



Your Body, My Rules

Texas is turning many heads with its controversial bill that threatens a woman's right to choose. **Page 7.**



Gluttony in the U.S.A.

Hunger is a problem all over the planet. But in Brooklyn each year, we devour hot dogs like a bloody sport. **Page 4.**

THE SLATE

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The Voice of Northern Lehigh High School

Volume 87. Issue One. October 2021

Band plays a different tune over hot summer

Veteran leader, Mr. Carroll, reaches 300th day of seasonal rehearsals

BY SUSAN GILSBACH
STAFF WRITER

This summer, after band camp being cancelled last year due to the pandemic, the middle school parking lot was once again filled with the sounds of the Northern Lehigh marching band. With the delta variant, the weather, and new restrictions, none of the band members knew what to expect walking into the

band room for the first day of camp. "This year, walking into the band room for the first time felt completely surreal. I hadn't been in that space for the better part of a year and a half. Ultimately, it felt really good to be back because it felt like life was a little more normal," said Owen Levan-Uhler, an upperclassman marching band member. And while band camp was supposedly back to normal, they had a lot coming for them in the two weeks to come. "My least favorite part about band camp is the heat. [The weather] is not

horrible in the morning, but when it's high noon and on, it's downright awful. I had more sunburn than I did the previous year. Plus, some of our rehearsal time outside was cut because of how hot it was" says Cydney Krause, one of the band's two drum majors. She, along with Nate Walters, helped direct many of the activities that happened during band camp. Along with the heat and the weather, the band was being taught and working

See Band camp, page 2



Photo courtesy of Brooke Delancey
NL's color guard helped support the band during summer preparations.

Goals Set, Goals Scored



Photos courtesy of Lifetouch for the Reflections Yearbook

Northern Lehigh's girls soccer team is powering through this year with a press-time record of 7-3. (Top) Katya Pesesko, 9th grade, blasts one during a recent match while asst. coach Mr. Jason Reinhard, Emma Niebell, Briana Ojeda, and Sophia Lear enjoy moments on the sidelines.

New hires begin fresh starts in classrooms

New science, math teachers replace longtime NL faces

BY MADDY MACK
STAFF WRITER

Northern Lehigh students were greeted by many new faces this year as the school year began. New science teachers Ms. Gabriella Wilder and Ms. Amy Shonk, along with new math teacher Ms. Paige Schmidt, were welcomed to their first year of teaching at Northern Lehigh High School.

Ms. Wilder teaches both Ecology and Biology this year. She attended East Stroudsburg University and studied Environmental Science and Biology Education. She is extremely passionate about conservation and wildlife rehabilitation. In her free time, she likes to longboard and play video games. "I am looking forward to getting to know all of my students and helping them understand

biology," she said. Although the pandemic poses a unique challenge once again this year, Ms. Wilder looks forward to the coming year.

The science department has another new addition this year. Ms. Shonk not only teaches at the high school, she teaches at the middle school as well. For the past six years, she has been teaching classes at Northampton Community College, and before that she worked in pharmaceutical research. Ms. Shonk has lived in Northeastern Pennsylvania her whole life and loves to spend her free time with her family, going camping, listening to music, and reading.

At the high school, Ms. Shonk teaches tenth grade Ecology and Cell Processes. She also teaches eighth grade Earth Science and seventh grade Life Science at Northern Lehigh Middle School. She has always loved biology, but cannot choose a favorite class to teach yet!

See Teachers, page 2

Ready for a 60s revival?

BY OWEN LEVAN-UHLER
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Yearbooks are an expectation and a companion of the high school experience. With new leadership and a group of dedicated kids replete with new ideas, there are high hopes for this year's chronicle at Northern Lehigh High School.

"I think it's important for people to look at the book and actually reflect on the year, rather than skim through for embarrassing pictures of friends," said yearbook co-editor and senior Ava Segur. "I'm hoping for it to be an accurate representation of what students want to remember."

This school year is a prospect revival for Northern Lehigh, after nearly two years of the global pandemic. NL's yearbook, known for decades as "Reflections," will do its best to do just that — reflect and resurrect such idealism.

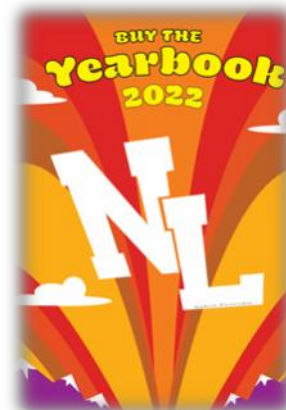
"This year, I want the book to stand out. I wanted to pick a theme that is a bit more out of the ordinary and something we haven't done before," said senior Molly Williams, yearbook co-editor. "I want there to be colors and creativity."

And that there will be. The vibrancy is already being spread around the school with hippie imagery and peace-and-love posters, relating to this year's theme: a 1960's revival.

"I chose the 60's for this book because I feel like the style of it is slowly coming back," Molly said. "I love all the colors and patterns... the slang, the outfits, the music, and the vibrance. The 60's felt like the perfect fit for this year."

First-time yearbook adviser Mr. Christopher Barnes is ecstatic about this Reflections' potential: "I would hope that my excitement is contagious, as it is with The Slate

See Revival, page 4 & 15



INSIDE



Coming out is not a game to them.
Page 11.



The needles in the galactic haystack
Page 8.



Name a song other than Back in Black.
Page 16.

A look back at 2021's commencement



At Bulldog Stadium, the Class of 2021 marked its entrance into the real world last June. (Clockwise from above) Trinity Packard, Alexia Mankos, and Maggie Reitz. (Top right) Alec Benner and Nate Ellan gaze toward the future.



School Board President Mr. Gary Fedorcha, Principal Mr. Robert Vlasaty, and the B-man, Bielman Perez. (Left) Brady Hanzarik helps Teague Herzog look his best on their special day.



New year, new educators

Teachers, from page 1

For all teachers, this school year continues to present many challenges. "I think the biggest challenge for me is that I am teaching three completely different classes, and all of them for the first time. It's a lot of preparation each day," Ms. Shonk said. Despite these obstacles, she is looking forward to some upcoming labs and interesting lessons in the future, and cannot wait to see the students engaged and excited about participating in them.

The math department also gained a new addition this school year. Ms. Paige Schmidt, who is from Bowmansville of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, teaches a variety of classes. She teaches Algebra IB this semester, along with Geometry, Algebra IA, and Algebra II/Trigonometry in the spring. Her favorite class to teach

is any kind of Algebra. In her free time, she loves to be outdoors.

Being new to the district, Ms. Schmidt feels that there is a lot to learn about the area and the school itself, which may take her a while to get into the swing of things. "I am looking forward to learning all about the Northern Lehigh High School culture. I am also looking forward to getting to see my students compete in sports games and music concerts." Ms. Schmidt is greatly excited to be a part of the Northern Lehigh team.

Although no one knows what the school year will look like, students and staff alike are excited to be back in the classroom and not on their computer screens. Ms. Wilder, Ms. Shonk, and Ms. Schmidt are no exception, and Northern Lehigh students and staff gladly welcome them into the bulldog family. 🐾



Joining the Bulldog teacher ranks this year are Amy Shonk, Gabryella Wilder, and Paige Schmidt. Welcome to the NL family!

Carroll still leads strong

Band camp, from page 1

on new movement concepts to bring the show to the next level. Despite having to go inside many of the days due to the heat, the students were still working on memorizing and improving the show musically.

