

COVID-19 has forced humanity inside, creating a worldwide ghost town. Washington Township, pictured above when the shutdown began, is no exception. See more corona-coverage from Brittney Diehl, Lily Groover, Owen Levan-Uhler, Comic Guy Chase Jones, and others inside.
Photo by Ava Rosario for The Slate

Coronavirus vs. the Dawgs

Just when the school year was running smoothly, a new disease halts all life, posing a question mark for the present and future

BY BRITTNEY DIEHL
STAFF WRITER

Coronavirus hit us like a bullet train and spread like wildfire. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as of now, the pandemic has infected 1,364,061 and killed 82,246 in the United States alone. These numbers are staggering and, unfortunately, Pennsylvania has helped raise these tolls.

The Pa. Department of Health (DOH) has marked a total of 59,636 COVID-19 cases in our state. In Lehigh County, there are 3,378 cases and 133 deaths. However, these are not just statistics or numbers on paper. There are stories behind each and every mark that the government has been tallying. *We* are those numbers.

It has been months since the first case of coronavirus, and in this time, the world has learned that this illness is anything but the flu. Yet, the guidelines in which to prevent it are still the same.

Wash your hands, cover your mouth — all the techniques learned in childhood. However, even with these methods, many have caught the virus.

According to the DOH, symptoms of fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty

breathing, diarrhea, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, and new loss of taste can appear within two to 14 days after being exposed to coronavirus.

Additionally, if these symptoms are mild, the DOH urges citizens to stay at home, rest, drink plenty of fluids, and to take acetaminophen to lower fever. If these symptoms are severe, call a healthcare provider. If these symptoms are life-threatening or in case of an emergency, call 911.

Many brushed this virus off, saying it could and would not affect, or rather, *infect* them. However, this pandemic has made itself into Lehigh County. Northern Lehigh School District, including many others, have shut down due to Governor Wolf's orders.

No matter how much we did not want this virus to interfere with our daily lives, it has. As a result, our school, as well as the people who run it, have taken tremendous action fighting the effects that coronavirus has left behind. Superintendent Mr. Matthew Link being one of the many.

Dealing with the uncertainty of coronavirus has taken a huge toll on a handful of people. However, Mr. Link still has optimism in his everyday school routine.

See *Gone Viral*, page 3



Like something out of an apocalypse movie, parks all around — including this one in Slatedale — have been wrapped with caution tape to prevent children from contracting germs.

Photos by Ava Rosario for The Slate

THE SLATE
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NL closed down but meals, classes, and spirits stayed alive

Gone Viral, from page 2

"I try to find the positive in each day and then share that with others, whether it is with friends, coworkers, students, or my family. The positive things still need to be acknowledged and celebrated," Mr. Link said. "For me, it helps to deal with the uncertainty that still exists due to the pandemic."

The virus has shown everyone — even when staring in the face of a pandemic — that humanity is truly resilient in its efforts to be happy. Coronavirus has also made our superintendent realize that some seemingly impossible things are possible.

"It has made me realize that some of the things we thought we could not do yet or could never do are definitely possible. Our NLSD team, including students, has convinced me of that!" he said.

Coronavirus has changed many aspects of daily life including going to school. It has also made many question the future, such as when they return to school. Despite this unpredictability of the virus, school will definitely happen in the fall — there is just no set atmosphere. We could be online just as we are now, we could be in the building

again, or it could be a mixture of both.

We will have assignments and new topics to learn, to some students' dismay.

Even though there is a chance of going back to school in the fall, the environment that we once had will have changed exponentially. How the school district cleans and disinfects the buildings and buses will change; how students interact in classrooms and hallways will most likely alter as well. Basically, the couples attending NLSD will no longer be able to hold hands and hug in the hallways. Friends cannot "high-five" and "hand-shake" as they once did.

The pandemic has changed many things in the world but it has not changed people's financial standings. There are still those in need who are struggling to meet requirements for online schooling and everyday necessities. However, to minimize any struggles, NLSD has found ways to support the community in any way it can. One way is the Grab-N-Go meals.

The Northern Lehigh Food Services Director, Mrs. Sue Bahnick, took the lead on this service. "We can figure this out and we have people who are ready to help," she said. Any student living in the district area has been fed

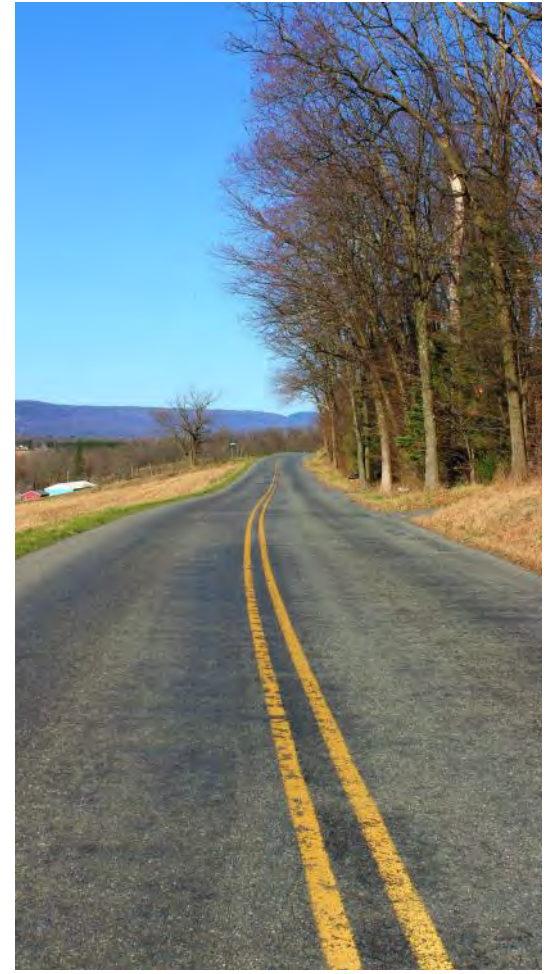
even if they do not attend school at NLSD. Also, the school is working with the Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to form some sort of plan to keep this program going throughout the summer.

Mr. Link leaves with one closing remark. "I know that I would not have wanted to figure out what we accomplished or to take on the work that still lies ahead with any other team, in any other school district, or in any other community. Our mantra through all of it has been 'We can figure this out.' So far, I think we are doing just that."

With all the chaos the coronavirus has brought the world, it seems that the human race can really strive through anything.

We do not know what is to come — there are no oracles or time machines to help us know or even understand our future. We do not know how long this will last or how long we will be able to endure the long-term effects and how to stop it. *Yet.*

That three-letter word holds a great deal of hope for humanity — it holds the future of the world as we know it. We just have to decide what we are going to do with that hope. 🐾



As the virus spread and the state shut down, traffic problems became non-existent.

Photo by Ava Rosario for The Slate



Grooves in the dirt lie dormant where the happy feet of children once swung back and forth. Parks have been closed for months due to the outbreak.

Photo by Ava Rosario for The Slate

The disease was the solution. Then I woke up.

*The rain came and cleaned the planet,
but just narrowly missed the real target*

BY MR. CHRISTOPHER BARNES
MANAGING ADVISER

I peered out the door with hesitation, trying to see any dust in the air or signs of life. A bird, a bee, even the sound of cicadas would be comforting. After all, we *were* given the go-ahead to step outside, breathe, play, even (gulp)... hug.

With the sun shining on a new day more metaphorically than it ever has, my neighbors, strangers, and I breathed in fresh air with a massively-detoxed earth revolving under our feet. Gone were the racists, murderers and rapists; polluters, thieves and pedophiles. The greedy, the selfish, the homophobic and vindictive. Liars, cheaters, bullies and thugs.

"Someday a real rain will come and wash this scum off the streets," Robert De Niro's dark, vengeful character Travis Bickle promises in the 1976 classic "Taxi Driver."

That real rain drenched every corner of this horrid planet and washed away all that scum — we finally, in 2020, were given the gift of a new world. Clean, friendly, safe and respected — what generations have envisioned for so long.

We came so close. On many of these restless nights of little sleep, I had a dream that this unbelievable COVID-19 pandemic was the biggest blessing to ever reign over us, which reminded me of that line from the movie.

In the dream, those who have lost the right to walk amongst us — the monsters who walk the crooked line of all things destructive — were the sole victims of the coronavirus.

It was the antidote that remedied the poison we have all battled since earth started its revolutions. There was a time — there *must* have been — where people simply got along. No insults, no bigotry, no stolen lunch money, no nuclear bombs, no need for peek-a-boo doorbells.

Children felt safe in school, in church, on the playground, at home. Parents parented. Dogs ran free. Fields were clean, water was clear, air was fresh and there was fear of little else than not having enough time in the day to do it all again until tomorrow.

Imagine had this destructive new disease that popped up from nowhere and infiltrated our lives washed away what we as a species never asked for. (Shut up, "OK Boomers," get off your make-believe high-horse. This is for you, too.)

What we have been witnessing for months now is a modern plague that has sucked away so many good people. Noble lives, gone.

My dream gave it a mission. Actual reason for those body bags and tractor-trailers to be filled with the remains of those who should never have walked earth in the first place.

