

Photo by Kyndra Dougherty

Rachel Arnold is one of many NLHS students who practice their crafts to join the workforce one day. Above, Rachel welds a T-joint to then break in half to check if the weld was straight. More LCTI photos on pages 14 and 15.

## What's the big splash about 'Big Fish'?

By Lacey Groover  
 Editor in Chief

NL Little Theatre decided their spring musical to be *Big Fish*, a whimsical tale about forgiveness, family, living life to the fullest, and embracing mortality.

It shows the struggles between father and son, Edward and Will Bloom, when Will is faced with the news of his father's terminal illness. Will battles with the lessons his

father taught him and has trouble separating facts from fiction when hearing about his father's life through the lens of his fantastical stories.

The story shows their journey to understanding and accepting each other and their differences. Will discovers the purpose of the magic woven into Edward's stories and why he chooses to tell them how he does.

Every generation will view this show in a different light.

This musical presents the many different perspectives of the generations, and the themes presented in these stories all serve a specific purpose for people of all ages. The director, Miss Kayla Driscoll, has a special connection to this show and has a deep understanding of the characters and their development throughout the story. "This is a show that lingers --it is one that is full of so much

See *Big Fish*, page 2

## First Day of School



Photo by Sam Mack

Junior Autumn Khuu spends a few minutes talking with principal Dr. Lori Bali and newly hired assistant secondary principal Mr. Dan Williams. See more on page 2.

**INSIDE**



**Women Wrestling Power** — It's not just a dude's sport. Page 9.



**Book Bans Really Mean What?** — Does this story keep turning? Page 4.



**The Illusion of Freedom** — Mylz Miller walks the treadmill of regularity. Pages 7.



**Newest member of the 1,000-Point Club!** — Read more on Page 10.

# Mr. Williams joins Bulldog ranks as asst. principal

By Sarah Garcia  
Senior Copy Editor

After working at Northern Lehigh High School as Assistant Principal for many years, Mr. Michael Strohl has decided to transfer to Lehigh Career & Technical Institute as principal for the institute's Academic Center.

Word soon spread to other NL students about Mr. Strohl leaving Northern Lehigh. As students discussed this situation, many questions arose: "Who will be the new assistant principal?" "Where did they work previously?" "Why are they coming to Northern Lehigh?"

The Northern Lehigh school board unanimously decided that the next assistant principal to fill Mr. Strohl's role for secondary schools is Mr. Daniel Williams.

"As a person, I try to be somebody who's approachable. I want to be somebody that can, y'know, build relationships in a school setting," Mr. Williams said. "I want to make sure that I build good relationships with our staff and students, and I'm just somebody who is dedicated to getting the most out of the people that are around me. I have the mindset of setting everybody up for success, and I just want to be a resource for people."

"I started my educational career at the Lehigh Area School District. I was a biology and chemistry teacher at Lehigh for about 16 years, "Mr. Williams continues. "Then, when I got into the administration, my first position was in the Stroudsburg School District.



Photo by Sam Mack

In the last few weeks, new assistance secondary principal Mr. Dan Williams spent time traveling around the high school to meet students and review handbook expectations.

"So, I was at Stroudsburg Junior High School for about a year and a half before I came here in this position at Northern Lehigh. I enjoyed working at Stroudsburg, but I wanted to gain an opportunity to work somewhere relatively close to where I live."

"So, when I saw that the position was open, a couple of factors played in

my decision. I'm very familiar with the Northern Lehigh School District being from Lehigh. I used to come here a lot, and I know a lot of people here. So, y'know, I kind of was aware of what was going on here, and I like what's going on here! I like, y'know, how there's a drive to try to change things here in a positive way and to really set our students up for

success. So, I want to be a part of that, and I want to bring my ideas to that positive mindset. Also, this school district is very close to where I live, and my kids are students at the Palmerton Area School District. I feel like being close to this area allowed me to be part of this educational community."

Mr. Daniel Williams holds the promise of setting the students in Northern Lehigh up on a good path to success. He has built an educational background of being a teacher and working as another assistant principal for Stroudsburg.

He considers himself someone others can rely on and wants everybody to do their best while maintaining a path of potential success. It's important to have a positive mindset for your students and a desire to build trust and good relationships with them.

Already liking the way things are run here at Northern Lehigh, Mr. Williams wants to include his ideas to continue building a positive, successful path for all Northern Lehigh students to have a drive for success. He already feels like he has a strong connection with the Northern Lehigh community. 🌟

# Unforgettable moments behind the curtain

Big Fish, from page 1

love, life, spectacle, and emotion that it settles deep into the bones of those who take part in it and those who will come to see it. This show is a mosaic of a man's life--its central conflict isn't caused necessarily by a clear villain or event but rather by the dynamic of a father and son who are desperate to understand each other for the first time in their lives.

*Big Fish* means different things to all who see it, and one of the biggest factors in how the show is received has to do with age and experience. For younger audiences, they may marvel at the spectacle and enjoy the magical stories for what they are on a surface level.

Some who, in their young adulthood, may resonate deeply with Will, who is preparing to become a father and grappling with the idea of being the best role model, of not repeating the 'mistakes' of his own. And those with more years may find themselves transformed by the man who faces his mortality, whose only concern at his heart is the health, happiness, and well-being of his family.

This show is not a spectacle for the sake of spectacle like some modern musicals find themselves falling in the trap of--it is a spectacle for the sake of story-telling, of bringing the audience with Edward to see a life well-lived and well-loved."

Preparation for a musical is different from that of a regular play. In addition to remembering lines and blocking, which is where you are on stage, actors have to be singing and dancing, all while changing costumes and getting around backstage when they're performing. Purposeful movements and repeating the scenes the same way during rehearsal allow muscle memory to click and the team to work together with something they're all familiar with.

Everyone involved in a show must literally and figuratively know the story inside and out. Spending time analyzing the story is essential for the cast because they must have a broad understanding of the characters they are playing. The crew must know how the storyline plays out chronologically. Being well-versed in how the story of *Big Fish* goes is helpful to the production because it takes place in many different settings: the witch's forest, a giant's cave, the circus, and the river, just to name a few. Actors on stage must

know the show's storyline well and be aware of what is happening around them. In a production with many people, moving set pieces, and stage lights suddenly turning on and off, there is very little leeway for unpredictable changes.

The cast continues to work with each other to gain a trusting relationship with one another.

Clue, NL's fall play, was a non-ensemble show, so not everyone who is in the theater program was cast. With the addition of the cast who didn't participate in the play, some of the cast is back to an introductory phase in theatre, learning names and how to work together.

We commonly do unconventional drills to learn these skills, one of which is called the human knot. Everyone stands in a circle and uses both hands to reach across and grab someone else's hands until everyone is "tied" together.

The goal is to untangle the knot and return to a circle without letting go of anyone's hands. This teaches us how to communicate with each other despite the uncomfortable situation we're put in. Some days, we successfully escape, and some days, we get stuck. The ability to work as a team and success fluctuates throughout a production process, so it's important to acknowledge that not every rehearsal will feel successful or easy. Drills like these make the group physically closer and closer as friends and teach us how to work through tough days as one unit. Team building in theater is essential for putting on a good production because you must be able to trust your castmates and crew members on stage for a show to go smoothly.

Learning this show has its obstacles due to the fantasy of the stories, but the creative team's deep and clear understanding of how the process of producing a show works and knowing what to focus on during rehearsals puts the students in a place where they can exploit their strengths to make this show fantastic.