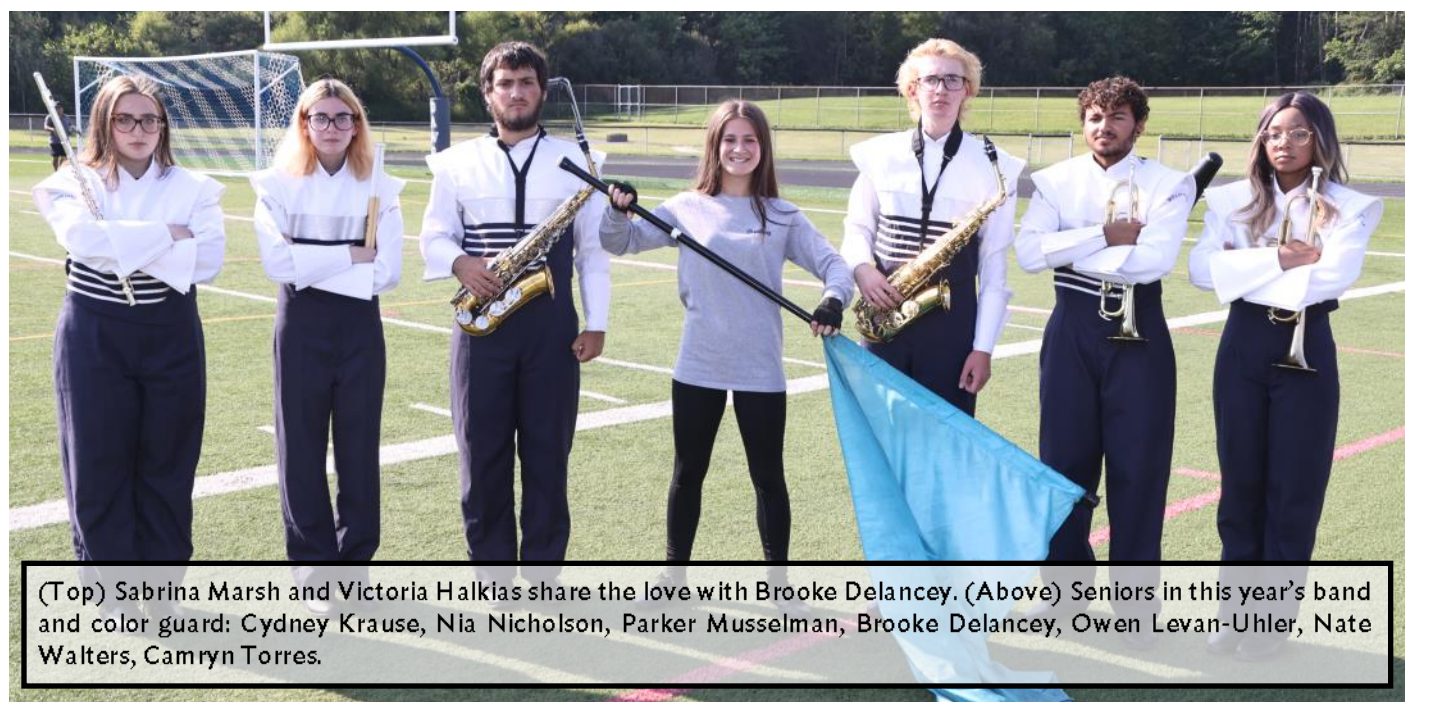
Though some learning concepts and complex movement aspects of the field show were rushed because of the weather, namely the heat, over five of the nearly eight minutes of the show were taught.

For some seniors, the last day was emotional. Brooke Delancey, band president, said "I am truly heartbroken that this is my last year with the band. I consider this group to be my family". Other students, such as Cydney, had mixed feelings, "I felt a bit sad because I knew this would be my last band camp with such a great organization. However, it felt refreshing because I know this is the last time I'm going to have to suffer through feel-like weather of 100 degrees."

Meanwhile, the last day of the 2021 Northern Lehigh band camp was also Mr. David Carroll's 300th day of band camp. Mr. Carroll has instructed at Sun Valley High School and Hanover High School, as well as directing at Northern Lehigh for 25 years. When asked about changes over his career as a band director, Mr. Carroll stated, "The basic elements of band camp have not changed a great deal over the years. The overall plan is to as-

sign equipment, refine skills, learn the music for the competitions and parades, and learn the field show." Mr. Carroll also compared camp with his time with a senior Drum Corp, "It is very similar to band camp when I was a student Drum Corps Camp, but [instead of teaching] I marched with senior Corps"

The band program, past and present, thanks Mr. Carroll for all his compassion and dedication over the years. Regardless of age or role, this year's camp has been a learning experience for all, and the band will improve drastically over the fall. 🐾



(Top) Sabrina Marsh and Victoria Halkias share the love with Brooke Delancey. (Above) Seniors in this year's band and color guard: Cydney Krause, Nia Nicholson, Parker Musselman, Brooke Delancey, Owen Levan-Uhler, Nate Walters, Camryn Torres.

MONUMENTAL MOMENTS IN HISTORY

20 past 9/11: Are we safer than before?

BY CALLUM ZIMMERMAN
SLATE HISTORIAN

On the morning of September 11, 2001, 19 Al Qaeda terrorists hijacked four passenger airplanes in the United States. Two planes were flown into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, causing the destruction of both towers. A third plane crashed into the Pentagon, just outside of Washington, DC. The fourth plane crashed in rural Pennsylvania after the crew and passengers bravely attacked the terrorists on board, preventing it from hitting another target-thought to be the White House.

The attacks claimed nearly 3,000 lives and impacted many more globally. On 20 September, President George W. Bush declared a "War on Terror" and stated that defeating terrorism was now the world's fight. The U.S. had experienced terrorist attacks previously, but none had been on the same scale or significance as 9/11, which created a shock-wave across the world and shaped the generation to come.

An invasion of Afghanistan was launched less than one month later on Oct. 7, 2001. Though the Taliban regime fell in Nov. 2001, the United States and its allies remained a presence in the region until Aug. 31 of this year, when current leader Joe Biden, hastily pulled our military and civilian presence from the region.

So, There I Was...

When asked where he was during the events of 9/11, Mr. Barnes, English teacher and adviser for the Yearbook and The Slate at Northern Lehigh High School, explains, "[I was] In my car, on my way to my newspaper job in Bucks County. I was listening to the old Howard Stern show on regular radio back then and he had announced a plane just hit one of the Twin Towers."

Ms. Lilly, Special Education Teacher at Northern Lehigh High School, says, "I can recall this day with vivid accuracy. I was a tenth grade student in high school. When the first plane hit, I was on my way to geometry class..."

"I was teaching kindergarten at Peters Elementary," said Mrs. Beil, special education teacher at Slatington Elementary School. "The guidance counselor was

watching the news in her office and told me about the attacks. I remember the day after the attacks. It was a beautiful day, but I was struck by how eerily silent it was because no planes were flying."

And Then the Politics...

When asked about her position re-

garding the country's response to the attacks on 9/11, Ms. Lilly states, "At the time, I didn't know enough about politics to agree or disagree with how our country handled the response. I remember feeling that going after the people/person who was responsible for such dev-

astation was the correct thing to do, but then again I was a high school student."

Mrs. Beil is unsure about her position regarding the United State's response to the attacks. "I think of all the brave men and women who have been killed or seriously injured in Afghanistan." She continues, "I think that many Americans believed that such an attack could never happen (despite Pearl Harbor). We all had a false sense of safety and security."

When asked about his political feelings around the handling of the response to 9/11, Mr. Barnes comments, "It's very easy for anyone not involved with the response and process to have differing opinions on how things should get done. Everyone plays 'Monday morning quarterback' and would do things better."

"Whether I agreed with it or not," he continues, "I needed to have faith that my government was doing everything it could to capture those responsible. Of course, my confidence waned after it had been many years of seemingly nothing. Then one night, I was watching the Mets-Phillies and a 'USA, USA' chant erupted from nowhere. Fans in the stands got the news of bin Laden's death."

Where Are We Now?...

Our generation may not remember the original events, but we are now part of the story. Of the 13 American service members who were killed in an attack during the U.S.'s chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan in August, a full five were only 20 years old. Seven of the service members were toddlers or infants in 2001, and the oldest was 11.

Meanwhile, a retaliatory U.S. drone strike reportedly killed seven Afghan children, including two 2-year-olds who had no inkling of 9/11, let alone the war that has been waged in its name.

Between 100 and 200 Americans (or more, depending on the news source) and thousands of U.S. allies in Afghanistan are now reliant on the Taliban for a way out, while economic collapse threatens a worsening humanitarian crisis. Many of those who have escaped face a global purgatory at temporary sites as Biden's Administration struggles to vet and resettle tens of thousands of refugees. Unspeakable things are occurring within Afghanistan at the hands of the Taliban.

So, here's the *big question*. *Are we better off for the last 20 years?* 🇺🇸



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Eating contests leave a bitter after-taste

The world is hungry while we spotlight gluttony on ESPN

BY HAVEN MOORE
STAFF WRITER

The United States is a country full of unique traditions, competitions, and contests that are valued and cherished by many. However, keep in mind that whatever events are celebrated, publicized, and plastered all over the media, speaks volumes about who we are as a nation.

Unfortunately, the 14th Annual Nathan's Hotdog Eating Contest that occurred on July 4th in Coney Island, New York, was a celebrated tradition that demonstrated the sick lengths Americans will go for titles and triumph.

On July 4, 2021, a man by the name of Joey Chestnut beat his 2020 record by one hot dog in the competition and won. According to the New York Post, "the competitive eater, 37, took home his 14th win in the last 15 years of the competition." Additionally, Post wrote that "According to multiple outlets including ESPN, Chestnut housed a total of 76 hot dogs (with the buns!) in 10 minute.

This demonstrates how widely recognized the winners of this competition are, and what extensive lengths that they go through for fame and acknowledgment. Joey Chestnut recognized the uncomfortable feeling while competing, but considered it worth it for the validation of winning, earning prizes, and fame. He has been quoted as saying, "Even if I was uncomfortable, having everybody cheer me and push me, it made me feel good...". There are many other sports, activities, and competitions, in which one could tap into those same results and feelings without the sickness, waste, gluttony, and promotion of unhealthy behaviors.

