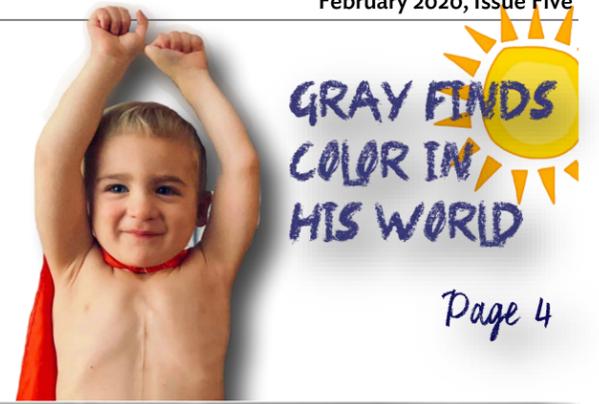


THE SLATE

ALL YOUR BULLDOG NEWS... UNLEASHED!

'URINETOWN' FOR A TREAT

Photo by Brooke Bower for The Slate

When you gotta go, you gotta go... to NL's 2020 musical, "Urinetown," opening Friday, March 6. Caleb Hankee (on chair), playing Bobby Strong, rehearses "Look at the Sky" while the poor crowd waits to follow their new leader into rebellion. Madison Hoffman goes with the flow, page 2.

Vast agenda looms over next leader

Trump or dem has question marks surrounding 2020 term

BY OWEN LEVAN-UHLER
STAFF WRITER

All democracies around the world have things to improve upon, and America is no exception. There are always things to improve when in a democracy, and America's is no exception.

As stated in the first of this two-part series, our country's next president needs to take steps to address the various issues of climate change, the economy, the education system, and the healthcare system. Still, there are many more items that need to be discussed, starting with taxes.

From the news to the dinner table, the word "taxes" is talked about *everywhere*. Taxes are collected because that is the only way that our government can afford to function. They are a fairly simple concept until they're analyzed too much.

In America, people work for an income, and the government takes a part of that income as taxes. All the money you make in a year is income, and the more you receive, the more of it is taxed. The only exception to what is accepted as income are stocks. When making a profit from selling

See Agenda, page 4

Year two of S2SS sustains district safety

24/7 anonymous tip line has proven effective in first stages

BY AVA ROSARIO
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Northern Lehigh continues to take strides toward a safer school district. As the world changes, schools must adapt their methods to ensure true security.

Last year, NL took a major step toward making safety more accessible with Safe2Say Something, an anonymous reporting system that now helps most schools throughout the area.

No school is immune to complications, but sometimes those issues could be fixed with just one person's voice.



Safe2Say changed that by making an effective lifeline for those in need of help. A simple, anonymous report will immediately notify the proper channels within minutes to provide appropriate and efficient assistance.

Superintendent Mr. Matthew Link shared the extent to which this new

resource was used since its unveiling. "For the 2018-19 school year, we had 20 tips and for the 2019-20 school year, we also had 20 tips," he said. "I would say the tips most often were related to either mental health concerns or students using tobacco products, including vaping."

Principal Mr. Robert Vlasaty commented on students' response. "I can say every time it was used, it was used effectively and appropriately here," he said. "It's definitely been effective and help-

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INSIDE



In search of refs, umps, and all officials in between. High demand and short supply are hurting scholastic sports. Read our first of a two-part series, page 10.

NL musical flows full-stream ahead

'Urinetown' plays two weekends; opens March 6

BY MADISON HOFFMAN
STAFF WRITER

Welcome to Urinetown! The musical, that is. Northern Lehigh Theatre Troupe is proud to present a satire packed full of fourth-wall breaks and bathroom humor, starting March 6. This Tony award-winning musical, written by Greg Kotis and composed by Mark Holland, is coming to Slatington with the full force of that 3 a.m. whiz.

The musical takes place in a small, unnamed town — a poor, filthy place full of poor, filthy people. There has been a 20-year drought that leads people into the illusive "Stink Years." Caldwell B. Cladwell, played by senior Cole Cheesbrough, takes them out of those years by creating Urine Good Company (UGC) and taxes the people's ability to pee leaving everyone to have to scrounge for pennies.

The political elite rules over this new world and sends anyone who doesn't follow their orders to Urinetown. Bobby Strong, played by junior Caleb Hankee, is a poor boy in charge of Public Amenity #9, and with the help of Hope

Cladwell, Strong's love interest, played by freshman Lily Wanamaker, who is Strong's love interest, lead the poor into a rebellion for a new *golden* age.

What exactly is Urinetown? Audiences will have to find out during the two-weekend performance. There will be a whole song about it right after your intermission tinkle.

"Urinetown is so timely for audiences as it deals with environmental issues, politics, and social responsibility," said director Colette Boudreaux. "But more than anything, because it is a satire, it is hilarious!"

The jokes start right from the beginning and *flow freely* like the overflowing toilets in Act 1. Get ready to *wet yourself* laughing.

Satire is the use of humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people's stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and other topical issues. Ecological topics, like a drought, for instance, will always be a pressing topic so this satire is good for any period. This musical does a perfect job of making fun of the situation and making the audience think about our own ecological problems.

Junior Emily Hunsicker, who plays Little Sally — a little girl who helps narrate the musical alongside Officer Lockstock played by Dylan Miller — said, "The ending of the musical leaves the audience questioning what was truly right or wrong."

And there seems to be something for everyone in this musical.

"Our students have done a wonderful job embracing the unique style of this piece and since the creators wanted to poke fun at musical theatre itself, there is a song for everyone!" Boudreaux said.

This is so true. "Urinetown" makes fun of classic musicals like "Les Misérables" and "Guys and Dolls" with revolution and dance breaks. So even if it doesn't seem like your cup of, uh, tea, you will find something to laugh about.

"We've put tons of hard work and dedication into making this show truly one of a kind," said Hankee. "We've put a grueling number of hours into this musical to not only make it great for our audience but also to make sure we've done it justice and made it fun for everyone who sees it. We've stayed after school almost every day since the beginning of January to make this show really come to life. There have been many long nights but also many fun moments."

Sophomore Cydney Krause, who plays Penny Pennywise and is in charge of the public amenity (public toilet) said, "The most fun experiences I've had in theatre would probably be performing 'Privilege to Pee' or 'Why Did I Listen to That Man?' They are both very high energy songs, making them exhilarating to



Little Sally, played by junior Emily Hunsicker, gets scolded by Officer Lockstock, played by junior Dylan Miller, to tell him where the rebel poor are hiding.



Penny Pennywise, played by sophomore Cydney Krause, gazes into the eyes of Caldwell B. Cladwell, played by senior Cole Cheesbrough, as his daughter Hope Cladwell (freshman Lily Wanamaker) and associate Senator Fipp (freshman Seth Adams) stare at them in awe and disgust.

perform."

The musical is pushed up two weekends, from the third weekend in March to the first, and more shows have been added. We will be showing our 50th-anniversary show for not one but *two* weekends! Go to our 7 p.m. shows on March 6, 7, 13, and 14, or our 2 p.m. performances on March 8 and 15.

Tickets are on sale right now through the theatre website.

Go to northernlehightheatre.com/info and click on "Get Tickets." Get your tickets online so that you don't have to worry about not getting a seat. But I guess if you wanna wait, you can also get them at the door. Tickets are \$11 for adults and \$9 for students/senior citizens.

Don't be the Bunny and come see the NLTT production of Urinetown! 🐰



Photos by Brooke Bower for The Slate
Caleb Hankee and Lily Wanamaker practice their song, "Follow Your Heart," together.

CHECK OUT MORE PICS ON THE GRAM!
@theslatenews

THE SLATE
ALL YOUR BULLDOG NEWS..

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The Slate is the voice of Northern Lehigh High School.
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Thank you for reading and please pass it on!

