiance is a character I created when I was just a freshman. I was only 14 years old at the time. I had been tasked with developing a Northern Lehigh-inspired comic strip for *the Slate* and I had spent months creating characters based on students, as well as teachers. Ms. A was one of the last characters I came up with for the comic, but to this day she is probably still the best. She is based on Ms. Hannon, known history and civics teacher who many of us have had at one point or another.

The differences between the two pieces above is immense. The strides which my style has taken in just four short years truly shocks me.

They say that "art imitates life." If that is true, then the difference between these two illustrations is a perfect imitation, or rather representation, of the difference between my freshman self and my now senior self. The original Ms. Allegiance illustration is unrefined and messy, though it certainly does not lack character. Kind of like my freshman self, a wildcard of a kid with character and ambition to spare.

Whereas the most recent depiction of Ms. A is cleaner and the lines which make her up are more deliberately placed. The composition is also far more interesting and her pose more natural and stoic than that of the original. In a way, it shows a shift in myself, almost as if to say *I have settled down a bit*, becoming more thoughtful and less chaotic. Even the medium is different, one being a classical illustration, the other digital.

While both began on paper, they

ended up in very different places. Four years ago, you would have never seen a digital Chase Jones work of art, for as a classic comic book fan I felt it was sacrilegious in some strange way. So, I have modernized myself and my work, hardly, but it's still a pretty big step for the guy who was given the title "Stuck in Another Decade."

I'm definitely not the same kid I was four years ago, but I am okay with that, because I like the man I am becoming. Without having gone to this school, who knows who I would be, so I thank all of you who have helped to mold me into who I am today and set me on the path to who I will become.

I would also like to give a special thank you to Mr. Barnes himself for allowing me to have this back page for the last four years. He never had to give it to me, but he did, and I have enjoyed filling it with content for all of you to consume, greatly.

To Ms. Hannon, Mr. Shuey, and Mr. Gerould, I just want you all to know that you played a major role in the development of my character and the way which I have chosen to attack the world. I appreciate you all more than you could understand. Finally, to my favorite film teacher, all I can say is, I will miss you, Mr. Kern.

You have taught me everything I know about film production and screenwriting, well...you and *Save the Cat*, and for that I will be forever grateful. I promise you I will go off to make some damn good pizzas (only the man himself could understand that call back), my friend.

With that, I am off, Northern Lehigh, so farewell and one last time I shall bestow upon you my greatest advice...Talk hard, conform little, and always play with their minds. 🍕

The Slate staff of writers, artists and photographers, 2021-22



Photo by Andrea Barnes

This year's SLATE staff photo theme was "Identity." The staff invested a lot of thought and heart into their personal articles, art, photos, and opinions this year. Thank you for joining our student journalism journey. (l-to-r, back) Giana Rosario, Callum Zimmerman, Avery Diaz, Mr. Chris Barnes, Maddy Mack, Abby Peartree, Caitlin Kirk, Susan Gilsbach, Angelina Juarbe. (front) Keona Dyer, Chase Jones, Lily Groover, Haven Moore, Molly Williams + Mu, Owen Levan-Uhler, Ayden Scanlon, Devon Vega, Delaney Szwast, Alexis Traugher, Diego Fenstermaker. (Missing: Hayley Thoder and Laurence Nichols).