Instead, they no longer withered away in prisons, hid in alleyways, waited in the shadows, or lurked around the corner. They were not executed, murdered or detained.

Just washed away. *The disease was the solution.*

But dreams are just dreams. We are all here together, peering out the door with hesitation and fearful curiosity of how much longer we can endure the unknown. One day the madness *will* die, but the virus just missed the mark. We came so close. 🍀



In the 1976 classic "Taxi Driver," Robert De Niro plays the increasingly-unhinged Travis Bickle whose famous line about a rain washing away the scum of New York City streets echoes what could have occurred in our current situation. This COVID-19 plague could have been the rain Bickle predicted, and it just missed its mission. A dream was so close to actual world peace.

Join NLHS marching band for another fantastic season

As seven-time Region 2 champions, Northern Lehigh Marching Band is planning for its 2020 production. We are proud of our extraordinary past with shows such as "Vesuvius," "Building the Dream," "Exceptional," "Zingara," "Lost at Winter's Edge," "Primal," "Dare to Soar," and "More than a Number." We are planning for another great production this fall, and if you want to be part of this varsity-level experience, you can join as a member of the color guard (flags), or as a "visual performer." A visual performer is part of the overall visual experience, but does not have to be a musician. For more information about membership in the Northern Lehigh Marching Band, contact Mr. Carroll via email at dcarroll@nlsd.org.

Game Night! Fall Sports! Softball!

Game Nights Play On! The Library Club will continue to host virtual Game Nights through the summer. Email Mrs. T for more info: ktiedeman@nlsd.org.

Fall Sports – Keep Hope Alive! Keep updated on the sign-ups through the NLSD athletics website.

Shout out to the Varsity Softball team - Always remember; keep your head up, move forward, never quit, get back up, stay positive, keep fighting, find the positives, be better, aim small, miss small, leave nothing behind, 110% and nothing less, YOU CAN HANG! Love, Coach Farber.



From all of this turmoil... peace?

Better preparation needed to progress through future prevention

BY OWEN LEVAN-UHLER
STAFF WRITER

Over the course of history, there have been events that shattered the world. Natural disasters. Wars. Plagues. A possible seismic shift in society is coming, all tragic and ironic thanks to one concoction of nature.

As I write this, COVID-19 has claimed around 74,581 lives in the U.S. and around 264,000 worldwide. Re-

citizens (nearly 33 million Americans filed for unemployment as of May 7, with even more who haven't applied for benefits). The economy is in a recession, with no end until the pandemic is over.

With the seemingly infinite stark state of the U.S. and the world, it is hard to see how any good could ever come out of such a devastating situation. Though, if society takes the right steps, the future repercussions of this virus

might be a seasonal event; at least, health officials are expecting a resurgence of the virus this fall.

For a few years, or even decades, most surfaces might have to be thoroughly cleaned *every day*. Social distancing will be a common practice for a time. For a while, large gatherings like movie theaters and sporting events might be very limited and controlled to lower the spread of the virus.

19. With this in mind, maybe this coronavirus will be the sign to make governments realize they need to be taking more active steps to prepare for future diseases.

It is obvious now that countries need to take stricter, more progressive preparations to contain and treat not just COVID-19, but other inevitable diseases as well. Governments and hospitals might need to generously stockpile PPE (personal protective equipment) and other equipment for long periods of time in order to be ready for health crises to appear.

Granted, hospitals were, and are, definitely understaffed to deal with the proportions of this outbreak, but the personnel who *were there* to fight the virus often did not have access to the amount of equipment and PPE that they needed.

Countries might also need to create new legislation to better prepare them for another scenario such as the one we witnessed this year, and maybe COVID-19 will help society realize that it should take more steps to prepare for the possibility of a similar situation.

Maybe citizens should make their own masks that they can store until necessary. Maybe the coronavirus will help some realize that they should share with and help others, instead of hoarding supplies that everyone needs. The pandemic could change the way people treat everything from sanitation and personal hygiene, to money management and saving to better prepare for another drastic event.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic is a horrible and tragic event, perhaps it will help governments put aside many feuds and partisanships to get more done for their people, in times of crisis and not.

Maybe the pandemic will help companies big and small treat their workers more respectfully, and give them the materials they need to safely work at any point in time. Maybe this will be the event that will reshape the world's priorities and bring the world together to help itself. Maybe not. Maybe nothing will change.

But something about that thought just doesn't seem right: some aspect of society *will* change for the better.

Out of the struggle surrounding the pandemic, the world will once again prevail. Happier days will emerge from the sadness and uncertainty. Out of the turmoil, peace, and a sense of togetherness. 🐾



searchers expect the U.S. toll to reach over 81,000 by July 2020.

The country is on lockdown. Schools are closed for at least the rest of the 2019-20 school year. Stay-at-home orders are issued in every state. Hospitals are dangerously short on supplies and overrun with patients (coronavirus and non-).

Thousands of businesses are shut down, some permanently, resulting in an ever-growing number of unemployed

could be less severe, and maybe even beneficial.

Since sanitization has become such a global priority in recent weeks, one big wonder is how society is going to treat the practice after the pandemic is under control and possibly behind us.

COVID-19 might become a more common aspect of society once the initial waves of the health crisis are over. Some scientists are predicting that the virus

The educational process will most certainly be different for the next few years, with social distancing and closures to limit the spread of the virus likely to reoccur.

Setting aside the fact that the next few years will look very different, maybe society will be changed permanently.

The U.S., along with many other countries, was far from prepared to deal with something as ferocious as COVID-

OPINIONS

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Editorial

Our journalistic integrity thrives in second year

We did it again. And we're still *just* getting started.

It may just be a school newspaper, but the same goes for other clubs. *It's just a high school musical. It's just varsity soccer. It's just debate club.* All true, but these are dedicated commitments that are forever meaningful to those involved.

Sadly, newspapers are a dying medium. Other than the big-city mainstays, people get their news in the palm of their hands — on the hour, and every minute between. So a printed publication has become a patient piece of art.

Student varieties are now the ideal stepping-stone to all-things journalism — online, broadcast, government coverage (eek), entertainment blogging. What we have tried to do with *The Slate*, which has been in publication since at least the 1940s as part of Slatington High School, is piece together interesting stories about various topics and opinions that showcase each writer's personality.




It has been a dedicated commitment and a true pleasure to share our love and excitement

of this still-thriving patient medium with the Northern Lehigh community.

Last year, as a staff writer, Ava Rosario said her goal was to be editor in chief of *The Slate*. Little did she know the job was hers the second that was said, but she certainly proved herself throughout this entire year. It's the kind of work-ethic necessary and appreciated to hold such a position throughout the two semesters.

So from our editor, what does this newspaper mean?

"The Slate is an opportunity to share our voice," she said. *"We can inform, persuade, and express all we want, and so many people will see that. Our words make a mark on the paper, whether someone is the editor in chief or a staff writer. What the staff gains from this goes beyond writing skills. We are part of the best team at Northern Lehigh, keeping the spirit of journalistic integrity alive."*

Well put, Ava. Thank you for everything. 

You deserve a good tomorrow

Do not be so quick to dismiss a fortune cookie's brilliance

BY AVA ROSARIO
EDITOR IN CHIEF

In 2018, I opened a fortune cookie, and for the first time in my many years of Chinese food endeavors, I was almost inspired. *"He who waits to do a great deal all at once will do nothing,"* it read.

I listened as the rest of my family scoffed at their cheesy predictions, but something told me to put that piece of plagiarized wisdom in my pocket, just in case.

When I found that fortune again, my English class was halfway through reading *"Into the Wild."* If you recall my self-discovery article from last

Sure, I seemed happier — I thought I was finally changing my life for good — but the consistent spirals and episodes that followed were proof that I was lying to myself. I could dye my hair whatever color I desired, the screaming never silenced.

I had thought about help before, but the first, even second, time around didn't go so well. I kept quiet for the years that followed, quietly suffering and letting time chip away at my sanity. My mind kept reverting to the past — I was happy then, so why not live in that fantasy? But you can never be who you *were*. You shouldn't, at least.

Then, in late 2019, I broke. I sobbed at the dinner table, begging for

force that pulls you right back down to earth. When you despise yourself as long as I did, looking in the mirror and telling yourself that you deserve tomorrow never comes easy.

There's a TED Talk presented by blogger Tim Urban on procrastination. It's a common plague that every person deals with at one point, but Urban put it in an utterly terrifying perspective. To end the presentation, he shows what he calls a "Life Calendar," with rows upon rows of boxes, each box representing one week of a 90-year life. That calendar is horrifyingly small, and I've already used a good percentage of it. Complaining, comparing, hating.


I am far from comfortable with the person I am today. I have so much to do and experience before I come close to knowing who I am. What I've learned from the past few months is that envy leads to nothing.