Altering babies, preventing cancer, and illuminating dogs

CRISPR technology is still developed to monitor diseases, cellular reproduction

BY NIA NICHOLSON
STAFF WRITER

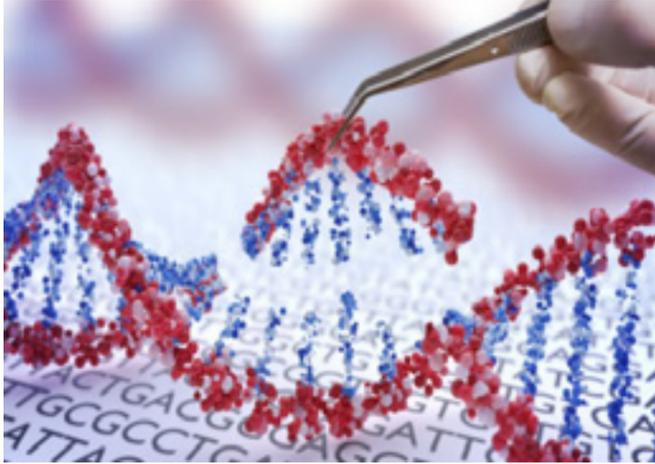
Picture this: a piece of technology that would allow you to alter your baby in the womb, prevent cancer from even forming, keep the old looking young, and...make dogs glow? Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeat, or CRISPR, was first discovered in 1987 as a sequence in an *E. coli* genome.

Decades later in 2007, further research into using CRISPR as a guard to bacteriophages began. Today, studies are still conducted as to how CRISPR can help with diseases and cellular reproduction.

Some of these tests are, of course, less serious than others. For example, there is a Mississippi dog breeder hoping to create a glow-in-the-dark breed. This seemingly small-sequence discovery dates all the way back before the 21st century could very well be the key to end aging, cancers, birth defects, and so much more.

By using CRISPR, scientists can target telomeres for imaging and are able to label telomeres and structures.

(Telomeres are a protective end of DNA in a cell and are found in chromosomes.) Efficiency in labelling and specificity when researching is very helpful and can speed up the process; however, CRISPR's biggest advantage is its ability to target living cells and work on them without killing them.



Shipeng Shao, a Google scholar at Peking University, et al., were some of the first to prove the minimal toxicity. In the past, methods of labelling genomes would cause damage and required procedures that could even kill cells.

An exciting new stride being made is

research with altering telomeres. Imagine a string of DNA as a shoelace; telomeres would function as the aglet and prevent fraying or destruction of DNA. Each time a cell regenerates, such as a skin cell, the telomere allows it to not lose genes or endure damage.

Each time this occurs, the telomere is shortened. An enzyme called telomerase acts as a base to protect the telomeres when the cell is young. With repeated regeneration, the telomerase wears away.

Once a cell's telomere becomes too short, it is more likely to be corrupted and die. This is associated with cancer and aging, because all cancers truly are simply mutated cells that can harm natural processes in some way.

Many cancers are linked to shortened telomeres in affected cells. By using the non-cell-destructive agent CRISPR, scientists can measure the telomerase to detect cancer. CRISPR's system can cut and insert genes, allowing for an even more in-depth, real-time, study of telomere damage.

There have been experiments done to

temporarily block telomerase from active cancer cells growing in a lab. Without telomerase, the tumor cells died. This procedure, while successful in the lab, may pose risks to living humans. Blocking telomerase may impair fertility, affect the production of blood and immune system cells, and impair the natural healing of wounds.

Researchers Kim et al. managed to completely strip telomeres from bone marrow neuroblasts (tumors caused by Neuroblastoma).

They measured the effects on the cells, finding detrimental changes to the cellular functions. There was a loss of mitochondrial function, which is what powers the cell. They also found an aggregation of the proteins that are linked to Parkinson's Disease.

While removing telomeres may cause too much havoc, this is not all CRISPR can do. More minor tests, only affecting single nucleotides, are being done to study cellular aging and how technology can prevent this or cause this in certain cells.

Not enough may be known yet, but the research being done toward disease treatment and preventatives gives a glimpse into a promising future. 🐾

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Are you 17 years of age?



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Summer Blast Counselor!

**Contact Northern Lehigh Rec. for
more information:**

**Call 484-633-0093; email us at
nlrecauthority@gmail.com or check
our Facebook page!**

Safe 2 Say

From page 1

ful, and so far, there have not been any negative consequences."

NL's clear emphasis on the importance of S2SS made it widely effective. The information was made available in almost every way possible, including assemblies, emails, and letters.

"Everyone has the information," Mr. Vlasaty said. "It's on our website, we sent written letters home, and sent emails out, so we did a nice job of marketing and explaining it."

The system is not only open to students, but faculty and staff as well. English teacher Mr. Christopher Barnes utilized it when he was made aware of a student who was considering self-harm in the moment.

"From my driveway, I contacted the

S2SS hotline, and literally within minutes, the police conducted a welfare check, the parents were contacted, as well as all our administration," Mr. Barnes said. "Mr. Vlasaty then contacted me to say the student was safe and with adults who can confirm the same. It was amazing how rapidly the whole thing was under control. It's really good to know it's there for anyone who needs it."

Administration said that S2SS has been effective and that it has helped the district identify several students that might have otherwise been in trouble.

"We know with certainty it has helped students not only within Northern Lehigh, but also across the state," Mr. Link added. "In Northern Lehigh, the vast majority of our students care for and appreciate their classmates and want to help them get support if they are struggling with any of the issues faced by school-aged children in today's world." 🐾



Gray sees his miraculous world in color

3-year-old conquers seizure, surgeries, and remains a hero to himself and others

BY BREANNA HOPPES
STAFF WRITER

Life is an enthralling journey all people go through yet not all truly experience. As young adults, many would assume we all understand the value life holds. Yet somehow, Grayson, at just 3-years-old, has a better understanding of life than most adults.

At just 2 months old, Gray (as close to a member of the family as one can get) suffered a seizure that had led to his diagnosis of PHACES (Posterior fossa brain malformations). This young boy has conquered surgeries and countless numbers of doctors appointments, yet at the end of the day he remains a hero to himself and those he loves. This syndrome, causes a risk for seizures and strokes due to brain abnormalities. In August of 2019, Grayson had abdominal surgery to remove a cyst that he had been born with.

Children tend to have fears of the dark and the monsters their imaginations may create. As for Gray, fear is not in his vocabulary. To be fearless at this age is to truly be a hero for those around him. The family of this young boy has been astonished by all of the efforts he takes to conquer PHACES. Grayson's parents, Tyler and Katie Evans, have experienced a whirlwind of stress and fear due to this rare syndrome.

Katie said positively, "He is incredibly



rare and has a great quality of making everyone around him smile."

A line directly down the abdomen of Grayson had been formed following the incorrect formation of his chest walls. The worry this syndrome causes for those with a greater understanding than Grayson causes a sea of emotions, yet his ability to melt hearts just with his smile remains.

The importance of understanding these rare syndromes is to offer others a greater grasp of how important it is to cherish your health. To walk through life's most difficult challenges with a smile upon your face at such a young age is a gift.

Grayson has always been a walking ray of sunshine even on his cloudiest days. Many people are guilty of waking up and immediately complaining about the idea of starting the day early. When was the last day you truly awoke with a heart so full and genuinely thankful for your health and the wellbeing of those you love?

Nearly all of us fall guilty of taking things in our lives for granted. What if we all had the mentality that the spontaneous and creative mind this 3-year-old has? Although we are older, are we truly above his mentality?

In a world where light shines upon negativity and conflict, the positive peo-

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Agenda

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stocks, you only have to pay about half the normal income-tax rate.

There are also taxes on sales, though there are exceptions to what sales are taxed. The tax on many grocery items in Pa. is reduced or exempted. Businesses don't have to pay sales taxes during transactions like buying or selling part of a company.

Unlike the average citizen, businesses are only taxed on their profit, and not their total income. There are countless ways that businesses can claim that the money they take in over a year isn't profit to avoid paying taxes.

Business Insider explains, "Businesses are allowed to report profits to their stockholders, but then report a different number entirely to the government when filing taxes.

Sometimes very large corporations pay absolutely no taxes at all. If they don't like the tax laws, wealthy people and businesses are allowed to bribe the people who write the laws to create 'loopholes' written just for them, which always means they wind up paying lower taxes."

These complex deals are arranged constantly, but only the wealthiest of private citizens and big businesses can afford them. So, when it comes time to

choose the next president, plans to reform the way businesses and citizens pay taxes need to be made and set into motion. That way, taxation in all forms is fairer for all.

