

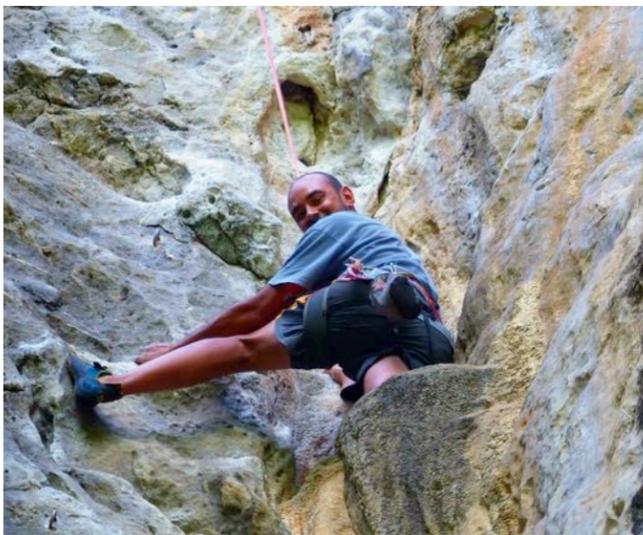
THE SLATE

ALL YOUR BULLDOG NEWS... UNLEASHED!



1,000 POINTS! Page 10

'An intoxicating sense of freedom'



Destination Anywhere

Northern Lehigh High School science teacher Mr. Rajeev Gupta has a blank plan book, when it comes to his travels. All trips are up in the air, under the water, or on the side of a mountain in some desolate tropical paradise. Above, he is pictured with his friend, Aitana, on a taxi boat. Left, on a climbing route in Ton Sai, Thailand. Join his spontaneous journeys on page 3.

Shining like a rainbow in the dark

Aavidum Club boisterously crusades against the silence

By Anthony Bardelli
Staff Writer

Amongst the many clubs which one may join at NLHS, there is one whose soul is the wellness of all beyond its social cluster. Aavidum, from Latin, translates loosely as "that of life," a phrase which has come to form the foundation of the group's guardian motto: "I've got your back."

It is an innate human need to rely upon, and thrive upon, companionship in the hostile morass that is the world which one can fall into...and never return from... without eyes and hearts to guide the weary soul.

In the constant ebb and flow of life, the chaos of the dice rolled for humankind can take its toll upon the mind and body. Like a string of fate, one untethers to the point of snapping. Aavidum seeks to be the sailor that holds onto the rope and mend it for all those in need.

The organization was started in 2003 by students of Cocalico High School in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, to be the shield against the scalding taunts and act as the righteous sword against

Say hello to 'Bye Bye Birdie' on musical stage

By Cydney Krause and Staff Writers

Northern Lehigh Theater Troupe is about to transform its stage and send audience members back to 1958 in Sweet Apple, Ohio. Bye Bye Birdie will hit the NL musical stage on March 21-24 to spotlight the Birdie-obsessed teenagers including Kim MacAfee (played by Courtney

Trumbore), the president of the Conrad Birdie fan club.

But, who is Conrad Birdie? He's a rock-and-roll superstar and teen idol ready to sweep the nation who happens to have been drafted into the army.

Because of this, songwriter Albert Peterson and secretary Rosie Alvarez plan for Conrad's farewell. It is Rosie who pulls out Kim MacAfee's name



and leads them to travel to the small town of Sweet Apple, Ohio, where Kim is going to be kissed by Conrad on live television, but Hugo Peabody has other plans.

"This year the audience can expect to have their emotions played with as they watch two people struggle in love, and a crazy star who just can't get stop the girls from going

wild," said Alyssa Snyder, who plays Rosie Alvarez. "Along with that they can also expect moonlight swims, loop the loop, and lots of dance breaks!"

Director Colette Boudreaux explains how the camaraderie of the cast stayed cohesive during the role selections and grueling rehearsals.

 **Bye Bye Birdie: March 21, 22 @ 7 p.m., March 23 @ 2 and 7 p.m., March 24 @ 2 p.m. For ticket info, see ad on page 9**

Student Council plays Cupid

By **Jamie Knerr**
Editor in Chief

Valentine's Day... You either love it or you hate it. For some people, they use it as a day to further express their affections for someone. Others see it as a day they can't wait to be over. However you see it, our Student Council has a way to make the season a little more fun for everybody.

From the end of January to early February, students had the opportunity to purchase and fill out a quiz to find their perfect match. The quizzes work like this: Depending on your answers, you are matched with who is most compatible to you, meaning who answered the most similar to you.

Matches are given within your grade level and also within the entire school. With purchase, students received a list of who they are most compatible to be best friends with, and who they are completely opposite from, or who they are *least* compatible with.

All proceeds benefit the high school's student council to help us provide more fun events like this!

Student Council will be holding our annual



Spring Dance on Saturday, March 16. This event will be semi-formal and we invite everyone to come celebrate with us! Food and beverages will be provided, as well as a fun night spent with friends! We will be selling tickets throughout all lunches in the beginning of March. Tickets will be \$10 prior to the dance or \$15 at the door. It will be held in our gym from 7-10 p.m.

March will also mark the start of our annual Food Drive. This two-week fundraiser supports the Northern Lehigh Food Bank. Each homeroom is given a collection box and students are encouraged to bring in any canned goods or non-perishable items to be donated to the food bank and distributed to community members.

This fundraiser is a great and easy way to give back to others!

Looking ahead to April, we will also be hosting our annual Spring Miller Keystone Blood Drive. This event is open to the public and any student 16 years or older. We invite everyone to come and donate! The units collected help many people throughout our community in need.

Student Council has many events scheduled for Spring, so make sure you are up to date with all of the information! 🐾

BULLDOG BRIEFS

🐾 HAPPENINGS FROM THE HALLWAYS 🐾

BRAAAAAINNNNS! This past May, three juniors (now seniors) achieved the highest possible score of a 5 given by the College Board on the AP Calculus Exam. These students were **Ian Rigby**, **Aaron Rudolph** and **Michael Martineau**. Very impressive!

Running Indoors is Cool: How fast can you run a mile? Jared Thomason set a personal best at each of the last three indoor meets. His latest was **5:14** at the Susquehanna University Invite!

Got ups?! Zach Moyer won the high jump at the Lebanon Valley College Invite and followed that performance by clearing 6ft at Susquehanna University!

Reading is still fundamental! Miss Scheckler has successfully forced all of her current classes to pick a book to read for enjoyment (with no assessments involved!)

Have a Great Summer! Team Yearbook is finishing up their masterpiece! That's right, the yearbook will be ready for press in March so we have delivery in early June. Order your "You & Me, Blue & White" yearbook soon by clicking the link on the high school web site today! Supplies are limited!

Getting' Muddy with It. Ms. Mattiola's Fine Arts class has been up to its elbows in mud! Students have been throwing on the potter's wheel and have made some great pottery! Coming soon to a display case near you.

Welcome Back. The Science Art Center welcomes back Dr. Deanna Quay, chemistry teacher, and sends best wishes to Ms. Katie Cappuccino on her next teaching position. We might see Ms. Cappuccino in the building as a substitute!

No Foolin'. Good luck to Mr. Shuey as he is expecting his second child on *April 1!*

Garfield would not approve. Shout out to the "Happy Monday Lady" in the cafeteria. You sure make our days sweeter!

Have something for Bulldog Briefs? Send it our way any-time: theslatenews@nlsd.org.

Carrying a message of openness and positivity

personal demons when one of their own ended their life.

To date, 150-plus bastions have been set up across the United States for students of all ages – the key demographic. Most notably, Aavidum has worked with the homegrown Bo Tkach Foundation to spread awareness of mental health and raise money to support the cause of preventing tragedy before it strikes by recognizing the signs of disturbance. One of these very island refuges seeking to spread awareness is located in Northern Lehigh High School.

Upon the announcements one may have heard of Aavidum meetings during the morning, yet a mere vocalized acknowledgement gives minimal context as to what the club's purpose is in the context of the school in such a vast network. One may also remember the presence of Aavidum affiliates in the mornings greeting students and staff as they entered the building before the winter holiday. Aavidum, in itself, "means to look out for one another. It isn't saving lives or anti-bullying, while of course those are important, we stand



for general positivity toward each other," said Ian Rigby, an avid senior member of the group since his freshman year. Furthermore does he elaborate that the club desires for "...you to take your 'sad boi hours' to your friends instead of holding it in."

The message that is carried is for openness and positivity. Trust in your friends and family to hear your words and be there for you. Since its coalescence has Aavidum stood upon the pillars of caring, compassion, acknowledgement, and respect for its fellow person. For those who are chosen or ask to attend, the annual grand meeting which brings together many schools from around the state addresses these pillars in detail as guest speakers and students from the host school take

members through the club's objectives.

The message is that no matter where you are, there will always be strangers waiting to become friends.