To win, contestants put themselves at immense risk for major health-issues. According to CBS News, "a normal eater has a stomach that feels full after consuming about a liter or a liter and a half's worth of food.

Competitive eaters learn to stretch and relax their stomachs to fit in more food by eating large amounts of low-



Mom would be so proud. A well-attended and celebrated event, the Nathan's hot-dog eating contest at Coney Island is a mainstay of the Independence Day weekend. Eater.com

calorie foods and liquids including water, diet soda, watermelon, and cabbage." They also train themselves to digest food at a faster pace using techniques that mess with the natural functioning of their intestines. The *Gastroenterology and Endoscopy News* states that side effects of competitive eating include nausea, painful gas, vomiting, heartburn, and diarrhea. More serious side effects could include choking, esophageal inflammation, and stomach rupture. "Are mere prizes and validation enough justification for such danger?"

These contests shine a light onto one of America's biggest health problems, which is obesity. The WHO estimates that at least 2.8 million people die each year as a result of being overweight or obese. Eating contests are widely promoted and popularized, normalizing the habits of overeating and binge-eating. The behavior displayed in these contests can easily become life-threatening, because it

impacts how contestants approach eating on a regular basis.

According to health enews.com, "a study further concluded competitors are more at risk of becoming obese as they age, and binge-eating may become normal for them."

The U.S. The Food and Drug Administration suggests "2,000 calories a day as general nutrition advice, although calorie needs vary. However, participants in food competitions can quickly consume their recommended daily caloric intake in a matter of minutes."

As long as food eating competitions go on, obesity is a constant problem in this industry and can spread among viewers as well.

Unhealthy eating is not only practiced during the competition but before as well. And chances are, these habits continue long after competitions to either continue training, and/or because they

are stuck in an unhealthy relationship with food.

On another note, food eating contests glorify gluttony. Contestants obviously eat far more than they are hungry for (or can keep in their stomachs), and do so out of pure greed. The organization Feeding America estimates that 40 million Americans go hungry. According to mashed.com, "the entire population of New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Phoenix, and Philadelphia, [is] about 20 million." Contestants in one competition were given 69 hotdogs. All that food could provide a meal for 69 people. Instead, it wastefully goes to one person to gorge upon, illustrating twisted priorities.

While food eating contests are often deemed fun and entertaining, such information will hopefully provide insight as to how grotesque and wasteful such events are. 🐾



Long May She Wave



Photos by Caitlin Kirk for The Slate

As part of the Patriot Club, advised by Mr. Scott Gerould, Caelin Mack, Cameron Kuntz, and Ryan Lynch, among others, take great care to properly raise and lower the American flag each day.

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To move forward, take a page from the past

Revival, from page 1

[NL's student newspaper that Mr. Barnes also advises]. We have two editors who I know will bring this thing to life and we will produce one amazing legacy for this class of 2022."

Being seniors, Molly and Ava have goals to achieve, and lessons learned from being involved in Yearbook.

"I've learned that people are so much more creative than they realize," Ava said. "A lot of people get nervous when you ask them for an idea, but they have so much to offer once they get past the nerves and offer their thoughts."

"I hope to put together a book that will make everyone proud to be in it," Molly affirmed. "I want all the seniors to be happy with this being their last yearbook."



Positivity pumps through the process of making the book, as well as the final product. Ava reflects: "We form memories while putting it together, so I'll be able to look at pages and remember what silly thing inspired it. Whatever we put out is going to take me back. I hope it does the same for everyone who buys one."

Yearbooks are now on sale for \$55 — the lowest price of the year. Check out more on page 15.

Introducing...

BRUISER



With a new mascot comes a new identity. Nameless for decades, for the first time, we now introduce Bruiser, as chosen by the Northern Lehigh School District. The Slate received 71 different name submissions before the staff narrowed it down to the final 10: Woofgang, DeeYoGee, Brutus, Slater, Butcher, Barklee, Blue, Muttley, and T-Bone. After 1,086 votes, the winning name was unveiled on Homecoming Day. Thank you to all who offered suggestions. Long live the mighty Bruiser!

Free Barking With Molly Williams

Since the first day of this school year, the yearbook staff has been doing its best with creating the 2022 Reflections Yearbook. A lot of work goes into making an entire book, especially with it being so important to some people. With everyone working hard, I figured asking the team some questions about their experience thus far would be good to shine a light on them.

What reaction do you hope to get from the people who see the yearbook?



"I want people to look at the book and feel genuinely excited. We have a really cool theme and really talented people, so I hope everyone takes the time to appreciate the work put into it." - Ava Segur



"I hope when people see it, they see a yearbook that is filled with lots of exciting things. They will gaze at all the cool items that will make them want to keep picking it up. It won't be a yearbook that you look at once and then forget about it. This yearbook will be revolutionary, radiant, reviving, and so much more." - Daisy Richards



"I would like people to look at the yearbook and really enjoy it." - Faith Lorrah



"I wish to see some laughter in their eyes. Something that will be remembered is all I wish the yearbook to become, so the smallest bit of amazement from the yearbook would be amazing." - Nakayla Swanger



What do you look forward to the most with creating the yearbook?



"I'm excited to take pictures of people in the moment and not just posing. I want people who are looking at the yearbook to be immersed; they should feel the emotion of the people in the images." - Annasti Turissini



"I look forward to having access to all photos and creating art for the yearbook. I truly appreciate being able to have an input on the book and giving my all my ideas. Having this class available is a great opportunity for students in 2021 to create the perfect yearbook." - Jalyn Leshner



What about 'yearbook' is your favorite?



"My favorite thing about yearbook is that I'm involved in it." - Aiden Pessko



"We get to do (almost) everything from scratch. From the way the cover is designed to the whole theme of the yearbook. Everyone is so interactive and trying to create plans to make the book work the way we envision it. Also, I love how everyone gets their own little job and assignments to do within the yearbook so nobody gets to feel left out and everyone gets their own little part." - Elizabeth Panetta



"My favorite part about yearbook is how we all are putting our talents towards it. SO many people have great artistic talent that I've never seen before, and I think this is a good way for them to show off what they can do. All of the kids in this class get along and bring something to the table. I'm excited to show off how groovy this year's yearbook is going to be." - Cecilia Serfass

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Tennis wasteland is the perfect spot for Bulldog oasis

Our View

Now, more than ever, us Bulldogs need to come together. But... where? It has been an exciting return to a full-school population, but our student body could use a place to have respite that goes beyond the cafeteria's outdoor tables.

In the back area of the high school, next to the Slatington swamplands, sit some dilapidated and unloved tennis courts. Some rusted fences, overgrown weeds, a *Do Not Use* sign keeping away either Rick Grimes's crew or whatever would chase Will Smith in an apocalyptic movie...

The land no longer has game but could sure use some life.

Now, we know it would come at some cost, but imagine taking this forgotten property and transforming it into something useful — a gathering place to remember. A Northern Lehigh memorial pavilion would be the perfect spot for Bulldogs, past and present, young and old, to gather, hang out, relax, recharge and remember those who have left our community too early.

Picture a decent-sized wooden structure with picnic-style tables to let high school lunchers have a chance for dining al fresco. Perhaps donations could even allow tables to include engraved nameplates for those who can only rest with us in spirit. Mrs. Wasilkowski. Mrs.



Can we turn this lonely, dilapidated space into a multi-functional, student-centered haven with endless possibilities?

Marushak. Crystal Schaller. Olivia Rodriguez. Most recently, Chase Frable.

A little story or two can be told

while sitting within this "Doghouse of Fame". (Official names could be brainstormed.)

Consider the many other uses for

this idea as well. Escaping the classroom is sometimes the best way for education to actually occur, so why not use the space to break free of the walls, old desks, and same recycled air to work on this week's project, yesterday's make-up work, or even to just take a moment to chill? Think art showcases. Live music (a BEEF reunion concert?). Outdoor theater. Poetry readings. An occasional coffee-house. Science classes could plant trees to add more life to the area. The possibilities are endless. This could really be a hub of the NL student community.

Again, we understand that this would take serious cash and that other district items might hold priority but where there's a will there's a way to find the funds somehow. The hours of relaxation and education that would occur on the property (all supervised and during school hours, of course) are priceless.

Who's with us? How can we make this happen? We, current Bulldogs, along with all those who have passed before, would be so very grateful to this NL campus enhancement. 🐾

We have heard of eating *clean*, but c'mon...

BY KEONA DYER



'Are you sure, ma'am? Milk Duds? Old candy canes? Anything?'



