

# THE SLATE

ALL YOUR BULLDOG NEWS... UNLEASHED!

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The Voice of Northern Lehigh High School

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# COPIES



## NORTHERN LEHIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT EDITION



Photo by Lily Groover

Officer Mark Nicosia poses with his sweet ride. Learn more about our SPO squad, page 2.

## The true costs of college

*'Don't forget to apply today... your spot awaits'*

BY CAITLIN KIRK & MADDY MACK  
STAFF WRITERS

Congratulations! You have been selected to join the Class of 2027 at... Please click the link below to submit your deposit and confirm your enrollment.



Art by Lacey Groover

Throughout the years, the way that colleges have changed their admission process has put an unnecessary financial strain on the accepted students. Not only do students now have to pay an arm and a leg for their studies, but

they must also pay for a board of advisors to review their applications. *Isn't that literally their job?* These advisors are specifically hired to review applications. So why are students required to pay extra fees to submit an application? *How else are you supposed to apply?*

Although the college of a student's choice gives an estimated tuition cost, the real debt soars far beyond with additional expenditures that seem completely unnecessary. While beliefs about standardized tests, like the SATs, are changing, many people still take them to better their acceptance chances and give them scholarship opportunities. To take the SAT, a student must sign up weeks in advance and pay upwards of \$50 just to take the test. *What if I sign up late?* That's an extra charge, which could be around \$30. *What if something happens and I can't make the test date anymore and have to cancel or change the date?* That costs more money as well.

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### Bikers for the win



Jordon Chando, junior, was one of a few bikers at NLHS's Spirit Day to take on Surfers. More Spirited photos on page 3.

## 'What do you know? You're just a kid'

The importance of valuing a young person's opinion

BY SUSAN GILSBACH  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

All too often, I hear some variation of the idea that young people don't know as much as adults. Often, this comes in the form of the phrase "What do you know? You're a kid!"

This phrase is hurtful, and often makes me feel like the

opinions that I have formed are invalid, despite all of the research that I have done to make my opinion.

Think about it like this: if a student writes a history paper that deserves an A: it's well-researched, it's formatted perfectly, and everything about this paper is great, the teacher wouldn't give the student an F

just because the student hadn't had a college history class yet.

So, how is it fair to devalue my opinion just because I'm not the same age as the person I'm talking to?

One of the most common arguments to support the idea that young adults are less valid in their opinion is that young people can't properly do re-

search. However, this idea is simply untrue. High school requires a lot of research, as does college. The internet is a very easily accessible tool for people who grew up in the age of cell phones, and it offers us access to so many resources right at our fingertips. In fact, we use it al-

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# To protect and serve NL

BY LILY GROOVER  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

To protect and serve. That is the official motto of the police force. Within the walls of Northern Lehigh, we have three, real, legit, school officers to protect and serve us. Each officer is here for one specific purpose: safety. Whether that is safety from yourself, safety from another peer, or safety from whatever or whomever is outside, they are there to protect.

Officer Mark Nicosia and Officer Zachary Wargula are official school police officers, or SPOs, for short. Officer Nicosia covers both the middle and high school, while Officer Wargula is stationed at Peters Elementary. Officer David Jones is the Chief of Police and School Safety and Security Coordinator stationed at Slatington Elementary and the District Office.

Northern Lehigh is a tiny district, and both officers Nicosia and Wargula appreciate the tight-knit community of the Slatington area. "In big schools you can go four years and there will be kids that you've never seen before at graduation. If that kid is in need, how am I going to help them if I can't find them in a big, populated school? Here at the high school, I have roughly 500 students," Officer Nicosia says. "At some point every kid has seen me. The visibility is good, if I go to three lunches a day almost every kid sees me, and word spreads if I talk or treat one student nicely."

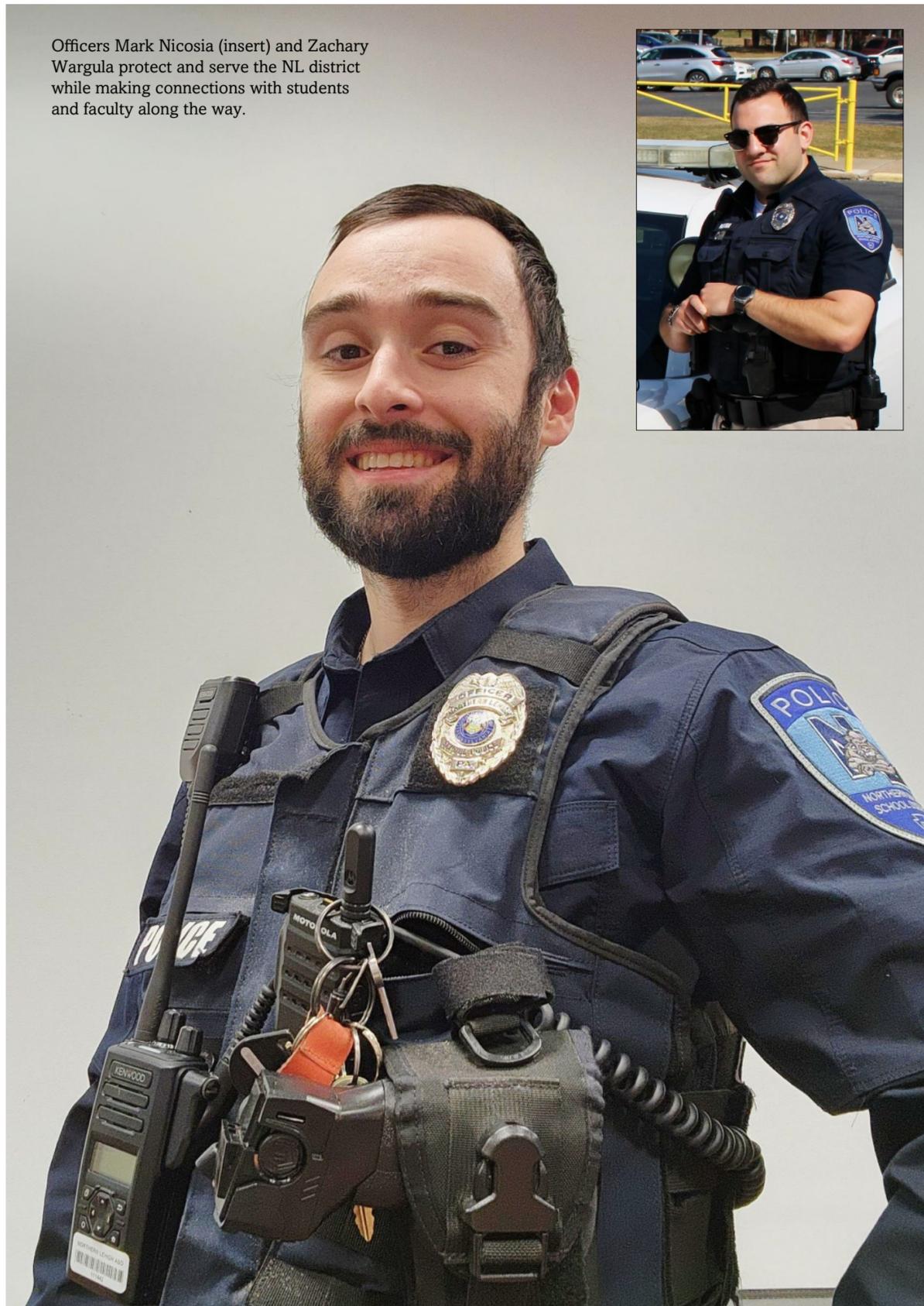
Officer Wargula says, "Being a police officer here in this school and this community means everything. It's the greatest job on the planet. This school and community is close knit; it values people of all walks of life and backgrounds. They look after each other and care about each other. It reminds me of my home town of Tamaqua just a few short miles up and over the mountain."

Officer Nicosia is originally from the state of New York, as many can tell by his demeanor, and attended the State University of New York Community College for two years, got an associate's degree, and moved to Pennsylvania. He was then hired by the Whitehall Police Department, which put him through the Allentown Police Academy. He then worked for the Lehigh County Sheriff's Office. Officer Nicosia is certified in Act 120, which is what the certification for a police officer is, and certified in Act 2, which is what certifies a deputy sheriff, through the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO).

In and around each school, the officers oversee many different tasks each day. Officer Jones does some law enforcement, informal mentoring and counseling, and some in-person teaching when asked by staff and administration. He says his job is about creating partnerships, building relationships, and ensuring school safety.

Officer Nicosia starts his day at 6:30 AM while he monitors all of the drop-offs, starting at the high school and middle school before ending at Peters Elementary. After that, he comes back to his main area, where he spends "60% of the time at the high school and the rest at the middle school," as there are four grade levels here, compared to only two across the parking lot. Each day, Officer Nicosia tries to interact with as many students as possible, by popping into classrooms without lecture time, to make as many connections as possible.