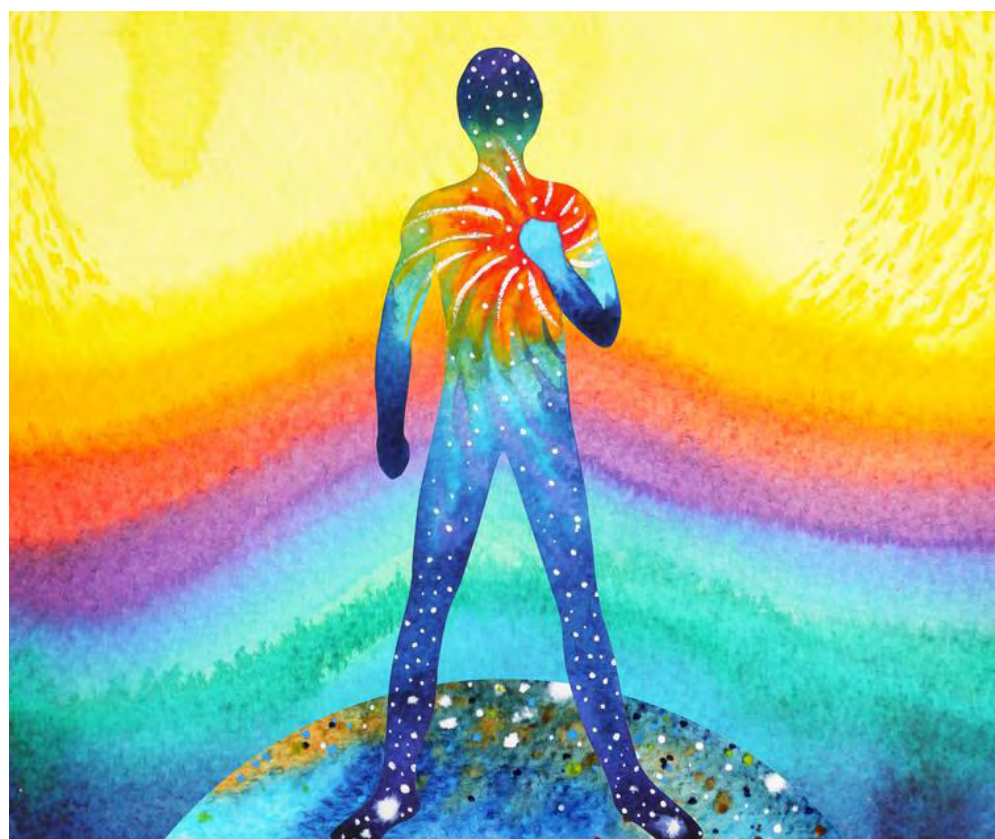
Happiness is an impossible goal as long as we compare every aspect of our lives to others'. I am stuck with my past and present, but letting go of resentment means that I get to determine my future.

I've been broken in seemingly millions of ways, but I realize now that I need that — we all do. I need to plummet to rock bottom so I can climb my way back up without ever looking down. I know pain, and now I can do everything I can to avoid reliving it.

There's no self-care formula that will lead to some tried-and-true solution. What I can merely suggest is that you recognize your potential. What you are capable of.

I'm done with loathing; the world and I don't need more of it. Be obsessed with yourself and never think that you're selfish because of it. Walk away from the people who take you for granted.

Look in the mirror and *know* that you deserve tomorrow. A good tomorrow. And whenever you get the chance, open that fortune cookie. It could just change your life. 



year, you'll know that I was immensely inspired by the story of material sacrifice and self-reflection. With these two forces of revelation combined, I couldn't help but feel like I had wasted so much time. I existed for 16 years and still had no clue who I was. It was time to find out.

I can confidently say that the impulse didn't get far.

I chopped off and bleached my hair, gave myself bangs, updated my wardrobe, and even tried meditating for a bit. Here's the thing: I was forcing an image that I just... wasn't.

something to soothe the agonizing panic. I couldn't be next to people anymore. I couldn't sit in a classroom. I couldn't wake up in the morning without terror ready to consume me. I just couldn't take another breakdown in the bathroom.

People think of therapy as this cure, and I did too, but now I understand it as more of a supplement. Nobody can grow *for* you. It takes discipline and self-acceptance, and sometimes that acceptance will require discipline. Some days I think I've finally found bliss, but self-esteem is a strong

OPINIONS

Twelve years of school struggles were worth it to find the real 'me'

Heading out the graduation gate with renewed pride toward the life I deserve

BY CODY GRABARITS
EZRA SPENCER SEAN ONYX
STAFF WRITER

I suppose to start, I have to take a breath, look around me and know that I'm going to be OK. A chapter of my life is ending, yes, but that doesn't mean it's the end of my story. I'm not alone and I know there's more for me in the world. After that, I have to screw my head back on straight. With school and this quarantine, I've gone a little stir-crazy.

High school is over for me now; I

first time I realized that my family wasn't a family at all.

How was I supposed to find myself when I didn't even have a family to confide in?

I struggled all the way up until high school, the summer of ninth grade. I met a group of friends that allowed me to see things from my own point of view and to be myself without having someone breathing down my neck 24/7. One of them was asexual, one of them was straight, and one of them was gay and transgender, so I didn't receive any



never have to go back. However, I think I'm going to miss being a senior and seeing all the teachers that have helped me get to where I am today. I'm going to miss seeing my friends and complaining about my classes with them. I'm even going to miss the lunchroom, even though it was always so loud. But I'll miss the messed-up beauty that was high school.

No one seems to really care about the other school years. I guess it's because you have so many to put in. But I really started caring about myself and finding out who I was back in seventh grade already.

That was when things first started to get bad for me, and I realized then that I had severe depression. (It took another couple years to get diagnosed with that and severe anxiety.) Middle school was rough because it was the

judgment when I first came out as genderfluid at the beginning of 10th grade. I didn't tell anyone else besides my best friend at the time because I didn't want to be viewed as a freak or anything. I had internalized homophobia and other phobias because my mother was so adamantly against the LGBT+ community.

Yet the next step was picking a new name because my deadname was something that I really didn't want. Not at all. It hurt my ears to hear it; it stung my heart, too.

That was such a long and difficult process. A process, I must say, I rushed too quickly and ended up picking a name that didn't really feel like who I was. But I went by that name for almost three years. And it was nice hearing my friends support

See Pride, page 10

Our Own Bubble Became Too Real

by Camryn Torres



"Everyone is basically in his or her own bubble, watching certain aspects of the world from afar. Will the bubble POP one day, reuniting us with our freedom?"

New Slate regime ready for 2020-21, virus or not



Breanna Hoppes will serve as editor in chief of next year's Slate.

Every year, *The Slate* needs strong leadership and a keen eye for helping to oversee each publication. Our new regime started in 2018 with Jamie Knerr and continued this year with Ava Rosario.

We are proud to announce next year's editor in chief will be Breanna Hoppes, who will direct our eight issues delivered to all students, faculty, and to businesses throughout the community.

"Writing has truly helped me find a stronger voice and being a part of this staff has been the best experience for me," Miss Hoppes said. "I'm beyond excited to take part in creating eight wonderful issues. I couldn't be happier about this."

Joining the editorial staff will be Brittney Diehl as associate editor, with the sports department being tackled by Kendall Heiney and Alexis Traugher.

The presses start up again in September, regardless of where students hold court.



#ClassOf2020

@ZachariHalkias

"I am Iron Man."

@TaylorReitz

"Senior year was going great, then corona came."

@BriannaSchuck

"It ain't about how hard you hit; it's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward." - *Rocky Balboa*

@ColeHankee

"Live life in today, not tomorrow, cause you never know what life could bring you at any time."

@NathanGreen

"Love many, trust few, do harm to none."

@SearraThomas

"I will never forget how a virus took away our senior year, but through the hardships that come my way, I will never let anything stop me from finding my future." #StayStrong

@DaleWanamaker

"Accept what is. Let go of what was. Have faith in what will be."

@ReaganPender

"I have nothing to prove to you." - Captain Marvel

@CalvinShelly

"I am not a chemistry teacher, but I am a scuba diving instructor" - Mr. Battista

@EzraGrabarits

"My goal was to be the gayest man at Northern Lehigh. I have two boyfriends; I win."

@AvaRosario

The Office, S4: E1 - 11:23

@HunterBrown

"THERE IS NO BETTER FEELING THAN STEPPING OUT ON THE FIELD AND STUNNING THEM ALL BY DOING WHAT NONE OF THEM THOUGHT YOU COULD."

@PrestonBauer

"I'm not superstitious, but I'm a little 'stitious." - Michael Scott.

@MadisonHoffman

"Keep your eyes on the stars and your feet on the ground." - Teddy Roosevelt, *Newsies*

@ZyepherBradley

"I'm a trans male; I have been the entire time. I have ears. I hope you have a good life."

@XavierMartinez

throat-clearing noises "It is time for everyone to know the truth that I am not straight. I am curved, yes, I am gay, and what about it? Heh...heh."



@JaggerBolton

"You wanna go to Chris's?"

@KevinMuniz

"I'm the favorite child. Thanks, grandma."

@MadisonPeters

"Never take anything in high school for granted because once it is all over, you'll never get it back."

@JasonCheck

"Sometimes by losing a battle you find a new way to win the war."

@AllisonHandwerk

Cardi B voice
"CORONAVIRUS, it's gettin' real."