Northern Lehigh High School
1 Bulldog Lane
Slatington, PA 18080
theslatenews@nlsd.org



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Owen Levan-Uhler
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Lily Groover
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Avery Diaz
COPY EDITOR

Alexis Traugher
SPORTS EDITOR

Mr. Christopher Barnes
MANAGING ADVISER

CORE STAFF WRITERS

Susan Gilsbach, Maddy Mack, Haven Moore, Abby Peartree, Giana Rosario, Ayden Scanlon, Hayley Thoder, Dev Vega, Molly Williams, Callum Zimmerman

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Diego Fenstermaker, Lauren Nichols, Cecilia Serfass, Delaney Szwast

MULTIMEDIA MASTER

Chase Jones

ARTIST

Keona Dyer

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Caitlin Kirk, Kiley Kennedy

BILLING MANAGER

Mrs. Kathy Nowlin

PRINTING PRODUCTION

Times News, Lehighton

Pro-birth movement spawned from dehumanization

Texas lawmakers out to abort *Roe v. Wade*

BY OWEN LEVAN-UHLER
EDITOR IN CHIEF

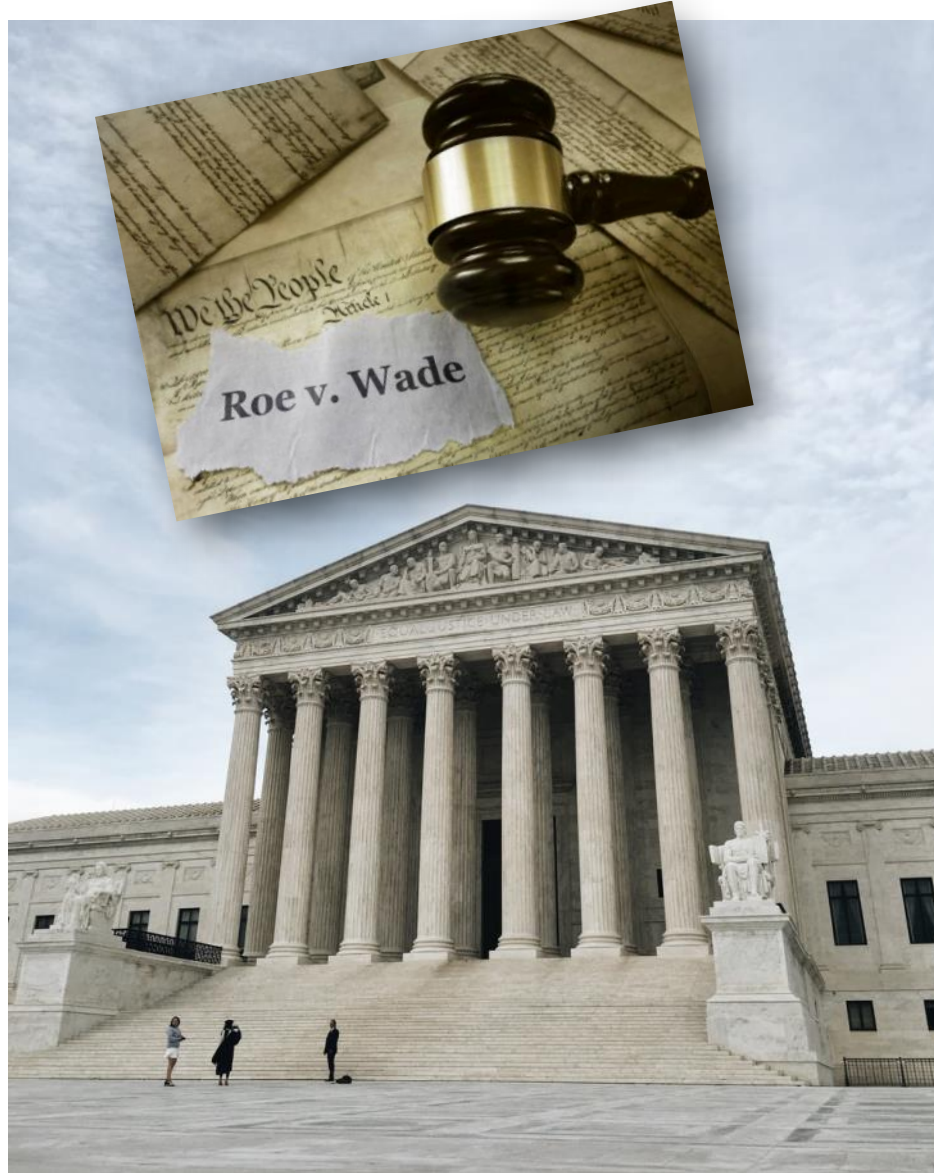
As someone of the male sex, my opinion on the matter of abortion may not be as important as the opinion of a mother. And while my opinions as a male should not matter as much, men with the wrong opinions are put into power to enact tyrannous laws against mothers and their bodies, so my opinion against them shouldn't be uncalled for. Besides, it will take more people working together to cease the pro-birth movement in the U.S.

First of all, why "pro-birth?" Many anti-abortionists do not actually care about the unborn child. They care about controlling mothers. A 15-year-old cannot be expected to take care of and provide for themselves as an adult. But in places like Texas, if they are pregnant, they can be expected to give birth to and raise another human. And besides, once those babies are born, many of the governments that force them to be born are rather indifferent about providing services to the mothers or their children.

The intense hatred of abortion is rather hypocritical (and ironic) in origin: the anti-abortion movement in the United States is sparked primarily from racism, which has led to many problems in America.

Ben Wattenberg, an advisor to several past U.S. Presidents, published "*The Birth Dearth*" in 1987. He explained that the U.S. had three options to prevent white people from losing their numerical majority. One: people could be paid to have babies, similar to some European countries.

But that would mean people of color (POC) would have to be paid in the same capacity as white people, which was the opposite of what racists wanted. Two: the number of legal immigrants accepted into the country could be increased, but many U.S. immigrants are POC. Again, a dead end. But the *third option*: the U.S. could ban abortions since over 60% of abortions back then were performed on white people.



This could be perceived as a satirical piece of literature, a la "*A Modest Proposal*," but Wattenberg's stance was as unfortunate as it is unironic. What is more unfortunate is that Wattenberg's influence in the racism/anti-abortion sphere is minute compared to religious groups, specifically Evangelical Christians.

The *Roe v. Wade* ruling occurred in 1973, and not only were many Evangelicals indifferent toward the legislation, but many actually applauded the decision: "individual health, family welfare, and social responsibility," were some of the justifications for an abortion in the years leading up to and following *Roe*.

Representatives of the Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis resolved for work toward "legislation that will allow

the possibility of abortion under such conditions as rape, incest, clear evidence of fetal deformity, and carefully ascertained evidence of the likelihood of damage to the emotional, mental, and physical health of the mother." So, if most Evangelicals were apathetic toward abortion, what changed?

Desegregation. The IRS prevented segregated schools and organizations from being able to receive tax exemption and "charity" status, infuriating Evangelicals. Bob Jones University, a Christian academy in South Carolina, discriminated against its non-white students, losing credibility with the IRS. No matter how much they tried, racist Evangelicals failed in their quest for validation through religious justification.

Evangelical organizations realized

they needed to broaden their agenda to other subjects in order to gain more traction. Abortion under religious right was merely used to disguise the true motives of groups like Evangelicals.

The pro-birth movement did not keep segregation in place (though the United States is still extremely racially-biased in most pieces of legislation), but became so strong that abortion became an even more important issue once segregation was no longer feasible. The movement is a horrifying display of ignorance, hatred, and dehumanization. And now, with Texas SB-8, not only are reproductive health services suddenly limited, but *Roe v. Wade* will be called into question and very possibly struck down.

It is sickening, and completely unconstitutional, to push an anti-abortion agenda *in general*, but especially on the basis of religious freedom. I have little respect for those who wish to strip someone from a *right* as imperative as an abortion because of their individual religion or opinions; what ever happened to separation of church and state? If you use religious freedom as your argument, the only basis you have stems from nothing more and nothing less of racism, on top of your already blatant hatred toward those preserving their health and livelihoods.

Not only is it ridiculous that 15 million people in Texas are being openly persecuted by the government designated to protect them, but appalling laws such as SB-8 do not prevent abortions from taking place. They simply stop *safe* abortions. They also result in more suicides. They result in more poverty, between getting rid of thousands of jobs to forcing an enormous financial responsibility on a citizen: a child.

If the only reason someone can get an abortion is for rape or incest, then you believe they have to be violated before deciding to do what they want with *their body*. If someone getting or performing or "aiding in" an abortion can potentially face a longer sentence than a man can for *raping someone and impregnating them*, then the anti-abortion movement is purely a war on bodily autonomy. Nothing but unrest, rage, and violence will come from such tyranny. 🌹

Rolling with the pandemic, again; CFES preps for success



Columnist

Abby Peartree

A new change in our school that could help students immensely is the College For Every Student Scholars program (also known as CFES Scholars).

The CFES scholars program is all

visits and speak to people in their future career. It is never too late to sign up! Please email Mrs. Hoffert at rhoffert@nlsd.org for more information on joining the program and how it can help you to achieve your future success.

In other Bulldog happenings, these past couple months have seen many things change due to COVID restrictions. In the beginning of the 2021-22 school year we started off with little restriction on what we were able to do (not the greatest choice in my opinion).