While only recently having come onto the NLHS front, its members are full of a vital altruism needed for the cause to progress through its infancy as a club. As a member myself, I can say that though young, the value of Aavidum is immeasurable.

It is a coalition I am proud to be a part of and feel honored to see its birth in Northern Lehigh High School. All souls who have dedicated themselves to the wardenship have done so for those who may know nothing else but sorrow in my eye. It is a boisterous crusade against the silence that threatens to consume humanity. A rainbow in the dark. Unlike any other band, it is for the students upon a personal plane. All are welcomed and cared for as equals. "Aavidum is about acceptance of all students and supporting them," by Mrs. Jones, the founder of the NLHS sect's reckoning.

To those who need to be heard, there are those who will listen and let you know, "I've got your back." 🐾

THE SLATE

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The Slate is proud to be the voice of Northern Lehigh High School. It is printed by The Times News of Lehigh. We thank you for reading and please pass it on!



Science teacher turns spontaneous world explorer

By Jamie Knerr
Editor in Chief

Well-known travel author Annette White once said, “Stop dreaming about your bucket list and start living it.”

Mr. Rajeev Gupta, science teacher at Northern Lehigh High School, has taken his passion for exploration to a new level. This past summer, Mr. Gupta had the trip of a lifetime, spending almost his entire break from teaching to exploring new places.

“I’ve always wanted to go to random places, and just see the world. I thought it was a good time to start,” he said. Traveling solo for his first time, Mr. Gupta had taken a month-long trip to Thailand, a country known for its beautiful, large cliffs and mountains made perfect for rock climbing.

Just after the 2017-2018 school year came to an end, Mr. Gupta wanted to travel somewhere he hadn’t been. “I didn’t have a concrete plan when I got there, which is something I have always wanted to try out.

I always wanted to go somewhere and figure it out as I went along.”

Wanting to fulfill that dream, Mr. Gupta stuffed a backpack and got on a plane. That plane flew him to his first and only definite stop, Bangkok, the capital of Thailand.

“Bangkok was a very crazy city. It reminded me a lot of the cities in India because it was very crowded and noisy. So I didn’t want to stay there long; I had left the city pretty quick.” After two days of exploring the city, Mr. Gupta traveled south to visit a smaller island called Kho Phangan.

Kho Phangan is a small island in the Gulf of Thailand that mainly consists of jungle and mountains. Gupta, having loved this island for its beauty, spent almost five days longer than he had planned, exploring and hiking through its jungles.

“I went hiking almost every day, and I visited a bunch of different beaches. There are quite a few there that aren’t accessible by roads, so you have to either hike through the jungle or take a boat around the island.”

The jungle terrain on the island is



Mr. Raj Gupta rarely spends time at home, when possible. This past summer, he slept in his own bed a mere 10 times. Above, he stops at Bluerama, a restaurant overlooking the Gulf of Thailand in Kho Phangan.

very dense, so it would be difficult for a person to successfully travel through it without a trail. “The beaches I saw were absolutely beautiful, it looked like they were out of a movie. You’re surrounded by jungles and cliffs and the bluest water I have ever seen.”

After visiting Kho Phangan, Mr. Gupta had traveled from the east side of the peninsula of Thailand to the west, staying at Ton Sai. However, his journey to this area came as a surprise.

“I was planning on going to



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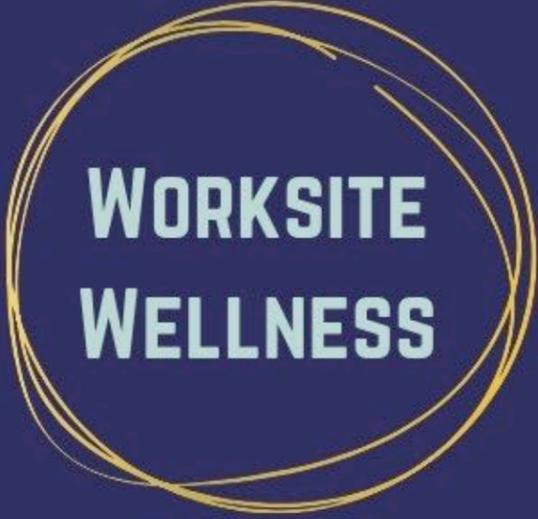
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NL hosts Lehigh County Choir Fest

By Shayla Smith
Staff Writer

On Jan. 12, and for the first time in eight years, Northern Lehigh High School hosted the 2019 Lehigh County Choir Festival. Six schools across Lehigh County: Catasauqua, Dieruff, Salisbury, Whitehall, William Allen, and of course Northern Lehigh, were brought together in the high school's auditorium to put on a

memorable concert.

"Being able to host was an unforgettable experience," said Danyel Rex, an NL junior and a two-time festival performer. "Having an event like County at NL is something that is very rare and as a student here I am so proud of hosting and being involved."

The festival is held every winter. There are only two days of rehearsal and preparation, only



Singin' their hearts out: (Top) Cole Cheesbrough, Trent Herman, Shayla Smith, Francine Ohlson. (Middle) Paige Zellner, Brianna Strohl, Maggie Reitz, Danyel Rex, Olivia Bailey. (Bottom) Brooke Delancey, Emily Bachman, Claudia Cozzi, Owen Levan-Uhler.

'Birdie' to take flight

"I initially wondered how the cast would get along since I was combining our year-round troupe members with those who were coming on for just the musical (from the high school and middle school)," Boudreaux said. "The Troupe, however, has done a wonderful job of being exemplary leaders and helping the newer cast members acclimate. Meanwhile, the auxiliary cast is working so hard to keep up, and I am so grateful for their commitment and enthusiasm!"

If this story sounds the slightest bit familiar it is because the creator of *Bye Bye Birdie*, Michael Stewart, actually based the role of Conrad Birdie off of the King of Rock-and-Roll, Elvis Presley, when he was drafted in 1957. However, Conrad's name is not related to Elvis, but to his rival, Conway Twitty. *Birdie* is often seen as the typical high school musical, the director said, but thanks to the vision of the production staff and the brilliant capabilities of NL Art Director, Mr. Steve Shuey. "I am proud to say this will be like no other *Birdie* anyone has ever seen. NLTT is striving to be known for productions like that, and this is helping to pave the way for that reputation," Boudreaux said.

Mr. Shuey said audience members can expect a feel-good comedy making light of the norms in 1950s society. The musical's design is based on the "Pop Art" movement from that era.

"Pop Art was a challenge to traditional fine arts and it incorporated all things in popular culture," Mr. Shuey said. 🐾

On the road again, on a boat again, over the valleys again

Railay, a beach known for its rock climbing. I had stopped at a national park in inland Thailand and I met this crazy man from California who had not been home to the states in 15 years."

Mr. Gupta had the opportunity to meet many new people on his trip, and this man was no exception. For the past 15 years, he has been exploring new places and going anywhere on the map he desires. "We started talking and I told him my plans of going to Railay to climb. He had said that if I wanted a *real* climb, I should go to Ton Sai instead."

After taking this man's advice, Mr. Gupta kept on his journey and traveled to Ton Sai to gain a more authentic experience of the land. When he had gotten off the 'taxi boat,' he noticed the island was almost completely deserted. On this island he was able to find a tiny little hostel where he stayed overnight. "Rooms were little bamboo shacks inside the jungle, their walls against the cliffs. They were so rustic and simple. To stay each night cost me \$8."

Here, Mr. Gupta had spent most

of his time rock climbing over the beach's cliffs. His first time experiencing outdoor climbing took place on these 1,000-foot-high limestone cliffs. "I got really close with the people I climbed with there. We were all on this secluded island, traveling alone, only with the purpose of climbing. I was only there for six days but I made the best of friendships. I still keep in touch with them today."

While traveling with family and friends, you can create memories that stay with you forever and explore new areas with the people you love. However, one of Mr. Gupta's favorite aspects of this trip was that he was able to experience this solo. "When you travel by yourself, you meet new people in a way that you never would if you were traveling with others. You are completely subject to your own whims and you can always go by what you feel all the time." Mr. Gupta describes this as an "intoxicating sense of freedom."

Once his trip to Ton Sai came to an end, Mr. Gupta had traveled back home to the U.S. However, he didn't stay in Pennsylvania too long before getting back out on the road and



Like something from a worldly calendar, Mr. Gupta shares photographic memories of Aang Thong Marine Park in the Gulf of Thailand (above) and Badlands National Park, South Dakota.



BEEF: It's what's for rockin'



Grade-A prime cuts of homegrown organic entertainment: Austin Deibert, Lorenzo Cozzi, Sara Hunsicker, Robert McIntyre, Mike Martineau, Charles Fleischmann, Cat Shelly, Dylan Kuntz.