@EmilyWotring

"Corona didn't stop me. #earlygrad"

@KoleRichards

"Hey seniors, we really outdid senior skip day this year!" -Badanger

@SiannaVelez

"It's corona time."

@JosephSkepton

"Paris is a state of mind."

@Dylankuntz

"The only easy day was yesterday. Aim small, miss small." - Navy SEAL philosophy

@AliLorah

"Everything happens for a reason."

@BenjaminLehman

"Santa Claus isn't the only one who can go down the chimney!"

@RobertKerr

"Haters will say what they want, but their hate will never stop you from chasing your dreams." -Justin Bieber

@RickyLaBarre

"To live is to risk it all. Otherwise, you're just an inert chunk of randomly-assembled molecules drifting wherever the universe blows you."

@PaigeHude

"Wait, what?"

@EvanFry

"i am god."



Everyone is a work-in-progress — I'm finally on the right path

Pride, from page 7

me in such a way.

It was 11th grade when I finally came out to the school. I couldn't take hearing my deadname anymore when it wasn't who I was. I received judgment, being called fake, but I also received support. My teachers were very understanding, and although many didn't grasp the fact that I wanted to be called he/him, they stuck by the new name, and I was grateful. Even with the slip-ups, I was still grateful to hear my new name rather than my deadname.

However, 11th grade was also when my life fell apart.

My mother found out that I was trans and gay. She yelled at me, bucked the idea so hard, and I wound up in a mental hospital because of it. I had no support from my family, and the friends that I once had slowly faded, and I felt like I was all alone. Yet while I was in the hospital, I met a man named Eugene who helped me very much.

He told me that I can't change anybody's view except my own and that I was going to have to live with how my mother viewed me. He taught me how to be more confident in myself. When I left the hospital, I wrote him a letter and promised him that I would not end up back in a hospital like that. To this day, I have not gone back. I hope I see him later

in life.

Finally, 12th grade rolled around, and I was all alone once more. My older friends had graduated, and I didn't see my friends as much anymore. All I had was my best friend, but she lived out in Missouri, and there wasn't much she could do. I went through my classes silently, hoping the year would go by fast. I was ready for high school to be over. Then I met my now boyfriend, but friend back then, Gabriel.

He's been there for me this whole time, supporting me and my transitioning and the hell that I have to go through for being LGBT+. He was also OK with it when I came out as polyamorous after I explained to him that it meant I could date multiple people at once. I was so lucky.

Then I met my now partner, then friend, Kase. They were a good friend until I started catching feelings.

However, with Gabriel's consent, I got to ask them out, and now I'm in a happy polyamorous relationship. I can't say it's perfect, but it's imperfectly perfect for me, and that's all that matters. Then COVID-19 struck and ruined my plans all over again. But I'm working with that

to the best of my ability. I'm not in the best spot of my life right now, but I'm working on getting better. With the support of my partners, best friend, and therapist, I'm slowly making my way to get to the life that I want.


time for me to find myself. I went through many friends, a lot of hatred and denial, two names, and changed my entire gender.

I went to elementary school as my deadname and left high school as Ezra



I think, in a way, high school is all about finding yourself. The stuff that you learn, yeah, you'll remember some of it for the rest of your life, but it's more about the impact the teachers and students had on you and what you do to find yourself in that time. It took a long

Spencer Sean Onyx, and I am proud of who I am today. So who knows where I'll go next, what my plans for college are, and where I'll work. But I know, in the end, I'm heading toward the life that I deserve. 🌈



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The blossoming of a new beginning

My Nana left behind many lives in need of sunshine, water, and her love

BY BREANNA HOPPES
STAFF WRITER

Life breathes, blossoms, and passes on like a garden. Constant growth, a need for rain, and lots of sunshine. Transpiration of a new life often occurs when least expected, yet the need for adaptation remains.

Long periods of sunshine, then a torrential downpour occurs. Our days are filled with unavoidable things and events, and as devastating as loss may be, they are necessary for growth.

Until the beginning of May, the world had given me nearly 17 years with my beautiful Nana. For years, every day the plants she had owned were consistently watered. They had been given the water necessary for growth, and the sunshine needed to flourish. As incomprehensible as a sudden loss may be, it is a time to grow.

As far as coping may go during this long-lasting storm, my Nana is now the watering can for all of the loved ones left behind. While bodies may depart this Earth, the love and goodness in their hearts never leave. From a new angle, lost loved ones view our miraculous growth with a soft smile upon their face.

My Nana and I always spent time together on a golf cart circulating our neighborhood. On multiple occasions, she would make hard-boiled eggs for the family. They were the best eggs, until they were on the ceiling. Nana would be thrilled to go on the golf cart, forgetting all about her eggs on the stove. When we would return home, Pap would say they exploded from the pressure.

Also, her love for yard sales was like no other. Just ask Pap how much gas he needed to take her to them, all out of love. She loved the idea of getting expensive things at low prices and loved the profit when she sold things.

One summer day when my family had a yard sale, Nana was sitting on a small cooler with wheels. When leaning back, the wheels began rolling backward and there she went, rolling down the driveway. Instead of simply standing up, she shouted for help. We all had a great laugh even though she did not, and sure enough, she finally just stood up.

The cleanliness of my Nana and Pap's house was unreal. Tidy and always neat is how it needed to be.

Many mornings when I was young, I'd walk down to their home and there she'd be, mopping her floor for the 16th time that day so far. Pap would have the stereo playing bluegrass music as always, and Nana and I would dance and spin each other around in the basement. There's no rule saying concrete basement floors cannot be turned into a dance floor, is there?

My Nana was the most caring person there is. Her love for my Pap and family



Linda Hoppes was 'Nana' to many, and especially Bree Hoppes (top) who will always remember the woman who enjoyed the little things — honking trucks and exploding eggs, and always, her family.

was indescribable. Growing up and living next door to a woman with endless love for her life and those in it was a joy itself. Being able to call this woman "Nana" was a gift like no other. Years of big pushes on the rope swing, running through the sprinkler and drinking Starbucks Frappuccino on a golf cart may have come to an end, but the love I have for her is eternal.

Adapting to abrupt change is no simple task. Growing where you're planted after loss is a painful process.

As I take in views without my Nana's presence, the pain remains, yet so does the love. Our loved ones up above are all around us in spirit. The absence of someone as full of love as my Nana will never take away the presence of her memory.

While loss leaves loved ones left behind broken, time and fond memories serve as a reminder to enjoy our time on Earth. Eventually, the pain in the memories will be replenished with appreciation that we walked the planet the same time as someone so full of love.

Growing up, my Nana's line to me was always, "When your time is up, it's up. Enjoy it while you can." I sat with her often at sunset on that golf cart, close to the turnpike watching tractor trailers go by and motioning for them to honk. Conversations replay throughout each and every day, her constant reminders to enjoy life while you can, since it can abruptly end.

Things as small as a wave from the front porch to come in as I get off the bus are the things that will be missed the most. It is the little things that are the foundation of our lives. Savoring moments while loved ones are here is essential and provides a sense of comfort during times of grief.

Is there truly ever an end to life? People this special continue to live on in our lives even after their passing. As I look at the flowers and trees my Nana had planted and constantly watered to see grow, I think of myself and my family as her flowers now. As her ray of light shines upon us, we will continue to blossom, as there's no better way to grow than with a love so strong.

Just 48 years ago, two people married, and had three children, who in all, had six children. Without the love of two people, many beautiful journeys of life would never have come about.

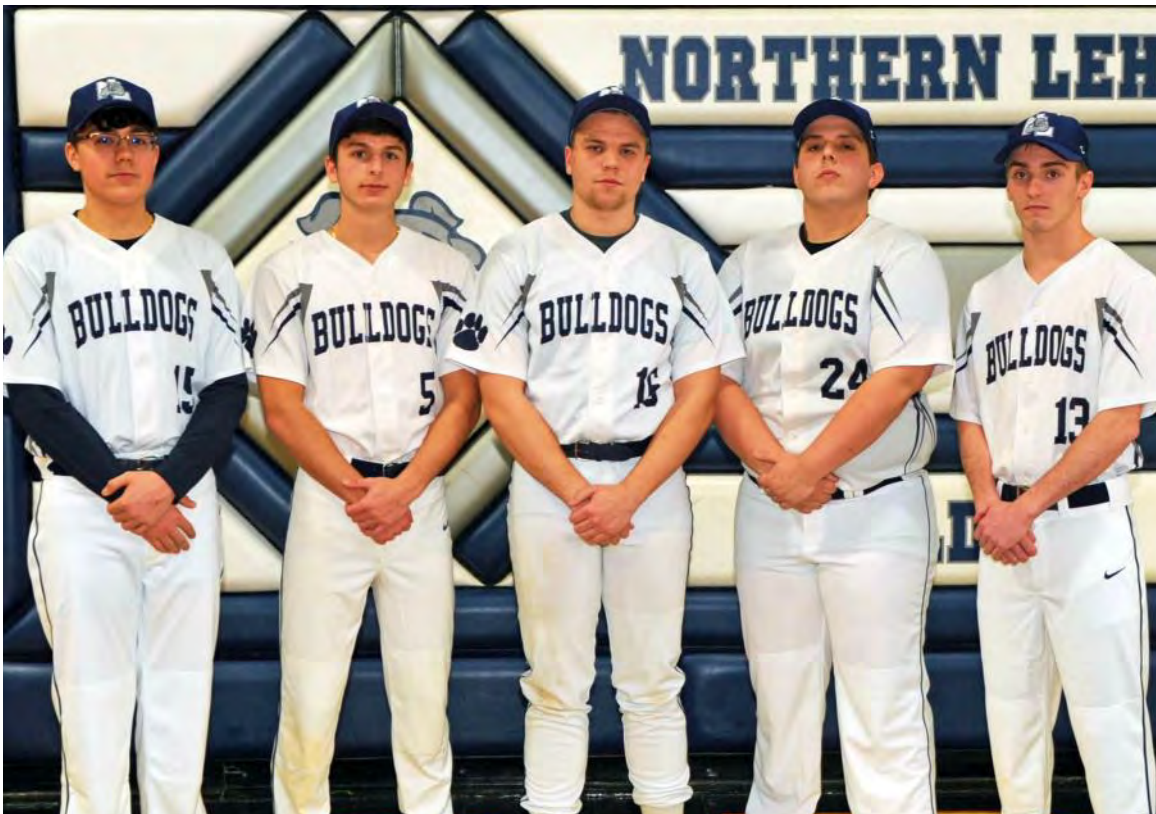
Each and every person on this Earth has a set plan when he or she is born. Our gifts of life happened all because two people fell in love. This love remains and will continue to live through me each and every day.