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has not slowed down and, in light of that, we must follow new restrictions. I believe the governor has made the right decision as cases keep going up and with-

students to do is to abide by the rules in order for the COVID-19 virus's spread to slow down. In my opinion I believe it would be best for everyone to just listen to the law so that eventually all of this will be over. I also think that not wearing masks outdoors is controversial as it doesn't stop spreading just because people are outside. The new rules, however, are a significant improvement.

I also asked two students with differing thoughts on the matter how they felt. Susan Gilsbach, sophomore, said, "I think that it's good, and that it's keeping everyone safe, but I think it needs to be enforced more strictly."

On the opposing side, sophomore Ayden Scanlon states, "I don't believe people should be forced to wear masks in public schools. I think it should be up to the parent to decide whether or not they want their child to wear a mask. Specifically, if the child in question would be more susceptible to the more negative effects of the virus."

It is clear that many people have differing opinions; however, at the end of the day everyone has to follow the rules. Overall a lot of changes appear to be happening this year and I, for one, am excited to see what will happen. 🌹



about preparing students for success in their future career, whether through college or otherwise. I believe it is a great program especially for people who want to explore different options or for those who may not yet know what to do after high school.

The program is presented by Brilliant Pathways and is organized by school counselor Mrs. Raquel Hoffert. Students will be given the option to go on college

out precautionary measures it can only get worse.

As of the second week of school we were all expected to wear masks and monitor be careful with how close we are to one another as per the Pennsylvania guidelines. When not wearing a mask the guidelines dictate that there is increased ventilation and distance between people.

The exception to this rule is any kind of outdoor activity. The best thing for

Letters to the Editor

To the editor,

It has been mentioned numerous times that the school would like more support at 'away' games. I may have a possible solution, which would be to offer bus transportation for students who might be interested in attending the games but lack a way to get there.

Northern Lehigh could offer one bus that would pick up and drop off students at the school. In order to claim a spot, students would have to "reserve" a seat so a head-count could be taken.

With each request the student would need a permission slip signed by their parent/guardian. If there would be a large number of requests received, we could have a wait list if perhaps someone that previously requested a spot could not attend.

Annasti Turissini
Sophomore

To the editor,

When you create a space for people to eat and socialize, it's sometimes difficult to do both. Longer lunch breaks would allow people to eat all the food on their trays and socialize longer, which benefits mental health.

A lengthy lunch would take away from school time, but making classes too short, such as in the middle school, could take valuable learning time away and cause students to become overwhelmed with school work. Two reasons to consider a lengthier lunch are the time students wait in line and the number of vegetables that go into the trash because students might eat their favorite food first, causing healthy food to turn into waste.

A more drawn-out lunch would benefit students, including me!
Nathan Knauss
Junior

In the galactic haystack, we (the needles) are limitless



Columnist

Dev Vega

Humans are strange. We have such a huge superiority complex just because we were the first to use rocks to kill other animals. We are "intelligent lifeforms" because we said we are. We are superior because we're prideful enough to say so.

But we're not intelligent, nor are we the superior lifeform. I mean, maybe on Earth. But we're totally ignorant to everything else out there.

Have you ever just sat down and thought about the universe for a bit? It's freaking mind-boggling. We're such a small needle in an industrial-sized haystack and we don't know how big the other needles are.

The observable universe is around 5.4×10^{23} miles in diameter. That's 5,400,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 miles!

Meanwhile, the Earth is only about 7,900 miles in diameter.

Whether you subscribe to the idea of an infinite universe or not, you cannot disagree when I say there is a lot of *space* in *outer space* and we only occupy a very, very small part of it.

Honestly, the fact that we can see things like atoms, the apparent smallest unit of matter means we pretty much have to be infinitely smaller than the biggest thing in existence. We might just be the equivalent of atoms inside of our bodies to the immense scale of the cosmos. Galaxies in the universe mirroring the very cells that make up your being.

In a pessimistic way of thinking, we are nothing compared to what could be, and what definitely *is*, out there. In an

optimistic way of thinking, there is so much we've yet to see for ourselves. We'll never reach infinity, meaning we'll never run out of new things to find if we take the next step toward space travel.

Personally, I prefer the negative view. I'm a fan of cosmic horror or the exploration of the insignificance of human existence when compared to the vast universe. Things like *Event Horizon*, *Uzumaki*, and (most famously) *The Mist* all focus on how little we can truly matter when it comes to the rest of all existence. Lovecraftian Horror is possibly the most popular kind of Cosmic Horror, and for good reason.

The Cthulhu mythos is so mind-bogglingly awesome and expansive. If you're unfamiliar with the story of Cthulhu and his elder god family, here's a scary rundown. The Outer Gods are these big multi-dimensional aliens from a far-off forgotten planet. Cthulhu, everyone's favorite, crash-landed on Earth some millennia ago and has been in an endless slumber under the ocean ever since. Somehow, though, this doesn't stop him from still communicating with humanity and creating manifestations of his brain in the real world. His and every other Outer God's bodies are *so cosmically beautiful that viewing them would cause a man to go mad*. And the big kicker?

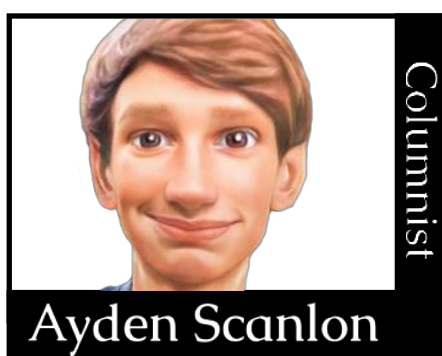
The entire universe, Outer Gods and all, is actually just a dream inside the head of another slumbering God named Azathoth who is about to wake up any minute now. And some theories suggest he isn't even the biggest bad guy out there. Consider that for a second. We could be a dream in some dude's head who isn't even that significant in his own existence.

Ignoring the spooky fish monsters, the universe is still scary. I didn't even touch on black holes and the multiple dead zones spread throughout space. Maybe I'll bring them up next time. But for now, I've gotta go. Cthulhu is beginning to stir, and I do *not* want to be here when he wakes up. 🐙



Photo courtesy of SplashStock

Tyrannical terrorism touches down in Afghanistan



Columnist

Ayden Scanlon

Evil is a strong word. The very word evokes quite a strong feeling within a person. There are very few people we would even label as evil. Throughout the history of the world we have experienced many evils. Men such as Adolf Hitler, Mussolini, and Joseph Stalin. It seems as if the number of lives taken is the most popular way to rank a person's villainy. And, I have yet to mention entire organizations of people, like ISIS or the KKK.

To most people, these organizations are undeniably vile. However, as many of you readers may be well aware of, an organization akin to these has been having a resurgence in Afghanistan over the past few months, and boy, is it sad to watch. The pictures that I have seen, the stories that I have read, and the sheer amount of cruelty that is being exhibited by these men can best be described as cruel, disturbing, and evil.

And the most surprising element of the whole scoop is that the United States' decisions only acted as a catalyst for these people to return to power.

For those among us who are still blissfully unaware of what is (and has been) transpiring in Afghanistan, the Taliban is an Islamic terrorist organization. The word "terrorist" is a scary word all on its own, and it is used to describe people who use fear and violence to push a political agenda. The Taliban fit the bill perfectly for that definition.

The Taliban enforce a set of rules under the Islamic faith known as Sharia law. These rules boil down to following

strict Islamic rules or face severe consequences. Mainly death. The lifestyle that the Taliban enforces under Sharia law may be seen as cruel and unusual, specifically to women and members of the LGBTQ+ community. Misogyny and homophobia are abundant within the terroristic views of the Taliban. The punishment for being gay under Taliban rules was the act of stoning the accused to death.

With the human rights violations blatantly being displayed, the United States stepped in and tried to stop the Taliban in 2001. For 20 years, the people of Afghanistan have lived free of Sharia law and have progressed as a society immensely. But, the price for that freedom came at a cost. During that time a bloody conflict between the United States and the Taliban was in full swing. That is, until we left.

That is right, the United States left the Afghan people to fight the war without them, though the current administration is privy to the word "withdrew." Should they have withdrawn, they would have taken the time to evacuate equipment, allies, and U.S. citizens. However, they did not do that. It is a no-brainer to remove deadly weapons and people from the conflict *first*, that way terrorists would not acquire our equipment or capture our people. But because of haste, the Taliban were able to take over U.S. resources and strengthen.

So why should we care? Well for one, Sharia law is already being enforced again after the Taliban takeover. Women have been shot in the streets for not being

without a male escort or for not wearing a burka. That alone should be enough for anyone to realize that this is absolutely without a doubt *wrong*. The loss of an innocent life for such a petty reason goes against the very foundation of our constitution, and goes back to as far as 15th century England.

own power against us.