Another issue that needs immediate attention is retirement. Almost half of Americans are not able to save enough for retirement, and many people do not have access to savings plans through their occupation. Although there have been recent legislative steps so more Americans could have access to a healthy retirement, there needs to be more active steps in companies to provide employees with retirement benefits or plans.

Unfortunately, the costs of retirement plans can add up quickly, especially for small businesses, which is why many employers don't offer much of anything in the way of pension. The next administration needs to figure out a way to make retirement plans more affordable for businesses, giving them the ability to better provide financial security to their employees.

Another huge discussion across the nation is immigration. Many people have misconceptions and stereotypes about immigrants, one being that they negative-

ly affect the economy.

This misconception is very untrue, for, in fact, immigrants stimulate the economy.

Global Citizen, an action/online movement, says, "Immigrants and U.S.-born workers generally do not compete



for the same jobs. Instead, many immigrants complement the work of U.S. employees and increase their productivity.

In the U.S., immigrants are generally concentrated in highly-skilled STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) fields such as software development and medicine, according to the George W. Bush Institute, while undocumented immigrants are often employed in low-wage labor jobs that would otherwise go unfilled.

Overall, immigrants boost wages, expand the economy, and are more likely

to start businesses than the average U.S. citizen, according to the Mercatus Center."

Another stereotype that people hold against immigrants is that they are primarily supported off of America's welfare programs, though that is far from correct. Global Citizen also states, "Immigrants are also less likely to use welfare than the average U.S. citizen, and that includes undocumented immigrants, who pay more in taxes than they receive in benefits."

Immigration enhances our culture, stimulates the economy, and brings about new ideas and practices that can better the lives of everyone in the country. "Creating an environment — both legally and socially — where immigrants are allowed to build a new life is a way to promote the general betterment of humanity."

While illegal immigration is a problem that needs to be solved, the next president should promote laws that support and encourage immigration, and make the immigration process more just and available, especially to the refugees who need it to survive.

There are many more issues that need to be addressed and solved, and there always will be. But the issues discussed in these two articles are some of the most distinct in our country and general society today. 🌟

Grammys had a 'Grande' problem

Singing star claims the charts but goes home empty-handed

BY AVA ROSARIO
EDITOR IN CHIEF

The biggest night in music became one of the biggest mistakes of all time after some questionable Grammy wins, or more importantly, losses.

Social media blew up the moment the program ended with a war practically unfolding between Ariana Grande and Billie Eilish fans.

Grande fans were ecstatic to find out that the singer received five nominations. This night was going to be huge since last year Ariana had not even attended the event due to a dispute over what song she was allowed to perform.

She had also endured a difficult three years -- from the bombing at her Manchester concert, to her ex's death, to a broken engagement -- Grande had been through it all. Then she swallowed her pain to release her album "thank u, next" just six months after the Grammy-winning "Sweetener."

She didn't stop there. After everything, Grande still pushed herself to go on the 101-show *Sweetener World Tour*, and managed to drop more hit singles along the way. Multiple on-stage breakdowns showed the fans just how strong she truly was.

Grande winning those Grammys seemed like a no-brainer. She was the first artist since The Beatles to hold the No. 1, 2, and 3 spot on the Billboard Hot 100. She broke various streaming records on Spotify, becoming the first female artist to have three albums with 2 billion



streams. The song "thank u, next" hit 100 million streams just 11 days after its release. She had grown big-time over the past few years, so it was no surprise that even her casual listeners were confused by zero wins.

Billie Eilish received four out of the five nominations that Grande was up for. Eilish also had a big year, and at the impressive age of only 18 years old. The

singles off her debut studio album, "When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?", climbed to the top of the charts almost instantly, with *Bad Guy* claiming the top of Billboard for 44 weeks and peaking at No. 1. Her success was astounding as it all started with simple Soundcloud tracks and grew to a worldwide audience.

Not only had Grande been nominat-

ed, but she had been asked to make a comeback performance after five years off of the Grammys' stage. Finally, with the freedom to choose what she could sing, Grande performed an impressive medley that satisfied fans' desire for the hits, as well as the deeper tracks.

There is speculation floating around social media that the Grammys were bitter for Grande's absence last year and were simply being spiteful. Even Eilish knew that Grande deserved the Grammy for *Album of the Year*. The moment she got to the mic, Eilish said, "Can I just say that I think Ariana deserves this?" If the recipient doesn't even think she deserves it, then something is wrong.

The same happened to Mariah Carey in 1996. Her album had two No. 1 debuts, one No. 2 debut, and she was asked to perform with six nominations. She won nothing.

Obviously, this is not the first time this situation has happened. Almost every year, fans are outraged by their idols losing to "undeserving" competitors, but this year shocked so many. Grande pushed through anxiety attacks, PTSD, and more trauma that the world may not even know about to offer her voice to those who needed it.

She wanted to help others through her experiences and her pain, even when it was clear that it might have been too much. Her lyrics came straight from her heart and healed the ones that listened to it. Though the world may not be over the mess, in the words of Ariana: just keep breathin'. 🌹

Colorful

From page 4

ple must emerge from the shadows. This young boy has experienced more pain than some of us teenagers have and will endure. The world is conflicted and there are individuals who do not deserve the recognition they receive. But there are tiny, charismatic children fully capable of changing the world. Grayson has proven to those around him, no matter how big or small a problem is, he will simply leapfrog over it.

As Grayson enters a program for children his age, he declares, "I'm big and strong for my new friends." A challenge as small as a pebble or as large as a mountain will never be insurmountable for this inspiring little human. Grayson's life is a forecast of sunshine with the occasional cover of clouds, but he sees through them at all costs. Throughout all steps of his journey, this boy has remained optimistic.

This is a leap year and Feb. 29 is Rare Disease Day. The importance of understanding various diseases is truly unex-

plainable. There are individuals all around us who are living with diseases invisible to the naked eye.

On Feb. 29, awake with a 'Grayson mindset,' meaning you are the only person who determines the way you overcome life's challenges.

Either let the difficulties you face defeat you or defeat them yourself. Though life is an unpredictable adventure, we do have control over how we travel over our bumps in the road. Rare diseases deserve to have light shed upon them regardless of the fact that they are uncommon and typically unheard of.

There are young, powerful warriors tackling these diseases each and every day who deserve all the recognition they can receive. Always appreciate those in your life who have been blessed with excellent health and if there are individuals in your family in the process of conquering rare diseases, cherish each moment spent with them.

The world can be a damaging and dark place, yet children such as Grayson still persist and remain determined to defeat anything that may lay in their path. In a *gray* world, find the color or simply be the color. 🌹



OPINIONS

Page 6

Editorial

Cheaters have no place in the majors, or anywhere else

The little team that couldn't and eventually did, was evidently the team that shouldn't have in the first place.

The "cheater" stigma can follow close behind the guilty party and throughout time now, the Houston Astros — 2017 MLB World Series champions and playoff contenders thereafter — were caught. They took the shortcut and lost.

The old-school work ethic needs to return. Baseball is purely a primitive sport at its core. Pitcher throws ball. Hitter swings bat. If hitter contacts ball, hitter runs. If hitter misses, hitter tries again. Done. It's basic cause and effect.

Now, in our world of constant connectivity, there is access to accuracy. There is also, however, temptation to abolish the work ethic and, instead, take the shortcut.



Photo courtesy 6ABC News

In our classrooms, you have that access. We know you know, ya know? Need math solutions? There's an app for that. Worksheet needs facts filled in? There's an equally unethical friend for that. It's not cooperation; it's not group learning. It's the shortcut of the apathetic, the lethargic, and the lackadaisical. C'mon, we know.

For the billionth time — because it needs to be a billion and one — the world needs to resurrect its sense of character, integrity, and pride.

Perfection does not exist but effort does. Resilience abounds.

The Houston Astros had been non-existent for years. Always at the bottom of the standings, rarely in postseason play, and the club needed a boost (and an illegal one at that). Did the cheating work? They popped the champagne in the last few years and have been a powerhouse ever since -- not solely because of the cheating but it certainly played a vital role.

Now, they have the stigma. Think of Barry Bonds, Mark McGuire, Ryan Braun, or A-Rod. Their names carry that bold asterisk.