I appreciate the creative team's time, understanding, attention to detail, and patience towards the cast and crew that goes towards producing this compelling musical. As a cast member, I absolutely love watching a stage production develop into what it becomes. The amount of work and effort everyone puts in always pays off when we finally perform together. See you on stage. 🌟

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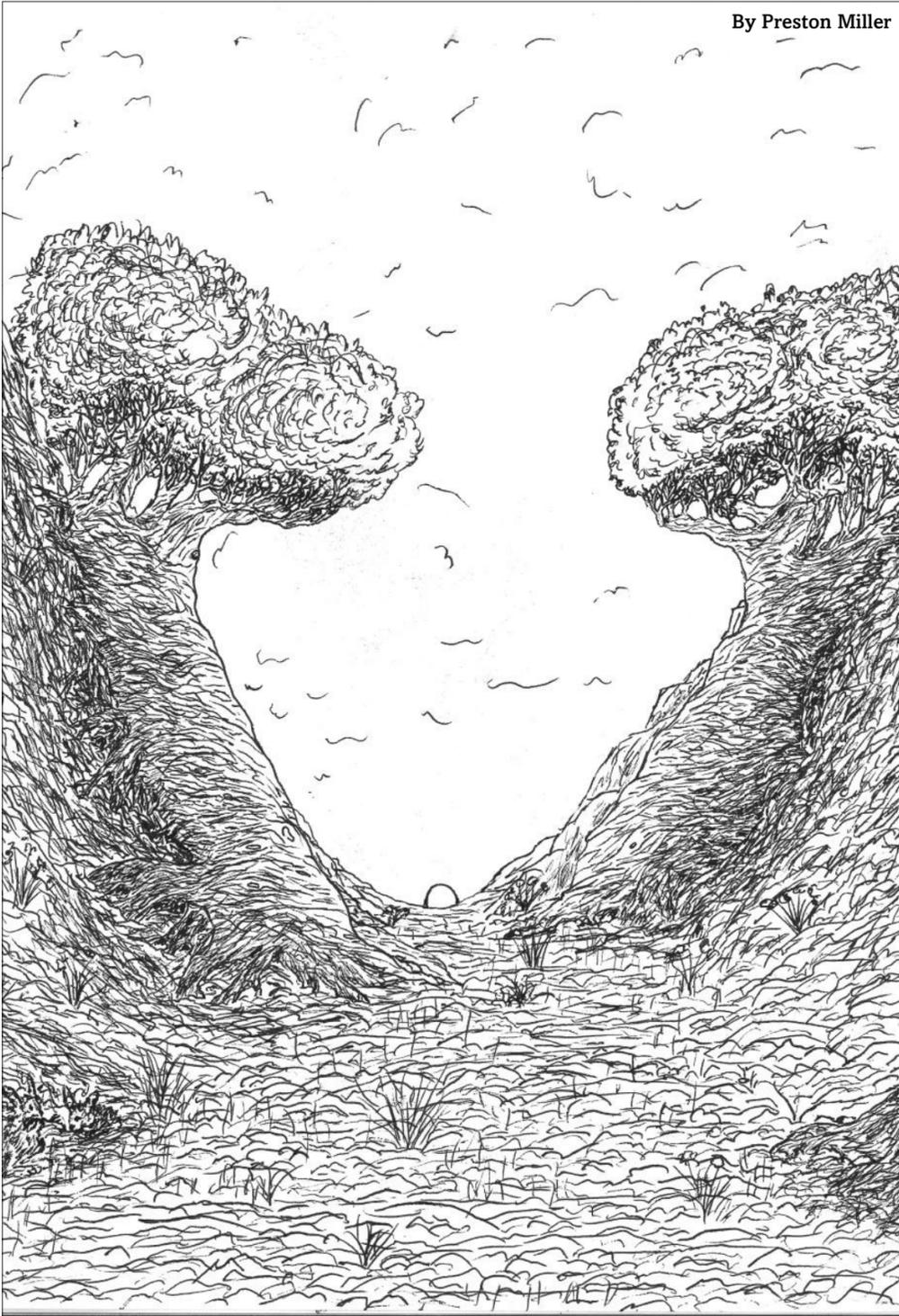
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# Dry Season



By Preston Miller



Remember to drink your water.

# Reforming our classrooms?

## Why the American education system needs a wake-up call

By Madilynn Husack  
Slate Writer

If you're reading this, you have probably experienced the American Education System (AES) in some capacity. Many schools could resemble prisons, and the system too often overanalyzes test scores instead of improving understanding quality.

It seems counterproductive to make fish climb trees, but this is what the AES has its students do. It forces students to learn in one way and makes grades determine their worth.



It pushes students towards higher paying and more respectable jobs like lawyers or doctors and away from the humanities. The government then questions why jobs like teachers are not being pursued. Teachers get paid pennies compared to doctors, but both are equally needed; however, teachers are less respected. They must deal with kids who don't know how to handle their emotions and parents who expect excellence. Without teachers, students wouldn't be able to learn the information needed to become a valuable part of society.

Throughout the years, the American education system has lowered expectations of students due to a cultural shift. Honors classes have become less strenuous, every-

See Schools, page 4

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# A battle over books sees no final chapter

## Is Censorship and Silencing Stories Limiting Knowledge and Students' Creativity?

By Kyra Grabowski  
Slate Writer

When going into a library, you would expect to be able to check out any book you want on any topic, whatever that may be. Well, have you ever attended a library to find the book you are looking for, and only to find out it's banned? You may remember reading books for school like *Lord of the Flies*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Outsiders*, *Diary of Anne Frank*, or even *Charlotte's Web*.

These books are becoming banned for reasons like racism, violence, and religious families disapproval of talking animals. Some school students don't get to read those books because of book bans.

Banning books from public schools and public libraries has almost tripled in the past year. Thankfully, Northern Lehigh has not participated in banning books within our school's library and has kept many book options open to students who would like to read them.

Why are books being banned? Many people push to ban books that include serious topics like violence, offensive language, racism, and mental health-

related issues. Some consider those topics inappropriate for young readers. A common argument is that this material shouldn't be taught or shown to students because by teaching them about serious topics can cause them to be badly influenced by the actions depicted in the book.

However, many people will disagree with this argument by saying that these books should be taught and shown since they can teach history, important lessons, and help with the creativity and imagination of students.

Then what do book bans actually accomplish? There are both pros and cons to book banning. One pro people argue is keeping books with inappropriate content out of schools protects kids from negative behavior changes by restricting exposure to these topics.

According to a Britannica article titled *Should Parents or Other Adults Be Able to Ban Books from Schools and Libraries?* by The Editors of Procon, a former public school science teacher, Jenni White, had said, "Numerous studies on the use of graphic material by students indicate negative psychological effects."

The example she used was "more casual sex partners and [beginning] having sex at younger ages." Another pro of book banning is that certain book topics can impact kids by making them act aggressively and make them less sensitive to violence. The same article explains how a mother of four, Kim

Heineche, said, "It is not a matter of 'sheltering' kids. It is a matter of guiding them toward what is best."

On the other hand, a con is by taking away certain books it also takes away from important lessons and knowledge from this generation. Robie H. Harris, author of frequently challenged children's books including *It's Perfectly Normal*, *Who Has What? All About Girls' Bodies and Boys' Bodies*, and *It's Not The Stork*, stated, "I think these books look at the topics, the concerns, the worry, the fascination that kids have today...It's the world in which they're living." Another con is banning books can limit creativity and imagination.

Neil Gaiman, author of the frequently challenged novel *Neverwhere*, stated, "You get to feel things, visit places and worlds you would never otherwise know...Empathy is a tool for building people into groups, for allowing us to function as more than self-obsessed individuals." Each side has many different arguments, and surely enough, there is research to back up both sides. When faced with both sides of the argument, many are left questioning whether or not book banning is the logical thing to do.

The beginning of book banning dates all the way back to the 1600s. Massachusetts was the first state to ban a book, and since then, many states have begun to follow in its footsteps. Recently, states like Florida and Texas

have faced serious criticism for removing books addressing topics like race, gender, and LGBTQ+ issues from school libraries. However, not too long ago, New Jersey prohibited book banning.

Karen Grant, president of the New Jersey Association of School Librarians, said, "The bill will protect the intellectual freedom of students as well as acknowledge that school libraries are centers for voluntary inquiry, fostering students' growth and development."

Many states participate in book banning, but because New Jersey's protest against book banning could help inspire other states to ban the ban. As of July 2021 and June 2023, about six hundred forty-four books have been banned throughout schools and libraries in Pennsylvania.

Some people may argue that book bans are getting out of hand and others may believe that it is necessary. Either way, books are quickly being taken off shelves and banned across the states for many reasons.

Books are being targeted constantly for the topics within them, creating debates about the censorship of books. People who don't support book banning say that it limits freedom of speech and access to important information, while supporters of book banning may argue that it can help protect the community from harmful material. As the issue of book banning increases, many wonder what the future holds for book access.

## It wasn't even close



Photo by XXXXXXXXXXXX

Kylee Snyder, Ms. Lorson, and Ms. Urban showed their Barkley love prior to the Super Bowl, and thankfully did not jinx the victory. Next year is still up in the air.

## A flawed foundation?

Schools, from page 3

one gets a participation prize, and grade inflation is through the roof. People do not realize that lowering expectations is a problem. Not just for college, but for real life. Colleges are already no longer looked at with the same prestige they once were. Many people are finding trade schools, like LCTI, more beneficial. Northern Lehigh is lucky to have a place like LCTI, where students can learn trades that can lead them to a career. This opportunity can make college seem like a waste of money and time.

The American Education System struggles with teaching only to pass a test and not to fully understand a topic. AES expects students to know certain subjects from high school and college but forgets to teach basic skills. Instead, students are forced to memorize insignificant things like history dates, the powerhouse of the cell, and the quadratic formula. Students do not learn about the importance of money, how to create healthy relationships, or how to do basic household chores.