By Dylan Kuntz
Community Editor

It was roughly two years ago that five Northern Lehigh students created a band called BEEF that since then has grown in both popularity and size. Charles Fleischmann, Mike Martineau, Nick Lehman, Robert McIntyre and Sara Hunsicker never intended to create a band, but the more they practiced and performed together, the more the idea evolved.

The story starts in the winter of 2016. Charles, Mike, Nick, Robert and Sara decided it would be a great idea to combine their musical talents for the upcoming school winter concert and perform a piece from the legendary Trans-Siberian Orchestra as a separate group.

They met in one of Charles's barns with a finished room upstairs in order to practice and write music. When the time came for the winter concert, their piece was a huge success. This set the stage, so to speak, for their next performance at the 2017 spring concert, as well as the official creation of the band.

Until after the 2016 winter concert, the group had no name, nor were they aware of what they were about to create. "BEEF started very informally," says Sara. "It wasn't something that was made purposefully. We just played music that we didn't really get the opportunity to play at our high school. We weren't intending to become a band or really make anything of it."

The name was not at all planned either. Instead, it was to-

tally random. "One day, we met at Ivan Zheng's restaurant to brainstorm," said Mike. "Jokingly, I said, 'Hey guys, I'll slap my finger on the menu, and wherever it lands will be our name.' It landed on 'beef,' and the rest is history."

After the winter concert, and now an official band, BEEF needed to develop something for the spring concert. They started putting together different ideas, but eventually decided to write an interpretation of winter, spring, summer, and fall in an original piece called *Seasonings*. Each season had a different feel to the music, as well as a light show. Once the performance of *Seasonings* was over, the crowd went wild. BEEF's first year

Martineau receives academic accolades

Northern Lehigh High School Principal Robert Vlasaty recently announced that Michael Martineau, senior, has been named a Commended Student in the 2018 National Merit Scholarship Program. A letter of commendation from NL and the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC), which conducts the program, was presented by Mr. Vlasaty to Mr. Martineau.

Approximately 34,000 Commended Students throughout the nation are being recognized for their exceptional academic promise. Although they will not continue in the 2019 competition, Commended Students placed among the top 50,000 scorers of more than 1.6 million students who entered the 2018 competition by taking the 2017 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test.

"Winning the National Merit Scholarship Award was refreshing, among other things. It reached Mr. Vlasaty's office eleven months after I took the PSAT, so it had escaped my mind for the most part. It came in the midst of my navigating college applications, and it was nice to have that leg-up. To me, this award is a prime example of why it is important for each and every one of us high-schoolers to put hard work in now. I studied quite a bit for the PSAT, and it paid dividends. I encourage students to give all of their work this due diligence. You have to work hard to play hard."

Mr. Vlasaty agreed, saying, "Michael's recognition as a National Merit Scholarship Contender is a tribute to his parents and teachers, and to his hard work and dedication. Michael is an exceptional All-American young man who not only exudes academic prowess, but he is a gifted musician too! We are extremely proud of him and he represents his school and family well!"

Theater members balance long rehearsals with school, life

By Owen Levan-Uhler
Staff Writer

The Northern Lehigh Little Theater has hosted some great productions over the years. Some of the most recent being *Beauty and the Beast* and *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*. This year, a group of talented high school students (with some help from teachers and parents along the way) are putting on another production that shows great promise - *Bye Bye Birdie*. The only way these productions

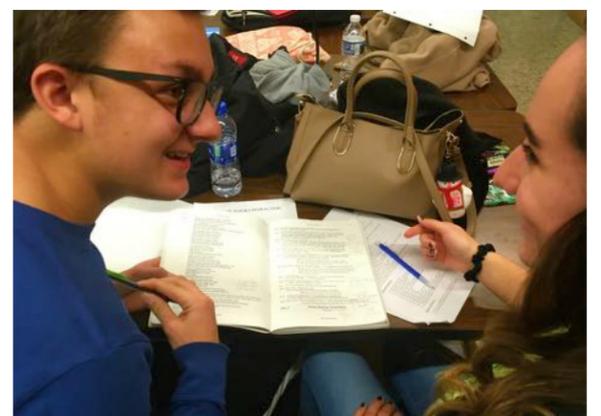
evolve as well as they do is with the hard and nearly never-ending work of these talented students.

Students in theater work around the clock to remember lines, build sets and props, make costumes, make sure lighting and sound work the way they should, and so many other things. Imagine having to go to school for 15 hours one day. That's how long many of the theater kids were at rehearsal for on the Friday before *Winter Cabaret* this year.

After a whole day of school, theater had scheduled a rehearsal from 3

to around 7 p.m. The rehearsal had to go later than expected, however, and ended right around 9 p.m. But this is what has to happen. In order for a production like this year's amazing *Winter Cabaret*, rehearsals may (and will) go later than planned.

I asked Maggie Reitz and Claudia Cozzi how



Trent Herman and Brianna Strohl go over the script for 'Bye Bye Birdie.' (Photo by Courtney Trumbore)

OPINIONS



Editorial

Experience some moments before the concert's over

One of the stronger lessons learned as the years go by is taught through the concepts of experience and moments.

Teens and young adults are always in a rush to get elsewhere fast, climb over the next hurdle quicker and turn each corner blindly without ever standing still to look around for a while.

Too many fail to experience the many moments that surround. Consider those who seem to get school. These are not the students who bust out of the door at 2:15 and just wait for the next day to arrive.

Those who immerse themselves in the full educational experience take in the moments before school, during school, after school and all-around school (those are prepositional phrases, kids).

They wake up ready for a challenge, prepared for the unknown and excited for adventures - as minimal as chicken alfredo at lunch and as meaningful as playoff practice or musical rehearsal.

It cannot be a coincidence that the students who go beyond the classroom work - student council, yearbook, theater, sports, chess club, game night, Aevium, band, chorus, the very newspaper in your hands, and everything in between - grow faster, mature stronger and create memories for a lifetime that really define what "school is all about."

They are sculpting moments from experiences. Think about how YouTube is saturated with grainy, poor-sounding concert videos recorded on the latest iPhone-whatever. Immediately when the lights go out and the band takes stage, the phones pop on and record these false memories instead of the eyes, mind and ears. The experience is severely misguided.

Before the final curtain closes (that's a metaphor for graduation, kids), think about what school really means. That "When are we gonna use this?" mentality is so 1985. School teaches you lessons that go far beyond the classroom.

Even after the NLHS chapters close and real livin' begins, enjoy every song and immerse yourself in the full concert. Do not watch it all unfold on a small screen when the real show is rockin' all around you.

'My show just had to go on'

Finding an anchor on the stage to create many more acts

By Courtney Trumbore
Staff Writer

Life is a lot like the ocean. At times it is beautiful and fun, and others, dark and choppy. For a long time, my life was dark and choppy too, until I found my anchor. An anchor can be an array of things. For some, it's a pet or a family member, but for me it's an activity. This is the story about how theatre saved my life.

I transferred to Northern Lehigh in my sophomore year and it was my hardest transition yet. I didn't know everyone and I was nervous to make friends. At first I didn't want to do any activities because I didn't believe I was good enough (and sometimes I still feel that way today).

Then I found out the high school was going to do *Beauty and the Beast* for its spring musical. Since I was little, I loved singing and playing pretend, but as I got older, that changed. I thought that in order to be cool, I had to play sports and be athletic, but in the end that wasn't for me.

After encouragement from my mom and peers, I decided to audition. It was one of the best decisions I have ever made. I found my first friends and my true calling. It was amazing, I finally felt like I belonged, but something still wasn't right.

A couple years earlier I experienced something very traumatic which has affected me mentally in different ways. While attending my grandfather's memorial service, I witnessed one of his close friends die. I know it sounds crazy - someone dying at a funeral - something you can't forget.

That image stayed with me

forever and caused many problems in the future. My sophomore year was anxiety-ridden. My first breakup and a concussion didn't make it any easier. But theatre helped me carry on and continue, and it still does to this very day.

Last year we did *Sweeney Todd*, and that was by far the best time of my life, but months before that my life was a mess. I didn't know it at the time, but I surrounded myself with toxic people. I had pushed away the good

I KEPT TELLING MYSELF, 'THE WORLD WOULD BE BETTER WITHOUT ME.'
...I DIDN'T SEEK HELP, BUT IN A WAY, HELP CAME TO ME.

friends I had in theatre in order to please these new friends. They filled my head with negative thoughts and feelings. They made me believe it was OK to self-harm, and I was in too deep to turn back. I was convinced I was broken even when my life was OK. I wanted to kill myself and had no real reason behind it. But I was sure. I kept telling myself, "The world would be better off without me," or "They don't need me anyway." I didn't seek help, but in a way, help came to me.

Once we started rehearsing for the musical, I was able to get in touch with my peers from theatre. Being with them almost every night, my mentality improved as well as my attitude. I realized how toxic my so-called friends were and that I didn't need them controlling my life anymore. I became happy again and I was happy for months.