Do the work, kids. You may not love it or ever need it, but do it for the character and integrity. Swing the bat. If you miss, swing again.

Don't be an Astro. 

Woman's defense turns to possible life sentence

'Affirmative defense law' not accessible for victim. Was justice served backward?

BY BRITTNEY DIEHL
STAFF WRITER

"She entered the courtroom, where she was facing life in prison on charges of murdering her alleged sex trafficker," stated *Washington Post* reporter Jessica Contrera. Rape, murder, court cases, convictions, and jail. All of these concepts boil down to one central belief, inhumanity exists among the human race.

In the town of Kenosha, Wisconsin, Chrystul Kizer, a 16-year-old African American girl, was sexually abused by 33-year-old Randall "Randy" Phillip Volar III. In the autumn of 2016, Randy and Chrystul met on a website called Backpage.com, which allowed people to advertise themselves for those seeking sexual interactions. At this time, Chrystul lied about her age, saying she was three years older than her actual age of 16. However, after their first encounter at a bus stop, Randy knew Chrystul was underage from thereafter.

For several weeks, the illegal couple met until Chrystul was arrested at the age of 17 for operating a stolen vehicle. Randy offered to and eventually paid her bail. Despite this, no random act of kindness would go unpaid. Volar made it extremely clear as to what he wanted in return for such a kind act. At this point, Chrystul began to attempt to cut Volar out of her life.

On June 4, 2018, she appeared in court to plead guilty for the stolen vehicle crime. Later that same day, Chrystul and her then boyfriend, Nelson, got into a disagreement, causing her to call Volar asking for his support and his company. She had a pistol in her handbag that was a gift from Nelson.

According to reports, once at Volar's house, Chrystul was drugged and touched inappropriately. She tried to escape, but failed. Volar saw this as an opportunity to get on top of her. That's when she shot him. Twice.

Once the authorities concluded that Chrystul did indeed kill Volar, she was put on trial. Her attorney attempted to utilize the "affirmative defense." This allows any and all minors who can prove they were purchased or sold for sex to be acquitted for charges against them if those charges are committed because they are a "trafficked victim."

Despite the fact that Chrystul was simply shooting Volar as a form of alleged self-defense, the judge ruled that "Chrystul did not have



access to the affirmative defense law for trafficking victims. In his view, neither would other trafficking victims charged with violent crimes" (Contrera). As a consequence, Chrystul returned to her jail cell.

It turned out she was not the only victim of Randy Volar. There were reportedly a dozen underage, African American girls at his residence. Yet, the man remained free for a total of three months thereafter.

In most people's eyes, committing any crime is considered wrong, but the law states that some crimes are justifiable if given a certain set of circumstances. When regarding the "affirmative defense," this proves to be an excellent example of such in our society. Regardless, having these rules and regulations not only prove to be harmful for society, but also harmful to any individual.

As proven before, the "affirmative defense" is not always beneficial for the victim utilizing it. This could lead them into a more damaging and violent situation, such as Chrystul sitting in her jail cell.

Nevertheless, when looking at this story, Chrystul still murdered someone. It is a fact that she shot Randall Phillip Volar III twice. In the eyes of most, this would be considered morally improper. However, our government's law is trying to say that, under the circumstances, an act of murder could be considered morally proper.

As a consequence, this story simply boils down to perspective -- a concept most try to avoid. Perspective is essentially a person's opinion and opinions cannot be proven, they can only be felt. However, feelings and emotions are large factors playing into murder and rape as well as their effects. Not only does it wreck a person physically, but also psychologically. It messes with their mind.

Psychologically speaking, Chrystul may not have been in the soundest mind when relaying her story and separating the truth from misconceptions. Initially, she told different stories to the authorities and other news officials.

This act, as most others, allows for comments to be made on our society. People all around our nation seem to take a stand, even when referencing a small case in Wisconsin. Activists within the #MeToo movement are on Chrystul's side, supporting her in the courtroom.

In its entirety, Chrystul's story, and those similar to it, proves to impact the nation. News is spread, opinions are formed, and those who have ideas typically defend them in full force. This form of communication allows for a fast-paced, knowledgeable society, spitting words and phrases out as fast as humanly possible. As Wally Mars from *The Switch* would say, maybe that's why it's called the human race.

Nonetheless, a person's life and right to live peacefully are two ideas that conflict with each other. They are supposed to be natural rights, yet seem almost impossible to naturally fall into place. 

OPINIONS

Digging into depression

Emotions might be misunderstood but, in the end, we'll be all right

BY ABBERLY RESSLER
GUEST COLUMNIST

People all around the world deal with depression, but too many do not take it seriously. They make fun of it and joke about it like it's nothing, but people die from this. Some casually say that they're depressed, but how can you be depressed and make sick jokes like that?

I don't think anybody takes this serious enough. Depression keeps people hostage in their own mind. Bad thoughts are surrounding them all day, but they're just too tired to do anything about it. I know because I've lived with depression for a while now. It makes me so tired.

Most days I'm too drained to get out of bed. There are voices inside my head that tell me I'm not good enough; that I'm ugly and fat and nobody will ever love me. Maybe they're right. If all those things are true, and I can't even love myself, then how is anybody else going to?

The hate that I feel for myself isn't normal and I know that. I've said how I feel, but it is hard to find people who understand. There are arguments battling inside of me all day, and they keep me distracted from everything going on. I have my demons screaming to do bad things, my anxiety whispering for me to go downstairs, my body is yelling at me to stay in bed, and my heart is crying for everything to just stop.

Nothing works together anymore, and it's always a constant battle. My puzzle pieces don't fit together like they used to.

They were broken and shaped into something different. I am no longer the picture that my mom once saw. The once full-of-life little girl is now a little girl full of scars. Her eyes aren't filled with joy, but with the tears she tries to hide behind her fake smile. But that smile was once real. She used to be afraid of the dark, always needing a little light to give her comfort. Now she welcomes it with open arms, knowing it's the only comfort that will stay.

That little girl isn't gone though, she's just afraid to come out. She's been hiding behind layers of hurt and self-hate for so long. She knows if she comes out, she'll be broken. That her innocent mind will be filled with dark thoughts.

All of those dark thoughts are like a bad song that never ends. That song is being blasted throughout my head, and my demons are the ones dancing to it. There is a party inside my head, but I don't want to attend.

The problem is I don't have a way to shut off the noise. So I would constantly focus on something other than myself. I focused on my brother and sister, and I started to live *for* them. I realize I have people to take care of before I leave the world. The party is still going on, but I'm learning how to get used to it. I'll be alright. 🍀



A beginner's guide to all things jazz

BY DYLAN MILLER
STAFF WRITER

As a musician, I am always looking for inspiration for new and creative ideas. Something that truly inspires me to create music is the music itself. It is amazing how its simplistic ideas can hold such emotional weight and be so encapsulating. However the other side of the spectrum, where more complex and theoretical music lives, is a genre I hold in high esteem — *jazz!*

which being *Miles Smiles* (1967) that featured tracks like *Gingerbread Boy*, a cheeky tune that feels like a waving flag being carried against strong winds. Famous for slow, somber tracks like “*So What*,” off of “*Kind of Blue*,” which feels like it asks the simple question over and over again and *It Never Entered My Mind*, a single which feels more like a contemplation of regret.

My favorite of his works is his 1960 Spanish-influenced album “*Sketches of Spain*” which at the time pushed the boundaries of jazz. With only five



I love snapping to those swinging beats. Listening to those loose roaring horns that dance in your ears and the low buzzing one's that play dreamy wisps of melancholy, it brings tears to my eyes and a smile to my face.

Since my discovery of this flavorful genre, I have been enamored and inspired by its melodies and improvisational flare.

However, many are unfamiliar with jazz and its origins, or are overwhelmed by its large roster. In this “*Beginner's Guide to Jazz*,” I will be laying down the groundwork for you to have a truly fulfilling life... a life with *jazz!*

Before I get to rattling off the legends and their many great works, let's shuffle out some history. Jazz originated among African American communities somewhere in the steamboat era of America. Stemming from blues and folk, one of jazz's earliest forms was ragtime (think the old-timey piano music in black and white Disney cartoons, which was the ‘pop’ of its time. Around the same time in the little town of New Orleans, jazz was born in its true form. From then on, it slowly spread across America, constantly being transformed by those who played it.