Some countries have done education right, and the differences are not world-changing. Places like Singapore and China both consistently have top

education standing, but both value education in their culture. If the United States pushed for a higher standard of education instead of athletic prowess, students wouldn't graduate high school, and college would lose out on what to do next.

Increasing the standard of education will make school harder, which can result in an increase in mental health problems. This one flaw, however, can not overshadow the many pros that could come with a better education.

A better education can give students who are facing problems out of their control a way out. Implementing something like Singapore's "Every School a Good School" program could do just that. It gives every school the materials and chances for it to be successful. Imagine students who come from poverty having the same chances as students who come from wealthy families. This could be one possibility of what could come from an improved education system.

It will not be easy to fix the education system. It might cost more money and some sleepless nights for successful results, but this needs to be done. This is an epidemic, and it is time people start realizing it.

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# C'mon and redefine your beauty

## Embrace yourself beyond those insecurities

By Morgan Smith  
Slate Writer

Have you ever been called fat? Or ugly? Has someone ever told you that your legs are too big, your clothes are too flashy, your arms are too hairy, your fingers are too long, your feet are too fat, and your hair looks dry, messy, short, or long?

If you were told anything slightly negative about your appearance, then this article is you. Some people will look at you and find anything and everything to critique about you.

Whether the critique is something small like "your toes are a weird shape", or something big like "those pants make you look fat", it can still shape how a person thinks of themselves for the rest of their life. I'm not writing this article to tell you that you're perfect or to tell you why shaming other people is wrong, though it is.

I'm writing this article to tell you that it's okay not to like certain aspects of yourself, and it's alright to have insecurities, but instead of hating those things about yourself, you should learn to love them instead, or maybe just to be fine with them.

Those insecurities do not define who you are, and I want to show you that you are way more than the fat on your

arms. Everyone has options, such as how your hair should be styled, what clothes you should wear, how your body should look, how feminine you should act, and so much more. But why should those opinions even matter or have any effect on the way that you view yourself?

I am a 5'7, 140 lb female with a BMI of 22.7. It takes a lot of courage for me to share that, but I'm hoping that if you are someone who struggles with body image, you can read this and feel a sense of relief knowing that not everything is perfect under the surface. You can be an athlete, be in shape, eat healthy, work out, do everything right for your body, and still be heavy. And you know what? That's okay. It truly is. I have heard many people say, "I need to start working out so I can lose weight," or "I need to go on a diet to lose weight."

But my question is, why does your weight matter so much? Once I realized that my weight is a random number that doesn't matter because I love how my body looks, I became so much happier and more confident. So seriously, stop stressing about the scale and start worrying about how you want your body to look. Stop saying, "I need to work out to lose weight," and start saying, "I need to work out because I want abs."

I'm sure everyone still reading this has looked in the mirror and seen at

least one thing they don't like about themselves. I will tell you that I personally think my legs are too big. I think that I have too much leg fat and not enough muscle.

But then I started to think, no one cares. No one is looking at my legs and making comments about them. Just like no one is looking at your hair, ears, arms, or any part of your body and making comments about them, and if they are, that says a lot more about their character.

I think what I'm trying to say with this article is that just because you have insecurities does not mean that they have to consume your life. I have seen so many people completely destroy themselves trying to look the way society makes them think they should look. So it's okay not to like your thin hair, but never let that define who you are, and don't let it consume your life.

**If you or someone you know needs a shoulder or some time to vent, there are opportunities at school. Please ask your counselor for more info.** 🐾



## A Necessary Respite

Students in good academic and behavior standing were given a fun day of activities, games, and relaxation time before the holidays. Clockwise, from left: Carly Schmick, Drew Mohrey, Rachel Bauer, Zania Braewell and Aliya Fischer, Bella Seiler, and Sophia Peckham.

Photos by XXXXX



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## EDITORIAL

# NO EXCUSES

## MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR MIDDAY GIFT OF TIME

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High school is a challenging time filled with academic responsibilities, extracurricular activities, and social commitments. With packed schedules and increasing workloads, students often struggle to keep up with assignments and understand difficult concepts. However, at our school, we have a unique advantage: Lunch and Learn.

This 70-minute mid-day period is an invaluable opportunity for students to complete work, seek help from teachers, and recharge before tackling the rest of the school day. With this resource in place, there is no reason for any student to fail a class.

Lunch and Learn provides the flexibility that many students claim they need. Whether a student is falling behind on assignments, struggling to grasp a concept, or needing extra time to prepare for a test, this period is designed to offer support.

Teachers are available for guidance, allowing students to ask questions and receive one-on-one instruction. In many schools, students must scramble to find time before or after school to get extra help, but we have a built-in solution. Ignoring this resource is a wasted opportunity.

Beyond academics, Lunch and Learn serves as a time to decompress and reset. Stress is a significant factor in student performance, and having a structured break to relax, eat, and socialize helps main-



tain mental well-being.

However, relaxation should not turn into excessive procrastination. While it is important to unwind, students must balance their time wisely—spending the entire period on social media, gaming, or chatting with friends instead of catching up on work can lead to unnecessary academic struggles.

Some students may argue that their struggles go beyond what can

be fixed in a 70-minute period, but even small efforts make a difference. Consistently using Lunch and Learn to complete homework, review notes, or meet with teachers can prevent work from piling up. Instead of staying up late to finish assignments or cramming for a test at the last minute, students can take control of their academic success by utilizing this time efficiently.

At the end of the day, Lunch and

Learn is a privilege, not a guarantee. Students have been given a structured period to stay on top of their work and seek help.

The responsibility now falls on them to use it wisely. With this time available, no student should be failing a class due to missing assignments or lack of understanding. Success is within reach—students just need to take advantage of the resources at their disposal. 🐾



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# The Illusion of Freedom

## How Capitalism and Systemic Inequality Trap the American Dream

By Mylz Miller  
 Slate Columnist

Since the beginning of this country, there has never been a place for people of color. There has never been an unconditional understanding of Africans, natives, or the people who seem to have dissimilar ideas about social constructs that bound every individual into an ever so slightly intensifying grip of greed, unrest, anger, and conformity. Freedom in its truest sense is only one step away until you realize that you've been walking tirelessly on a treadmill of regularity.

In a debate that inspired the writing of this article, "Is the American Dream at the Expense of the American negro," James Baldwin, an African-American author and civil rights activist stated, "It comes as a great shock around the age of 5, 6, or 7 to discover that the flag to which you have pledged allegiance, along with everybody else, has not pledged allegiance to you." This statement resonated deeply with me, not only as a person of color but also as a human.

The country to which you are indebted seems to be ignorant of your needs, wants, and ideas, offering blanket momentary solutions to entrenched problems.

Have you, the reader, ever experienced capitalist nihilism? Capitalist nihilism is the realization that your value and sense of self have been reduced to job description, profit, and material gain. This means that you are nothing more than what you own or what you do. This tantalizing awareness is felt throughout society nowadays, but the majority of revelation came from oppressed groups who felt the effects of this system firsthand. Simply by being black, you are automatically at a disadvantage; you're seen less as human and more as a character type. You are forced into the narrative that if you don't become successful, you're worth nothing more than the ideologies forced upon you. This is why most civil activist groups invented in the 60s and 70s were often associated with socialism.

They understood that once you break out of the racial views people hold against you, you're still put in a box simply because of your position of power. Of course, minorities have had an unfathomable amount of disadvantages,

which still grips the media today when it comes to equality and prosperity in this country, which at large was what the civil rights movement stood for. Still, they also realized poverty isn't just a race issue; it's an underlying trend forced upon us by the predecessors of our country.

Since the founding of this nation, Caucasian males have had generations to build wealth and business while using minorities and women to their ad-

the bottom 50% of households own less than 4% of wealth in America, while the top 10% of households own more than two-thirds. This is intentional. If you're subjected to poverty in a country where the societal norm tells you that you are responsible for your position in the world, you have no choice but to fall victim to the false ideologies of self-worth.

When the case for most people is a tendency to worry about themselves

turn to substances and even suicide, despite their money and influence. Their self-worth is now written in checks, and they're looked at as symbols of wealth rather than humans.

The fight for social change begins with internal change. You are more than your situation and understanding that helps feed into a greater empathy we should all have as Americans. Social divide because of class or race isn't merely just a moral issue, but it's an



vantage.

Once progressivism started becoming more prevalent within American policy, the precedent had already been set.

Our identity becomes plagued with anxiety about how we're going to survive instead of how we want to live. You subscribe to the idea of working hard, but unfortunately, your work is unfulfilling and puts money into the pockets of people who put you under scrutiny.