Once the show started, I was exhilarated and full of life. Things felt right again, and I was

at peace. Even when we were at the Freddy Awards, I didn't care if we won or lost it all. I was proud of everyone in the cast and so happy that I chose not to end my life months before.

Then senior year started. I should have been excited. This is my last year in high school. After this, I'm free, but I didn't feel that way at all. I felt as though I was falling into an endless pit of darkness. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't claw my way out. I was trapped and I saw no end to my

suffering. Even when the auditions for the musical came around, I still felt uneasy. But I still auditioned because I hoped that theatre would save me, one last time.

Even after I got the role of Kim MacAfee in *Bye Bye Birdie*, I

still felt down. This is what I had been working for the past two years. That's when my parents took action and got me help. I resented taking antidepressants. I thought it meant I was broken and I could never be fixed, but I was wrong. I was enjoying theatre again, and even though I still have days where I'm down in the dumps, I'm able to enjoy the things I love. Both theatre and antidepressants have helped me get back to a better place and I'm a better person because of both.

There were so many times in the past three years where I wanted to end it all and I did hurt myself, but now I look at those negative memories and smile because I'm still here.

Even through all the hardship I have gone through, I am still here, alive and breathing. And theatre was there to help me, every step of the way.

I am sure now my curtain will not close anytime soon. 

OPINIONS

Stuck in a loop of discovery and reflection

By Ava Rosario

Arts and Culture Editor

We are all trying to find our way through life, some just become more lost than others. Not knowing who you are can be intimidating in a constantly evolving society, but what's even worse is knowing who you are and being just out-of-reach of that person.

This challenge became a reality in my life only a few years ago, and as the threat of adulthood loomed closer, the more impossible a breakthrough seemed. Time became my worst enemy, plaguing my mind with its infinite state. Everything was moving too fast for me to keep up. This made my yearning for self-discovery appear as an unfathomable dream. My wish was to find myself, and fast.

Last year I was introduced to a book that finally allowed me to start the process.



McCandless — Hitchhiking to freedom and inspiring self-discovery.

Into the Wild, written by Jon Krakauer, is a retelling of the story of Chris McCandless, focusing on his hitchhiking trip around the country. The novel expands upon the article Krakauer had first published in the magazine *Outside* after moose hunters discovered McCandless's body in Alaska. He had been in a bus, numbered 142, for weeks until the hunters found him. Before that, he had set off on an expedition west with his Datsun and minimal supplies. Krakauer recounts this event while giving accounts of McCandless's past.

He came from a wealthy family that looked perfect from a distance. His dad, Walt, was a rocket scientist, and his mom, Billie, had a consulting business that Walt later joined. They seemed like any happy family. The truth revealed that Walt was leading a double life with two families and he was abusive to both his wives and numerous children.

This toxic lifestyle is ultimately what drove Chris away after graduating college. He completely disappeared, only keeping in touch occasionally with his sister, Carine. Along the way, he gave up his car and money and had some close calls when situations got dangerous. During his journey, he made important relationships with people he was able to connect with. Jan Burres and her partner Bob took him under their wing for a while, and eventually he met a man named Ron, who grew to care for him deeply. Then he traveled to Alaska.

I was intrigued early into reading his story because the concept of freedom and adventure captivated me and the inspiration that

Bulldog spirit enhances the school experience

By Kristen Guelcher

Staff Writer

When we look back on our high school career, we aren't going to remember what clothes we wear, the conversations we have, or even some of the things we learn about. But one thing that will leave an everlasting impact on us is our school spirit. What exactly does it mean to have school spirit, and why is it so important? This question has a variety of answers that may not be obvious to everyone. On the surface, school spirit can simply be wearing your school colors, but one thing I have learned is that it is much more than what it seems.

One aspect of school spirit that many students may not think about is getting yourself involved in a variety of extracurricular activities. By involving yourself in different clubs, you surround yourself with other students who are passionate about their school and the work they do. Not only will you be benefiting your school, but you will begin to feel good about the work you are doing.

Since our school is so small, many of the students who get themselves involved are the students who participate in most activities. Therefore, they are typically always busy balancing these activities with their schoolwork, and possibly sports. At times this causes them to be unable to put forth their best efforts due to the overwhelming amount of work. This is why it is important for all students to get involved in one way or another.

Personally, over the past couple years

I have gotten myself involved in a few new extracurricular activities. Besides participating in cross country and track, I am a member of Student Council, the Leo Lions Club, and The Slate. This year I decided to join the Dog Dish, along with theater. I have found that by participating in each of these activities has boosted my school spirit. Being a



part of the clubs that help make up our school gave me a sense of pride that I had not felt before I joined them.

School spirit is the backbone to any school, no matter how big or small. It is more than important for people to get involved in activities. It will undeniably benefit you and your school. The more school spirit and participation we have, the happier the students are.

Having happy students creates a positive environment all together, which is extremely necessary for schools. The more engaged we are as a student body, the better we will be as a school, so go out and get involved to better both yourself and the people around you. 🐾

Los estudiantes en el club de español enseñan a la escuela primaria de Slatington



In December, Spanish Club students visited Slatington Elementary to teach mini-lessons on various topics. This has been a tradition at NLHS for many years. Students teach 30-minute segments to grades 4-6 in pairs or groups of three. They select their own content and each lesson is prepared ahead of time, outside of school. All classes learn about basic Spanish vocabulary or grammar and then complete some sort of fun review activity as well.

Joseph Zeller, 1918-2018

By Dylan Kuntz
Community Editor

On Dec. 12, 2018, the world lost a wonderful man. Joseph Zeller, who lived near New Tripoli, died at the age of 100. Borne in Campus, Illinois, on Sept. 19, Mr. Zeller was destined for greatness.

Joe Zeller was brought into the world at the climax of the First World War, a conflict that forever redefined the world. Through his youth, he lost both his brother, Leo, and his mother by the age of 11. Joe's father owned a tavern and had customers including Al Capone, but in the Great Depression, the family home and business were lost. From there, Joe and his brother Frank were sent to



Southern Indiana to work as farmhands, as well as operators of their aunt's illegal moonshining business. When federal agents raided the moonshine business, Joe and Frank fled to Chicago hidden in a load of

furniture. There, Joe boxed in the Golden Gloves competition in Chicago and supported himself and his brother by working in restaurants and selling vacuum cleaners until he became an apprentice electrician in 1938 in Wausau, Wisconsin, and a journeyman electrician in 1941. As many know, our country entered World War II on Dec. 7, 1941, and Joseph Zeller was one of the millions of young men to join the U.S. military. He served in the Navy aboard the USS Ranger and saw combat in Morocco during Operation Torch and in Norway to sabotage the German nuclear weapons project.

Joe was also called to service during the Korean War. After his service in the military, Joe went on to hold many positions in local government, including mayor of Emmaus and a member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. He was heavily involved in public services and the Boy Scouts of America. He continued to be patriotic by having membership in the American Legion and in the VFW Post 12099 in order to honor fellow veterans and those who sacrificed their lives in times of war.

Joseph Zeller was always eager to tell his life stories to those young and old. He especially enjoyed talking to the students of the schools he visited, Northern Lehigh included. Joe always encouraged students to strive for greatness, and he believed that a positive outlook on life would help you achieve your goals and every generation would overcome their problems to keep America one of the greatest countries on earth.

Mr. Zeller never lost sight of his morals and beliefs, and at 100 years of age, he always stood for the flag no matter where or when. He continued to help others, whether it was through his actions or his words, right up until the day he passed. 🐾

22 KILL: Pushin' up for a cause

By Brianna Schuck
Sports Editor

Throughout December, Mr. Todd Herzog and Northern Lehigh Middle School were working to give back. A precursor to Mr. Gerould's Patriot Club at the high school, Mr. Herzog runs a club at the middle school called Sons of Liberty. Over the last three years, Mr. Herzog has been trying to instill that freedom isn't 'free,' rather, brave men and women all over the country fight day by day, night by night for our safety and well-being.

For a change around the holiday season, students in the middle school decided to give back, but they were not just giving back to the community. They wanted to join Mr. Herzog in the 22 KILL Push-Up Challenge ~ a simple challenge only tenured for 22 days, yet the significance behind it will be sure to leave an empowering message.

The 22 KILL Push-Up Chal-

lenge is exactly as it's titled. For 22 days, 22 students do 22 pushups, simulating the bare minimal pain, aches, and heartbreak that soldiers go through every second they are in battle. However, the number 22 has a meaning behind it. The name

Over the course of the last three years, these students have raised roughly \$5,000, but they didn't do it on their own.