Still, what *is* jazz? This is a question that can only be answered by the music itself. That is the purpose of this article, to inform the uninformed, enlighten the unenlightened, and sway the masses with the power of jazz.

Without further ado, the first master of the trade I have to introduce is Miles Davis, trumpeter and jazz composer. He is most notable for the innovative bop style of jazz on his various albums, one of

tracks, this album covers a wide range of sounds, transporting you to Spain itself. Commencing with *Concierto de Aranjuez (Adagio)* featuring Miles's fantastic trumpet leading a journey to Europe with awesome ebbs and slow-building flows. Followed by tracks like “*Solea*,” which feels a march through the colorfully lighted, foreign fragrance-filled streets of the night and *Will O' the Wisp* which is like a step off that road into a forest of ancient ruins. This only scratches the surface of Davis's immense discography which I implore any reader to dive into and explore.

The next composer on this list is my personal favorite of the bunch, Charles Mingus, double bassist extraordinaire. His take on jazz is one of great voracity with a hint of insanity thrown into the mix. His 1959 album “*Mingus Ah, Um*,” considered his most popular work, is a collection of some classic jazz compositions rife with improvisation. Containing upbeat tracks like “*Boogie Stop Shuffle*,” which feels like a subway station during rush hour and “*Bird Calls*,” a track with the seasonal feel of spring adventure, including horns imitating birds. My favorites of his big-band albums have to be “*Mingus Mingus Mingus Mingus Mingus*” (1964) and “*Let My Children Hear Music*” (1972). Both have a very spectacular quality that reflect each other in different ways. While the former is very loose and bustling the latter is bombastic and triumphant. Notable tracks are “*The Shoes of the Fisherman's Wife Are Some Five Slippers*” which has the audible quality of a grand cirque performance.

See Jazz, page 8

Nightmares 101: The scares come from where?

BY LILY GROOVER
STAFF WRITER

Half of Americans each day wake up in the middle of the night, heaving, sweating, and sometimes even screaming. What causes this? Nightmares.

Ugly, terrifying, downright creepy nightmares. There really is no scientific explanation as to why people dream. It's just a common understanding that everyone does.

A dream is defined as a hallucination occurring during certain stages of sleep, often during the rapid eye movement stage, or REM, where many most likely aren't going to remember what happened because the dream has already faded before awakening. Dr. Sujay Kansagra, of Duke University Medical Center, says that since our brain is usually sorting out our thoughts, feelings, and memories during a dream, it will automatically block out that dream, so we are able to decipher what's real and what is just a dream.

There is still no definite proof that dreams are thoughts based on your recent activities, conversations, or other life concerns. However, most doctors and scientists have plausible theories as to why dreams occur. Someone's brain might use a dream to confront an emotional trauma occurring.

Another theory says that since the

amygdala -- the part of the brain dealing with survival instinct -- is more active during sleep, it might use dreams as the body's way of getting ready to deal with a threat. Additionally, as stated before, a



dream may also be used to help store memories, disregard unimportant thoughts, and sort through complicated feelings and decisions.

A nightmare is just a scary dream; however, unlike a dream, after a person wakes up from a nightmare, they usually remember what happened. Since the intensity of the nightmare usually wakes the person up in the middle of it, then they will have an easier time recalling what happened. This is a factor as to why

nightmares are so terrifying to some people. Their brain is not quick enough to tell them that it is not real. That split second of thinking what you dreamt really happened is what makes nightmares

scary.

Like dreams, no one knows why they happen. However, it has been found that certain things can cause people to have nightmares more frequently, from everyday occurrences like anxiety, stress, eating before bedtime, a fluctuating sleep schedule, jet lag, and illness. Or not so common occurrences like alcohol consumption and/or withdrawal, side effects of a medication, or some sort of trauma like losing a loved one.

Surprisingly, nightmares affect kids more than they do adults. Adults usually have nightmares because of stress and anxieties. But, according to the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, nightmares are a part of the growing process in kids. Individual experiences like scary movies and books and irrational fears might be contributors. It also seems that children with a more vivid imagination tend to have more nightmares than the average kid.

Fifty percent of children ages 3 to 6 can have severe nightmares every other night, causing them to wake up their parents. Nightmares in children usually peak by age 10. After that, the tendencies of having nightmares decrease.

When adults have frequent nightmares, doctors might say that they have a nightmare disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD. Although, that would be on the extreme side. Only 2 to 8% of the adults who have nightmares are eventually diagnosed with those disorders.

The occasional nightmare should not leave someone worrying. However, trying to get rid of them is a simple task. Someone could try to establish a regular bedtime routine. They could talk about the dream, rewrite the ending, not eat before bedtime, do yoga, meditate, etc. Though, some people do enjoy having them from time to time. 🌸

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Jazz

From page 7

Through his superb and curious compositions, "Mingus" inspires me wholly to be fully expressive in my creativity.

Consider this a sidebar for me to mention one of my all-time favorite styles of jazz — bossa nova, a fusion of none other than jazz and samba leading to a mix of sounds like no other. A staple of this genre is the 1964 album "Getz/Gilberto," featuring saxophonist Stan Getz, guitarist João Gilberto, and composer Antonio Carlos Jobim. It holds utter classics like "The Girl from Ipanema" and "Corcovado (Quiet Nights of Quiet Stars)." Songs whose soft guitar and holy saxophone evoke such an emotional vigor in their quality, it almost feels nostalgic.

My final pick is saxophonist Kamasi Washington whose 173-minute 2015 album, "The Epic," speaks true to its name. This album is filled with stark rhythms, sax solos, and an angelic choir to top it off. It starts with "Change of the Guard" which feels like the musical version of the succession of kings probably symbolic of his introduction to the genre. Other upbeat tracks are "The Next Step," and "The Rhythm Changes" which are more like events than tracks. On the flip side is "Isabelle," a track with a heart-wrenching romantic build that feels like a personal letter of love.

A similar track is his cover of Claude

Debussy's *Clair de Lune* which feels like a convergence with lunar beings. Some tracks also include vocalists like *Malcom's Theme*, a harrowing tribute to civil rights leader Malcom X and *Cherokee*, a love song which I consider to be the epitome of groove. Finally the album ends with "The Message," a wild and tumultuous track that sends you right back to earth. Kamasi has proven to be a modern staple of how jazz has beautifully evolved and is an ever-changing, grandiose, metaphysical form.



So, what is jazz? I could give you the technical terminology, but that wouldn't do it justice. Jazz is like a musical lifeform expressing the thoughts and ideas of its composers in a format that transcends formal language.

It may seem like a lot at first, but I promise, if you open up to it, jazz can liven up your music taste with its spice magnificence. It's got highs and lows, sharps and flats, and everything in between. Before you know it, you'll be a jazz connoisseur able to introduce those who have yet to be introduced to its wonder. 🌸

What we are not hearing about the deaf

BY AVA ROSARIO
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Lack of talk surrounding the deaf community has left it vulnerable to stigmas and misconceptions over the years. Growing up with a deaf grandma that was determined to communicate with her eight grandchildren, as well as having a parent who is a sign language interpreter, I was fortunate enough to witness the deaf community in ways that the general population typically does not.

Even today, many misconstrued ideas need to be corrected.

Sign language is not one universal language. Though there is an international sign language, each country has its own—British, Japanese, African, and so on. Specific signs even in the same language can vary by region. Signs are constantly evolving, so the way one person says *dog* in one state may differ in another. If my grandma is signing with a younger deaf person, she may find a new way to sign phrases or words.

American sign language is not English. They do not translate word for word. In English, you would say, “I will go to the store tomorrow.” In sign language, it is “Tomorrow go shop” or “Tomorrow go store.” Maybe even “Will shop tomorrow.” There are many ways an English phrase can be converted, but it will not match exactly.

Reading lips does not come naturally to everyone who is deaf. My grandma went to the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, so she was able to learn the skill through years of practice.



Though you do not have to learn it through school, many just assume that every deaf person will be able to know what they are saying by simply mouthing it. It can help to clarify while you are signing, but solely relying on it will likely get you nowhere.