According to the Federal Reserve,

and their situation, it often results in a lack of community and relationships. If you ever do happen to reach a place of financial freedom, you tend to become selfish. We buy two cars instead of one or land that we may never touch, but when it comes to helping fund basic resources for low-income families, forget about it.

Money that you've slaved over becomes your source of happiness rather than a commodity. This is why often you'll see celebrities, people of status,

economic one. The oligarchs who run this country know that; however, as young people, we have the perfect opportunity to educate ourselves and help support our working and underclass fight for equality and inclusion within our broken economic and political system.

We shouldn't be forced to blindly accept the false narrative and idealization of what it means to be an American. 🐾

## Crossword Pawzle





**Across**

1. To Kill a Mockingbird, Diary of Anne Frank, among others
9. New asst. principal surname
11. Possible team of women in the future?
13. Thankless jobs around NLHS who keep us clean
14. Latest member of the 1,000-pt club
16. The curtain opens in March for this musical

**Down**

2. Photographer of LCTI pics on pages 14,15
3. L.M.'s writing within Conway's writing, page 7
4. Large mammal usually weighing 50+ kg (Porobenski article)
5. All Your Bulldog News \_\_\_\_\_
6. New left-field baseball homerun wall is this many feet
7. Created movie posters for Stream, Screamboat, and The Mean One
8. Front-page photo activity
10. Blue-Man Group was this artistic teacher's first concert
12. A type of spring proposal
15. Yearbook HQ, IYKYK

**ANSWERS ON PAGE 15, BUT C'MON, TRY FIRST!**

# When to not pick a side

## Luigi Mangione, arrested for murder of UnitedHealthcare CEO, should not be revered

By Patrick Conway  
Slate Columnist

Brian Thompson was a family man. He and his wife, Paulette Reveiz, had two sons and lived in the affluent community of Maple Grove, Minnesota. He was an avid supporter of the Special Olympics and was even the honorary co-chair of the 2026 Special Olympics.

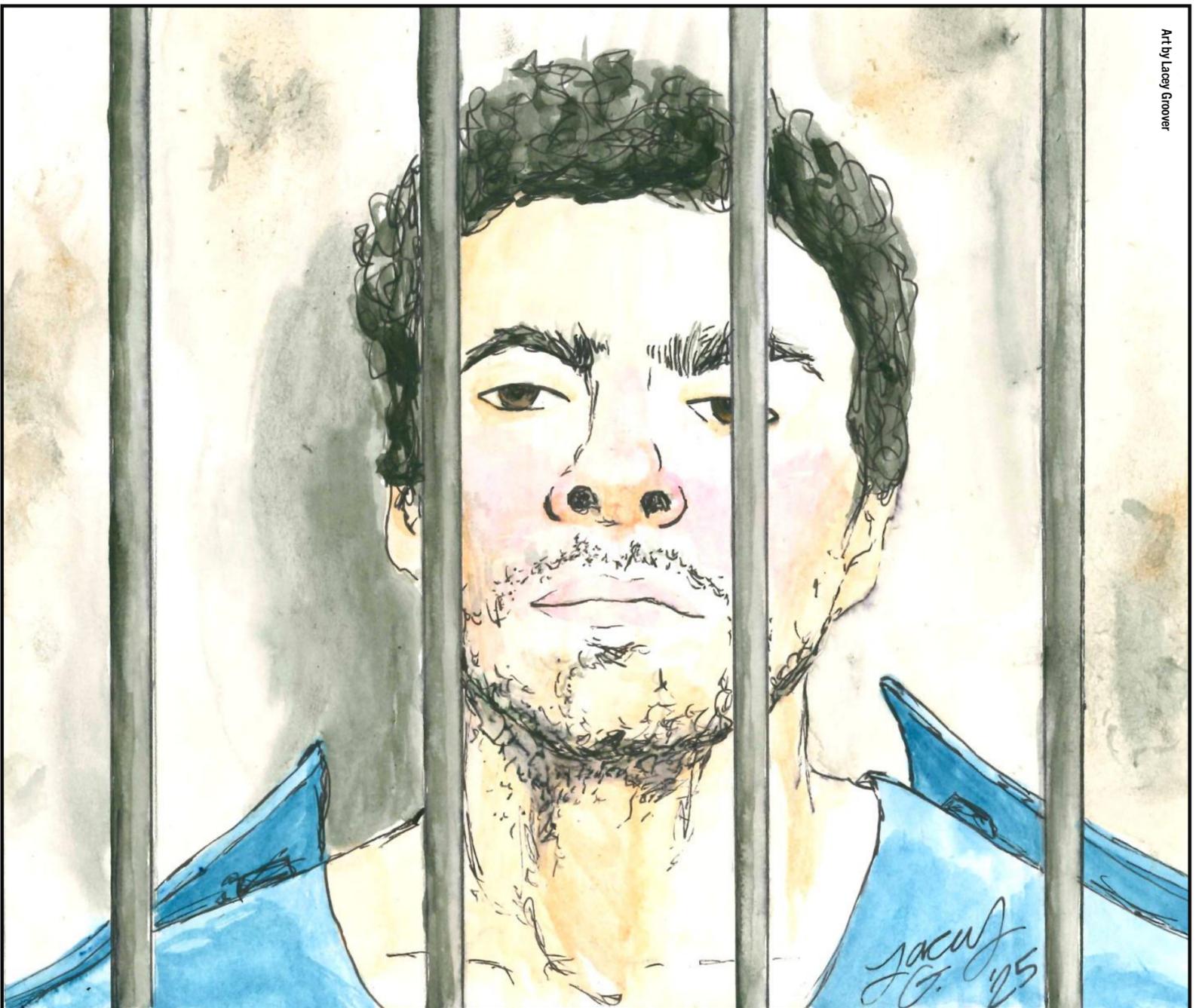
Thompson was the CEO of UnitedHealthcare-- the largest health insurance provider in the US-- and planned to attend an annual investor's meeting in New York. His family alleges he had received death threats well before the meeting, but Thompson seemed unconcerned. In the early

Mangione had a fierce hatred for the American healthcare system. Prior to the murder, Mangione wrote down his motivators in a brief manifesto, apologizing for the attack but claiming "it had to be done". Mangione highlighted that the US has the #1 most expensive healthcare system in the world while ranking roughly #42 in life expectancy. He claims the American public is to blame for allowing large corporations like UnitedHealth, Apple, and Google to gain so much influence. Mangione is believed to have been influenced by the works of the domestic terrorist Ted Kaczynski. His famous manifesto, *Industrial Society and its Future*, was made to justify multiple bombings

trading. The suit highlighted many of the recent measures Thompson and UnitedHealth took to boost profits. The District Court of Minnesota overviews a strategy UnitedHealth recently used to illegally boost their profits-- an action known as upcoding. Upcoding exploits the fees the government gives to insurers to help cover certain groups of people. In this case, UnitedHealth falsely reported pre-existing conditions for many people on Medicare Advantage plans. This caused the government to pay larger and unnecessary amounts of money to UnitedHealthcare, helping boost profits. They did this through a variety of methods, summarized by the overview given in

American health system has caused a large public outcry, with many rushing to defend Mangione. Emerson College polled a group of voters between ages 18 and 29, with 41% saying that Thompson's murder was acceptable. In fact, some people took to the attack so well that threats were sent to insurance workers on numerous occasions; a previously common occurrence which has only increased in severity since the murder occurred.

Social and economically challenging times are normally cause for public upheavals such as these, but one seriously needs to consider the morality and context of situations like these before coming to conclusions and for-



Art by Lacey Groover

morning of December 4th, Thompson left the Marriott Midtown hotel and walked to another nearby hotel. As he walked to his destination, he was followed. He was shot in the back at close range by an unknown person. Then, Thompson was pronounced dead just twenty-eight minutes later at Mt. Sinai Hospital.

The suspect? A man by the name of Luigi Mangione, who was arrested just five days after Thompson's murder-- traveled by bus from New York City to Altoona, Pennsylvania and was reported by a McDonald's employee. He and his lawyer have denied any responsibility for the crime, but all evidence points to Mangione being guilty.

Many consider Mangione an intellectual-- he was valedictorian of a Gilman School in Baltimore. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Engineering and a Master's Degree in Computer and Information Science. He has great opportunities as a result of both his family's wealthy stature and good reputation and merit. These accusations have likely snuffed those opportunities-- regardless of whether he is proven innocent or not-- as they have also displayed some potentially concerning traits.

Mangione is a radical. Several news outlets analyzed Mangione's social media presence. They found he was outright opposed to the modern ideas of wokeism and secularization, and that he was concerned about falling fertility rates, decline of Christian faith, and DEI programs. Most importantly,

throughout America.