"I'm just making sure I'm talking to everybody, some kids need somebody to hear them. A lot of kids tell me things, whether it's personal, something they observed, a rumor, about their homelife, or their boyfriend/girlfriend, you name it." Additionally, things come up such as



Officers Mark Nicosia (insert) and Zachary Wargula protect and serve the NL district while making connections with students and faculty along the way.

vapes, fights, lockdowns: "We have to be here, we have to handle it," Officer Nicosia says.

Officer Wargula has the same mindset of trying to connect with as many people as possible: "I stop into classes and get involved in activities going on, attend lunches, sit and eat with students, attend classes and build things with students, do artwork, color, attend gym and get involved, and even go into classrooms and teach lessons to inform our student body about right and wrong, the law, among other things." And of course, each officer makes sure that the school is as safe as possible for each student. Officer Wargula says, "We must make sure that all doorways in and out of the school are closed and are locked, that there are no suspicious people who do not belong on school grounds walking around or looking to cause trouble. To help with this, since we cannot be everywhere all at once, we utilize a massive camera system that surveils every inch of the school grounds, so that we can track people and things and find out easier what is going on even when we can't physically be there in person."

Officer Wargula graduated from Tamaqua High School in 2015 and attended Kutztown University to get his bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice with a Minor in History. He worked a variety of security jobs before attending the Police Academy and graduating in 2020. Since then, he has worked on the street with the West Penn Township Police Department in Schuylkill County as well as the Weatherly Borough Police Department in Carbon County. He also worked for the Lehigh County Coroner's Office as a Deputy Coroner/Forensic Investigator in 2022. He is the newest addition to our school district's police staff.

Ensuring the safety of the students and staff at each school, the officers are trained to take care of incidents that come about. For example, during the administrative lockdown that happened on Mar. 17, Officer Nicosia, along with local and state police officers, searched, interrogated, and ultimately determined the school to be safe, letting us hold our Spring Homecoming Dance the following day.

These officers are here to be a helping hand toward all the students in NL.

Officer Nicosia says that his least favorite part of the job is the "actual police stuff?" "I hate jamming the kids up and giving them citations, but it's a necessary evil of the job. They dictate how it happens. We tell you "don't bring drugs to school" in elementary and middle school, then suddenly in high school, the rules don't apply anymore. You have to face the consequences, I can only do so much. The rules are the rules."

Officer Wargula has the same way of thinking: "This job to me means being an authority figure to students, being a parental figure, being a friend to students, being a tutor and teacher, being a mentor, and most importantly just being present and available, an open door. I want students to trust the police, to know that we are here to help and we aren't scary and serious monsters that only show up to arrest someone."

"As we've seen in the news in recent years, this job is one of the most important jobs in law enforcement, and demands people that take the role seriously and care deeply about the student body as a whole," says Officer Wargula, "which is exactly what I will do." 🐾

## They may be kids, but their opinions still matter

Opinions, from page 1

most every day for our classes in math, science, English, and so much more.

So, the idea that young people can't do proper research is overruled by the amount of research papers that the average college or high school student writes per year. The average research paper requires students to think, as well as research. Both of these qualities are key components of forming an opinion.

Another reason that is often given is that young people know less because they

are young. This idea is simply untrue. Young people in today's day and age are required to take almost every kind of class that you can think of in high school, so we tend to be even just a bit intelligent on the matter of most topics. While people in older generations may have had the time for more real-world experience, that does not make the younger generations' opinions any less important or valid.

Parents tend to devalue the opinions of their children when they're too busy, or when they simply don't feel like listening. While this is a valid course of action,

we should be doing more to cultivate the decision making and the opinion forming skills that children have so that they will be prepared to form fully researched opinions, an essential skill for as they get older.

While the opinions of young people may be seen as less than the opinions of older generations, it's our generation that is going to inherit the world that is left for us. So shouldn't we have a say in what happens to it? Isn't it important to listen to and value the opinions of those who have to take over once it's their turn?

And, if anything, shouldn't young people be learning how to be the world's next leaders?

Children are often raised to be "seen and not heard," but that mindset is very harmful to the children, and even young adults in today's world. Just because people are younger does not make their opinion any less valid or important, no matter what excuse people try to give them. Young people deserve to be heard, and we deserve a say in what happens to the world that we are going to inherit. 🐾

# College application fees force more savings on seniors

College, from page 1

Thankfully, the view of the importance of standardized tests has started to change. However, many students still feel the need to not only take them, but prepare for them as well. Some students take the SATs multiple times, hoping to improve their scores. Others pay to take the practice SAT, or PSAT, and some even buy practice books. All of this work goes into taking a multiple-hour test that can either greatly, or minimally, impact the chances of going to a dream college. Now imagine getting a great score, and finding out you also have to pay to send that great score to the college you want to attend. If you are still debating your choice and want to send your scores to multiple schools, you have to pay for each school you send them to.

These pressing issues and costly decisions are being put on college graduates and upcoming college freshmen. Alivia Obenski, an NLHS senior, applied to five colleges before deciding on one that was the right fit for her. "I was most nervous about the cost of the college and the idea of not knowing anyone there," she said. Cost is still an important factor for Obenski, as it is for many others. "I didn't start thinking about applying to college until December of my senior year," she said. "At this point, I'm past having second thoughts about the cost. I'm having third, fourth, and fifth thoughts about the entire college process. I'm upset, scared, and trying to prepare to be in debt for the rest of my life just for an education."

Seth Adams is a senior at NLHS, and he is also planning to attend college. Although feeling prepared for the steps he needed to take, it was still a nerve-racking decision. "I was probably most nervous about getting accepted," he said. "I'm also worried about being homesick if I end up living on campus." Each school he applied to had an application fee upon submitting the application, and at up to \$40 for each application, it becomes expensive very quickly.

Mr. Chris McCarty, a Wilkes University graduate and employee of NLHS, had very different financial burdens compared to what today's generation faces.

"I did not have to pay to submit an application, but I know now-a-days, most colleges and police departments make applicants pay. They did not do this in 1989," he said. College applications today have different requirements as well. "Colleges are harder to get into today. Colleges use more criteria than only academic eligibility. They are using criteria



that may weigh students with less academic credentials and give them a priority for admissions," Mr. McCarty said. His application process included a lengthy application and meeting with admission directors, unlike today where students are sometimes required to submit standardized test scores, an application, extended essays, and can be questioned about any less-than-perfect past experiences. "I am nervous for my own children, because I do not have any kind of plan for them when it comes to the elevated prices of college today," said Mr. McCarty.

Ms. Gabryella Wilder, one of NLHS's ecology and biology teachers, attended East Stroudsburg University for a total of six years. She had a unique experience with the college admissions process. "My school offered 'Instant Decision Day,' so I knew that I wanted to take that route. Instead of doing a traditional application process, I was able to go to the school on the designated date and present all of my papers to them. They immediately decide, right in front of you, whether you are accepted or declined from the college and if you were accepted, they gave you your financial aid package," she said. By doing this, she was

able to save money on the application fee, which she needed to pay at the other schools she applied to. The other four schools she applied to had an application fee that cost between \$50 and \$100, which she needed to pay. "I originally entered college to teach secondary education biology, but I switched to environmental science for a period of time. I ended up taking graduate classes to earn my teacher's certification, which costs more money than undergraduate classes," she said. "I wish I would have stuck with secondary education biology because changing back cost me more money in the long run."

Regardless of age, the idea of college is always looming in the future. With new work standards, many people entering the workforce after high school need a degree to score a job, meaning that college, in some manner, is required. Sam Frame, an NLHS junior comments on his worries about college, "When applying to college, I'm most worried about getting accepted."

Like many others, cost is a significant factor for Frame. "Cost is definitely a factor to consider when choosing a college. The cost of college includes not only tuition and fees, but also room and

board, textbooks, supplies, and other outside expenses. The cost of attending college is a significant factor in a student's decision," he said. Additionally, Delaney Szwast, another NLHS junior, says, "I think that cost would be more of a factor towards my final decision in schools, not one that would deter me from applying; however, I would like to try and minimize my student debt as much as possible, so if the school was significantly out of my budget, I would likely be turned away by the price." Haven Moore is also a junior at NLHS who plans to attend college. "I'm scared for college because of the cost," she said. The college process is supposed to be an exciting time for many teenagers, but it is only becoming more stressful. "I started looking at colleges out of excitement, but now I am looking at colleges because I am anxious," she said.

For the coming generations, the idea of going to college is only becoming more nerve-racking. These anxieties come both from being truly independent for the first time and struggling to afford college as a whole. However, many students still feel that going to college is an important part of their future, and are willing to accept the risks to gain more of an education. 🐾



Emma Wensing, Cadence Whalen, Zoe Edwards.