As Mr. Herzog recalls, when he first started this challenge, he wanted to find a way to return the favor. Donating na-



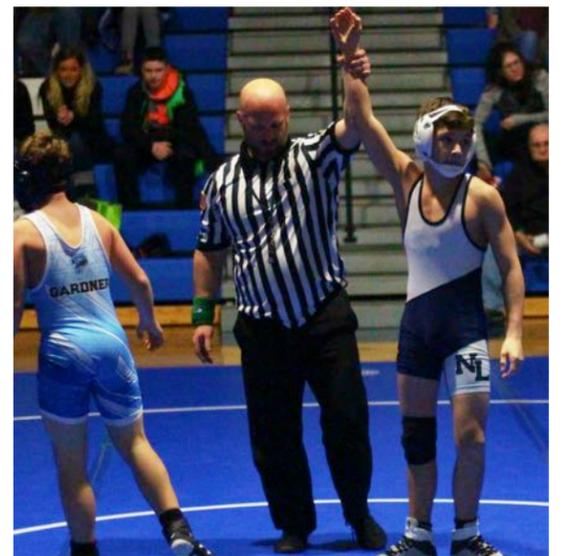
22 KILL comes from the number of veterans committing suicide daily due to PTSD and other related diseases. This challenge was brought forth to the middle school in a way to give back. When it first began, it was an option as to whether or not the students wanted to do the pushups or simply donate \$22. From there, it grew.

tion-wide is rather difficult, though, so he wanted to give back to the community. Originally, he contacted the Nam Knights, of Bethlehem, and explained that these students wanted to give them all of their donations collected. However, the Nam Knights did not want

Grapplers 🐾



From Senior Night, Dom Bandle and Damion Rodriguez. (Photo by Cayla Novicki)



(Top) Brenden Smay and (above) Nathan Ellan.



Josh Schaffer.

PHOTOS BY ALL LORAH

NL Sons of Liberty push up in honor of Vets

to accept that money. Rather, they wanted to double the price and give back in a greater way. This year, these students set a goal of \$600. In no time, they had reached that goal and earned \$909. Mr. Herzog knew they were capable of much more, though, so he set a new goal of \$1,000. When the time came to total

everything up, they were amazed to see they were well above their goal.

However, they did not do this on their own. With the help of many donations from students, community members, and even some veterans and teachers, they had raised \$1,163. Being so high in price, Mr. Herzog did not want to make the Nam Knights feel obligated to match them, yet they were still more than

happy to double their earnings, making their new total \$2,326. The Sons of Liberty Club, along with the Nam Knights, donated \$2,326 to DOG T.A.G.S. – a program whose volunteers help raise service dogs for veterans who suffer from PTSD.

Mr. Herzog would like to give a huge thank-you to Nam Knights, as he says, “These guys put time in and put their lives on the line in war and

now they are putting time in to give back.”

PTSD is a strong topic that certainly hits home for many, including members of Nam Knights. The club secretary lost his brother two years ago to suicide as a result of PTSD. Giving back is all that it takes to help those who put their lives on the line for our well-being. 🐾

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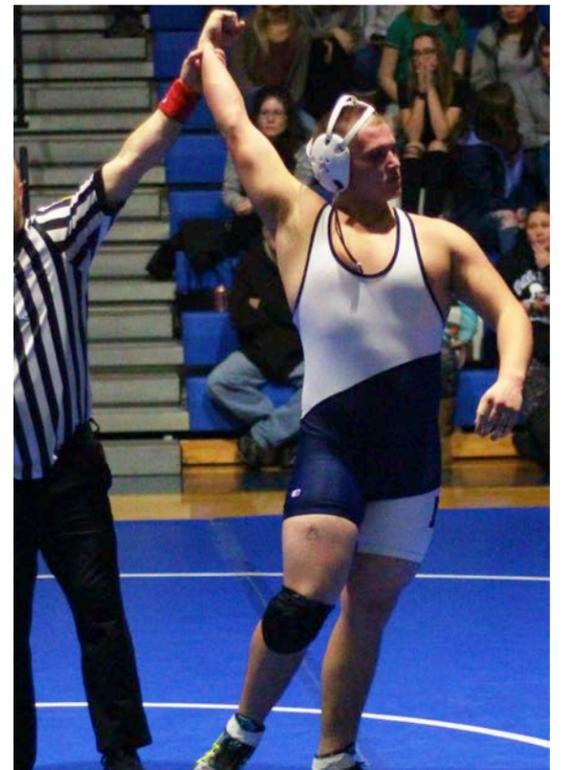
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PHOTOS BY ALI LORAH



Damion Rodriguez.

SPORTS



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‘She’s her own driving force’

Jada Saeger uses work-ethic, inner-strength to reach 1,000-point milestone

By **Katie Guelcher**
Sports Editor

The NL Lady Bulldogs got their first win of the season against the Salisbury Falcons on Saturday, Dec. 15, but the night’s crowning achievement was senior guard Jada Saeger scoring her 1,000th career point in just four seasons.

Going into the game, Saeger was only 7 points away from reaching the milestone. Averaging about 24.3 points per game, this was not going to be a challenge for her. During the 2nd quarter, the ball was tipped loose from Salisbury’s hands. After Saeger grabbed the loose ball, she quickly sprinted down the court and set-up for the 3-point shot that she needed in order to reach 1,000. At the end of the game, Saeger scored a total of 23 points, contributing to the final score of 52-33.

“I wasn’t nervous,” she said, going into the game. “Mostly anxious to get it over with because it was kind of an emotional thing. Lots of people don’t get their 1,000, and to finally get to that point brought tears of joy before the game.”

Saeger has been playing basketball for as long as she can remember. “When she was younger, I had to push her to work out,” said Jada’s dad, Ken Saeger. “Now it’s, ‘Dad, can we go to the gym?’ She just loves to play basketball and I don’t have to push her. She is her own driving force.”

Saeger spent her freshman year at Catasauqua High School where she scored a total of 198 points. At the start of her sophomore year, she and her family transferred to Northern Lehigh School District. She quickly earned a starting position and scored a total of 329 points at the end of the season. Entering her junior year, she had a total of 527 points, more than halfway to 1,000. Year after year, Saeger’s stats continued to increase and improve. Saeger scored 404 points during her junior year and entering her senior year, she had a combined total of 931 career points. It was inevitable that she would reach her 1,000 points early in the season.

“She was always athletic. I signed her up for a basketball camp going into 4th grade and she’s been playing basketball ever since,” said her dad. “I taught her about eating properly, recovery, speed and agility. It’s amazing because I was athletic as a kid but I didn’t want to put all my time into sports. That is her work ethic. Sometimes we’ll go



Jada Saeger scored her 1,000th point this season for the Lady Bulldogs basketball team and has not stopped since.

A Changing of the Guards

Frew retires cleats

By Jamie Knerr
Editor in Chief

For almost 20 years, Mrs. Jessica Frew has led Northern Lehigh's field hockey team as head coach. Throughout that time, Mrs. Frew has guided the passing teams to many victories, and even a title, which had never been accomplished at Northern Lehigh before her. She has left a lasting impact on all of her players, and her accomplishments do not go unnoticed. The time has come, however, for Frew to officially hang up the cleats and call it a coaching career at NL.

Mrs. Frew built a foundation on her love for the game during her high school career, having played for Lehigh Area High School, and becoming a very successful member of its team. After graduating, her love for the game continued and ultimately led Frew to finding her career. Soon after, she was given an opportunity that changed our high school's program forever.

"I was working as a nanny in Connecticut and my mom had reached out to me and said there was a posting in the Times News for a coach at Northern Lehigh."

However, Frew had her doubts before eventually joining our school's program as an assistant coach in 1999. "I was 19, turning 20, at the time I was hired. This was definitely a transition for me and the girls. I was only a year or so older than them, so there was a time period of establishing myself as their leader and coach, and not another player."

This had become the first challenge for Frew, but she was able to find the authority need-



Mrs. Jessica Frew (left) and Mrs. Katie Farber have history at Northern Lehigh. While Mrs. Frew has now retired from coaching field hockey and Mrs. Farber is about to take over softball, they were once on the same team, as shown below. In the middle is pictured senior Katie [DeBias] Farber who played under the guidance of first-year coach, Mrs. Jess [Schoenberger] Frew.



Farber returns home

By Brianna Schuck
Sports Editor

Northern Lehigh alumnus Mrs. Katie Farber returned to the district last year, but this time as a teacher. Not only did she return to her own high school hallways, but she returned to the softball battlefields where she spent a majority of her time in high school.

As a first-year coach, she got to preach the definition of *Bulldogs Softball*, and she took the opportunity to make an impact. As the season progressed, Coach Farber continued to instill a work ethic and determined mindset as she constantly reminded the girls that the effort is greater than the outcome. Sure enough, on May 17, 2018, the Bulldogs Varsity Softball Team defeated Salisbury 5-3 in the Colonial League Championship game.

Concluding her first season back as a *Dawg*, Coach Farber was able to wear a gold medal herself, with hopes of many more in the future.