The manifesto advocates anti-technology and revolution against industrial society. According to USA Today, Mangione left a very positive review on the site Goodreads, tying it to a quote he had found online: "'Violence never solved anything' is a statement uttered by cowards and predators... all other forms of communication fail, violence is necessary to survive."

This manifesto, alongside some similar influences, definitely made a large impact on Mangione-- rapidly changing his beliefs and personality to the point he isolated from his family and friends. His parents reported to police last November that he had been missing since July. Mangione's hate for healthcare became as severe as Kaczynski's hate for industrialization, resulting from poor treatment he received for an extremely painful spinal condition. He sought some sort of vigilante justice and took matters into his own hands, using Brian Thompson as his target-- even though UnitedHealthcare has never covered Mangione. He was an easy, high-profile target with enough morally questionable decisions to justify a murder to many people.

Thompson was not a very benevolent man, regardless of his background and philanthropy. His motives in the insurance business were heading almost solely by profit, both for himself and his stockholders.

A lawsuit by CalPERS and the Hollywood Firefighters' Pension Fund accused Thompson, alongside other officers in UnitedHealthcare, of insider

court documents:

*UnitedHealth induced providers to find new diagnoses by paying bonuses to providers who upcoded. UnitedHealth trained providers to use "buddy codes," that is adding multiple new diagnoses based upon existing one... Defendants also exploited the House-Calls program by using tools designed to find diagnoses that did not exist... Doctors and nurses who worked for UnitedHealth during the Class Period have admitted that they added codes they did not truly believe existed because UnitedHealth pressured them to do so.*

Once these injustices, alongside many others, within UnitedHealthcare's business model were discovered and investigated by the Department of Justice, Thompson and other officers within the UnitedHealth group sold millions of dollars worth of stocks, just before the company lost billions of dollars in stock value. The court notes:

*The Individual Defendants [Witty, Hemsley, Thompson] made, or caused to be made, false or misleading statements that caused the price of UnitedHealth common stock to be artificially inflated or maintained artificial inflation in UnitedHealth's common stock during the Class Period. Each of the Individual Defendants was directly involved in the management and day-to-day operations of the Company...*

The reveal of corruption within the UnitedHealthcare industry is an already hand-in-hand with as well as an already negative public opinion of the

mulating opinions. This isn't a type of situation to be dichotomized, either-- both Mangione and Thompson are criminals, and both are morally questionable individuals.

Mangione had no direct reason to kill Thompson, but felt entitled to take out his anger on the health industry by becoming a sort of martyr and killing another human being for a national extremist movement.

Brian Thompson did not directly harm any of his insured parties, but manipulated policies and systems within his company to drive up profits, completely disregarding the wellbeing of his customers. Are either of these groups justified? No. There is no utilitarian purpose for Mangione killing Thompson-- bloodshed will change nothing about the healthcare industry except its security.

UnitedHealthcare is not a moral company, as its coercive business practice harms customers and discourages the government from effectively helping its citizens. A person who kills another without a reason of self-defense is not a moral person, and a company that manipulates other people to draw in profit is not a moral company. You cannot totally defend either Mangione or Thompson, the healthcare industry or the anti-industrial movement, or any of the opposing trains of thought in this debate. Stay educated and neutral until more details arise, as taking sides for a situation like this will create a slope which drives us into more elements of coercion and violence and threaten our identity as Americans. 🌱



Photo by Morgan Smith  
Autumn Khuu, Mackennah Mosser, and Zania Braewell wrestle for NL, but are part of an integrated team... for now.

A women's wrestling team is looking for more participants for next year. Interested? Start lifting and sign up in the main office today.

# Women wrestlers making waves

By Andi Szwast  
Sports Editor

This season, the Northern Lehigh wrestling team has a new addition of five female members: junior Autumn Khuu, sophomores Zania Braewell and Elianna Castillo, and freshmen Mackennah Mosser and Anna Trelease.

The girls were inspired to join the wrestling team for several reasons, and they have all seemed to enjoy their experience so far. "I decided to join wrestling for future planned events and because of my sister Koltyn," shares Mosser. There were many things that the girls liked about the program. Trelease states, "I would say my favorite thing about wrestling is that it is a sport that takes a lot of hard work, and it pushes you to be the best version of yourself." "One of my favorite things about wrestling is the community," Khuu shares. "I was nervous going into it because it's my first year, and I'm a woman, but the support I get [from] the team is amazing."

Khuu and Mosser also want to encourage other girls not to be afraid to try wrestling. "I would 100% recommend wrestling to other girls. It builds confidence as well as mental and physical strength. Wrestling gave me an opportunity to connect with others, learn to speak up for myself, and to not be afraid to try new things," says Khuu. Mosser states, "I'm certain that there's other girls out there who would want to wrestle, but being that it's still a boys' team, they don't. Having a girls team would benefit." Mosser hopes they will have a girls' wrestling team next year, as do many schools in the area.

With their passion and dedication, the new members of the Northern Lehigh wrestling team are already making a significant impact by being the first female members of the team. Setting a powerful example for future female athletes, their positive experiences will hopefully attract more female wrestlers and spark the first Northern Lehigh girls wrestling team. 🌟



## Barthold joins 1,000-point club

By Andi Szwast  
Sports Editor

On January 3rd, 2025, senior Katelynn Barthold scored her 1000th point in girls basketball, marking an achievement she had worked towards for the past four years and adding her name to the wall with every other player who earned this honor.

The game was played against Lehigh, and the Northern Lehigh Bulldogs took a win 62 to 21. "After I scored my 1000th point, it was a big relief," Katelynn says. "Going into this game, I was more nervous than any other game. I scored a layup in the first 2 minutes of the game, which cut the amount I needed in half, and [I] only needed 2 more points.

On one of the next plays after that, I was fouled while shooting, so I got to take two foul shots. I missed the first and made the second. Now, I only needed one point. On one of the next plays, I was given the ball by my sister and scored a three-pointer. Once the ball went in the basket, a huge relief was lifted off my shoulders. My teammates all came up to me and hugged me. It was one of the greatest feelings I've felt throughout my basketball career." 🌟



## Winter sports set to achieve many victories

By Andi Szwast  
Sports Editor

The NL boys basketball team has charged straight into the season, producing several winning games. After their first victory over Wilson in December, they have gone on to beat both Pen Argyl and Moravian Academy. Returning senior and juniors Connor Simms, Coy Daubert, Kayden Novicki, and Zaid

Salih are helping to lead the team to these successes, in addition to vast contributions from many high-performing underclassmen. With such a strong start, the team is poised for an exciting and rewarding season.

For the Northern Lehigh girls basketball team, the past few weeks have been a whirlwind of success and achievement. Returning seniors Dekota Barthold, Katelynn Barthold, and Jackie

Richards have led the team in several decisive wins, including those on Moravian Academy, Southern Lehigh, Wilson, and more. During their game against Lehigh, Katelynn scored her 1000th career point, marking an outstanding personal accomplishment. As the season continues, there are, without a doubt, more victories to come for the Bulldogs. Meanwhile, the Northern Lehigh wrestling team is back and bet-

ter than ever, thanks to the addition of several female members, something the team has never seen before. Seniors Cyrus Kinchen and Cody Mazzocca return to lead the team in several decisive wins, including those against Catasauqua and Schuylkill Haven. With these exciting changes and strong performances, the team is ready for the rest of a promising season. 🌟



Kellen Bauer



Connor Simms



Dare-Rious Smith



Zaid Salih

Photos by Morgan Smith

## Big squad leads this year's wrestling team



Photo by Lifetouch

This year's 2024-25 NL Wrestling Squad: Connor Arrigo, Jaxon Bower, Zania Braewell, Elianna Castillo, George Colon, Noah Gosart, Zach Gosart, Josh Haldaman, Isaac Jackovitz, Autumn Khuu, Cyrus Kinchen, Skyler Loos, Braden Marzen, Cody Mazzocca, Javian Mercado, Mackennah Mosser, Dawson Newhard, Grady Newhard, Kyle O'Connell, Carter Perez-Martinez, Mason Rothrock, Andrew Rudolph, Landon Ruth, Henry Slonaker, Anna Trelease, Jayden Weaver.

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# How 'Monsters' TV show distorts Menendez brothers case

By Lacey Groover  
Editor in Chief

If you are in any way familiar with the story of the Menendez brothers case, you already know it does not need any more sensationalizing. With the release of Netflix's new series, *Monsters: The Lyle and Erik Menendez Story*, many people have become more familiar with this controversial case. The release of this show has sparked important conversations about ethical entertainment production, male sexual abuse, and who the true antagonist of a story is; however, the way the directors handled the show's writing has proven to be questionable among viewers.