Laurence Nichols.



Jameelah Gonzalez, Lola Millroy.

**BIKERS**  
**SURFERS**  
**&**  
**AJAMAS**



Amber Oruska and Chloe Benner.



Sarah Hanzarik, Skyeelar Horack, Grace Bauer, Gabriella Hanna, Krista Lynch.

# Safety and Equality

without the

# STRUGGLE

**The stories our NL students told were raw and eye-opening. This interview made an immense impact on these students as well as the Slate staff. So immense, that it needed to span over two, separate issues. Courtney Gutai, Lacey Groover, and Bethany Barrett are very brave for stepping up, and telling the community their struggles. So welcome to our LGBTQ+ students' stories, part II.**



BY LILY GROOVER  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

**The Slate:** Is it a choice to be gay?

**Bethany:** No, it's not. It may take some time to realize it because, obviously when you're younger, that's not really what's on your mind. Although, I have met certain trans people who have said since they were very young they didn't act like the gender they were born with. I kind of just always knew but I never did anything about it until I was older. I don't think it is a choice. You're born that way and I think people who think it is a choice, and think that you're choosing it, and think that choice is wrong are not educated enough and honestly kind of arrogant. It's not a choice. Definitely not.

**Courtney:** Being gay? Not a choice. Being trans... not a choice. I will say, there are two groups of people in the trans community. There's the type where, like me, they've known since they were young. I've always been this way; it just took me a while to come out. And then there's the gender that is fluid, where they used to be a boy, and now they're not. Both are completely valid.

**Lacey:** I don't think I really had a choice. I mean, I might have not always known, but if I like a girl, I can't stop myself from liking them. I also saw this interesting article about trans people where they tested the chemical balance in their brains. It was proven that a male-to-female or a female-to-male trans person was born with a brain closer to a biological female or a biological

male.

**The Slate:** What do you have to say to people that say *you're too young to make these types of decisions?*

**Bethany:** I've always had the mindset that even if you are young and you think you're one thing and later on you realize that wasn't who you are. That's not hurting anybody. Just because you don't know at that point doesn't mean you're automatically straight. You're allowed to change when you realize what you really are. You are allowed to have one label but realize it was a wrong label and change it. So in my mind, even when you are young and you say "hey I think I'm this," that's completely fine. I think that people need to start realizing that it's not hurting anyone, it doesn't make a difference.

**The Slate:** People are obsessed with the little playground crushes when they're five and six years old. It's always a boy and a girl. Why does it matter if it's a girl and a girl or something like that?

**Courtney:** If you're old enough to be straight, you're old enough to be gay. You can't say, go ahead and mess around with these boys but not with those girls because you're not old enough. They see being gay as an adult topic. They see it as a very sexual thing when it's not. There's a romantic side and they completely ignore that. With being trans, you're told "you shouldn't get surgery" or "you shouldn't go on hormones because you're not old enough," that's not OK. Trans people are about 7.6x more likely to com-

mit suicide without gender-affirming care. I just think that when people say hormones are irreversible, they need to realize being dead is permanent. I would rather let someone use gender-affirming care than resort to suicide.

**Lacey:** All I have to say is *who cares*. You can always change your label, you can always change your body. And why is the default always straight? Why can't we just say this kid has a crush? Why does it have to be a straight crush? Why don't people have to come out as straight? You should never assume anybody's sexuality or gender or anything. Just let people be themselves until they're comfortable with who they are. It's none of your business unless they let you into their life like that. How simple does that sound? People can't let others live their lives the way that they want because it bothers them too much.

**The Slate:** Especially when it doesn't affect them at all. It does nothing.

**Lacey:** Well, apparently it's so difficult to call them a *she*, or him a *her*. It's so difficult to change the way they think in order to make other people comfortable instead of going out of their way to make themselves comfortable.

**Courtney:** It should be simple. It should just be like, you decide at some point what your sexuality is and it shouldn't be pushed on them. I know some people think they're defaultly straight because it's been pushed on them by society. I know in the lesbian community, for instance, they feel

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# 'People need to get out of the binary'

LGBTQ, from page 4

like they have to be heterosexual so they force themselves to go out with boys because they think that's the only option.

**Lacey:** It's a big peer pressure. That's basically all it is. It's a huge peer pressure. Sometimes families say, "You know your whole family ended up this way, like why are you different?"

**The Slate:** It's not even peer pressure, it's societal pressure. People that don't even know you or have any connection to you still feel like they're in charge of who you should be.

**Bethany:** I know there's a lot of people who would say, "The fact that you are gay bothers me because that's disgusting in my mind. It grosses me out." Well, it's not your life. You're not the one who is gay. You're not the one who has to deal with all of this societal pressure of not being allowed to be who you are and you are part of the problem. It is not your life. Leave it alone.

**Lacey:** People are making everybody under this whole umbrella of a wrong stigma that they have because a few people of this community are completely skewed. Every community is going to have people that have issues, but that doesn't mean everybody within the community fits to that standard.

**Courtney:** The actions of one don't define the whole community. There was the Ezra Miller crime case where they committed some horrible crime and everyone started misgendering them because they did that horrible crime. You do that, you bring the entire community down. If you are misgendering them, you erase so much progress that the community has made, even if you think you're a supporter.

**Bethany:** I want to go off of what Lacey was saying when she said, for example, people saying they want to identify as a dog. All of the trans people are viewed as that because a few people think that they're a part of this community, but it is just out of whack. Why is it so different for gays

and transgender people when that happens than it is for straight people? There are so many straight people out in the world who are not good people and they do crazy things, but that doesn't change everybody's view on straight people. Why is it so different for the rest of us?

**Lacey:** I agree, the number of straight pedophiles way outnumber the gay pedophiles, so why aren't all straight people pedophiles? It can go both ways but they always see it as just the one way because we're different.

**The Slate:** To someone reading this who feels like the world is on their shoulders and does not know how to handle the next steps, what do they do?

**Bethany:** I personally would say, for someone who's struggling to come out, no matter if it's gay, trans, or whatever, as long as you feel as though you'll be physically safe, that you're not going to be physically harmed, I say go for it. If you tell somebody who you are and they don't approve or think of you differently for that, then they're not meant to be in your life. They're not the person who you think they are. And if they don't support you, that's on them.

**Courtney:** If you're struggling with coming out, and you have any queer friends that's a good start because that allows you to get more acclimated to who you are. If you want to come out to your parents, you have to think about the situation. Realistically, if your parents are good people, and you trust them then, yes, come out. But, if it is going to put you at risk, don't. There's too many stories of people getting kicked out because they were gay or trans. When you are young, you don't have the resources to do anything about that. So if it's going to put you in danger, yes it sucks, but it's probably not advisable. It's unfortunate.

**Lacey:** Two things. Obviously, I'm going off what they both said, this is what I first thought of, please don't come out if you're not going to be safe. Please don't come out if you know that people are going to oppress you or people are going to be mean or

rude to you. However, don't be afraid to experiment, if you know what I mean. Bring it up in conversation, bring it up and see how your close friends or relatives would react to it. Then, it's a whole feel process and you can ask: Am I OK? Am I not safe? Make sure when, if you're coming out, that you will be safe when you do it.

**The Slate:** Describe what it's like to be part of the community or how you would like to be as part of this community.

**Bethany:** As of right now, I personally haven't dealt with much hate about it, but I don't really think many people know. However, I feel a lot for other people in the community, it's not great that we are seen as different and that it's a bad thing. A lot of people are physically, mentally, emotionally abused for it. They're called terrible names. I think that being part of the community comes with risks and I don't feel like it should be that way. I feel like it should be safe for you to be who you are and you should feel confident enough to be who you are openly. For a lot of people that's not how it is and I don't think that's fair.

**Courtney:** Speaking mainly on being trans, the best analogy is let's say you've had a horrible past. Let's say you were an addict, and you've struggled so hard to move on, and you finally moved on from where you were, and you're happy with yourself. After all that there's people bringing it up again, never letting me forget the past. I wish it wasn't like that. I wish I didn't have to, in every school program, have to see my dead name. I wish I could just move on with my life. And I wish society didn't force me to keep saying that.

**Lacey:** I think being part of a community makes me feel less different. I've had a lot of conversations with people online or whatever, and it just makes me feel like, "Oh my gosh, there are people that understand," and I'm glad that there are people like that.

**Courtney:** Normally I am kind of introverted, but with other queer people, I'm able to connect so quickly because we already have that common ground and I become very extroverted. It's a place to be yourself.

**The Slate:** Is there something you

would like to say that was not specifically asked or a question you'd like to answer that we didn't ask?