Over the offseason, there were big changes happening within the coaching staff. With Coach (Brian) Schell retiring, the big focus was on Coach (Robert) Hicks. In October, with great heartache, Coach Hicks retired from the softball program.

For two months, it was uncertain who the new coach would be. On the evening of Dec. 3, though, the Northern Lehigh School Board appointed Mrs. Farber as the new Northern Lehigh Varsity Softball Head Coach.

"Of course I'm excited. I'm very excited," she said recently. Over the course of the upcoming season, Farber has an in-

Note to players: 'Leave it all on the field'

sight that is greater than a winning record. "My expectations are to keep the hardworking traditions of Northern Lehigh Softball. We have a talented group of athletes who are all building off of a very successful year."

She is aiming to piggyback off of last year's successful season, and in line with tradition, says, "I want to keep the strong traditions of the Northern Lehigh Softball Program going that a lot of coaches before me worked hard to instill."

In shift from a legacy of male coaches, a female head coach is sure to dawn a nervous reputation on the program, yet Coach Farber is not worried about the opinions.

"Mr. Hicks has been here for a long time and he was involved with the program even before he came back as the head coach, so anytime there is a change like that, people will look at the program nervously. I also think hiring a female is a big change, too. We haven't had a female coach since I was here, and I've been out of school for almost 15 years."

When asked about the playoffs and upcoming players, coach says the work will offer challenges, especially with two talented seniors leave the program last year.

"Everybody's program changes in the coaching staff and seniors that graduate, injuries and illnesses, and no one's season is guaranteed from one to the next. Of course every coach's goal is to make the playoffs, and we switched to 2A this year so I think that will help us, being the small school that we are. Success only comes to those who work hard. Changing of the coaches is only a part of the season. I can't play for the players so it still has to come from the effort and the work ethic they put in. At the end of the day, you could have the best coach in the world standing down at third base and in the dugout, but if the players aren't willing to work hard and strive for success, we won't have a successful team. I can't play for you, I can only prepare you to play your best."

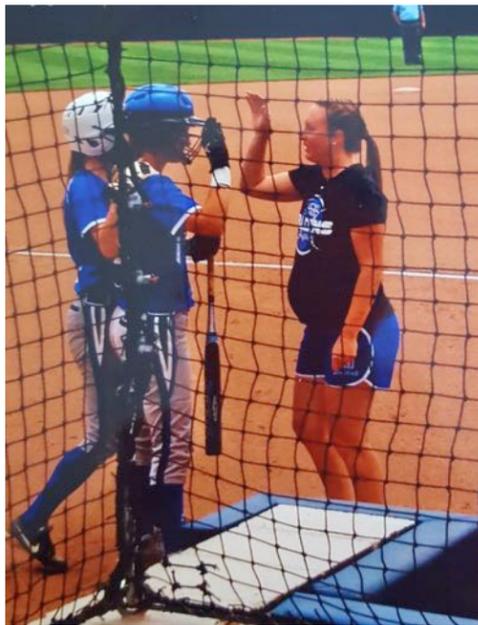
Aside from the "coaching" aspects, Coach Farber also discusses becoming the head coach on a personal level. "It's a very surreal feeling. It hasn't hit me quite yet. Playing Northern Lehigh Softball was one of the best experiences of my life and I gave it 110% effort everyday that I put my uniform on and the fact that I am now in charge of that very same program is a very surreal feeling."

Not only does Farber aim to improve over the course of the season, but she is also aiming to improve preseason workouts. After all, it all starts at the very beginning.

"Preseason is definitely something that we have to work on. It's hard being such a small school because we



(Top) Coach Farber celebrates a championship with her Most Valuable Kids, Trapp and Layla. (Above) Coach Farber takes care of business while seven (and a half) months pregnant.



have a lot of athletes involved in other sports and activities, which is a good thing. But because of that, we can't have as an intense offseason workout as I would like to have." Offseason workouts prove determination, and any hungry-dawg who is willing to work is willing to compete.

Over the course of the offseason, Coach Farber believes it is important to get involved elsewhere, stating a goal to get involved with athletes

over the summer to find out what everyone is doing.

"All the way down to the little girls, to the boosters, that's where it starts," she said. "If you want to have a successful program over the long run, it doesn't just matter what we're doing today and tomorrow, it matters what the 6- and 7-year-olds are doing. I want you [girls] to teach the younger girls what we want them to be learning. The younger girls are impressionable, and for them to be around you all, it's exciting for them and they're eager to learn. Some of them come to games and have seen you play, and they know how successful we have been, so it's exciting for them."

As Coach Farber's first season on the coaching staff has ended, one thing that we have all learned is that "Bulldogs Softball" is her motto. One of her goals is to continue to preach all about it.

"Absolutely the definition of *Bulldogs Softball* will be instilled this year. Even on a bad day, win, lose, or draw, *Bulldogs Softball* is more than just winning. *Bulldogs Softball* is giving it 110%, putting it all out on the line, and making sure that in the process, you're growing as a young adult and learning life lessons. You're making memories that will carry you for the rest of your life. That to me is *Bulldog Softball*."

Many do not understand what it is like to wear a *Bulldogs* jersey, but Coach Farber has just begun to unleash the impact it has had on her life.

While she reminisces, she says they don't give up - ever - regardless of the score.

"We fight to the last out, because one day, the last out is very literally the last out. Everybody's career ends at some point. You have four years to play for your school, your community, and with your best friends. That's it. I always tell you girls this and I will say it a million more times until you graduate that you want to be able to look back when you're my age and know that you didn't let your friends down and you tried your hardest. It doesn't mean you won and have gold medals, it doesn't mean any of those things. It just means that when we talk about memories and we laugh and have a good time, I can look my friends in the eye and honestly say

that there's nothing more in that game that I could have done. I couldn't have given anymore of myself."

But the reminiscing period isn't all to look at the past. Coach says, "That's a big part of it too. Instilling that in you guys and making sure you're giving all of yourself. I think that's lacking in some athletes in today's generation. Not everybody is 100% committed, not everybody in terms of softball, but young athletes in all sports."

Talent is not the only thing that takes you far in what you do. You need to be committed, motivated, and in-love with the game.

Something Coach Farber would like to change in the future is an increase in numbers.

"Because we are such a small school, you need everybody that you can in order to compete. Last season, we were short on numbers, and in some crucial moments, it showed."

But this year, Coach is aiming to change that. However, change isn't just occurring within the numbers.

"Obviously it's going to be a whole new ballgame because at the end of the season, Kate [Hoffman] pitched every game and she isn't here anymore. Like I said, it doesn't matter who the coach is, I can only prepare you the best I can and it's going to come down to who's going to try the hardest and who's going to give me what I am asking.

And if we're not successful, whenever your last day may be, if you could honestly say to me, 'Coach, we left it all on the field', that's what I'm asking, from you, and from all the players."

Aside from Coach Farber's input, former JV and varsity coach Mr. James Yadush believes Coach Farber is on her way to success.

When Coach Farber was still a student at Northern Lehigh, Mr. Yadush had the opportunity to coach her while she was a freshman, and by her senior year, he coached her at the varsity level. "She was a captain, lead-off hitter, vocal leader, and a stand-out second baseman," Mr. Yadush said, adding that she was a good softball player, but also believes she will be a good coach as well. He recalls giving out navy blue bracelets that said "team" on them.

They were simple, but impactful on Coach Farber because today, as she takes on her first year as head coach, she preaches *team* and everything it takes to power through success. 🐾

Championship achieved, banner hung, goals conquered

ed before she had begun her time as head coach in 2003.

As she entered our high school's gym as a new head coach, Frew had noticed that every sports team had banners from league or district championships hanging from the walls except for field hockey. At that moment, she had discovered her long-term goal for Northern Lehigh's field hockey team: Hang a championship field hockey banner proudly in the gym.

Year after year, Frew had made it known to her players that this recognition is what they were working for. "I brought the teams in here [the gym] at the start of each season and I would say, 'Look what's missing.'" This motivation drove each team to strive to reach this goal. In 2013, NL's field hockey team finally got its banner.

That year, the team had been crowned Colonial League champions after a very promising season. "Every season has its highs and lows, but there has never been a time where we didn't give it our all." As Mrs. Frew was able to coach the team to get that first banner, her hopes for the girls moving forward are to continue adding more titles to display.

While there are always highs and lows in any sports season, Coach Frew noticed some challenges she and the team would have to overcome. "We had to compete with schools that had a lot of money and most of their girls would play on traveling teams. It was hard at times

to keep up with them, but we never gave up," Frew said.

Her most difficult challenge, and the reason she ultimately decided to retire as head coach, became balancing her home life and the amount of time needed to be fully dedicated to coaching. "My daughters, Leah and Riley, are now getting to the age where they are also involved in sports. I realized that I wanted to be more involved with them and focus on their goals and put their passions first."