The Menendez brothers were convicted of first-degree murder for shooting their sleeping parents, Jose and Kitty Menendez, inside their Beverly Hills home in 1989. They claim the attack was an act of self-defense due to the ongoing years of emotional, physical, and, most debated, sexual abuse the parents put their sons through. Despite the evidence and poignant testimonies the brothers had in court, prosecutors argued they fabricated the abuse and committed the murders for their parents' money.

Their first trial spanned from 1993-1994, included all evidence and testimonies of the parent's abuse from both brothers, where both of the juries couldn't reach a verdict, leading to a mistrial. In 1995, they were retried, excluding testimony from Lyle and evidence of the abuse, which convicted both brothers of first-degree murder and sentenced to life without the possibility of parole.

*Monsters* is described as a biographical crime drama about the Menendez case that gives a glimpse behind the scenes of what happened behind closed doors; however, it isn't possible to condense this story into a digestible, nine-episode series. The issue with the television genre of narrative nonfiction is that it crams the bigger picture of reality through the limited lens of fictional storytelling. The Menendez story is too complex to be told this way.

Stories are commonly told linearly with a conflict between a protagonist

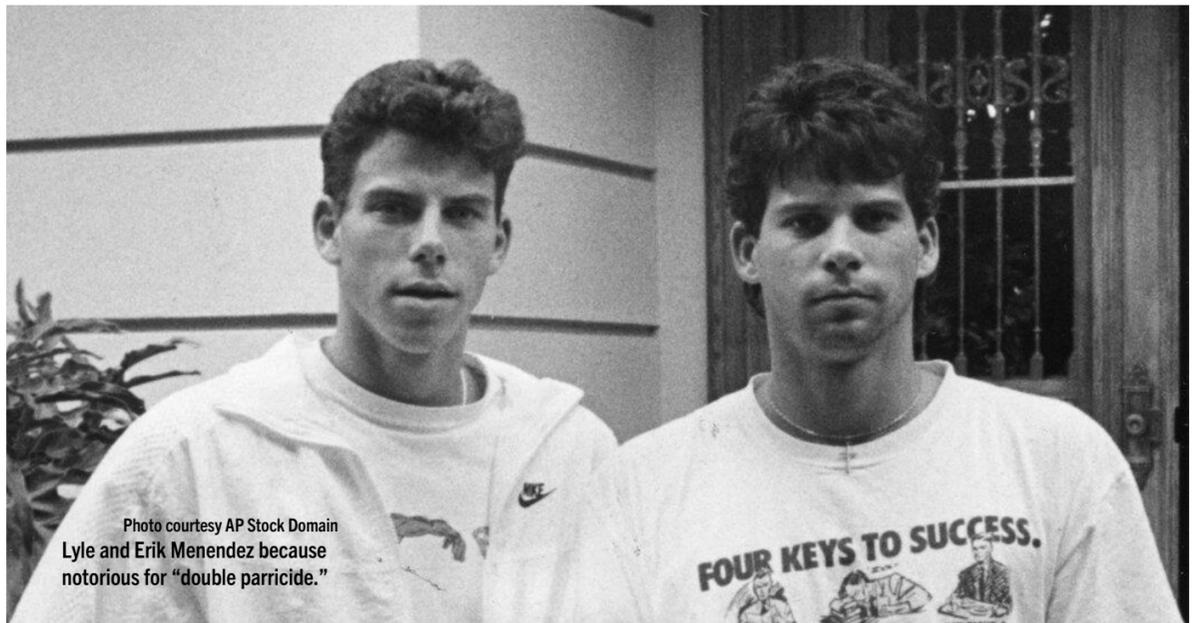


Photo courtesy AP Stock Domain  
Lyle and Erik Menendez because notorious for "double parricide."

and antagonist with a beginning, middle, and end. Determining distinct roles for the characters of this story would undermine the important nuances of the situation because of the unknown or complex variables. There are two sides to every story, and somewhere in between lies the truth. How do you accurately tell a story where the main character is both a victim and a perpetrator? Perspective.

The show aims to present all perspectives to the viewers so they can make up their minds about who the perpetrator is, but the contrast between the two sides is too great. The narrative flips like a coin between the two judgments of the brothers, one showing them as helpless abused victims who acted out of fear, and the other illustrating them as ruthless, money-hungry murderers out for blood. The show changes the characters to fit whatever narrative that episode requires to make it fit. They show a distinct split between the two perspectives on this case, yet it has no place where the two connect. This dichotomy eliminates any middle ground they want the audience to see.

In addition to the conflicting writ-

ing, this show is proven to have oversensationalized portions of this story based on weak facts like a romantic relationship between the brothers and arguments between the plaintiff and defense attorneys. Is this show meant to tell this story in a realistic light and bring awareness to the issues in this case, or is it a way to use the tragedies of what happened to captivate an audience for as long as possible?

Although many agree the show handled the accounts of the boys' sexual abuse responsibly, it gets overshadowed by the sensationalism of the murders. The actual shooting scene of the parents was put in the show an unnecessary amount of times, and, in a sense, glamorizing it. The show wanted to represent the family's lavish lifestyle and how that affected the family's lives, but making the show campy like *American Psycho*. The stereotypical flamboyance of how they are portrayed makes the show inherently more shallow. It could be argued they're trying to show the brothers how society saw them during their trial, playing into the cruelty and superficiality of it all, but they do this to an uncomfortable extent, glorifying and some-

times sexualizing the lives, situations, and actions of these boys.

The dramatization they use along with the severe sexual abuse is distasteful. *Monsters* cannot claim to be a biography because they fail to base parts of the story's plot on facts and present a middle ground. This prevents the audience from being able to make an informed decision based on the show's unreliable information. This television series is a fictional reenactment that fabricates parts of the story to make it more captivating. Looking at this case in retrospect allows us to consider how society saw the issues at the time and how it affected the result of this case. Recently, the public has been reevaluating whether or not their sentence is justified.

The way society can prevent tragedies like this from happening again is by ending the cycle of abuse and considering the role perspective has in every situation. It's important to remember that in a story with no positives, there is no right answer. People can be victims and perpetrators at the same time, and the fault doesn't always fall evenly among the ones involved. 🐾

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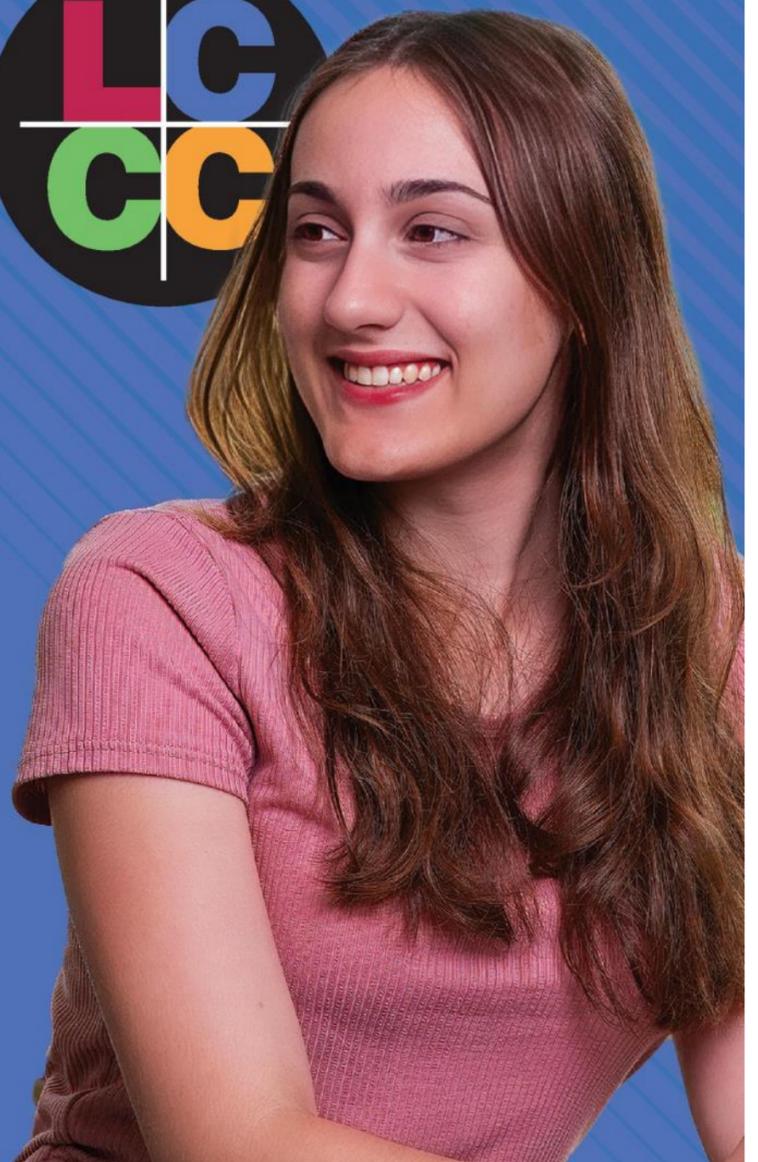
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# First mummified saber-toothed cat cub unearthed in Siberia

By **Ada Porobenski**  
Slate Writer

In 2020, researchers were initially looking for woolly mammoth tusks when they came across something much more unique. Near the Badyarikha River in Russia, the first ever mummified remains of a saber-toothed cat cub were found in the Siberian permafrost - an area of Russia uncommon to apex predators (predators at the top of the food chain without natural predators of their own.) Researchers were more than delighted when they unearthed the prehistoric mammal in an area least expected. The cub was determined to be 3 weeks old at the time of its death around 35,000 years ago.