So as a life ends, a new life elsewhere blossoms. My Nana's life was a garden. Constant sunshine, a little rain, and a whole lot of love. 🌻

SPORTS



FAREWELL TO OUR SENIORS



Baseball Seniors — Nate Green, A.J. Berger, Tyler Long, Jason Check, Preston Bauer.



Track and Field Seniors — Carter Smith, Zach Moyer.



Softball Seniors — Shyanna Williams, Brianna Schuck, Alicia Horn, Lauren Hoffman, Allison Handwerk, Paige Hude, Madison Peters.



Track and Field Seniors — Reagan Pender and Emily Hewitt.

BASEBALL



"I was very disappointed when the sports season was cancelled. The athletes were working hard at practice and they were really looking forward to the season. I am especially heartbroken for the seniors whose athletic careers have come to an end. I am remaining positive that all sports will continue soon."

— Coach Greg King

"What happened to the team of 2020 and especially the seniors is an event that will forever leave an impact on us. It makes you appreciate the time you are given and drives home the emphasis of giving it your all because nothing is ever guaranteed. Moving forward, I will make sure that my future teams play with the 2020 seniors in their hearts and leave nothing behind."

— Coach Katie Farber



SOFTBALL

BOYS T&F



"Reagan Pender and Zach Moyer have had tremendous high school careers. Each is a school record holder, has earned individual Colonial League and District Championship medals, along with PIAA State Championships medals. Reagan is known to be one of the top female distance runners in the area. The same is true for Zach in the jumping events. We are thrilled to say that both Reagan and Zach will be competing at the collegiate level next year. Although new to the track & field program, we were very excited to see Carter Smith and Emily Hewitt on the team this year. Both showed a great work ethic the first few weeks of the season and looked to be impact members of the team. Whether it was for the past four years, or just the first few weeks of this season, we would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the seniors for their dedication and leadership."

— Coach Mike Lehtonen

"It is super disappointing not having our T&F season. The throwers were a smaller group, however had a lot of potential. I was excited to work with first-year senior Carter Smith in the throws. Hailey Evans was looking to improve on her 2nd place finish at districts last year in shot-put and Evan Zambo was looking to improve his top 10 finish in javelin from last year."

— Coach Derek Long

"I feel bad that all our athletes who have missed out on an opportunity to enjoy the competitive season and the lifelong memories that could have resulted, but I especially feel for our senior athletes. In particular Reagan and Zach because they both medaled at the state meet last year and won't get to compete there again this year. Fortunately, they will both get the opportunity to make new memories and compete at the collegiate ranks."

— Coach Dave Oertner



GIRLS T&F

An 'underground' blast from the past

Time capsules reconnect seniors with their seventh-grade selves

BY BRITTNEY DIEHL
STAFF WRITER

"I know for certain that when they open their envelopes, all of their middle school memories come flooding back to them. For one last moment, they are all back in seventh grade together," said Mr. Jason Graver, seventh-grade Old World Cultures teacher.

Everyone's lives are made up of pieces we collect as we journey through our days. Memories, thoughts, beliefs, words, artifacts, friends, family ideas, crushes — they make us who we are.

Mr. Graver gives every seventh-grader at Northern Lehigh Middle School the chance to preserve and show our older version the pieces that we held dear to our hearts so long ago.

The things that made us laugh until we couldn't breathe; the things that made us cry until we thought we couldn't take the pain; and the things that made us truly happy — at least the things we *thought* made us happy.

Time capsules allow past generations to leave their marks in the future. They give society a way to see into past lives as well as past mistakes. According to Evan Andrews at the History Channel, the oldest planned time capsule dates back to 1876 when New York Magazine publisher Anna Deihm decided to assemble a time capsule safe at the U.S. Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. Despite the universal stance time capsules take, time capsules hold a place in the Northern Lehigh School District's heart.

Unless you did not get to experience seventh grade at NLMS, many know the joy of taking Old World Cultures. From Greek mythology to the study of the Romans,

Mr. Graver was able to make the past come alive for his students — the time capsules being one of his techniques. We studied the lives of people who lived thousands of years ago but Mr. Graver *made* it a personal activity for his students. He made us believe we were making history.

He gave the 12- and 13-year-olds in his class a chance to remember their pasts, and a way to catch up before they graduate. It provides an opportunity for a connection or a reconnection — the basis behind Mr. Graver's work. But it also gives everyone a way to let go and say goodbye to their past selves. It gives them a chance to move forward from their lives as a bulldog at NLSD.

Coronavirus, despite many people's wishes, has become a part of our society and with everyone's hope, our past. However, time stops for no man or pandemic. Currently, Mr. Graver is working with Mr. Hauser to get the time capsules of the Class of 2020 back to seniors. As of now, they don't know how and when it will happen; all we know is that it *will* happen.

Mr. Graver started this tradition in 1998 and one student's story solidified his decision to keep the tradition going. One of his seniors got their time capsule back and, once she opened it, she began to hysterically cry.

After calming down, she showed Mr. Graver a pair of ballet slippers — an item that was extremely important to her and held many memories. She had forgotten that she had put them in her time capsule and thought they were gone forever. In that moment, Mr. Graver saw the significance in what he was doing not only to help his students learn about the past but also as a way to help them make their own history.

Everyone's lives are made up of pieces. However, it is the pieces or people we lose — just as that girl's ballet slippers — that show us what we truly treasure in life. Personally, I've experienced a loss of a person I loved; everyone most likely has.

Although they may not have passed on, it hurts all the same. Therefore, the past not only gives us insight into what we once had but also a way to see our mistakes, to learn from them. It shows us the past's finality and instilled in us the fact that nothing will change. Despite this, it also gives us something else. It makes us want — possibly even plead for — a second chance. But we don't always get what we want. 🐾



(Top) From last year's time capsule 'unearthing,' friendships stand strong from seventh grade to senior year. Lauren Weiss and Calista Smoyer are still close. (Above) Edge Kroll was down \$50 in the middle grades but he broke even when opening his time capsule and reconnecting with his old friend, Ulysses.

Photos provided by Mr. Graver

Road signs to career will clear up in time

BY MADISON HOFFMAN
STAFF WRITER

Astronaut? Teacher? Fairy Princess? Movie Star? What did you want to be when you grew up? It is probably a lot different than what you're thinking about doing now. Or maybe you have no clue.

Maybe the thing you want to do for the rest of your life hasn't come yet at the age of 15 or 16. Maybe you know definitively you want to do something in the science field, you just don't know which science. Maybe you know what you want but don't know what to study or what job that would even entail. Life is full of uncertainties and a lot of the times you are asked to know them way too early.

You are asked in kindergarten what you want to be; you will say anything that sounds cool and the adults will smile and nod because truly it does not matter at that time. My answers were teacher, scientist, inventor, teacher again, and baker. That was all in just elementary school. We changed our mind every week about what we wanted to be because we were still growing into who we are. Who says we ever stopped growing?

Freshman year I had to write a paper on my future career and picked a storyboard artist, a job in the film industry. And I stuck with that for about three months. Mrs. Chruscial has seen me change my mind about my career and



switch between two things for half of my high school career.

My brother was lucky enough to know what he wanted to do by sophomore year. I'm lucky too that I found the right career for me at the start of my senior year. But who knows, I could change the direction I'm going in or even change my entire career path. The great thing about all of this is that nothing is set in stone.

senior year and I just couldn't take the stress.

I like to be challenged, but that made me look at everything from a new perspective, and I went back to film. I built up my portfolio for college and explored what I liked the most about film in Vid Pro II.