Some can also learn to “talk.” Deaf people can make sound without knowing it as they sign, and if they go through a deaf school, it is likely that they will be taught to utilize that noise.

My grandma can pronounce most words in the English language, but not having experience in actively applying the concept of sound understandably leaves some room for error. The long sounds and short sounds of vowels are typically

mixed up.

If they have been deaf their whole life, they will *never* understand sound. My grandma is still perplexed by our reactions if she hits something like a table too hard, even if we explain that what she just did made a “loud noise.” You can explain that the wind “howls” all you want, but it would be the same as explaining colors to someone who is blind.

Public institutions are not as universally accommodating as you would think. Even in today’s more educated and inclusive age, and despite the fact that it is a law, many hospitals are hesitant to provide the patient’s preferred method of communication. This is usually an on-site interpreter.

They do not guarantee an interpreter for every deaf patient. Sometimes it is even expected that a child interpret for their parents, a messy and unfair situation that the deaf community and interpreters are still trying to combat. Interpreters are treated like a luxury, not a necessity.

My grandma gave me the opportunity to understand the deaf community in a more personal way than most, and for that I am thankful. Seeing the relief on a deaf person’s face when you find them flustered in public and can actually provide help is a different kind of happiness, and I am lucky enough to experience that. And lastly, please, do not start yelling whatever you are saying because you think it will help them hear. 🙏

Prepared, just in case...



Junior Joey Abdelli performs CPR compressions on the mannequin as he was demonstrating the technique to Mrs. Jones’s health class. All juniors who have Wellness/Fitness III receive instruction on Adult CPR/AED/First Aid as part of their Wellness Curriculum. They also have the opportunity to receive their card from the American Red Cross at a cost of \$30.

SPORTS



Page 10

It's Official: Refs, umps are in short supply

Part One: The unsung supporting stars of scholastic sports



In next month's Slate, we talk with Mr. Dennis Rehrig, a 35-year veteran of PIAA officials who retired in 2019. He will discuss how the scholastic-level black-and-whites are heading into the red. In the meantime, if you are interested in joining the ranks of officials, visit www.piaa.org/officials.

Photo courtesy: USATodayHSS

BY BRIANNA SCHUCK
SPORTS EDITOR

With the new year riding in, one of the biggest questions in the sports world isn't focused so much on the games themselves, but the referees, umpires, and all officials who attend each event. Without them, sports wouldn't be competitive, and fans wouldn't have anyone to blame when their team loses.

Referees are one of the most important parts of an athlete's life. As sports are becoming more popular, the number of officials are going down — drastically. Over the last five years, the PIAA has mandated officials to go under the same reporting process as teachers and coaches, meaning they need to pay roughly \$75 for their clearances every five years.

As a result, baseball umpires have dropped from 160 to 105 in the past five

years. This is the total number, however not the number available on a regular basis. Some of them may not even be available most of the season, but they are still registered umpires.

In retrospect, these referees (and umpires), must spend \$75 on clearances, and they make about \$77 per varsity baseball game and \$62 per JV game.

Baseball is considered one of the worst sports when it comes to the number of umpires available. Softball, on the other hand, has roughly 115 umpires for varsity and junior high. This number does not seem like much of an increase from baseball, however, there is definitely a greater interest for softball because the games are faster. To help persuade some softball umpires to become baseball umpires, they have increased the pay for baseball umpires to \$77, and the pay for softball umpires is still \$75.

Over time, there is expected to be a greater pay difference.

There are 80 wrestling officials, which is not a terrible number, but it could always be better. In most cases, there is only one official per meet. Yet, sometimes, depending on the size of the meet, there will be two officials.

Soccer is currently the best sport when it comes to officiating, as there are currently 170 officials. These officials are for both boys and girls, as it is the same sport and the same season. So yes, there are 170 officials for soccer, but there are also a lot of soccer games played on a regular basis, so more officials are always needed.

Basketball is also in really good shape when it comes to officiating, but again, there are even more basketball games played on a regular basis than soccer, so more officials are needed daily. Currently,

there are 390 officials total for both boys and girls basketball. This includes varsity, JV, junior high, and middle school.

For example, when there is a middle school game going on at the middle school and a boys and girls junior high game at the opponent's school, then there is a girls varsity and boys varsity doubleheader at home. In total, that is roughly six to eight officials needed at one school. So, yes, there are a lot of officials, but there is also a very high demand for them.

Today, there are 240 football officials, but the new five year deal is up, and the officials will need to renew their clearances, so they are expecting that number to drop. Although 240 may sound like a lot, these officials have to cover the East Penn Conference games, the Colonial League,

See Ref Shortage, page 11

SPORTS

The gamble of paying collegiate athletes

New California law allows profits for players

BY BROOKE DELANCEY
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

If you were in college and played a sport, would you like to gain some profit? Many athletes have dreamed about playing their sport in college. Many of those students play so well that they have received scholarships just so they can go to play.

In California, a new law allows college players to gain money off their talent. For these players, the chance to make some money is huge. Thousands of people will go across the country and pay so much to watch these players play. Millions of people take time out of their day to watch all the athletes play their sports.

“The billions of dollars in revenue from ticket sales, sponsorships, and TV deals go to the schools and the athletic conferences they belong to, while channels broadcasting the games cash in from selling commercial slots. And the top coaches earn millions in salaries,” writes Joe Bubar, a contributing writer for Scholastic News Online.



If everyone who is doing a job with the sport is getting paid, I feel that you most certainly should pay the players who always work hard to make sure they can win. Many people think that the scholarships that pay for their education is enough. I feel that the schools are correct to think that scholarships are enough, but they are also wrong to think that's all the players should get.

The players should have the option to market themselves for brands if they want or need to. If you are working your butt off trying your best to play you should get some of the glory that other athletes that are not in college receive. If someone wants the athlete's autograph and is willing to pay for it, the athlete should be allowed to get the money and make a profit from that sale.

If they want to have endorsement deals with sneaker companies, they should. The only group that makes no profit is the athletes and that is not fair at all. Though, I feel that if the colleges do not want to pay the athletes, that should be perfectly fine since the players get the opportunity to be there for sports and education.

The colleges already pay for many scholarships to allow the athletes to come to the school for education and activities. “Colleges, they point out, already award more than \$2.9 billion in athletic scholarships to players each year,” Bubar continues. These players have the opportunity to gain various degrees. I believe that all the players should simply have the option to promote themselves. Tell me this — If you played a sport would you like the chance to earn some money? 🐾

NL freshman tops boardercross ranks



Freshman Tyler Fenstermaker (insert and middle above) placed 1st in three competitions in January and one 4th-place at Stratton Mountain in Vermont. Boardercross is when four to six people race each other. The first one to pass the finish line wins. Racing speeds can reach 65 mph.

“I do boardercross because I enjoy going fast and it's really just more enjoyable,” Fenstermaker said. “But the real reason is because it includes jumps and you are racing against multiple people. What makes it better is when I win basically every time. But the competition on the 12th I had first all the way down, then I hit the gate at the end of the race and got disqualified.”

He snowboarded for about six years, starting at age 9, and he started training at 10. He now competes for World Cup competitions.

Ref Shortage

From page 10

the Schuylkill League, and all of the PIAA.

The East Penn Conference has a standard of seven officials per game, while the Colonial League has a standard of five. However, if you do the math, the Colonial League needs about 30 officials every Friday night, while the EPC needs about 63 officials every Friday night.

Of course, this math does not include all of the games being played and whether or not the schools opt in to a seven-official standard compared to a five-official standard. Meaning, depending on the type of offense the team runs, the athletic director has the option to decide if a seven-official standard is necessary.

Field hockey only has 64 officials, and that seems really low, but only the Colonial League and the EPC have

field hockey, as the Schuylkill League does not. That being said, there are fewer field hockey games, so the need for a large amount of field hockey officials is not great, but larger numbers definitely make scheduling easier.

Last but not least, track and field has roughly 39 officials for District XI. These officials are also the officials for cross country in the fall. There is only a necessity for one official per meet, but the larger meets could have two officials, depending on the size.