The discovery of the cub is not only extremely cool and interesting, but it also allows paleontologists to greatly expand their knowledge of saber-toothed cats and improve our understanding of these fantastic creatures.

The frozen cub has given paleontologists a glimpse into the younger life stage of the cats, as most, if not all, fossils of saber-toothed cats are adults. Fur, neck, muscles, tissues, paws, and much more were studied from the specimen.

According to the National Geographic Website, A.V. Lopatin (the main paleontologist studying the cub) and his coauthors have identified the cub to be a *Homotherium latidens*, which is different from the well-known *Smilodon*.

This prehistoric cat is often known as the scimitar-toothed cat due to its shorter and serrated canine teeth. The *Homotherium latidens* is found in both Eurasia and North America.

It is known for being a lanky and wide-ranging predator, well suited to chase after its prey, such as juvenile woolly mammoths and other megafauna (large mammals usually weighing 50 kg or more).

National Geographic says the cub had enlarged neck muscles and long, muscular forelimbs, all thought to occur in adult *Homotherium*.

The cub was also capable of a wide gape that was used to bite into prey. These discoveries weren't as surprising as the others because paleontologists expected these features from previous fossils, but what was surprising to paleontologists was the dark-brown fur color of the cub. Lopatin says *Homotherium* cubs were most likely born with a darker coat that became lighter as they grew into adulthood. Paleontologists were surprised to see no stripes or patterning on the cubs, as most modern cats have them. However, the coat color of the cub may not be completely accurate as frozen animals often have a reddish tint to their fur.

The frozen cub also had no carpal pads, a trait common in modern cats and dogs. According to Smithsonian

Magazine, this lack of a carpal pad may have been useful for walking on snow.

One of the last main discoveries from the frozen cub is its upper lip. It is more than twice as deep as that of a modern lion cub. This gives paleontologists the idea that the lips of the *Homotherium* were able to hide their long canine teeth.

Unfortunately, the cub did not yet have adult teeth, so whether or not the canine teeth are covered can only be discovered with an adult *Homotherium* mummy. These discoveries have given paleontologists many helpful hints about the *Homotherium latidens*, but there is much more to be discovered from this cub.

Currently, paleontologists are on their way to extracting DNA and doing genetic analysis on the cub, which will only further our knowledge of these amazing extinct creatures. 🐾

## National Guard recruiters enter Mrs. Frew's 'Chopped' kitchen



Photos by Morgan Smith and Sam Mack

The Army National Guard Recruiters host a Chopped Challenge in Mrs. Frew's Family & Consumers Sciences kitchen today. Students were given two MRE (meals-ready-to-eat) full-course meals, which they needed to turn into an appetizer, a main dish and a dessert. Faculty judges evaluated the food based on presentation, taste and creativity. "This was a really fun learning experience," according to Mrs. Frew. "The students had a great time creating interesting dishes."

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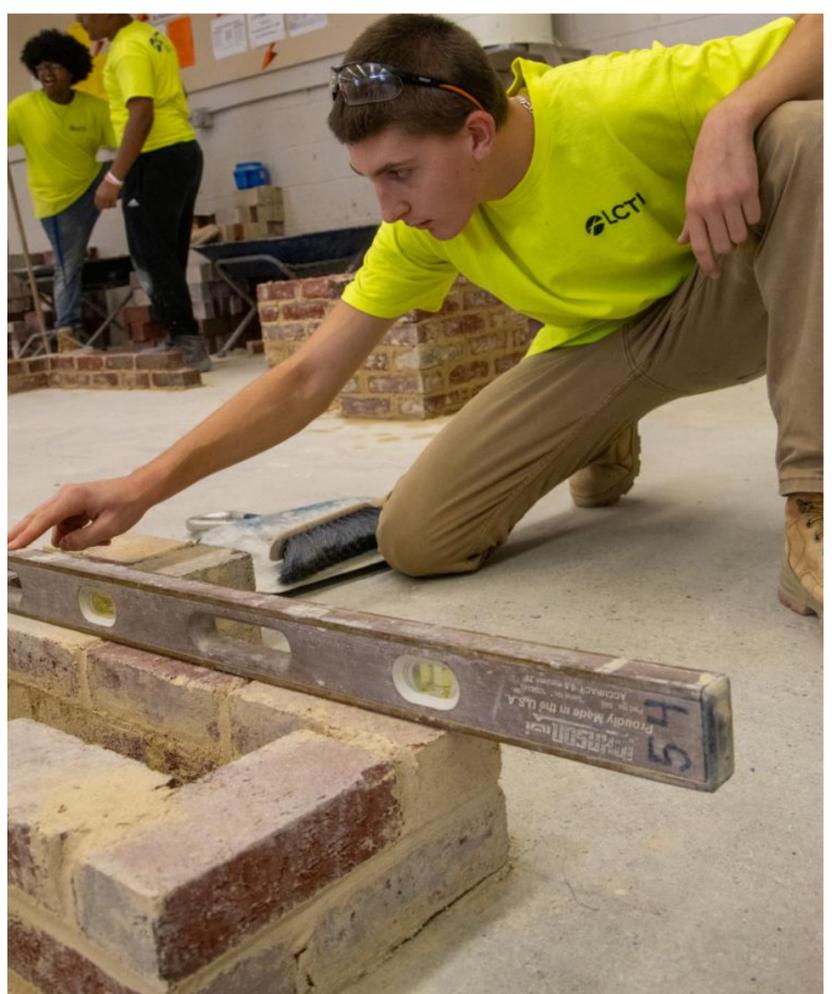
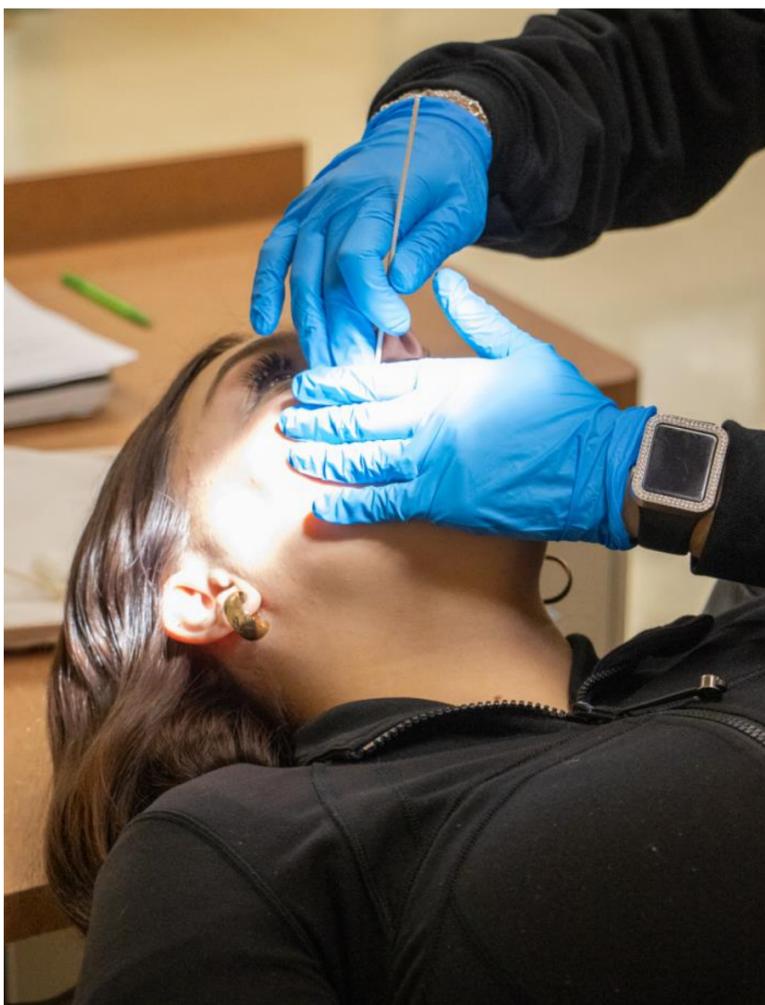
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# Bulldogs practice their career-prep skills at LCTI