You can always rework and refine things as you go along this confusing journey as well. Take what you like to do, hobbies and after-school activities, and explore that. Maybe you just want to make the most money possible or just be the happiest you can possibly be and either is OK. For some reason, in first grade, I was very certain I was going to do something in science. I guess I just loved the classes that I had up to that point. And now I hate science, no offense to any of our science teachers, it's just not my subject.

It always feels like there is this huge pressure put on you to choose this very big life decision but you could change it at any time, literally anytime. Just talk to Ms. Lorson. Going back to school may seem like a huge hassle but when you think about it in terms of your happiness, it really shouldn't be.

I know it may seem overwhelming now but just take a step back and breathe. You don't have to know right now and that's OK. Trust your gut and follow your heart. 🐾

Bulldog Barista



Before the world spun out of control, Mrs. Farber's classroom volunteered to bring a coffee cart (tea and cocoa, also) to NLHS halls. Juan Romero was the bulldog barista on this day, pouring the energy juice for Mrs. Kunkel.

Photo by Ava Rosario for The Slate

Listening to science can help us return to some type of normal

BY LILY GROOVER
STAFF WRITER

We all take things for granted — it's human nature. We never expect the constant aspects of our life to suddenly disappear because they've been there for so long. Yet coronavirus did just that.

It took away the everyday places and people we surround ourselves with. We can no longer go out with our loved ones. We can no longer walk into a store without our livelihoods being at stake. The pandemic may not have killed us just yet, but it definitely changed us.



Simple privileges like going to the grocery store have turned into a chore. Remembering to bring a mask, not to itch your nose, and only touching what is absolutely necessary is hard to instill into our brains after having freedom for so long. Following the arrows at the front of each aisle is near impossible.

Having to wait in a very long and spaced-apart line only to buy your food for the week seems ridiculous compared to typical life.

Usually, walking past strangers in a friendly environment, people tend to smile or nod their heads in regards to seeing you. Now, due to the pandemic, everyone seems to be in survival mode.

People treat everyone as though they are diseased even if they have never met you before. Everyone lives their day in a paranoid fashion. It becomes hard to touch the handle of a door and not instantly feel dirty.

With our faces covered and the six-foot

distance, it is hard to be a polite human being, and realize that the entire world is not against you. How, as a citizen, are we going to go back to seeing and greeting people on a regular basis if we are scared to make eye contact with someone?

When was that last time you sat down at a restaurant? When was the last time you went to get your hair cut? How long has it been since you have seen your extended family? Is it right to assume most of us have been lazing around?

Even though not having responsibility during the school year is all we would have hoped for, it now is all we want back. Before the pandemic was 'serious,' every other person was ready for school to be over. They were making plans with friends and dissing the teachers who were already preparing for the worst. Those same people are now posting on their social media about how much they miss their friends and having freedom. No one expected their simple normalities to be taken away.

In society overall, the population seems to be getting less and less motivated to reopen. The false hope that comes with giving a date for the economy to open gives a lot of people an energy boost to get through the pandemic.

With that date getting pushed back, the spirit we all have to come back more reliable as a population gets weaker and weaker.

Our vocabulary has evolved into saying "social distancing," "coronavirus," and "COVID" every other sentence. All major news channels have only covered anything to do with the virus for three months. Whether we like it or not, this pandemic has changed the way our world operates.

It does not matter where you live, your profession, your political stance, or how you are dealing with the crisis. COVID-19 has become a roadblock to our lives as a whole, and the only way we can overcome this pandemic is to come together, and just deal with it.

Do what the scientists recommend. The quicker we assemble as a society, the quicker our normal lives will be back and better together. 🐾

Through My Lens By Brooke Bower



So much has been going on with the world, but it got us to stop and smell the roses. There isn't much many of us can do but just focus on ourselves. Being isolated for so long has given me time to see who I was. I used to be shy and I wouldn't talk to very many people. But, now I have blossomed into a social butterfly. I still get anxious about certain scenarios and overthink little things. I've just learned to let go of all my worries because life is too short to wait for the perfect moment, sometimes you have to just go for it.

There is only one chance to do it and to do it right. I believe everything happens for a reason. Every hard time, every mistake, all the forks in the road, to all the good times, and all the successes. There are times where I feel down and wilted. But, there is someone out there experiencing so much worse. I try and keep a positive attitude and laugh. I'd rather spend 2 seconds laughing than 2 minutes being sad. I don't want to compare myself to other people because what's the point? I'm unique and proud to be different.



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The indecisions: College can be a compromise

BY AVA ROSARIO
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Undecided majors are prevalent, even in esteemed universities. Seniors sign away their savings to a future they haven't chosen yet.

I knew what I wanted to do. I was going to be a film student at NYU, studying directing with a minor in screenwriting. I was going to intern on the set of independent films and work my way to the top. *Rosario* would be as recognizable as Spielberg.

As all teenagers do, I thought I had peaked in maturity. I knew what life entailed and I stubbornly defied every warning I got against my "dream." The future can blur even life-shattering threats — debt meant nothing to me.

Then, senior year hit. It was time to start applying, and the price tags were looming. I settled on Susquehanna University, which had granted me priority consideration for scholarships and admission. The package I got was astounding, and I thought I was set. As deposit day approached, I recalculated. Even with the scholarships, I would be paying close to \$50,000, and considering the improbability of life, it would probably be much higher. I had to decline.

I resented the mere idea of going to Lehigh Carbon Community College since middle school. I grew up with a terrible and entirely incorrect mentality about community colleges. Knowing that I was headed down that path, I felt like a failure, because a private university wouldn't be handing me my diploma.

But I started listening. Not complying, just finally hearing what people had to say. One word became a broken record between everyone: *regret*.

It was that very word that had pushed me to risky heights. If I didn't pursue the most elite education I could, how would I make it? What employer would respect me? College was always a



See College, page 20



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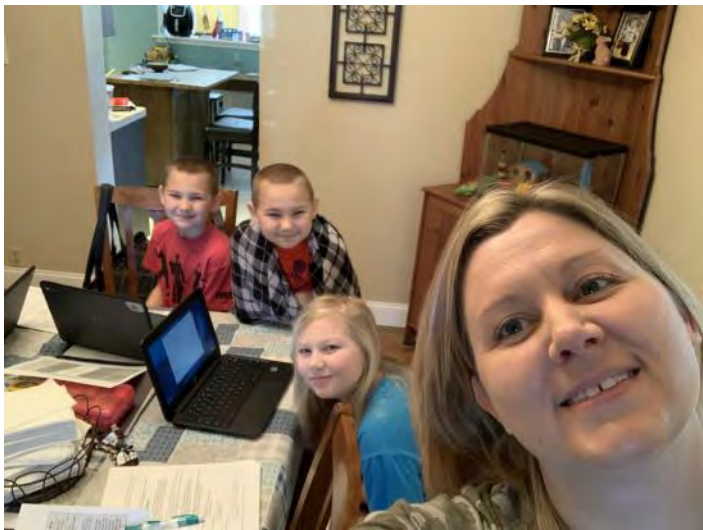


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Shut In, Covered Up, and Quarantined For All



(Far left) Mrs. Katie Farber with one of her goats! (Middle) Mr. Bryan Geist hits the trails and (above) Mr. Jon Prive guards his backyard territory.



Mrs. Chruscial and her homeschool learners kept busy.



Mrs. Maria Van Norman used a homemade safeguard.



Mr. Nick Sander kept busy with online classes, as did his daughter Moira. (Right) Mr. Christopher Barnes and his son Ike got their baseball fix by watching old Mets games on YouTube. Somehow, they still lost.



What Have We All Been Doing?

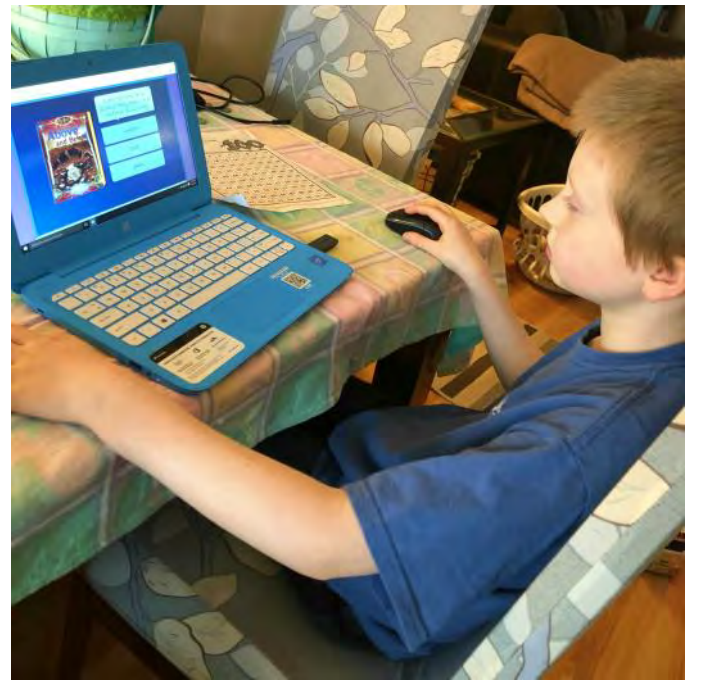


Amelia Varilek.