The entire world sees us as a laughing stock right now, as well as many Americans, including myself. And while a well-executed withdrawal was a long time coming, a sloppy and irresponsible one was what occurred, leaving Afghanistan in shambles. The media, seemingly in-



Photo courtesy of SplashStock

Secondly, the United States left allies behind. Now, more innocent people are trapped in Afghanistan, and have been refused admission on airplanes. Worst of all is to come to any spies or allies who were found to be helping us. Those men and women are to be put to death.

It is tear-jerking to think of American weapons being used against the Afghan people. Not only that, but the Taliban can now study our weapons and look for flaws. They can find weak points where they can place bombs, or even use our

different to the destruction of life, only cares when it fits their narrative, but that is for another day.

I also encourage everyone to make their own opinion on the matter, to get the gears turning in one's mind and formulate an opinion that they would believe is right. It does not matter what someone's neighbor or their friend says, or how much they tell someone else that their opinion is the correct one. What matters is your own. 🐙

Are the Oscars ‘to be or not to be?’

BY GIANA ROSARIO
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The Oscars are a ceremony held every year since 1929. This is one of the most prestigious and well-known awards in the film industry. Created by Louis B. Mayer as a non-profit organization, the Oscars were first made with the intention of advancing the film industry.

It is no secret that the pandemic has slowed production on everything, in-

cluding movie productions. A lot of movies that were supposed to come out when the pandemic first started ended up being pushed until months, or even over a year later. COVID-19 has really made everything different, and society will likely never be the same because of it.

shot at an award. The website goes on to say, "...and many long-anticipated features have been pushed back indefinitely." These productions will not get a chance to show off the art that came from them.

This pandemic has unfortunately stopped a lot of important things from happening. Big events like the Oscars have changed and are less enjoyable. Nytimes.com says, "The trade-off — whether because of the smaller crowd, the social distancing, or the cavernous space — was what felt like a dead room, both acoustically and emotionally." The 2021 awards were not the same as other years. There could not be as many people due to the virus. Only nominees and a few other people were invited.

Since processes have slowed down, that means movie productions have too. People have grown impatient, and they want more content. Now they have to rush production, making a movie or TV series that is not what it could be if they had more time to make it. No one knows how long this pandemic will last. It is unknown how long it will take for things to get back to normal, but it will not be anytime soon.




Movie productions have been delayed or completely shut down from this pandemic. On union.fsu.edu, it says, "Several major and minor releases were forced to end their theatrical runs early as the COVID-19 pandemic grew worse earlier this year." It is not fair that these projects had to be stopped, though it had to happen. Because certain works have been either held back or cancelled completely, they would not have a fair

award. 🐾

Home Sweet Gnome



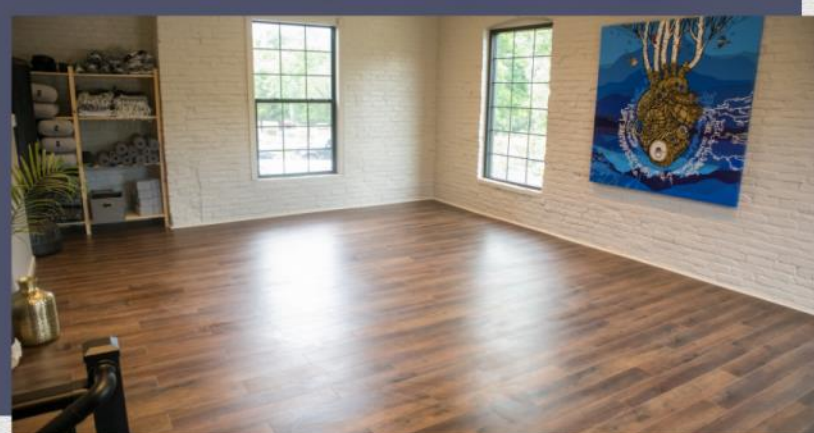
After a few dying trees were removed at the entrance to Becky's Drive-in this past spring, large tree stumps remained, which the owners felt were eye-sores when entering the theatre. "They reached out (as I do most of their painting and mural work) to see if there was a way to decorate them," said NL art teacher Mr. Stephen Shuey (above). "They asked if I would turn them into gnome homes. Utilizing the provided gnomes from the theatre, I created matching windows and doors that would compliment the roof styles. I constructed and painted them in my woodshop at home and attached them over the summer. Now the Becky's gnomes have a safe place to stay and a community of their own."




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SCAN ME

SPORTS



New leadership joins field hockey season

BY CECILIA SERFASS
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

If you've ever played any type of sport or have been apart of a team, you know what a coach is. This past season, the Northern Lehigh Field Hockey team has acquired a new head coach.

Coach Megan Leadbetter, former assistant coach to previous head coach Kim Seiler, and previous D1 goalie in college. Along with a new head coach, the team has also received two new assistant coaches and NL graduates, Dakota Schweitzer and Kassandra Beller.

Both girls had went to Northern Lehigh, so they know what it's like playing here at our school. Coach Leadbetter is certainly qualified for this position as she has past experience coaching for other schools and colleges.

She had this to say about our girls Varsity and JV teams, "This season is going to be different. We have the potential to go to the playoffs, and kick other schools out of the running." In past years, the Northern Lehigh Field Hockey team hasn't had the best record.

With losing the majority of their games, other schools looked at them as a

so to speak, "easy win." With the current 2021 season, things seemed to turn out much different. Coach Leadbetter says, "I have received text messages and phone calls from different coaches, and even refs congratulating me and the team on how we played." Although the team hasn't won as much as they would like to, the score doesn't always reflect the game. From previously losing to schools like Saucon Valley and Northwestern Lehigh, to holding them off even longer.

Seniors Olivia Horninger, Brooke Nonnemacher, Kendall Heiney, Brianna Kuhns, and Gabrielle Myster all agree

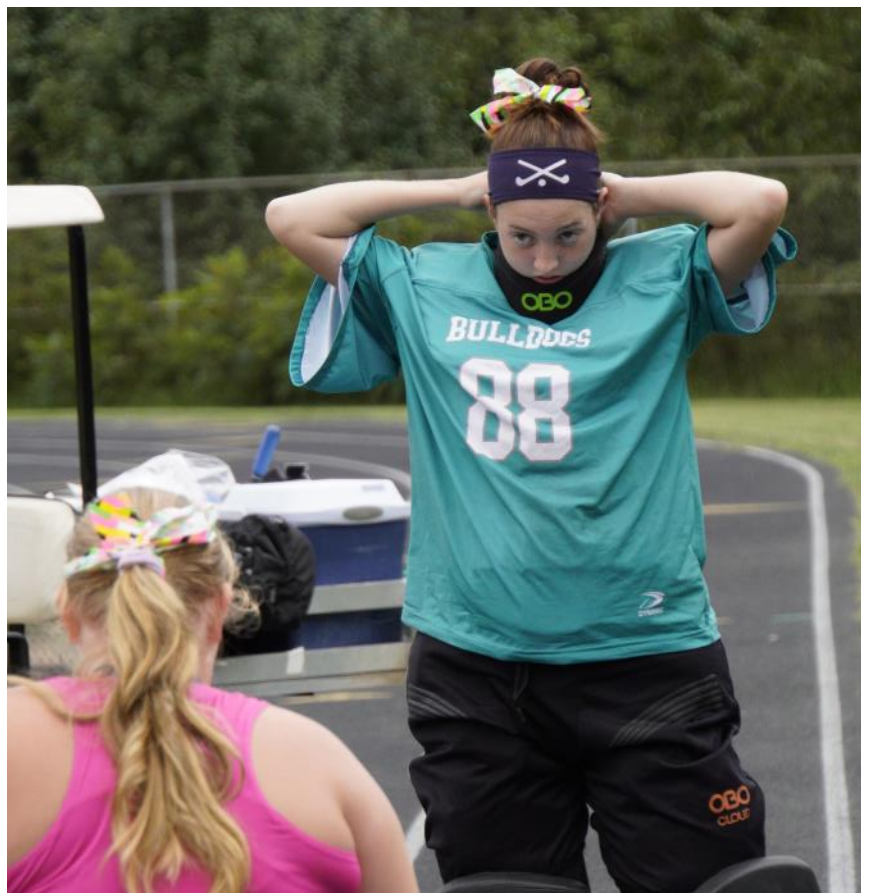
they want to leave their mark before they graduate, and make it so that the girls can continue to get better with years to come.

Going along with the talent from the seniors, also comes early talent to the Varsity team. Current freshman, Addison Cieri (and myself) have been Varsity starters since the season has begun. The current team is also much smaller than in past years. Without any subs to put in, the girls really have to work hard to come out with a win.

Moving forward, the whole team hopes for nothing but winning games. 🐾



Brooke Nonnemacher packin' heat.



Kendall Heiney crushes opponents' goals.



(Above) Sarah Hanzarik and (in mediate right) Brianna Eckhart - Brennan.



Coach Megan Leadbetter brought new vibes to this year's team.