Check out Part Two in our March issue! 🐾



If you have interest in becoming a PIAA official for local sports, visit:



piaa.org/officials



Many Jokers have grinned and cackled through time

Romero, Nicholson, Ledger, Phoenix, etc. — from the comics to the darkness and all the white paint in between

BY GAVIN TISCHLER
STAFF WRITER

“Have you ever danced with the devil in the pale moonlight?” the Joker says to Batman in the 1989 blockbuster. Many actors have played the Joker before and since, but how many delivered?

The first time we saw the Joker on screen was in 1966, when Cesar Romero played the character in the live-action Batman TV show created by the late Adam West.

This version of The Joker was more wacky and goofy than the comics or movies to come. Romero did a good job at bringing the character to life for the first time on screen and will forever be the one who started it all.

Jack Nicholson is the next actor who has played the Joker. Debuting in 1989 in the first Batman movie ever released, Nicholson played the character perfectly and is one of the best Jokers we have seen to date. It was very comic accurate but also original at the same time. There are many intense moments that leave you on the edge of your seat and make you wonder what will happen next.

After 19 years we finally got the next and best Joker we’ve seen on the big screen. Heath Ledger in “The Dark



Knigh” was a refreshing take on the Joker with originality, comic accuracy, and a short fuse where you don’t know what he’s going to do next. Ledger played The Joker in a way that we’ve never seen before and practiced for months prior to shooting.

His version of the Joker was an anarchist who wants to make a point to the world, no matter what it costs. Ledger

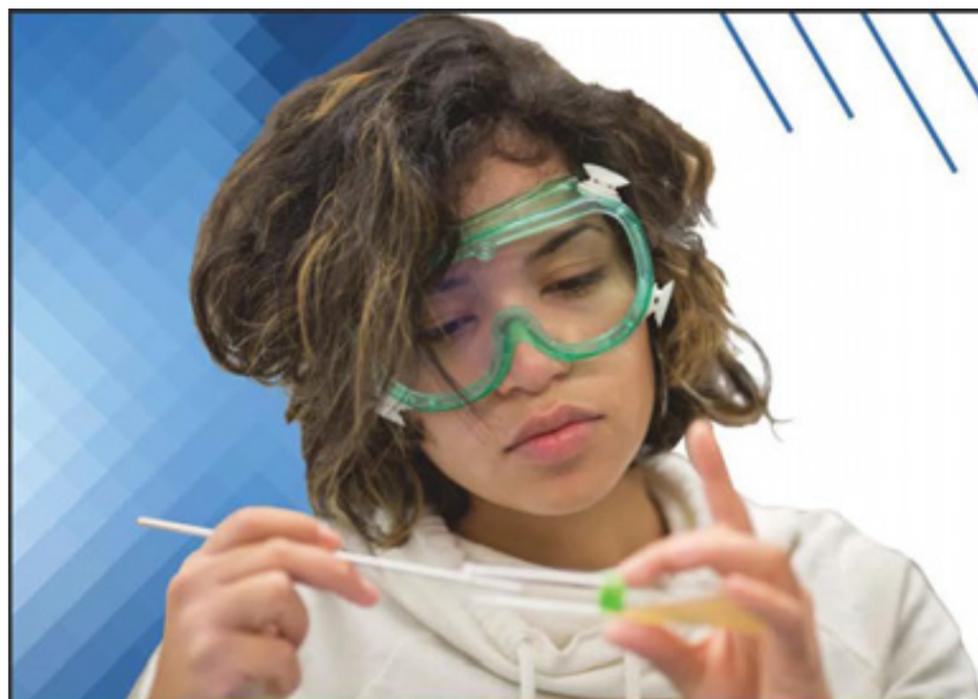
won an Oscar for Best Supporting Actor but tragically died before the Oscars in 2009.

In 2016 a movie came out that surprised many called “Suicide Squad.” When the movie was announced there was a teaser image of Jared Leto as a tattooed up, pimp Joker that many people hated. After the movie release, which was a hit or miss for audiences, Leto’s Joker

was a brand new and original take on the character, making him a pimp who is in the drug dealing business with a face tattoo and purple leather coat.

I personally enjoyed this take on the character because of the originality and how it felt new and refreshing. Many critics and audiences found him to be a

See Jokers, page 15



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When addictions start at home, so must the help

BY COLLIN WINTER
STAFF WRITER

There are a lot of things that can shake up a household -- fights, divorces, money, and especially addiction. A lot of people are lucky enough to live in a fairly normal household with supportive, loving parents who are at their side to act as role models.

There are also a lot of children subjected to parents who have been fully engulfed by the disease of addiction. It's not easy growing up with parents who constantly accuse you of stealing their money, lying to them, posing as emotional abuse victims, and things of that sort.

It's no surprise that it runs rampant in households, considering 38% of adults in 2017 struggled with substance abuse disorder. Although addiction is harmful to the user, it's nowhere near comparable to the damage it can cause to other people in the house with the addict, especially children.

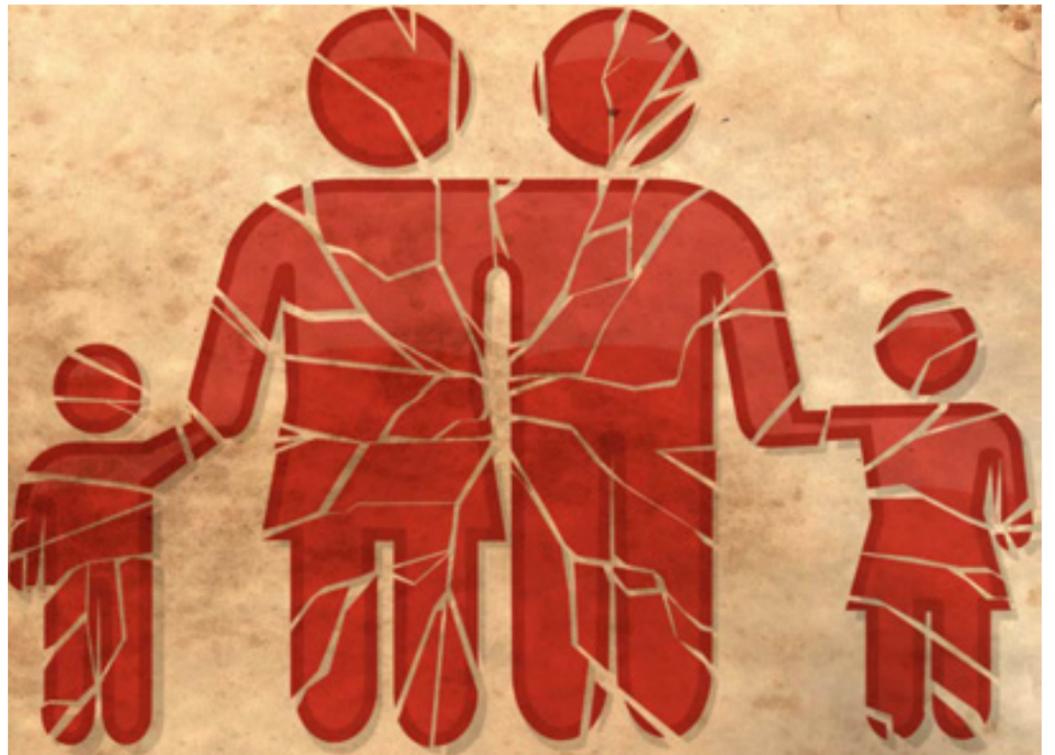
Addiction is frustrating. Bottom line is that it's not fair to anyone -- the addict, the friends and family of that person, employers, etc. One of the most frustrating parts is the word itself and how commonly it's misunderstood.

By definition, addiction means "Compulsive physiological need for and use of a habit-forming substance." In layman's terms, addiction is when a person physically and mentally feels like they

cannot stop a drug or behavior. For a long time, addiction was just seen as junkies being hooked on drugs, but as of 1987, addiction is officially recognized as a disease. It is important that we, as a society, are taking steps toward learning about this disease and how to treat it, and how to understand and treat people around us who are sick with addiction.

Addicts are commonly looked down upon as "filthy" or "scummy" or a whole list of other derogatory names. There's no doubt that there is a very large negative stigma surrounding addiction. In the media, addicts are commonly depicted as the cliché "junkie" -- ratty clothes, yellow teeth falling out of their black gums, wrinkled and discolored skin, thin, dirty hair, skin sores, and begging you for \$5 for "food." Although situations like these are a sad reality, this is not an accurate depiction of addiction.