Caden Keich.

Schools may have closed but NL classes kept grinding at home! Thank you to the parents who became teacher's helpers during this time!



Zach Kearns.



Dominic Keller.



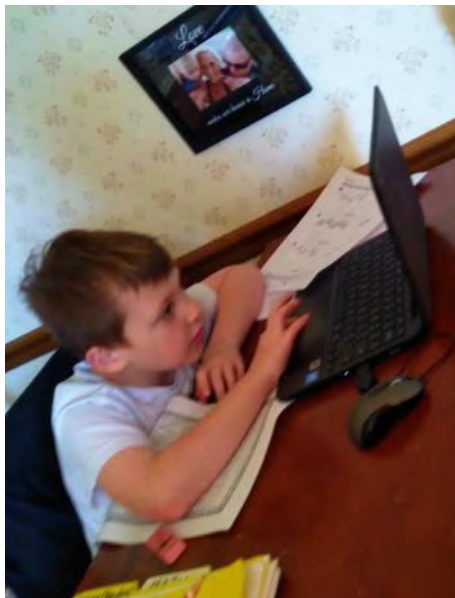
Marilyn Walters.



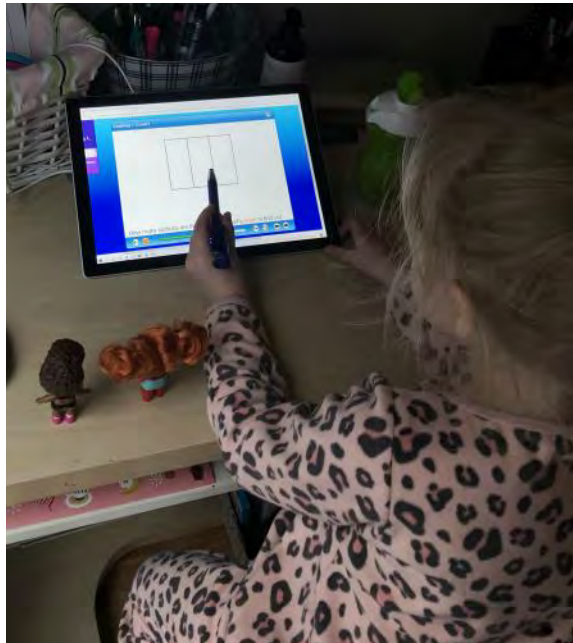
Addison Walters.



Jillian Heil.



Colten Bachman.



Alli Kearns.



Reagan and Ryleigh Bellesfield.

Many paw prints lead the path to a Bulldog life

BY DYLAN KUNTZ
STAFF WRITER

Let's face it, the past few years have been wild. So many crazy and amazing things have transpired, like the inauguration of Trump, some big spooky nukes testing from Korea, a "raid" on Area 51, the release of many amazing Marvel movies, and, of course, our current world situation.

There is no limit to the list of awesome world events from these past four years, but forget that. The events happening around Northern Lehigh are the ones I will never forget — all the dances, concerts, and time spent with friends is really what matters.

Since kindergarten, the class of 2020 would have spent close to 2,340 days together, but the coronavirus has that number knocked down to about 2,250. Not a huge difference, but the last 90 or so days of our senior year are some of the most important ones we would have shared.

With everything being canceled, it seems like a total nosedive from what we all were looking forward to. At this point, most seniors can agree that our situation really is the worst.

However, it would not be right to simply forget the journey we all went through to get to where we are now. Just because we miss out on a day trip, a pic-

nic, and a dance does not mean we can forget everything from before everything went haywire. Now all we can do is hope for everything we are missing now to eventually transpire.

Putting the coronavirus aside and actually reflecting in this reflection, I will start by saying that my time as a Bulldog is something I hold very dear. I have made so many good friends and had the pleasure of having so many amazing teachers. The great times leading up to this point are ones I will carry for the rest of my life. Nothing can possibly separate me from them.

One of the things I hold particularly close would be my time as a band member. I was not in marching band, but I was in jazz band, concert band, county band, and percussion ensemble. Being in the music program was so much fun, and it helped me grow a lot closer to some of my friends.

Then there's BEEF. I really cannot accurately put into words how I feel about being a member of this band, but I will try. From playing at the school concerts, to a handful of gigs here and there, to just messing around with some jazz, BEEF is, and always will be, my favorite part of high school.

The meatings (no, I did not misspell

See Reflection, page 22



College

From page 17

symbol of freedom to me, but financial freedom would have been impossible had I attended a private university. I don't want money to be my biggest concern just as I become an adult.

There's no shame in compromise. That fancy university on your diploma comes with a price tag that so many people struggle to pay off for the rest of their lives.

Another modification of my dream came when it was time to choose a major. Directing had been my absolute dream for years, then Creative Writing, then...well, I didn't know what. Landing on Visual Media was what I needed. The curriculum is diverse, with studies within

both the arts and technology. A variety of careers now lie before me — directing, writing, graphic design, and more. I don't have to decide just yet.

To the students considering prestigious schools, realize that you can be what you want to be if you have the determination. That expensive education isn't the ultimate ticket to success. You have the power to pursue your future.

I know compromise is often associated with failure, but I promise you that it's just not true. It's smart, responsible, and could save you from an unfortunate life.

Without student debt, my opportunities won't be limited. I can travel, I can experience, I can live. College isn't about status. It's meeting people, learning, and having an environment to thrive in. I am proud of the path that I'm on. 🐾

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Grab N Go Helps Feed NL Community

"It will continue through the summer on a Tuesday-Thursday schedule," says superintendent Matthew Link.

"It was important for the program to continue because the last thing we want the children in the community to worry about is whether they will have enough to eat while coping with all of the other uncertainties caused by COVID-19," said superintendent Matthew Link. "It will continue through the summer on a Tuesday and Thursday schedule, with each distribution including enough food for the days in between. Our entire food services department deserves so much credit for its full commitment to making the program a success, as do all of the volunteers and donors that assisted along the way! This all occurred under the leadership of our Food Services Department Director, Mrs. Sue Bahnick."



Late 2000's when *Saturday Night* was most 'alive'

BY GIANA ROSARIO
STAFF WRITER

"Saturday Night Live" changed the game of comedy and continues to shape pop culture with every season. Created and produced by Lorne Michaels, the show has won dozens of awards, with hundreds of skits to showcase its comedic talent.

SNL started bringing smiles to faces in 1975 and has been running for 45 years since, making it the longest-running variety show in U.S. history. This live show stars celebrity guests every week. Harry Styles, Tom Hanks, and Justin Timberlake are just a few of the many big names that have graced the stage.

Ranking the best season of all would take chapters of explanation, so we'll stick with the best era of the 21st century. In my opinion, the best era occurred during the mid- to late-2000s.

Making the audience laugh was rarely a challenge with this cast, starring popular members like Bill Hader, Seth Meyers, Andy Samberg, Kristen Wiig, legends Amy Poehler and Tina Fey, and so many more.

Opposers of the era often argue that the actors weren't committed — most episodes are full of character breaks, which is undeniable. But I see it as a signature; the cast didn't take themselves too seriously. They aren't there to compete for an Oscar in some pretentious drama.

This era brought about the iconic

character, Stefon, still sold on current SNL merch and in fandom stores such as FYE and Hot Topic. Writer John Mulaney and cast member Bill Hader created and worked on this character together, inspired by the mannerisms of a barista they both knew. Kenan Thompson, the longest-running cast member, also made his debut during this era.

While cast members such as Eddie Murphy, Will Ferrell, and Jimmy Fallon were beyond iconic, this era's episodes hit the mark more often.

Hundreds of hits were aired over these years, various catching on to become recurring segments. Some fan favorites include "The Californians," "Target Lady," and "What's Up With That." These were all recurring sketches on the show at one point.

Unfortunately, some of the skits are cut for time and never air on the live show. Normally, these skits can be found on YouTube or on the SNL website after each episode.

This era also popularized the SNL digital shorts — pre-taped sketches as opposed to the typical live format. Hader



Was this era the best in SNL history? Pictured: Amy Poehler, Bill Hader, Andy Samberg.

Photo courtesy NBC.com

and Andy Samberg were a major influence in their traction, featuring parodies such as "Dear Sister" and "Laser Cats."

As the cast evolved and new faces dominated the screen, it seems like they fell into a pattern. Of course, the chaos of current politics can be laughable in itself, but the frequent cheap jabs toward questionable government moves as well as

overdone impressions have caused more boredom than laughter.

Sure, the diverse comedy won't humor everyone every single time, but SNL has something for all tastes. Whether you want to watch your favorite singer perform their new single or have a quick laugh, hundreds of episodes are there to fulfill. 🐾

Getting involved helps to shape the high school experience

Reflection, from page 20

that) we had at least weekly pretty much carried me through my career at NL. There is nothing better than the feeling I had driving home after a good jam. A quick shout-out to Chaz Fleishmann, Mike Martineau, Sara Hunsicker, Rob McIntyre, Nick Lehman, Austin Deibert, Chance Herman, Lorenzo Cozzi, Cal Shelly, and Nia Nicholson for being some of the coolest *cuts* there are, and for making the last few years pretty *rare*.