Seniors! Olivia Horninger, Brianna Kuhns, Kendall Heiney, Gabby Myster, Brooke Nonnemacher. Photos courtesy of Lifetouch for The Slate and Reflections Yearbook

New soccer coach kicks through challenges



BY HAYLEY THODER
SPORTS WRITER

The new school year approached and brought many new people to the district along with it. One being Coach John Murray, the new boys soccer head coach. Before becoming the coach at Northern Lehigh, Coach Murray also played soccer but after aging out of it, he started his career as an assistant coach for his siblings team.

Following the path he was on, he continued coaching for a college club team as well as his son's team. After just ending his coaching season, Murray found out from a friend that NL was looking for a new head coach. Through many discussions and talks, a well thought out decision was made and he became the head coach for the boys soccer team.

While Murray was eager to begin this new coaching path, along with it came many challenges. "It's a very young team with a limited roster but one with a bright future. The players are realizing that each player is depending on the other player to be at each game and each practice and

that is the only way we can become successful," said Murray.

Not only has he had challenges with coaching such a young and new team but also with being a new coach at the high school level. This was new to him, since solely focused on club teams before this experience. Murray says "Coaching at the high school level has brought on a new set of challenges to me, since my experience has solely been with club soccer. But the players for this team have impressed me from day one and I have greatly enjoyed coaching them."

Murray was very thrilled to coach and teach this team. Along with being a young team, there aren't very many of them. Therefore there is not very much room for changes throughout the game or switches in and out. The team has learned how to get through many challenges and work together throughout the beginning of the season with the help of Coach John Murray.

Murray hopes that the boys of this season will take their experiences and lessons with them through every other season to come. 🐾



(Clockwise from top) Tyler Sollars; the boys ready for action; James Stock; and goalie Ethan Kunkle.

Young athletes chart a path to acceptance

BY ALEXIS TRAUGHER
SPORTS EDITOR

Many sports fans scream their lungs out as the quarterback throws the football for a perfect reception in the end zone, or when the puck flies past the goalie into the rounded net. However, this past summer those fans went silent. Marking future history books, NFL star, Carl Nassib, and NHL prospect, Luke Prokop came out as gay.

Carl Nassib is a 28-year-old Pennsylvania native playing for the Las Vegas Raiders. On June 21, 2021 Nassib made the announcement of his sexuality. "I just wanted to take a quick moment to say that I'm gay," Nassib said in an Instagram video. "I've been meaning to do this for a while now, but I finally feel comfortable enough to get it off my chest."

He later wrote how thankful he is for his inclusive and successful life: "I am also incredibly thankful for the NFL, my coaches, and fellow players for their support. I would not have been able to do this without them. From the jump I was greeted with the utmost respect and acceptance."

In the coming hours and days, Nassib witnessed extreme acceptance with only minor backlash. "The NFL family is proud of Carl for courageously sharing his truth today. Representation matters," said Roger Goodell, NFL commissioner.

Arizona Cardinals defensive end, JJ Watt, also stood alongside Nassib, "Good for you, Carl. Glad you feel comfortable enough to share and hopefully someday these types of announcements

will no longer be considered breaking news."

Nassib later made the announcement of his \$100,000 future donation to the Trevor Project, an American organization focusing on suicide prevention for LGBTQ+ youth. "I'm going to do my best to cultivate a culture that's accepting and compassionate," Nassib said.

Nassib is the first openly gay player to be signed to the regular season final roster, as well as play in a regular season game. Michael Sam, former St. Louis Rams player, became the first NFL Draft

prospect, made his announcement on Instagram: "Hi everyone. While this past year and a half has been crazy, it has also given me the chance to find my true self. I am no longer scared to hide who I am. Today I am proud to publicly tell everyone that I am gay."

Signing an NHL contract in December 2020, Prokop is the first NHL prospect to come out as gay. No other player, active or retired, has come out in the 104 years of NHL activity. Prokop has always wanted to achieve his goal of being an NHL player: "It has been quite

received acceptance from all over the hockey community. "The Nashville Predators organization is proud of Luke for the courage he is displaying in coming out today and we will support him unequivocally in the days, weeks, and years to come as he continues to develop as a prospect," said Sean Henry, President and CEO of the Predators organization. "A long-stated goal in our organization is equality for all, including [the] LGBTQ+ community," Henry continued.

Roman Josi, captain of the Nashville Predators, spoke out and told NHL.com that his team is "very proud of him for taking that step."

The NHL dedicated posts and interviews to show their acceptance of Prokop. "[The NHL] pledges to do everything possible to ensure that Luke's experience is a welcoming and affirmative one and continues to work to ensure that any current or future NHL player contemplating following his trailblazing footsteps knows our League is ready to provide support," said Gary Bettman, NHL commissioner.

A few months later, Sir Elton John, reached out to Prokop with his support. He thanked Prokop "for being brave and coming out and being able to help kids through what [he] went through and allowing them to have someone to look up to."

In a small time frame, two courageous athletes took the step of letting the world into their truth. Carl Nassib and Luke Prokop will be looked up to by young athletes and be remembered for years to come. 🐾



Could this be, should this be, a new trend in sports? These two athletes Carl Nassib (left) and Luke Prokop announce they are gay while still active in the game.

pick to come out as gay in 2014. However, Sam never was assigned to the final roster and only played in preseason. Roy Simmons, former Giant in the 1980s, came out as gay only after retiring.

In what seems like a whole over realm of sports, the NHL had gone through a very similar situation. In July, Luke Prokop, 19, a Nashville Predators' defensive

the journey to get to this point in my life, but I could not be happier with my decision to come out ... From a young age I have dreamed of being an NHL player, and I believe that living with my authentic self will allow me to bring my whole life to the rink and improve my chances of fulfilling my dreams."

In the following hours, Prokop re-

Photos courtesy of outsports.com

Leaders of the Bulldog Cheers



This year's squad: Skylar Schellenberg, Saige Schellenberg, Makenzie Peckham, Alicia Quattrocchi, Jackie Richards, Brooke Nonnemacher, Alexis Hollinger, Caden Whalen, Bianca Carrion, Zoe Edwards. (Pictured below) Seniors who will cheer for the last year of their high school career. Photo courtesy of Lifetouch for the Reflections Yearbook



Alexis Hollinger



Alicia Quattrocchi



Brooke Nonnemacher



Makenzie Peckham



Saige Schellenberg



Skylar Schellenberg

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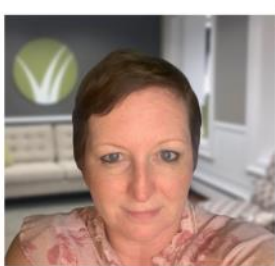
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2021-22 Boys Soccer Keeps Goals in Sight



Tyler Sollars, Bryce LoPinto, Colby Jackovitz, Ethan Kunkle, Logan Berfield, Coach John Murray, Seth Schaeffer, Michael Wilk, Matthew McCarty, James Stock, and Isaiah Simmons.



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Summer-storm tornado raised the roof across NLSD



Over the summer in late July, the National Weather Service confirmed Slatington was hit by a tornado in a strong storm that blew through the Valley. The tornado was rated an EF0 with peak winds up to 85 mph. An EF0 tornado is the lowest on the scale, with 5 being the highest. EF5 tornadoes have winds over 200 mph.

Damage to the NL district mostly occurred around the area of Bulldog Stadium, but no one was injured.

A roof was torn completely off the visiting team baseball dugout and the baseball bleachers were blown across the stadium parking lot, one of which struck a school bus and smashed a window. At least one field hockey goal and one soccer goal were badly damaged, probably beyond repair. Part of the metal roof was peeled back on one of maintenance buildings. There were numerous trees down on that part of campus as well.