**Lacey:** I would like to make a statement. I have a pair of earrings. It says gender is a construct. And it is, gender is a construct. Just because you were born male or born female doesn't mean you can't identify as something else, whether it be the opposite sex or anything in between. I have questioned if I was trans and I landed on the answer no. But if someone were to use he/him pronouns, I wouldn't care because I don't think that just because I was born female that means I have to use she/her pronouns. I would be more than happy if people use they/them for me or he/him for me or she/her. I really don't care. A lot of my friends use they/them pronouns for me. I am more feminine presenting but sometimes I feel like I don't want to be "girly" today and I don't want to be called a *sbe* today. Just because you were born with a certain part doesn't mean you have to fit into the little box that people who were also born with that part have to fit in. People can just be themselves, and be who they want to be and it doesn't need a label all the time. I don't know what my label is with my gender. That doesn't mean everybody has to know what their label is. Courtney is comfortable with her label, and I'm comfortable with any label.

**Bethany:** Jumping back to the question earlier about people saying we're too young. I think the same thing goes for if you're in your 30s, and you finally figure it out. I have known people to say, "Oh well, now you're too old." Wanting a label or not knowing your label has no age limit. I feel like you should be who you feel you are no matter how old you are.

**Lacey:** I've seen these really inspirational stories of people that marry the opposite sex and had kids and then they get to the age of 40 and they're like, "Oh my gosh, I identify as the other gender."

**Courtney:** People need to get out of the binary. The world is not one and zero and people need to stop thinking you're male or you're female, you have this part or that part. Some people have both. Some people have neither. Some people's hormones are all out of whack and they're intersex. It's time that people need to grow up and start accepting that not everyone is going to fit into the black and white that society has.

**The Slate:** In one sentence, can you express all you want?

**Bethany:** I want for the whole community to feel like they can openly be who they want to be.

**Courtney:** I want for my community to be able to have the safety and equality of all things that everyone has.

**Lacey:** I want equality and zero form of oppression. 🌈



Courtney Gutai, Bethany Barrett, Lacey Groover.

EDITORIAL

# One Step Ahead

We all remember Columbine. Sandy Hook. Parkland (Florida). Uvalde. Now Nashville. The familiar refrain on the news has become robotic. *"Another school shooting today,"* in a town we will all learn the name of, where an unknown assailant we will become familiar with, opened fire on unsuspecting, innocent lives, killing (insert number here) for reasons no one will ever know or understand.

In 2018 after the Stoneman Douglas High School shooting, The Slate filled its front page with dual opinions both for and against gun reform. A few weeks ago, our high school experienced an administrative lockdown when a bullet was found in a student bathroom. After a wide search conducted by NLSD, local, and state police departments, it was determined no physical threat was evident and students/faculty returned to "normalcy" the next day.

It was, however, an experience to reflect on and evaluate. Following the latest tragedy in Nashville, we asked faculty and students for some feedback: **Do you have a legitimate fear of a school shooting?** Not necessarily here, but just a fear in general. From 24 teacher responses, 5 said YES, 5 said NO, 9 said SOMETIMES, (the rest submitted an additional response). From 86 student responses, 24 said YES, 14 said NO, and 21 said SOMETIMES. (Again, others submitted responses). Posted below are a few of those responses that will remain anonymous. We thank those who participated in our survey.



I know the odds are very slim, but slim odds are not zero. I worry enough, but preparation is not 100% protection.  
**Staff Member**

After hearing of [yesterday's] shooting, I do now fear that I may experience a school shooting in my tenure as a teacher. May not be in this building, but perhaps I will know, personally or professionally, someone directly involved in one.  
**Staff Member**

I often wonder if I will someday need to make a sacrifice for my students. Some people will claim 'I signed up for this,' but never in my undergrad years did any of my professors address the fact that such a situation could become a reality.  
**Staff Member**

You never know when it could happen and even though we are trained to be prepared for it, there are so many different scenarios that could happen.  
**9th Grader**

Yes, we go through all these drills to be prepared for a shooting. We have to put ourselves into that mindset that it could be a reality. If it wasn't a concern, we wouldn't do any of that, but because we do, it will always be something we have to worry about.  
**12th Grader**

Yes, it's hard to wake up every morning to go somewhere that could be in danger. Then just sitting in school, scared of every announcement, and making sure you know your plan and exit.  
**10th Grader**

On occasion, yes. When something happens like the incident recently at NLHS, it creates a bit of fear. Although 'no threat' was posed, you can only do so much to prevent something.  
**12th Grader**

For me, it would be terrifying because I'd have to be outside for triage if there aren't enough ambulances for people that were hurt.  
**9th Grader**

Yes, my little sister is 4. We sit at the dinner table and talk about the day's events. She asks, 'Are guns bad?' She is FOUR. How do I respond to that? That's scary.  
**12th Grader**

No, I personally feel safe at the school and the administration does a good job when there's serious stuff happening like 'the bullet.' They took good precautions and it made most kids feel safe.  
**12th Grader**

Not exactly a fear of it's going to happen, but more a fear of if it were going to happen, there's only so much we would be able to do.  
**12th Grader**

Although I do not fear situations such as school shootings on a daily basis, instances like the 2-hour lockdown reminded me that it could happen anywhere.  
**12th Grader**

It only depends on where the shooter is, and if I can get out of the building.  
**10th Grader**

I think we've started to become desensitized to school shootings as a whole with the number of fake threats that I'm more scared of not reacting enough during a real shooting.  
**11th Grader**

It's always a possibility. You think, "It would never happen here in Slatington. But, that's probably what kids in Sandy Hook thought too."  
**11th Grader**

**Our world still spins, our school still thrives, and we *are* safe together.** As a community, we must remain reflective, proactive, and vigilant in staying one step ahead. School Police Officers are here, there, and visible in the district. (Read more about them in our feature on page 2). Teachers, staff, student-leaders have eyes open; mental health services are available when you are ready; ALICE (Alert Lockdown Inform Counter Evacuate) drills are practiced and reassessed regularly; protocols are studied and enhanced. The anonymous Safe2Say reporting system is available 24/7.

Tomorrow is always an unpredictable mystery, but tomorrow the sun still rises for us all. We will see you all then and look out for each other always. 🐾

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## Democratic Socialism How we can organize a community

By Patrick Conway  
SLATE COLUMNIST

It's a rather prosperous time to be alive, isn't it? We've seen incredible advancements in our technology over the last few years, and an age of electronics and computing is beginning to flourish. The West, in particular, has made incredible strides towards technological progress. It's amazing how far the liberal economy and ideology has taken mankind.

In addition to all of this, there's another movement that has been making a comeback to compliment the new technological advancements. Although not against these developments, many advocates want to make these developments accessible to more of the population. *Socialists*-- America's favorite group of rabble-rousers.

Socialism has become more of an umbrella term than anything nowadays, seeing as most socialist groups have very little in common. All socialist movements -- at least legitimate ones-- have a few things in common. All want workers to own the means of production, whether directly or indirectly, and want to expand collective ownership. From this point, we can divide this into a few movements. There are statist, vanguardist movements that seek to establish pro-socialist governments. On the other flip side, we have libertarian socialists who want to create socialist movements through voluntary contracts and without the influence of the state.

These two groups have had a lengthy, volatile history with one another. However, many pragmatists from the two groups have been able to find some compromise. It is a moderate position, doubling as both a political umbrella and its own distinct ideology. Its general concepts are a bit more specific than socialism, but the concept remains similar-- socialism should be maintained through democratic governance. The movement has come a long way, and over the last few years has been shifting towards socio-economic issues, rather than macroeconomic and political ones.

We find the beginning of the democratic socialist success in America attributed to Eugene Debs. Debs was a

profound democrat during the 1880s and 1890s, and after spending time in prison, he began to envelop himself in socialist literature. He later founded multiple socialist parties and the popular union, the "International Workers of the World." For being such an early socialist who ran on reformist principles, he was very successful. He ran for president on multiple occasions, and reached his electoral height by winning over nine-hundred thousand votes in 1912. Alongside the Russian Revolution, his success helped spark the First Red Scare.

He and his supporters were great

**Democratic socialism as an ideology focuses on mandated democratic socialism — embodied as a system. We have the opportunity to be pragmatic, and prepare for the development of socialism, together, through locally democratic means.**

advocates for many economic issues-- ones based around wealth inequality and labor cooperation. These demands, however, were never reached, as the development of consumer culture began to expand and the further development of capitalist ideals cemented themselves.

The developments did not turn out well for many capitalists, however, as after about ten years the Great Depression began to wreak havoc across all walks of life. The efforts of Debs and his followers, though still effective in assisting the Progressive movement's popularity, was just not enough, and the downfall of the global economy during the thirties is a prime example of its failures.