While she may be leaving as Northern Lehigh's coach, she will still be continuing her love for the game, coaching at South Parkland Youth. "I had to make the ultimate decision, so I want to be involved and be in charge of their program while my children are still there."

Mrs. Frew's love for the game didn't only involve the physical aspect. "Being athletic and being involved in a sport gives you more confidence, I feel. You're involved in a team and learning to work with others, and the result is so much bigger than just winning games." After being involved in our school's team for almost 20 years, she has had many girls go through the team that she still keeps in touch with today. "They all became great women, I actually just attended one's wedding. Keeping in touch with them is important to me because some are now moving



on with their lives and having kids and getting married. Not only that, but those girls from 2013 can come back to the gym and say 'We were the ones that did that' and I think that's really special."

Past or current players, Mrs. Frew has left her mark on all of them. The dedication she has given to our hockey program conveys her work ethic and passion for the sport. "For the years that I have worked with Coach Frew, she has been a strong and encouraging coach. Her passion for the sport has been beyond influential to me," Rebekah McGeehan, a freshman, spoke of her coach.

Maddy Posivak, a senior, added that "Coach has taught me to never give up and always push myself to be the best athlete I can be."

Replacing Coach Frew will be

Kim Seiler. She is coming to Northern Lehigh with 12 years of field hockey coaching experience. She is also certified as a USA Field Hockey Level I Coach. All assistant coaches will be coming back for the 2019 field hockey season. Mr. Bryan Geist, athletic director at Northern Lehigh, congratulates Coach Frew on such a successful career. "We're very thankful for Jessica and her outstanding work with the program, and are very much looking forward to Kim Seiler joining our athletic team and keeping the program on track," he said.

Mrs. Frew will continue her career as an educator at Northern Lehigh High School. We all wish her the best of luck in her future endeavors and hope for a promising 2019 field hockey season! 🐾

Bowman elected president of 4H State Council

Andrew Bowman, a senior at Northern Lehigh High School, was elected to serve as President of the 4H State Council. This is the highest office for Pennsylvania 4H youth.

The duty list for this position is as follows: Work with adult advisors and council members forming agendas for all meetings; Preside at all council meetings; Give credit to those who do Great things; Encourage attendance at meeting at the club, local, regional, and state levels; Serve as the 4 H commodity representative at the PA Farm Show 2020; In addition the above duties as President Andrew will attend: Capital Days where 4-H youth learn the process for bill passing

in the State; PA Farm Show in its entirety; State Days; Leadership conferences; Ag Progress Days; All-American Dairy Show; Keystone BBQ Championship; Farm Bureau Annual Conference; Celebrate Ag Day, PSU football game; Meetings with PSU administrators, members of the Department of Agriculture and Governor's cabinet, as well as any special appearances where PA 4-H representation is requested.

Andrew has been a member of 4H going on 12 years in both Lehigh and Northampton counties. Currently, he is the president of the Kid Does Dairy Goat Club, which covers a five-county area. He has learned to raise and show dairy goats in those 12 years

in such quality that they bring top awards both statewide and nationally. The showmanship aspect has always been Andrew's favorite and he continues to learn and teach others how to make his goats look their very best for a

judge in the ring.

The election of the State Council took place Saturday, Feb. 2. The officer positions were announced on Sunday, Feb. 3, at The Penn Stater Hotel in State College.



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Calendars should not dictate life changes

By Trent Herman
Staff Writer

New Year's celebrations have ended by now – hopefully – and people have had a chance for a new start.

Resolutions tend to be a discussed topic around that time of year. Maybe you made a resolution. Perhaps it's to eat healthier or exercise on a schedule. You may even know a family member or friend who made a resolution. In fact, many people make resolutions and end up failing to keep up with them.

Maybe this is you or someone you know. But honestly, it never made sense to me on why people make such big deals out of new year's resolutions. However, I do understand the idea of a fresh start. But, why is this

the only time of year that is focused on being a better person?

People should want to stick to their resolutions year round. For most people, I feel that a resolution is just something for them to talk about so they feel better about themselves. Although a new year's resolution should make you feel good, only when you act upon it is when you will see results.

According to businessinsider.com, 80 percent of resolutions have failed by February. This leaves 20 percent of people who have actually committed themselves to a new start. Which is impressive considering the fact that more than half of us fail. If you decided to stick to a resolution, I urge you to not give up on it because it will pay off if you work hard enough. 🐾

Grade-A entertainment

of performing had come to a close.

Having a band like BEEF is not something to take for granted. Northern Lehigh is one of the very few high schools to have a band like this, so it is definitely something to appreciate. Charles and Sara expressed their beliefs about how BEEF is important to them.

"BEEF has evolved over time with members coming and going, however, we continue to write our own music. To me, this is essential to the whole group," Charles said. "We try to bounce off ideas from one another and I'll compose the piece manually or by using software. The best thing about BEEF to me is that there are no rules. We can play whatever we want, how we want it."

Sara agrees, saying the most significant thing about BEEF is it empowers students to take a leadership role in the band or take charge of picking their own music and directing their own ensemble. "We got to call the shots, which now, being in college, it was really a helpful experience to actually express your

opinions and musical ideas and write what you want to write. I remember when we played for the elementary schoolers and just seeing them go wild, not because anything we were doing was that significant, but that it was like 'Oh my gosh, I could do that. I could go and write my own song and play the instruments I like.' I saw this as a way to say that *band* is cool. This is what you can do with musical instruments. Loving music isn't weird, it's cool and you can do cool things."

In the end, BEEF is something unique, and it offers students many opportunities they will not find elsewhere. There is no feeling to replace that of performing original pieces like *Seasonings* or *Swiss Army Parakeet*, and the friendships that are formed through writing and playing are second to none. The members come and go, but the true heart of BEEF lies in the music we share. BEEF is coming soon this spring with an all new and original piece, so be sure to check it out. Thank you to all of the BEEF supporters out there too, because we would not have made it this far without you. 🐾

The legacy of Alexander Supertramp

pooled from the pages kept me stuck in a loop of discovery and reflection. I found myself writing annotations that analyzed both the connections between our ideas and our lives.

McCandless had an understanding of life that I felt was missing from many people's perspectives. He thrived on an impulsive yet simple nature that allowed him to find a further appreciation for what life had to offer. This questioning of the system society abides by resonated with me, along with his answers to them.

McCandless went by the alias *Alexander Supertramp*. This was the first parallel I noticed between us. Some of my close friends know me as Tup, and some others know me as Ava Rose. Although it is not a significant change from my real name, the change separates who I want to be from who I am. This was likely McCandless's intention as well. He could tie certain memories to each name and create a different persona from his former self. With the trials he experienced in his youth, I imagine even this small detail had meaningful effects.

I was left with a lot of questions, though. After understanding the connection I had to McCandless, I wanted to know why he had such a general effect on others, too. To further analyze and comprehend this, I turned to the teacher who first introduced me to the novel, Miss Urban: "Chris was an honors student with similar values as many honors students. He held himself to high standards and felt strongly about his belief system. He succeeded at everything he ever tried up until the challenge that killed him. Never knowing real failure...is dangerous because we get overconfident and don't think of the worst that could happen." To me, Chris's story being explained from his childhood up until his death made him relatable to other classmates. Everyone could see a part of themselves in him. Even when reading the parts of his later years, we could see the effects our ideas may have on our lives, and how far we will go to live by them. By reading a real, non-fiction telling of success and tragedy, we were forced to reflect on ourselves while finding similarities between McCandless and ourselves.

"In my classes, students have a love/hate relationship with Chris," Miss Urban said. "The students who perhaps feel like they don't have the kind of control they'd want over their own lives tend to understand Chris's choices a lot better and might be more likely to follow him. The realists in the class find him hopelessly irresponsible and get

frustrated with his poor choices regardless of his reasoning."

I found that this was true in my class. Everyone's opinions were either strongly adoring or hateful, there was little room for in-between with the debates that brewed. He was bashed for his apparently mindless actions and unpreparedness. I think they took away the wrong idea from the book. It was not written to say that his methods of survival were genius in any way. It is more about his attitude and beliefs than showcasing any skills he had.

My opinion is that McCandless was in the right until he decided to leave for Alaska. Sure, he was unprepared for the hitchhiking around the west, but that was his plan and it worked. He *lived*, his own way. It's obvious to me that he needed to completely sever the ties between the life he had with his parents and the new one he would create. The trip was about experiencing life in its purest form without the burdens of support. He invited the challenge. He wanted to run from his past. He was willing to put his life on the line to escape everything and pursue the obsession of understanding himself. He just left too early for Alaska; followed his impulsive instinct at the wrong time. We can all learn from him, though. By understanding his strengths and flaws, students can find the message of the book. "I think that the novel was written as a way to inspire other people to not be afraid to be their truest selves," Miss Urban said. "We get told 'no' a lot in our early years by our families, friends, and society at large because they are looking out for our best interest. That can be stifling to creative spirits."