Photos by Eric Heiney for The Slate



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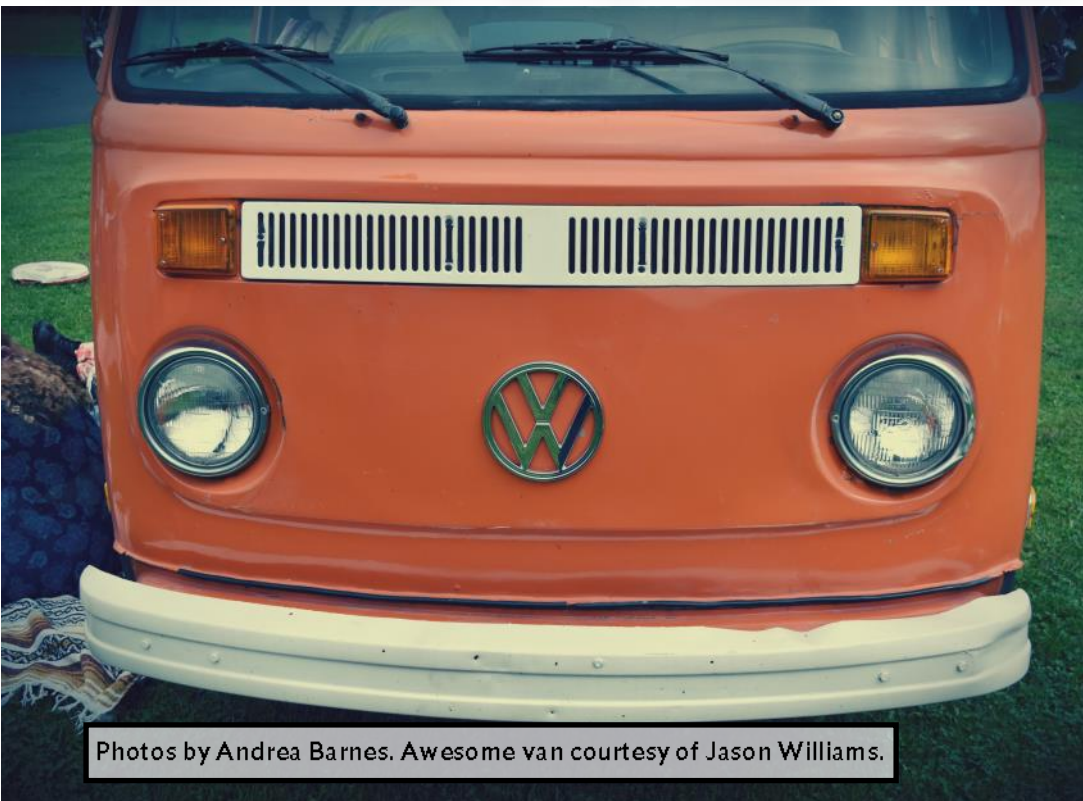
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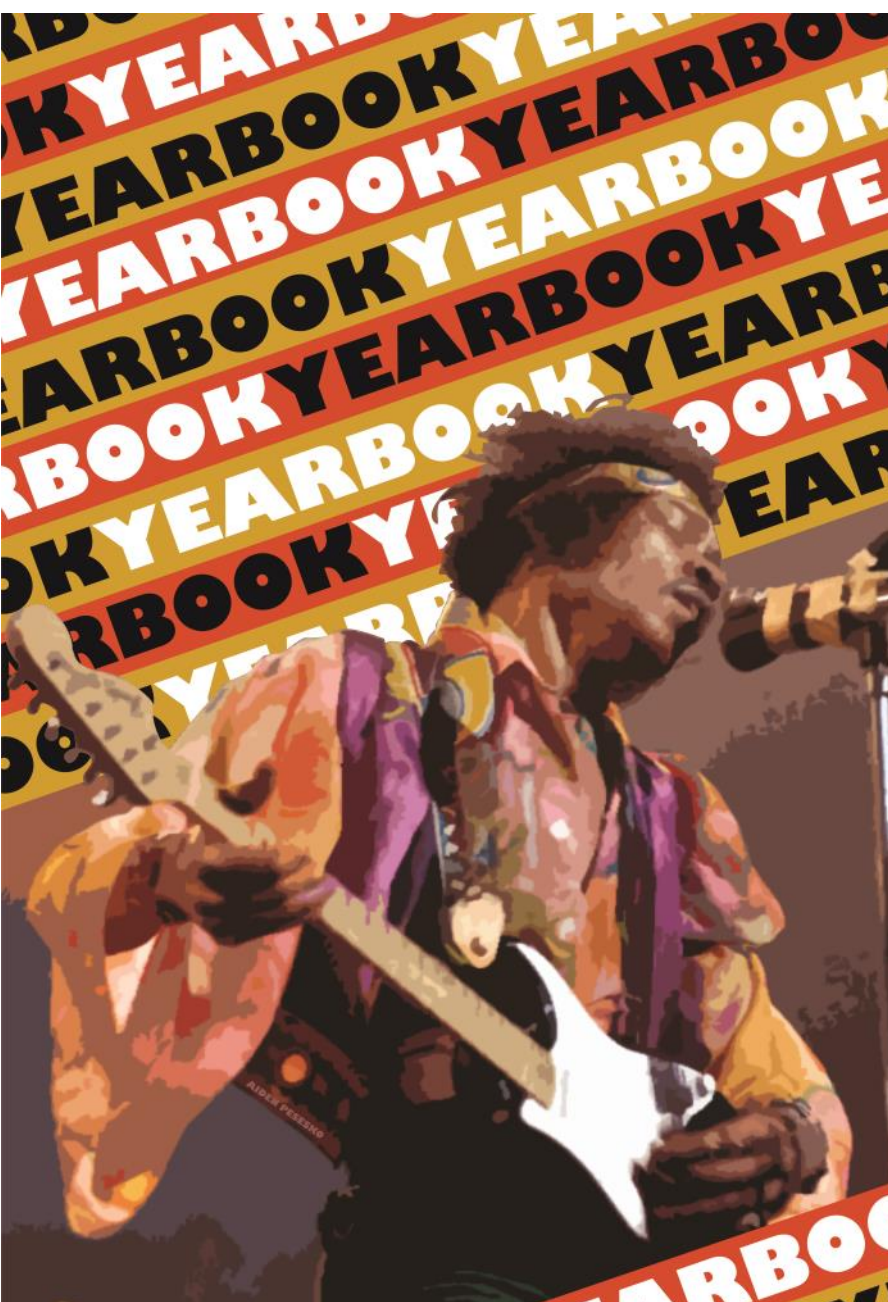
YEARBOOKS NOW ON SALE!



Photos by Andrea Barnes. Awesome van courtesy of Jason Williams.



Yearbook co-editors Molly Williams and Ava Segur.



These two posters, among others that hang throughout the school, along with the yearbook's cover, are designed by senior Aiden Pesesko.



SCAN ME

Metallica and AC/DC are not for the trendy

Posers stay on the surface with the hits... deeper tracks live with the faithful

BY CHASE JONES
RENAISSANCE RENEGADE

Just the other day whilst I was talking hard on some posers, specifically those who dress as if they are rockers, but know nothing of the genre and may even have a disdain for it, an unnamed authority figure overheard what I was saying.

Said person of authority felt the need to chime into the conversation and said to me, "Chase, being a poser is a completely acceptable way to go through life." I would like to believe however, that they are completely and utterly incorrect in having this ridiculous point of view.

To have heard someone of authority; someone of their status in the education system, say such a statement, with such confidence and sincerity, has totally validated so many of my views on modern society. So many thoughts about how art and individuality are purposefully being destroyed in order to gain control over the young population, practically proven by this one encounter.

Absurdity such as this is nearly the same as proclaiming that it is acceptable to walk through life as a shell of a human being; a drone being piloted by the system.

Being a poser is essentially admitting that you lack the substance and intellectual capability to understand and appreciate the work of the artists whose brand you are sporting.

This is what society is in search of, the dumbing down of the culture in order to build its brigade of drones, which will serve it in any manner it pleases. They will do it too, unaware of their behavior as their desire to not conform is still being



placated while they basically play dress up, wearing rock n' roll clothing that they are told makes them different. This, ladies and gentlemen, is conformity in its purest and most detrimental form...an entire generation mentally enslaved by the system; bred to do its bidding and put

those who will cause the absolute cultural downfall into power.

Then again, perhaps we are all posers and perhaps I am a self-righteous hypocrite who fancies himself a social critic. But, perhaps I am right and perhaps this poser culture reflects the group-think

mentality of today's society. Perhaps this culture is one of unknowing mockery and danger, as it has convinced so many that they are rockers, skaters, and all-around nonconformists.

When really they are doing nothing but conforming to the role the system provided for them, secretly and unknowingly working for it, not against it.

So, tell me, dear readers, what do you want to be? A poser who wears a band shirt because they think it will make them look like a rebel, or someone who is not afraid to enjoy what they love publicly and without remorse? Maybe you are unsure of what you are as of yet, but that is okay; think about it. Think about who you are and what you like.

Ask yourself, "Why do I like this?"...If you have no answer, perhaps you are posing, perhaps the system wants you to like it, and perhaps it is time for you to break free from the confines of your assigned social role. It is like escaping the Matrix, all it takes is one choice. The red pill, or the blue one?

The blue being a life of posing, ignorance, and conformity. The red being a life of individuality, nonconformity, and complex thinking, which will always come with its price. As Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "For nonconformity the world whips you with its displeasure."

He was a wise man to utter such words, for sometimes being an individual is less fun than following the herd blindly, completely ignorant to the faults of society and the dangers of the system. But, we will discuss that further another time. Until then, dear readers, continue to talk hard and conform little. 🐾

From Slatedale to spot 94. Closing out junior year in style



TRACTOR PARKING ONLY. On the last day of school in 2021, then-junior Robbie Schramel drove his grandfather's 1950s tractor all the way from Slatedale on the back roads. The journey caused one-lane backups, a lot of confusion, and much laughter. Can he top it this year?