The New Left's rise occurred during the 60s and 70s, about fifty years after Debs's socialist movement. This new wave was rather different from the previ-

ous democratic socialist movements. This one, rather than its previous economic convictions, began to focus further on liberating minority groups from societal constructs, and focused on socially progressive ideas-- ones like the legalization and acceptance of gay and interracial marriage, drug use, and the achievement of feminist and racially equalitarian goals. It was a grand time of social development.

These times did not last, however, as in 1973, a major recession broke out. Once again, people were left worse off than before, and many of these leftists began leaving their movements to compensate for lack of income and other issues. Beginning to see a pattern?

It may just be coincidental, but recessions have nearly always been preceded by rising leftist movements-- normally preceding these recessions by a decade or so. This causes the movement to recede, and for reactionary voices to push back against many forms of socialist reform. From here the movements fall into dormancy, only for the movements to reach their peaks again after about fifty years. This has continued, especially in the United States, for over one hundred years now, and they almost always result in worse off political situations for the lower and middle classes-- ones plagued by authoritarianism and the establishment of restrictive laws, normally ones being passed just outside of public view.

This cycle is about to reach its recessive point. Rising socialist movements-- those such as Antifa, BLM, and the previous "Occupy" movements-- have been spreading like wildfire, and reactionary pushback has, once again, been causing political violence and a generally more hostile environment for minority opinions. Accompanying it are early signs of an upcoming economic recession or depression. Hiking interest rates, poor levels of economic activity, and a society plagued by a lack of need for labor, as artificial intelligence leaves many people unemployed. It's looking bad, and nationally speaking, it's inevitable. There isn't much we can do about the global or national market-- at least as the small town of Slatington. We can always prepare, however.

Democratic socialism as an ideology

focuses on mandated democratic socialism-- socialism embodied as a system. We have the opportunity to be pragmatic, and prepare for the development of socialism, together, through locally democratic means.

It is a big step from our rugged individualism that we are used to today, but with adjustments we can become, at least locally, self-sufficient and prepare to govern our own work. Corporations will fail, or at least stagnate within the coming years, and it is up to us, as individuals and local communities, to prevent a drastic decline in standard of living.

There's many options for us as a community if we're to go down this path. It requires an active, proactive mindset that focuses on the acquisition of abilities to not only provide goods, but services. Learn a trade, even if it is only for a hobby. Anything that has some sort of productive capacity. In bad times, the supply of basic commodities and productive goods. Woodworking, welding, and machining are all great services to learn that will be in high demand, and being able to gather the materials needed for these are just as important. Jobs of this nature are incredibly important.

It's not only about preparing yourself for employment issues, either. It is especially important that you are able to cooperate. Work with people in your neighborhood-- be in the loop. You should be able to understand how producers interact, and you should be able to apply your knowledge of these things. From a political and social aspect, it's also important to work with people in your neighborhood. Be kind-- learn how to work with them and they will be able to work with you.

This socialism I advocate can't be achieved overnight. It's not supposed to be. Rather, it should be prepared. You cannot take one day to prepare for all of this-- it may very well be months or years away.

Better yet, this presumed crash may not come. It is important, however, to have an idea how to work not only by yourself, but with others, to prepare for the worst. After all, when things go bad, no state or corporation will be there to save us. 🌱

### Thinking about college? Better save (just to apply)

By Keona Dyer



"Forget saving for college... I need to keep saving to apply!" According to U.S. News and Weekly Report, colleges and universities use application fees to cover the costs involved in the admissions process – not for any other purpose. It ensures they only receive applications from students serious about attending their school. On average, the application fee in the US is \$43-50 for moderate universities. However, for Ivy League colleges, the fee is as high as \$90.

## Looking ahead: The future awaits

By Ayden Scanton  
SLATE COLUMNIST

It is hard to think that the school year is already in its last marking period. For much of our lives, we couldn't wait to be an adult.

We were looking forward to moving out from our parents, owning a house and a car, and finally adopting that puppy that you've wanted for fourteen years. But now that adulthood is right around the corner for many of us, what does the future look like? What will the United States look like in a few short years? Who knows, maybe it will stay the same. Or maybe it will change (whether that be for better or worse).

What will the world be like when our generation becomes adults? How will America appear in five or even ten years? There are a lot of interesting prospects to ponder over, and a lot of potential changes that can be made to not only the United States, but to the entire world.

Firstly, what is to become of fossil fuels and green energy? For many years now, the push for green energy has been going very strong. However, when will the United States actually go green? Even though solar panels and wind turbines have become largely mainstream, a large section of America is still using fossil fuels. This is simply because they are not cost effective to the average consumer. Most commercial solar panels are expensive, break easily, and only work in optimal light levels.

These drawbacks make it a difficult decision to make for the standard middle-class American. A similar story applies to wind turbines. Hopefully in the near future, the technology will advance to a position where more Americans will be able to afford and maintain sources of green energy. And who knows? Maybe an entirely new source of energy will be dis-



covered in the future as well.

Another important thing to consider is the way the nation's policies evolve over the next decade or two. Just recently the country has been pressured to change in more ways than one. A key example of this is the ever growing issue of gun control in America. Just recently the country has seen a large demand for stricter gun laws. However, it is hard for the government to pass any national laws against this issue when government officials can not seem to find a middle ground. Hopefully there will be a solution to the country's gun control problem, preferably sooner rather than later.

Perhaps one of the biggest things on a

lot of people's minds is how the economy might be in a couple of years. Currently we are in the midst of a large period of economic inflation. Just a quick glance at the price of eggs or gas is enough of an explanation to anyone. The thing is, inflation is affected by multiple factors. One of them (as many people would point out) is the current president and their policies.

While this is true, there are a number of other variables at play. For instance, uncontrollable events such as a sudden outbreak of disease or conflicts with product shipment could impact the economy greatly. The amount of money currently in rotation also plays a part in this.

But, as the past has shown us, the economy has highs and lows. It moves like a wave, and we are currently just at the peak.

Over time, it is very likely that the economy will calm down and inflation will become less prevalent.

And now for what really matters; what will we be like? Generation Z is going to shape the future of the nation and its culture. I firmly believe that when our generation goes out into the world, we are going to change it for the better. There are parts of the future that do look blurry, but there is a bright light at the end of the tunnel. 🌟

## An Ode to the Ocean: Long may she wave

The ocean, a place full of mystery and wonders. It contains almost all of the lifeforms on planet Earth and covers a large percentage as well. Not only is the ocean rather beautiful but can be extremely useful to us. In fact, the sea is a major factor in our transportation, medical healthcare, economy, and even our survival.

A large amount of income comes from the ocean, being about \$282 billion dollars per year. Not only that, but over 3 million people have a job or occupation related to the ocean. 76% of U.S trade is transported from other areas of the world to America by sea-transportation. Not only does the sea help us, but it also benefits the Earth itself by preventing a climate crisis from taking place because of carbon dioxide.

Despite all of the ocean's useful values and large surface, it is still at risk. With pollution, overfishing, chemical pollution, and ecosystem degradation, the ocean is becoming rapidly in danger. Pollution brings many of the biodiverse creatures of the ocean to much harm.

Elementary.

My Dear Readers



Kristiana Callaby

Cigarette butts are the most common cause of marine pollution. They contain microplastics of all kinds that if consumed by say, a fish, could cause much harm to not just that one sea creature but many more.

Not only does throwing trash in the ocean affect just the wildlife living there, but it also can hurt us. Fish that consumed any sorts of toxic chemicals or trash could be caught, sold, and eaten with those chemicals still in it. It's to the point that it can even affect brain development and genetics, which isn't even all of the serious risks from consuming a fish like that. Another very serious threat to the ocean is when factories expel extremely large amounts of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the air.

It causes the water in some parts of the ocean to become increasingly warm and acidic, creating new dead zones. It can lead to the possibility of multiple viruses and bacteria to go from the water to land, soon reaching us in even the shortest amount of time.



In fact, if we continue to do this by 2100, almost half of the marine species we see now would be extinct or close to extinction because of our own actions. If you want to stop this from happening, go to somewhere you know that might have pollution and try to remove all of it

as best you can. But don't just save the ocean. Make sure to also find and throw away any trash you see on land or water because it's the right thing to do. Sign up to groups that fight against these harmful acts towards our planet. 🌟



## Disagree with us!

THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE TO LET US KNOW WHATCHA THINK! THE SLATE PUBLISHES A BUNCH OF TOPICS – SOME TOUCHY ONES THAT ARE NOT THE NORM FOR A STUDENT PUBLICATION. IF YOU HAVE A DIFFERENT VIEW, SHARE IT! WE HAVE ONE ISSUE LEFT THIS YEAR.

OPINION

Letters should not exceed 200 words and may be sent to: theslatenews@nlsd.org

# Back to the Bump

## Baseball and softball return

BY DELANEY SZWAST  
STAFF WRITER

Spring sports are starting up, and the softball and baseball teams are returning to the fields to begin their seasons. Both teams are setting goals that they hope to accomplish this year.