Photos by Kyndra Dougherty

Clockwise, from top left: Angela Hale, Savannah Thompson, Zane Roth, Alondra Gonzalez, Brant Doyle, Elianna Cast, Ariel Turissini,



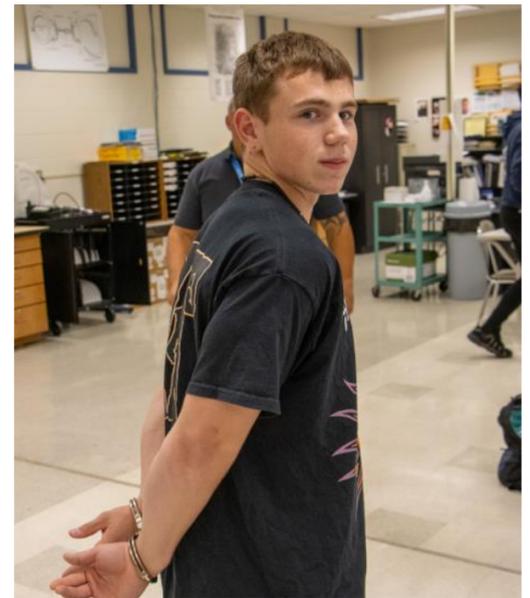
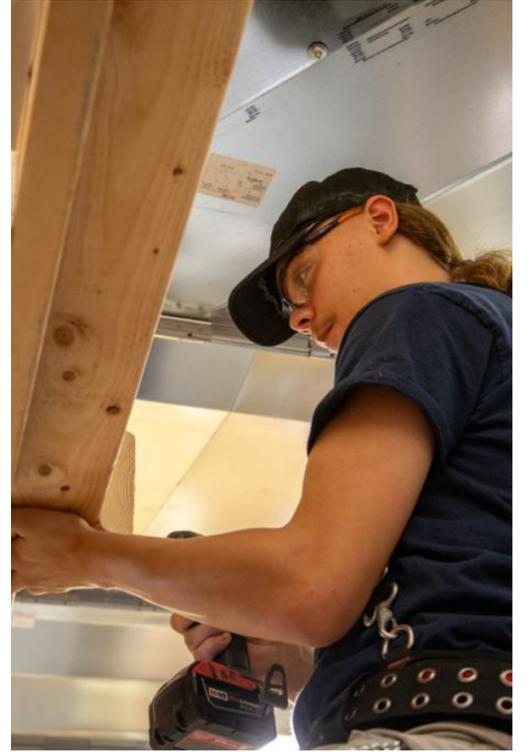
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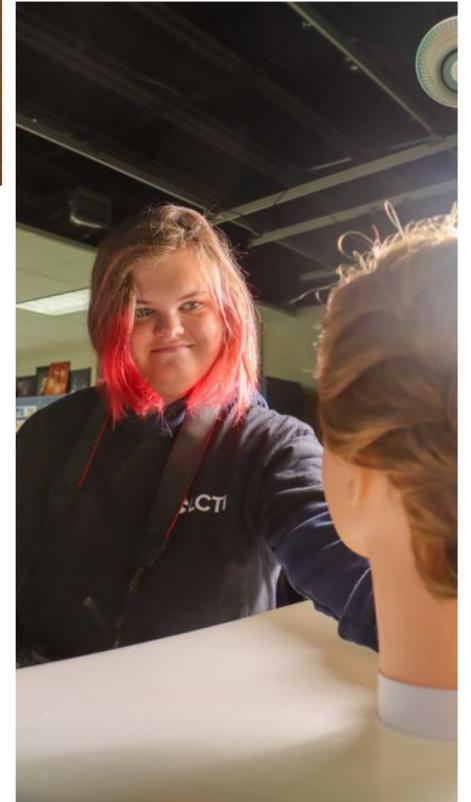
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Photos by Kyndra Dougherty

Clockwise, from top left: John Canavan, Jacob Leibenguth, Gage Simpson, Gabriella Gentile, Sarah Guth, Elliot Hook, Kyndra Dougherty, Kaiden Smith, Blake Everitt, Jaylynn Oruska, Jayden Trunk.



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13-custodians 14-KatlynnBarthold 16-Bryfish  
Down: 2-Dougherty 3-manifesto 4-megafauna  
5-unleashed 6-twenty 7-Mrkern 8-welding  
10-Shuey 12-Prom 15-Byth

# Media consumption dulls empathy yet fuels insensitivity

By Nicole Singh  
Slate Writer

To be sensitive is to be empathetic. Those who come off as insensitive lack empathy because insensitive people cannot put themselves in someone else's shoes, let alone understand the feeling. The lack of empathy may result from numerous factors, mainly the media. It causes emotional disengagement in a person and ultimately means they are deprived of the intelligence to realize someone's emotions, including their own, demeaning the value of a human life.

ARPANET, an experimental computer network, was released in the late 1960s, leading to the creation of the dark web a few decades later. The dark web allows people online to commit illegal transactions and media, hacking and cyber-crime, terrorism, and being able to purchase stolen data, like personal information.

With the right equipment, it isn't hard for just anyone to have access to this side of the internet and find its way back to normal media sources. Thus, it started spreading to the public. Anyone who uses any type of media sees it on their everyday feed, including young adults and teens, assuming your child doesn't have unsupervised internet ac-

cess. Social media has allowed us to voice many negative thoughts without consequences. It has become someone's ability to be someone they are not. They may tend to be more condescending and consume immoral media.

Although this may be the case, movies, television shows, and video games also display unnecessary amounts of gore and violence, plaguing viewers with a sense of normality. This display would normally unsettle the average person. Websites like Twitter or Instagram make it extremely easy to find accounts that give all their time to sharing videos of violence, ranging from videos of people getting into fights to ones containing gore.

Social media also gives people access to comments, spreading, brutal backlash, controversies, racist, homophobia, and harassment is a daily activity for some. This mockery over differences between people has become more frequent and normalized. In an article by Yale Daily News titled Has social media desensitized us? Katie Day Good, Associate Professor of Media, Journalism, and Film at Miami University and co-founder of Little Tech emphasized that it's so effortless not to think twice about leaving a malicious comment under someone's post when every other person

is doing the exact same thing. Viewing these types of content can cause distortion. People don't take everyday news seriously. With the rise of significant crimes happening recently, we can genuinely see the mindset of those chronically online. People are malicious and have no disregard for bad news as if it's fake.

The frequent stream of violent media makes people start to feel less hearty toward them because it is normalized to see tragic events become less of a mind-boggling evil.

Multiple cases have been reported with bystanders watching, recording, and listening but not helping. This infectious insensitivity is affecting how we react to real-life situations. How is it possible to be so in your own world that when you see a lady burning your first thought is to pull out your phone and record?

Victim Debrina Kawan was set on fire while sleeping in a New York subway station last December, and people's first instinct was to pull out their phones and hit record. More likely, they do so out of an instinct to stare. People also do it out of an impulse to capture an arousing and gruesome diversion. Some may even do so out of an impulse to go viral on social media. I understand how a bystander at that train platform, con-

fronted with the frightful sight of a woman burning alive, might hold back from doing something out of fear or from sheer panic. But to let her burn to record a video? That isn't something someone does to avoid fear. People do this when warped by the media, which turns them into spectators and other humans into just spectacles.

The lack of empathy isn't solely a product of media consumption; our upbringing, life experiences, and the surrounding culture all play a role. However, the pervasive nature of online negativity and the constant barrage of violent imagery undoubtedly contribute to this growing problem.

While we cannot control the actions of others, we can control our engagement with the digital world. Choosing to limit your exposure to harmful content, actively seeking diverse perspectives, and consciously cultivating compassion in our online interactions are the first steps. More than just stopping yourself from posting hurtful comments, we must actively challenge online negativity and promote a culture of empathy and respect. Every click, every post, every share, every comment is a choice. The choice is ours to remain passive spectators or to flourish as active participants in making a more sensitive future. 🌱

## It's what's on the inside: From lily pads to lab tables



Mrs. Wilder's Biology class was recently 'ribbiting' apart the mysteries of biology—one frog at a time. Sacrificing themselves in the name of science, these amphibians showed students it's what is on the inside that counts (toward the grade).

(Clockwise from above) Ryan Zambo and friend; Ada Porobenski and Emily Gad; Mackenzi Norwillo and Evelina Mayak; Alexa O'Connell and Karina Wisocky.

Photos by Sam Mack