This is part of the reason it's especially important to continue studying addiction and how it affects people, because at the end of the day, that's what addicts are -- people, just like you and me. In fact,



some of your favorite celebrities may be addicts/ex-addicts. Daniel Radcliffe, Carrie Fisher, Robert Downey Jr., Kurt Cobain, Oprah, Robin Williams, and so many more. It's amazing what you don't know about people from an outside perspective.

Addiction really puts people in abysmal positions, where it seems that you

want to love and support someone but simultaneously can't stand them and their behaviors. This is a dilemma that friends and families of addicts deal with on a daily basis.

I personally know lots of people suffering from addiction, some very close

See Addiction, page 15



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Beautifully ugly (the sweater)



Photo courtesy of Mrs. Showak

Before our holiday break, Jackson Schoch (right) went all-out for “Ugly Sweater Day.”



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Addiction

From page 14

to me, and I can say first-hand that it is definitely difficult to maintain relationships with those people. This becomes even more true when these addicts are in your own family.

They mean no harm, but these people who are so constantly lost in a daze and acting irrationally can cause a tremendous amount of harm, physically and emotionally to themselves and the people surrounding them, especially children.

When 38% of the adult population struggles with addiction, it's inevitable that there are going to be parents who are addicts. I believe childhood is the most important time in a person's life, so I find that the idea of children being trapped in addiction-riddled households to be the most saddening part of it all. The parents of a child are supposed to act as role models, and very frequently addicts do not make good ones.

Children learn how to steal, turn their back on their family, get so mad that you yell and hit them, blame everyone else for everything, and lots of other dysfunctional behaviors that will be car-

ried with him/her into adulthood and society.

Not to state the obvious, but this can cause a lot of trauma for a child, that will probably end up having to be worked out later down the line in therapy. No child wants to call the cops on their dad because he's yelling about money and hitting mom again.

At the end of the day, addicts are still people and addiction is a disease, and just like any other issue or disease, there are ways to help treat it.

If you or anyone around you who is



struggling with, or is starting to exhibit signs of addiction, you can be the one to step in and help. There are plenty of local rehab clinics that will offer inpatient and outpatient services, along with detox and therapy programs. It's never too early or late to step in and help. 🌸

Jokers

From page 12

terrible representation of the character.

The newest and debatably best Joker is played by Joaquin Phoenix in 2019's "Joker," with a fresh new take on the character the fans were eager to see. With the role, Phoenix brought something we have never seen before, how he became the Joker and what drives a man to insanity. Amazing visuals, choreography, an amazing soundtrack and score, and perfect acting blend well and create one of

the greatest movies of all time.

Phoenix worked hard to master the role and had several rewards and Oscar nominations. After seeing the movie four times I can say it is the best version of Joker we have seen on the big screen yet. The character has come a long way and fans of all kinds have a favorite of their own.

With the Joker being a brand new character in the videogame Mortal Kombat 11, who knows where he might pop up next? The Joker definitely has great things coming, and fans all around can't wait to see what's next for the beloved villain. 🌸



**FROM THE MIND OF CHASE JONES...
COMES THE REMARKABLE REBOOT OF WHAT WAS ONCE...**

PROJECT BULLDAWG

Ivan the isotope was also a hero of WWII and often fought alongside Marty Mercury, Ms. Allegiance, and Bourbon the Bulldog himself. Ivan is a young Russian boy whose strength rivals that of Ms. Allegiance. His nuclear abilities, which had accidentally been given to him in a KGB experiment to create small ray guns for their spies, gives him an incredible edge in battle. Abilities include super strength and the power to fire photon blasts from his fists. Despite his Soviet nationality, Ivan is a defender of freedom and found mentors in Ms. Allegiance and her Bulldog, Bourbon, as Marty did.

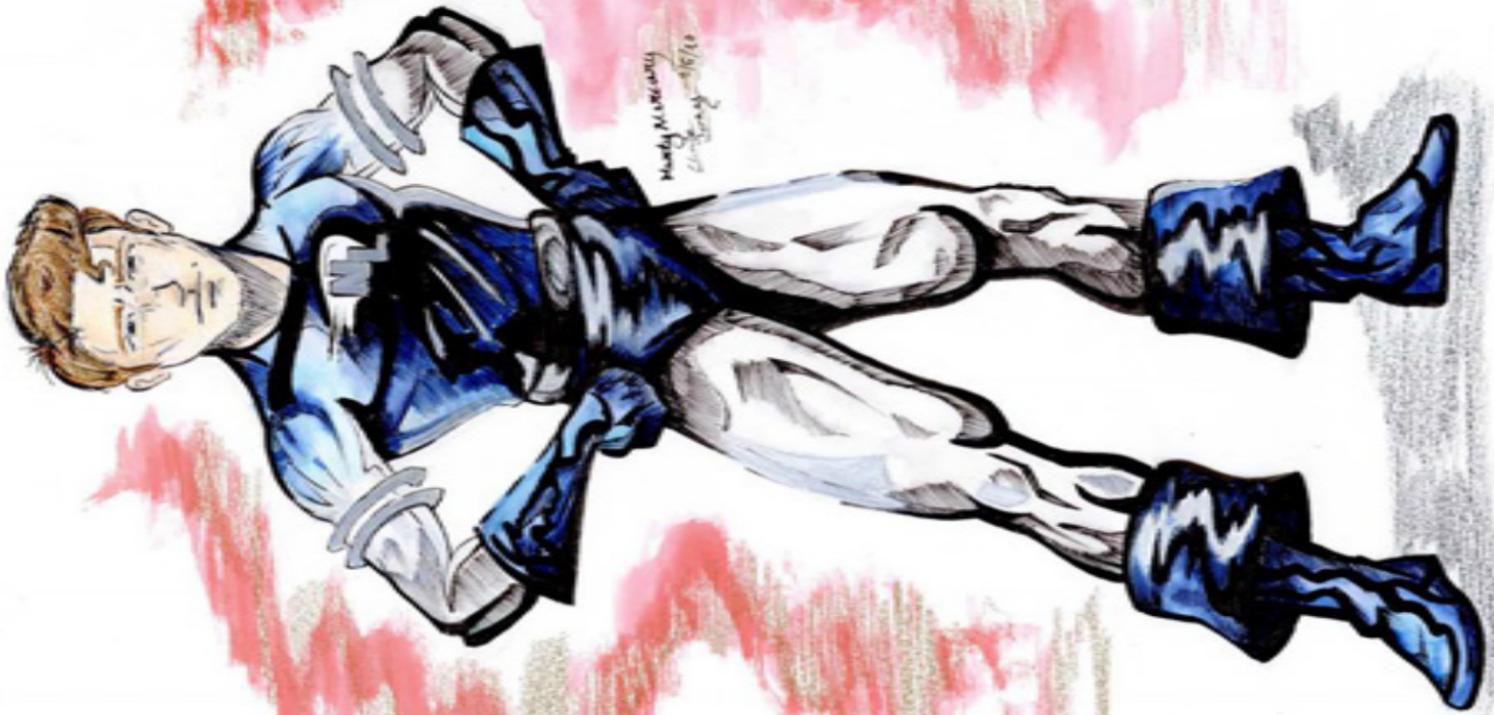


IVAN THE ISOTOPE

STAY TUNED

.....FOR BIOS ON BOURBON, MS. ALLEGIANCE, AND THE OTHER FANTASTIC MEMBERS OF TASK-FORCE BULLDAWG.

Marty is a young WWII hero who is known for his quick wit and patriotism. He gained his name for his swiftness, speed, and strength like that of the Roman god Mercury. No one is entirely sure of his origin, in terms of how he gained his powers; however, it never much mattered to them. Marty first appeared at the tail end of the war during the battle of D-Day on June 6th, 1944. Before he made his debut in battle, it was speculated that he was an apprentice of Ms. Allegiance (see next issue), along with Ivan the Isotope.



MARTY MERCURY

INTRODUCING THE PHENOMENAL & OUTRAGEOUS ADVENTURES OF...

TASK-FORCE BULLDAWG