The softball team has four seniors: Jordyn Hemmingway, Cadence Peters, Hayley Thoder, and Jeweliana Andrews. The group is looking to make it through the District playoffs this year. "We hope to grind through our tough Colonial League schedule and capitalize in district playoffs," Head Coach Katherine Farber said.

"There's three aspects to softball: offense, defense, and pitching," she explained. "If we can bring offense, and we can bring our defense, and we pitch well, I think we can beat anyone. It's just a matter of being able to bring all three of those pieces together and keep them together for seven innings. I think if we do that, they can beat anyone in the Colonial League, and they can win Districts and go into state playoffs."

The girls are eager to make a run in Districts, but they also have several smaller goals for themselves this season. "The goal for the season is to get a district medal but that is the goal every year," senior Jeweliana Andrews claims. "I think the ultimate goal this season is to become a better player each and every day."

Junior Haylie Fenstermaker agrees. "Of course our main goal and hope for this season is to win a district title and make it to states; however, there are many smaller yet meaningful goals we have along with this. Coach Farber has always advocated for our mental health and acting as a family rather than just a group of girls. Once we do this, there is nothing we can't do. I'm looking forward to seeing how the rest of the season will play out and how far we can make it as a team."

Additionally, Andrews finds that having a family-like team has its benefits. "When one head is down there is a whole team of girls that are going to pick the other girl up," she said. She adds that this year's team is "probably the loudest group."

Across the field, the baseball team boasts a much larger roster than last year. It is a young team with only one senior, Tyler Fenstermaker. The group is looking to improve their skills and grow as a unit



Photo by Lifetouch  
Nick Buskirk throws so much heat that his cap flies off.

this year. "I had zero expectations for what this season holds, but I will say that this group of twenty-eight players has far exceeded my expectations. Each and every student, teacher, and parent should be extremely proud of this group of boys. They have great character, great work ethic, and a desire to succeed," Head Coach Gerald Kresge noted.

He explained that he had three goals for the team this season: increase the numbers, have a competitive Junior Varsity team, and have a family culture. "To date, I can state that we have successfully achieved those goals," Coach Kresge said.

Senior Tyler Fenstermaker claims that the team has become much closer this season. "We're definitely bonding very well this year. Over the past few years, we bonded well, but not this well. We're doing pretty good with team bonding this year. Everybody is actually being friends and having a good time," he said.

Fenstermaker would like to see the team win more games this year: "I would like to get more wins than the prior years. Every year we've ended with like two wins out of the twenty games we had. I'd like to get more, even if it's one."

See Diamonds, page 12



Photo by Lifetouch  
Emma Smith — right down the pike.

## Bracketology Overload: An review of the Madness

BY ALEXIS TRAUGHER  
SPORTS EDITOR

The player's sneakers squeak as they come to a halt, the basketball bouncing down the court as the point guard takes the ball and charges toward the hoop. With a stunning pass handed off, the star player dunks the ball and everyone stares in amazement. This is just one example of the intriguing entertainment that accompanies March Madness; to this day, it continues to live up to its hype and draw fans in.

For years, NCAA March Madness has been basketball fans favorite time of year, with the best schools in the league going head-to-head fighting for the all-or-nothing title. This tournament starts with 64 teams which are dwindled down to 32 teams, then the sweet 16, the elite eight, the final four, and ending with the final championship game.

This year, most Pennsylvania teams were out of the tournament. Villanova and Temple both did not make it, but

Penn State qualified to play in the first round against Texas A&M, winning 76-59. However, in the second round, PSU fell against Texas University 71-66. The University of Pittsburgh also lost during the second round against Xavier.

Additionally, many teams started to go back to their roots and play like they are known for. In particular, the University of Connecticut men's basketball team, currently sitting as No. 4 overall, has become a force to reckon with as they are continuing on to the final four to play against the University of Miami on April 1st. They have recently beat Gonzago 82-54 during their elite eight performance. Also, the women's team were Big East Champions prior to March Madness. They had an impressive run beating Vermont 95-52, then Baylor 77-58, but fell to Ohio State 73-61. Overall, UConn is seeming to hold true to the title of basketball capital of the world once again (sports editor's future college's team).

In the small town of Slatington, in

eastern PA, the Northern Lehigh women's basketball team had their own version of March Madness as they played in playoffs, which extended their season until March 10. This caused a mix between spring and winter sports for many of the NL athletes, but the ladies gave it their all and performed hard in front of many supporters.

In addition to high school women's basketball, collegiate women's basketball was also drawing in more and more attention this year. During the Sweet 16, women's viewership on ESPN had a 73% increase with men's having a 5% decrease. In addition to women getting the viewership they deserve, there was also a female matchup brewing for the past two years. Aliyah Boston, forward and center for South Carolina, and Caitlin Clark, a guard for Iowa, are two of the best players in the league going head-to-head in the final four game on March 31st. Clark won the Naismith Player of the Year award, and Boston won the Naismith Defensive Player of the year

award this season. The excitement continues as fans wait for this upcoming match to finally take place.

With the next round approaching, many starting players for the remaining teams have started to be ranked and are coming to the attention of thousands. Adama Sanogo, UConn forward, is averaging around 20 points per game and was named to the West Regional All-Tournament Team. Next is Jordan Hawkins, UConn guard, who has been named player of the game in his previous two games, and was also named to the West Regional All-Tournament Team. Hawkins continues to show his excellence each night he performs.

Lastly, another player on the radar of fans and teams is Isaiah Wong, Miami guard, who has led his team in scoring this season and proves to stay consistent out on the court.

Note: This article was sent to press in early April. 🐾

## Diamond reflections



Jack Tosh

Photo by Lifetouch

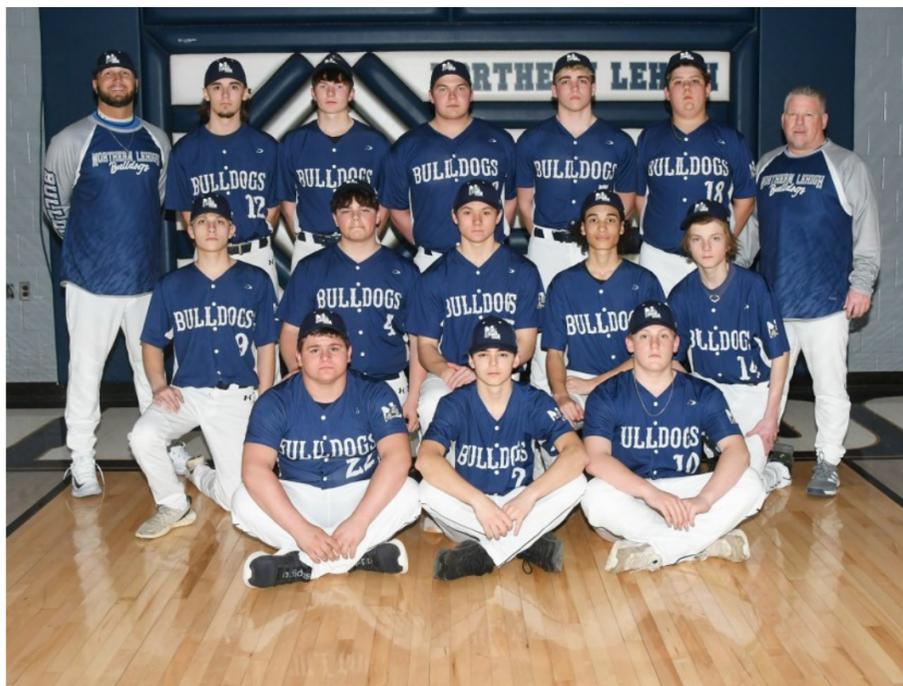


Photo by Lifetouch  
Coach Ryan Fegley, Nick Buskirk, Connor Simms, Jackson Van Norman, Jack Tosh, Conner Martinez, Coach Gerald Kresge, Brody Sterner, Brayden Tocci, Reese Lipsky, Chris Vargas, Brendan Hill-Geake, Lawson Hoffman (no longer on the team), Brayden Buskirk, team manager Porter Kern.



Conner Martinez

Photo by Lifetouch



Lawson Hoffman

Photo by Lifetouch



Brayden Buskirk

Photo by Lifetouch



Reese Lipsky

Photo by Lifetouch



Coaches Kresge and Fegley

Photo by Lifetouch



Tyler Fenstermaker

Photo by Lifetouch



Brayden Tocci

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Chris Vargas

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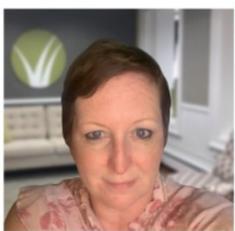
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# Varsity and junior high softballers



Coach Jason Smith, Coach Gabryella Wilder, Lily Watt, Cadence Peters, Grace Bauer, Leah Wentz, Kylee Snyder, Jordyn Hemingway, Skyelar Horack, Head coach Katie Farber, (middle) Kaitlyn Stock, Peyton Hoffman, Adriana Danyluk, Emma Smith, Caralena Lewis, Arabella Heintzelman, Naerobys Silverio, (bottom) Jeweliana Andrews, Aubrey Reinhard, Marissa Maehrer, Haylie Fenstermaker, Hayley Thoder.