Another awesome bit of my high school career would be the involvement I have had with a bunch of the school clubs. I even had the pleasure of serving in officer positions for Patriot Club and National Honors Society.

Although there was a lot canceled, it was a lot of fun. However, Patriot Club's big event for the year, the Salute to Service football game, thankfully happened last semester, and it was a big success.

Programming Club was also a fun group to be a part of, especially since building a robot was a big part of what the club did before the coronavirus hit. Last but not least would be The Slate.

It has been a fun couple of years writing all sorts of articles, and it was an honor being a part of something so awesome. One of my best friends being editor in chief helps too.

In all, I am very happy to have been a part of so many cool groups and spent time with friends or making new ones in the process.

So to all you youngins out there that still have time in high school, get involved if you have not already. This is time you will never get to make up, so spend it wisely. Whether it is building a robot, writing for a newspaper, raising the flags every morning, etc, it will be well worth your time and really make your career at Northern Lehigh an enjoyable one.

A considerably large portion of my life up until this point was also dedicated to the Boy Scouts of America. There are countless memories from my decade of involvement that I cannot begin to put into words. However, I will say that the time I spent in Scouting is a very big part of who I am today. Hundreds of hours spent working on survival skills, first aid, and so much more have more than prepared me for what is to come.

With all that said, the last thing really needing some reflecting would be the time spent with friends throughout the years.

Without them, the past 13 years or so of my life would be pretty dismal. I am more than grateful for all the time I have spent with so many amazing individuals, whether it was through school, concerts,



Super Smash Bros. competitions, boating days, scouting, summer camps, and so much more. You guys know who you are, so thanks so much for everything.

I want to wrap this up with a huge thank you. This one goes out to everyone that has been a part of my life up until now, especially academically. Thank you to all the teachers and staff of Northern

Lehigh for making my education so enriching and fun. I will always be grateful for the dedication all of my teachers had toward making these years truly unforgettable, as well as preparing me for my future.

To everyone reading this (especially Mr. Vlasaty): *Have a bulldog life.* 🐾

Lose the dreads or get cut from graduation

New law aims to prevent hair discrimination in schools

BY BRIANNA KUNTZ
STAFF WRITER

Almost everyone has hair, and every person has the right to do with it what they please. Some people prefer to color theirs, while other people like it natural.

Some style it daily and others just let their locks breathe. All in all, it is your personal choice to do whatever you want with your hair without it affecting your day-to-day life. In this age, that is not the case.

DeAndre Arnold, 18, a Texas student, is being discriminated against for wearing dreadlocks. Barbers Hill Independent School District did not allow DeAndre to attend his senior prom nor his own graduation ceremony simply because of how he chooses to style his own hair.

As reported in *The Washington Post*, "As his hair grew, he and his mother, Sandy Arnold, would cornrow it down or intricately tie up his locks in a voluminous dark brown and honey hold bun to make sure his hair was off his collar, away from his earlobes and out of his eyes so he could meet the school district's dress-code policy."

Though his hair met the dress-code policy, they proceeded to dismiss him from any school function, including school itself. If DeAndre showed up to school with his dreadlocks pulled back into a ponytail, abiding by the school rules, they sent him to in-school suspension, not allowing him to receive his education.

"His styling was no longer enough for the school," Mrs. Arnold told Fox 26 Houston. "Right before the school's winter break, she and her son were called into the Barbers Hill High School principal's office, where they were given an ultimatum: Cut DeAndre's dreadlocks or face in-school suspension," stated *The Washington Post*.

DeAndre and his mother consider the

policy to be 'sexist,' something Barbers Hill superintendent, Greg Poole, disagrees with. "My hair had nothing to do with my 'excellence,' as we say in Barbers Hill," DeAndre told the station. "How smart I am, what job I'm going to get — my hair doesn't determine that. I determine that for my character."

As he stated in his interview on *The Ellen Show*, he has a good reputation. In all his years, he has never been in trouble with the school. He gets good grades, respects authority, and simply has done nothing wrong to be treated like this.

"My hair is really important to me because my dad is from Trinidad," says DeAndre, "It's part of our culture and our heritage and I really wish the school would be open to other cultures." As of now, DeAndre is suspended from school and is still not allowed to come back until he cuts his hair.

On this topic, certain states have brought it upon themselves to pass bills to protect hair discrimination. As reported in *The Oregonian*, "A bill that would expand Oregon's anti-discrimination protections gained momentum Feb. 19 when it passed on a split vote in the House Of Representatives. House Bill 4107, which outlaws discrimination based on a hairstyle historically associated with race, will now head to the Senate."

The protections in this bill is to enforce policies on hair that mostly affect people of color to ensure there is no racial discrimination. Personally, I believe that what DeAndre and many others have gone through for something as trivial as

their choice in hairstyle is absurd. I color my hair very frequently.

That doesn't make me a bad person or affect my learning ability in school. I think most people can agree that this law is a step in the right direction for our

human rights. DeAndre is one example out of many people that have been discriminated against. He made a huge impact by sticking to his morals and making his voice heard. This goes to show that if you speak up, people will hear you. 🐾



DeAndre Arnold was told he could not graduate if his dreadlocks remained. TV host Ellen Degeneres went so far to invite DeAndre on her show, and presented him with a \$25,000 scholarship.

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A sincere thank you to all.

In this second year of the new regime, we have been cut short by one issue but the quality has never waned. As adviser, I cannot thank everyone involved more: NL administration that supports a free press, the community that reads all these great stories and enjoys the photos and art, and to this *great* staff with some of the most dedicated and professional young writers this paper could ask for. And to my tolerant "boss," Ava Rosario, for evolving into a wonderful writer, a dependable editor always willing to learn, and a genuine leader who achieved her goal of becoming editor-in-chief with sincere integrity and pride.

Mr. James

AND NOW, FROM THE MIND OF CHASE JONES, PRESENTED BY NORTHERN LEHIGH'S COVID RESPONSE TEAM, SOME TIPS ON DEFENDING YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY DURING THESE DIFFICULT TIMES.



Agent M2

Ms. Allegiance

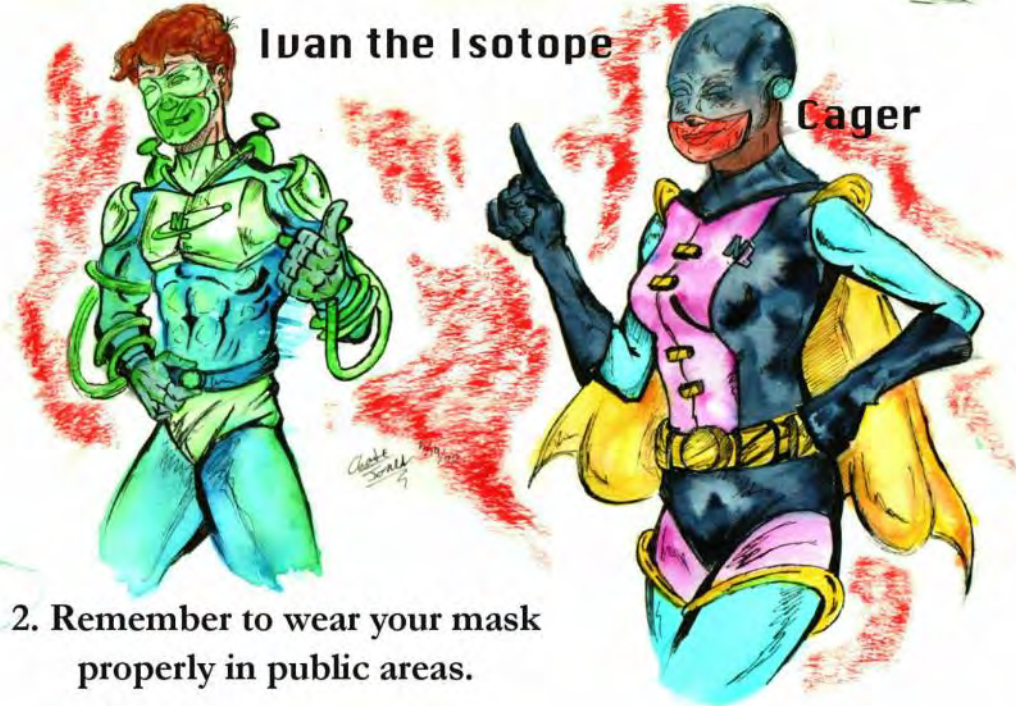
1. In order to protect yourself and others, be sure to keep your distance from those around you when in public.

Penny Craddock: The Cobalt Titan



Sgt. Bourbon

4. Consistently **wash your hands...** and paws.



Ivan the Isotope

Cager

2. Remember to wear your mask properly in public areas.



Morphra

MARTY MERCURY

3. Try to sneeze into your elbow and keep the spread of germs to a minimum.

Stay tuned for more
TASK FORCE: BULLDAWG
content coming next school year.