The lesson I gained gave me the chance to start growing as a person. I have gained this fixation with understanding everything, including myself. I allow myself to take risks that make me learn and progress.

Every day holds meaning and accomplishments. I am becoming a more authentic version of myself that welcomes spontaneity. Someday I will have my own great adventure.

Life shouldn't always be planned and perfect. It's complicated and will do everything it can to oppose you, but the solution can be so simple. Expand your boundaries and experience new things.

Feel with intensity, create without boundaries, love and appreciate every moment that you find serenity in this insane world. I will leave you with my favorite of the many Alexander Supertramp quotes: "Don't hesitate or allow yourself to make excuses. Just go out and do it. Just go out and do it. You will be very, very glad that you did." 🐾

Traversing the planet, one adventure at a time

traveling across our country. “I had a camping trip planned with a friend I hadn’t seen in a while. We were going to stay at Ricketts Glen for two days, a state park out in central Pennsylvania.” That trip was cut short due to weather, but Mr. Gupta had decided there was still some time left in his summer vacation.

“My grandmother lives in Michigan, and my mother had been out there taking care of her for a while. So I hatched a plan right then and there to drive up to Michigan and surprise them.” He spent time with his family and four days later, he was on the road again. With two weeks of summer left on his schedule, Mr.

Gupta had decided to travel to some other states he hadn’t gotten to explore yet. From Michigan, he traveled to Badlands National Park in South Dakota. “I really like the open roads and the feeling of driving without any plans.” Saving money by camping, Mr. Gupta was able to experience many sights he had not seen before. “I had a hammock and a tent with me, so I would find the prettiest spot I could and sleep outside. I’d make a fire and cook my food right there.”

Mr. Gupta did not spend too much time at the Badlands National Park, as it was “very desolate, hot and dry.” After spending one night there, he had taken advice from people he had met along the way and contin-

ued to the Black Hills, South Dakota. “There were forests, mountains, deep canyons, and rivers, giving me lots of opportunities to climb and hike.”

After continuing his exploration, Mr. Gupta had gotten a call that all of his family would be getting together in New York State. More than 1,500 miles away, he began the drive back home to spend time with family before returning to school.

Mr. Gupta had many exciting adventures through the course of his summer, spending only about a total of 10 nights at home during his summer vacation.

While he had a very busy summer, Mr. Gupta does not plan on slowing his travels down anytime

soon. His original plans for last summer were to go to South America on a skiing trip. When he suffered a knee injury last winter during ski season, this trip had to be postponed. Meaning, his plans for the upcoming summer are to travel to South America to ski the mountains.

It is safe to say that Mr. Gupta’s desires to travel have taken him to extraordinary places around the world, and the exploring has just begun. 🐾

Bonus photos of Mr. Gupta’s travels are on our Instagram page!  @theslatenews

Choir fest rings out musical beauty

two days for each singer to learn and master eight different pieces of music and to be able to perform in front of about 200 people. This is something that had been overwhelming to every student and faculty member, as each rehearsal was approximately seven hours in length. The involved high schools take turns hosting. At last year’s festival, NL’s choir director Mr. Schnyderite was given warning of what was to come for this year’s concert. “They basically looked at me, pointed, and said ‘You’re next.’”

Typically, each participating school will hold auditions and only select their most capable singers. This year’s concert consisted of roughly 70 performers, ranging in grades 9-12. “My favorite thing about County Choir would definitely be the people,” said senior and two-time concert performer Emily Bachman. “It’s amazing how we can all become so close over our love of music.”

Danyel adds to this, saying, “My favorite thing about County Choir is the music. It’s a bunch of really talented high schools getting together, making

music that is really beautiful. Being able to sing and hear the group together is a really rewarding feeling that I look forward to.”

Emily explains how her experiences in her years of being a County Choir performer have also acted as a learning experience. “I’m going to miss the directors the most. I loved being able to learn from them all. Any small thing they would tell me, I would use not only for that song, but for my singing overall. The directors have all helped me become a better singer, and that’s one of the best feelings that comes from County.”

As a performer myself, I can also corroborate that it was a memorable experience that was definitely worth the time and effort. People I had never seen before walked into our school and rather than viewing them as strangers, I saw them as friends. This makes the festival one of the most beautiful, uplifting things I have ever had the pleasure of being a part of.

“Singing is so much fun, especially when you get to do it right next to your best friends,” Emily said. Undoubtedly, and most sincerely, I couldn’t agree more. 🐾

Long hours pay off in the end

they balance theater with everything else needed for school. Maggie said that because she is the lead female cast member’s understudy, she is typically at theater for about 12 to 15 hours a week; but she was at theater for about 18 hours-plus on the week of Jan. 14. Claudia says she is at theater for around 10 hours a week, sometimes more or less. Maggie, Claudia and many of the other cast members are at theater for a majority of the school-week for at least a couple of hours per day. And now, because the spring musical is right around the corner, the cast and crew are often at theater on Saturdays. But theater is not the only thing these students do.

Director Colette Boudreaux knows that they often have other commitments, so she is generally flexible and lets kids come late if they have something else going on.

“Since theater is such a big time commitment, it can be hard to work around [her] schedule... which can make [her] miss some choir and band rehearsals, but for the most part [her] other directors are willing to work around [her] schedule,” Mrs. Boudreaux said. At the time of writing this article, Maggie is in County Band and Marching Band for other parts of the year. Maggie said her schedule is “kind of stressful... but it is not bad yet.” Claudia has stated how even though her other activities (school and otherwise) are extremely important, “theater always has to be a top priority.”

Because she was in Stage Crew last year, Maggie said she was at school until almost 11 p.m. most nights during Tech Week (which is the two weeks before an

NL Theater production). But Maggie isn’t the only one who has to put in long hours at school for theater.

Pretty much every theater member stays at school late, remembering lines, taking notes, dancing, setting up the stage, painting, decorating, sound-checking, and everything else needed. There is an insane amount of effort in these individuals, who work around (multiple) sports, clubs, school assignments, and other commitments to put on amazing shows, plays and musicals.

“The theatre rehearsal varies from week to week and gets more intense the closer we get to the show,” said Boudreaux. “During January and some of February, there will be about 20 or so hours of rehearsal a week, but not everyone is called for all of those rehearsals ~ only whoever is in any scene. When it comes to the two weeks before the show, however, we go hard with rehearsals starting right after school and going until 10 p.m. This seems tough, but is actually the most fun as we bring food, the students get to bond and hang out, and there is a lot of down-time backstage when production is figuring out technical issues. This is also when we get to integrate costumes and makeup and props, all the things that make a show really ‘pop’.

So if you go to the Little Theater’s production of *Bye Bye Birdie* this March, enjoy the musical. But also enjoy the fact that dedicated students put on this show because they love to, not because they are forced to or obligated to. Even if the going gets tough for them, they don’t give up; they keep going. They work through stress and fatigue to put together an amazing show just because they *want* to. 🐾

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Ballin' Bulldogs



Sophie Lear stays steady.



Jada Saeger looks for the shot.



Katie Guelcher readies a drive to the paint.



Grant Olewine breaks fast.



Brandon Hess finds an open man.



AJ Berger waits for his shot.



Preston Kemery wants buckets.

Lady Dawgs photos by Lexi Meckes

Ballin' Dudes photos by Ali Lorah

Reaching a milestone on the court

to the rec center after a game. Last year, she missed a game-winning 3-point shot at Moravian. After that game, we went to the rec center and practiced that shot from that exact spot for about an hour."

Currently, Saeger already has more than 1,300 points, and that number will continue to increase as the season comes to an end. "As a freshman, I wasn't even thinking about 1,000 points. I was just hoping to start and get some points in every game, as I did over at Catty before I moved to NL." Going into this season, she did not have a set goal for the number of points she wanted to reach once achieving that special moment.

"This year the main goal was to just shoot better and play better than last year." Saeger's increase in scoring has been a major contribution to the team's current overall record of 7-12. Since scoring 1,000 points, Saeger has con-

tinued to reach many new milestones. On Jan. 10, Saeger scored 38 points in a victory against Saucon Valley. She had broken the Northern Lehigh girls 35-year-old record of points scored in one game which had previously been 36. Due to this achievement, she was then nominated for *The Morning Call's* Player of the Week. In the Colonial League, Saeger holds the lead position for total points scored during the season, which is currently 461. She also holds the lead with total free-throw shots made during the season (116) along with free-throw shots made per game (6.1).

With the basketball season coming to an end, Saeger is extremely excited to see what the future has to offer her. After high school, she plans to attend college to major in exercise science, and of course, play basketball. For now, she is keeping her options open as far as which college she will attend. It is no doubt that whichever school Jada Saeger attends, she will be an asset on and off the court. 🐾