Row 1 (L-R): Ryleigh Bellesfield, Fiona Jones, Audriana Wertman; Row 2 (L-R): Elianna Castillo, McKenzie Chruscial, Coralyn Royer, Amara Fiorito, Sophia Fiorito; Row 3 (L-R): Coach Wilder, Coach Yesik, Emily Gad, Addison Smith, Morgan Smith, Tegan Simms, Annalisa Douglas, Savannah Kast, Coach Chruscial

# The fields are alive

Diamonds, from page 9

Freshman Brayden Buskirk agrees. "I just hope we improve on our skill set and just do better as a team than last year," he added. He expressed that he would like to work to improve hitting and defense. Both Fenstermaker and Buskirk were eager to help their teammates continue to improve their skills throughout the season.

Currently, the team is working hard on their baseball skills as well as their sportsmanship, character, and grades, all of which Coach Kresge believes are important for student-athletes. "The strides this group is making will have them competing much quicker than I think anyone would have expected," he said. "As a very young group, we will find the positives in everything we do. Small victories eventually equal bigger victories and that is what we will focus on. It will not be long before we see articles about their accomplishments on the field."

Coach Kresge further added, "I encourage all students to come out and support your schoolmates. Cheer them on and be as proud of them as we, the coaches, are. Bulldog baseball is back and will be making some noise on a field near you." 🐾



**MORE PHOTOS AVAILABLE AT:**

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Photo by Lifetouch

Seniors: Hayley Thoder, Cadence Peters, Jordyn Hemingway, Jeweliana Andrews.



Photo by Lifetouch

Hayley Fenstermaker.



Photo by Lifetouch

Marissa Maehrer.



Photo by Lifetouch

(Left) Kaitlyn Stock, (Above) Jordyn Hemingway.

# Smells like a controversial influence

BY LACEY GROOVER  
STAFF WRITER/ARTIST

Kurt Cobain set the standard for punk and grunge music in the 90s. The face of Nirvana was responsible for a rock music revolution with his creative output and mysterious lyrics. He committed suicide in 1994 after many attempts prior to that. His memory has become legendary with generations around the world wearing Nirvana merchandise with some not even listening to the music of the band. Cobain's reputation, however, isn't looked at as the greatest in some minds.

He was associated with a lot of unsavory things like being an addict to many drugs, making dark jokes about suicide and sex, drinking, smoking, cursing, anger, and vandalism. Did all of these behaviors define who Cobain truly was, or was it his dark thoughts slowly taking over his personality?

A lot of Cobain's identity was associated with the punk movement of thinking for yourself. An interviewer once asked the band "What's your definition of Nirvana?" Cobain replied with "Well, the most common word that comes up in every definition that I've read has been freedom. So, we kind of like to think of our music as musical freedom in a way. Not being tied to a specific genre or a specific sound." He was obsessed with the ideas of freedom and thinking for yourself.

This can be very helpful to struggling teens trying to find their niche, as it shows that they don't need to fit in the box that society expects them to fit into. Unfortunately, this can be taken in a way that causes unfortunate situations, and to juveniles looking up to him "freedom" could mean to repeat the behaviors he was known to participate in like drug use and drinking.

Cobain listened to many popular rock bands, but then he finally found punk rock. He loved the energy of punk rock instead of the technical perfection. If people don't have the precision others do in types of art they tend to look down on themselves or their creations. His lack of perfection encourages individuality and doing something because there is an enjoyment that comes out of it, not a need to please other people. The mindset of just enjoying something for the feeling and freedom one feels from it is an uplifting attitude that can help anyone with self-doubt.

Cobain started a band in 1985 with his friend, Krist Novoselic, that he met via a mutual friend at a punk concert. They decided the band's name would be Nirvana after going through many different names. After Nirvana's release of their album *Nevermind*, they became one of the most famous bands in the world. Everyone knew of them -- and their hit *Smells*



*Like Teen Spirit.* His fashion became the biggest new trend and he trademarked grunge fashion.

Kurt constantly downplayed his fame because he didn't want to be a sell-out because being a sell-out was the worst thing someone could be in the punk community. In an interview with LA Times he said, "We had grown up admiring punk bands, and thinking all those groups on the pop charts were embarrassing, and suddenly we were one of those bands. Famous is the last thing I want to be." His nonchalant demeanor drew people towards him because it was fascinating to see someone in his position with that attitude, but his demeanor could've been taken as arrogance and seen as ungrateful.

In 1990, Cobain's journal entries show that there was

a new drug in his life, heroin. Early on, he only used it occasionally, but, that snowballed into a severe heroin addiction. He fell in love and started dating Courtney Love, the main singer of the band Hole, and he took a break from touring for six months.

He just wanted to stay in, paint, play guitar, and do heroin. Even though Courtney Love was clean when they met, bringing a past addict to a current one never ends well. Cobain told Rolling Stone in April 1992, "My body wouldn't allow me to take drugs if I wanted to because I'm so weak all the time. All drugs are a waste of time. They destroy your memory, and your self-respect, and

See Cobain, page 14

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# The Great Dopamine Detox

## What We Can All Take Away From Bringing Back a Moment

BY HAVEN MOORE  
STAFF WRITER

In this day and age, it is quite difficult just to take a seat and be in the moment. This is a very common feeling, especially with the quick and fast-paced lifestyles that most people are used to in the year 2023. The constant stimulation through various activities causes people to feel overwhelmed, but at the same time, want more to be engaged with. This cycle is unhealthy, both physically and mentally.

These pleasurable activities release such high levels of chemicals in the brain such as dopamine, that they are driven to crave more stimulation and have difficulty going without or less than those levels. In other words, there is no time made to just be with oneself, without all the influences and commotion.

There are many ways that people can experience dopamine release. According to Medical News Today, dopamine is a type of neurotransmitter in the brain and is naturally produced by the body as a chemical messenger. It affects many behavioral and physical functions: learning, motivation, sleep, mood, and attention. Overexposure to a high level of stimuli can lead to addiction or dependency on

the activities that cause a dopamine release.

While this chemical release is naturally occurring, dopamine receptors are said to be "fried" by the high levels of releases that frequently take place from such abundance today in the form of stimulative experiences. The problem arises when dopamine is received in unhealthy ways: gambling, social media, the internet, music, video games, using drugs, drinking alcohol, food, having sex, and consuming media that accommodates a short attention span. Excess dopamine can lead to behaviors that fuel addiction or addictive behaviors and encourage unhealthy lifestyles - too fast-paced and one-track-minded to receive that pleasure.

To adjust to a healthy level of dopamine and escape that trapped mindset of seeking pleasure many have become accustomed to is what can be termed as "dopamine detoxing".

In practicing a dopamine detox, one will consistently avoid any form of these addictive activities that could trigger unhealthy forms of dopamine release. The idea behind going about this method



is to have the individual feel calmer, less affected by these stimulative activities, and be able to produce a sufficient amount of natural dopamine to feel pleasure and find joy in other less-addictive or behavior-changing activities.

Dopamine detoxing essentially also demands a person to take some time to themselves and step away from the bustling and overwhelming outside world.

It is stressed, however, that the term dopamine detox does not declare a total detox from naturally occurring dopamine, since the body always is producing it. There does lie some controversy that surrounds this idea as well.

While it does make sense and sound beneficial for the body, many experts

claim that this practice is not entirely correct.

Many believe that dopamine does not decrease when one avoids addictive and overstimulating activities and that this restriction deprives and demonizes humans of basic natural pleasures. However, the idea of making one's mental stability a priority in departing periodically from activities that serve more harm than benefit to decompress and find clarity amid such a loud and overwhelming world is particularly helpful.

The action of returning to a simpler way of living without constant stimulation and addictive activities is an action that can serve everyone in the best way possible. It helps people achieve more consciousness, better mindfulness, and develop a better idea of who they are and their interests without the distraction that these activities interfere with.

As with all things, this practice should not be taken in any hardcore manner such as giving up technology, never listening to music again, and restraining one from any pleasurable experiences. But there are quite a few aspects of this practice that can be used for good and in advancing one's understanding of self-control and personal health. 🐾

## He encouraged you to 'Come as you are'

Cobain, from page 13

everything that goes along with your self-esteem." The idea might be true, but at the time of the interview, he was a full-fledged heroin addict. In interviews, he talked about his addiction in the past tense and frequently lessened the severity of the situation.

"I did lie forever. I tried to keep it away from everybody because no matter how badly I don't want to be a role model or influence anyone, I still do. I hardly ever went out in public when I was on drugs, and I never made a spectacle out

of it, I never promoted it, and now I'm going to be associated with heroin for the rest of my life." He had been into rehab six times throughout his life, but always ended up relapsing. Cobain's words in interviews directly contradicted his actions, which later led to uncertainty of who he actually was and what he was actually doing. This could not only encourage drug use, but lying about usage as well.

Nirvana released their last album "In Utero" in September of 1993, but Cobain originally wanted to name the album "I Hate Myself and Want To Die."

It's odd to want to name an album "I Hate Myself and Want To Die" even though the band constantly reiterated not to look deep into it, but looking at how Cobain took his own life, it can be quite contradicting to not look further into the name.

In front of a young audience, with some potentially dealing with suicidal thoughts or self-hatred, it's a poor look to encourage such a mentality. Even if Cobain never intended to be famous, he was, whether he wanted to have an influence or not, he did.

Kurt Cobain encouraged individuality

and self-expression to an extreme, and could also be seen as a role model for some seeking creative inspiration and motivation. He proved to the world that you don't need to be absolutely perfect in order to enjoy something, but on the other hand, he encouraged rebellious actions and a pessimistic mindset.

If Kurt Cobain is going to be looked at as a positive influence it is best to take his artistic and unrestricted mindset as a way to motivate oneself, but it also can't be forgotten the problematic behavior he could've potentially encouraged. 🐾

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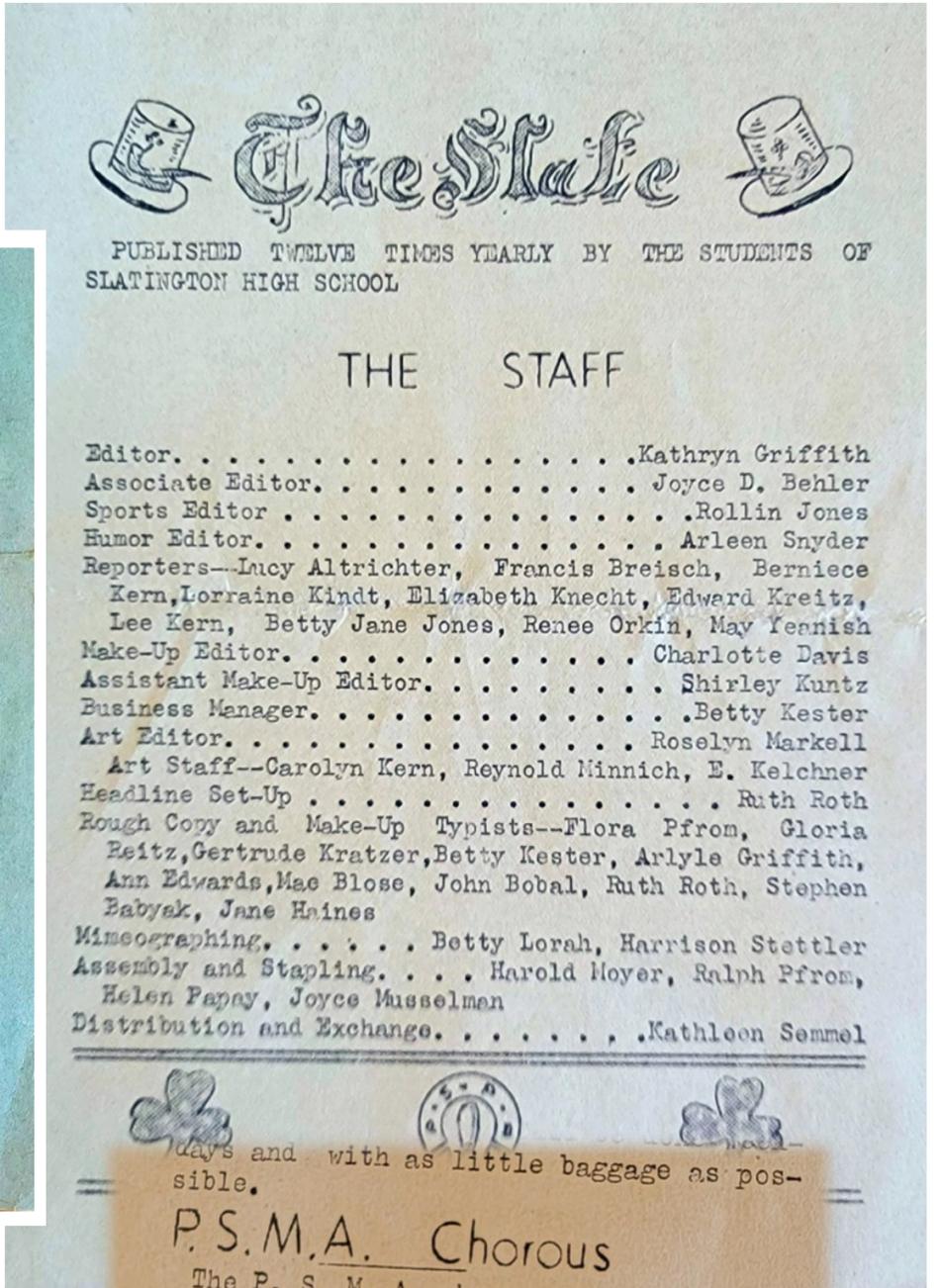
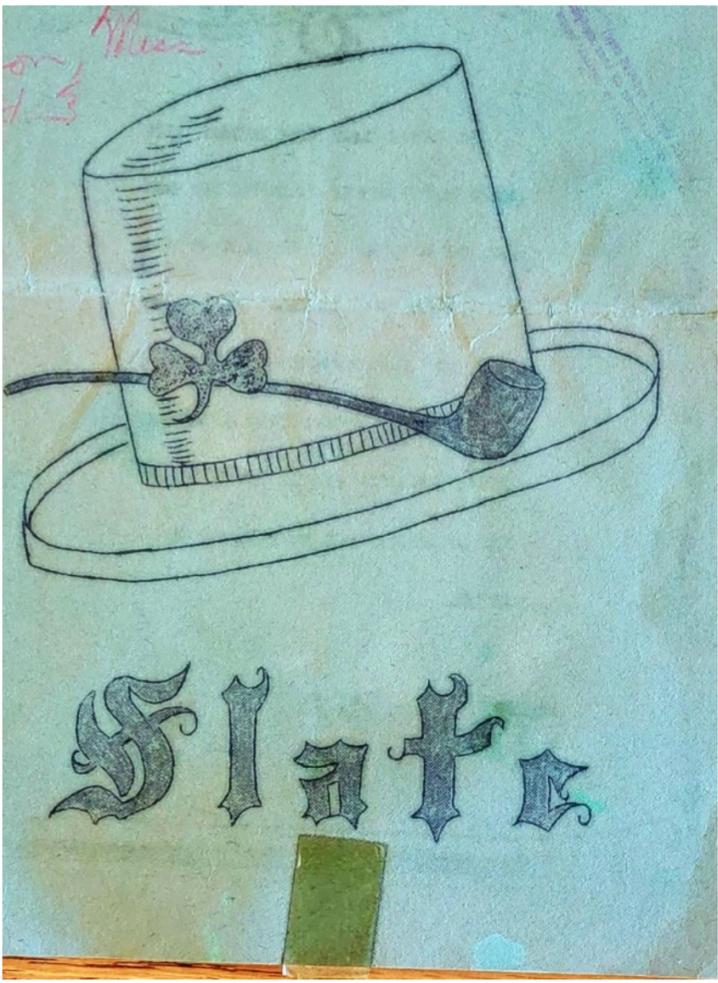
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# WW2 Slates unearthed



Take a trip back in time to World War II-era student journalism! Courtesy of the Boyer family (yes, *that* Boyer family), this Slate from almost 100 years ago, mentions a chorus performance delayed due to war happenings, and part of "Hitler's will" in which he returns his mustache to "Charles Chaplain." Do you know any of the staff members? We thank the Boyer family for sharing this piece of Slate history with us all.

days and with as little baggage as possible.  
**P.S.M.A. Chorus**  
The P. S. M. A. chorus was not held this year due to transportation facilities.  
The state chorus was to be held at East Stroudsburg State Teachers College.  
It may be held in the future if war conditions are settled.

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# Scenes from the 'Lightning Thief'



Photos by Michael Feifel



Clockwise from top left: Alex Feifel; members of Camp Half-Blood; Jessica Erking; Jackson Hunsicker; Susan Gilsbach; Ayden Scanlon.

