



### Collecting Smiles for the Kids



Student Council members Katelyn Verba and Brooke Nonnemacher empty items from the lobby's Toys for Tots box. The toys get picked up by the Lehigh Valley base of the U.S. Marine Corps where they distribute them throughout the area to children in need. "Student Council has participated in this program for many years because it's a great way to collect a lot of toys in a short period of time," said Student Council Adviser Mr. Nick Sander. "When people see the posters and bins, they know that it's a reliable, trustworthy charity that will make the most of their donation."

## Holiday costs are anything but holly-jolly

Americans' spending for the season crosses into trillion territory

BY OWEN LEVAN-UHLER  
STAFF WRITER

Remember running to your Christmas tree with a pile of presents under it, and the feeling of euphoria while opening gifts that morning? What about seeing advertisements for Christmas shopping two months before the big day or getting various toy catalogs in the mail the first few days of November?

I can guarantee many people have at least one house in their neighborhood that decorates for Christmas as soon as Halloween is over. With that comes the fact that American Christmases have become more expensive, asking the question, "Has holiday spending become excessive?"

According to investopedia.com, "In 2001, the average American planned to spend \$1,052 [during the holidays] – the highest ever. Following the financial crash in 2008, planned holiday shopping dropped to \$417 in 2009."

But ever since, the dollars Americans are willing to spend, and how much they actually *do* spend, has increased every single year, except 2012, and the numbers are projected to only keep rising.

The site explains that, "for 2019, industry experts expect the average American to spend \$920 per person

See SPENDING, page 2

## Final exams no longer pass the test

Flaws abound in the cumulative semester-finales; do they fail your future?

BY BRITTNEY DIEHL  
STAFF WRITER

Finals — the dreaded word that comes to greet almost every student at the end of each semester. These exams seem to have the most negative connotation, considering the stressful environment that surrounds them.

Most teachers utilize final exams to "capture how well students understand the material," as stated in the *Colonel News Magazine*. Despite this, some evident flaws follow in the wake of exams.

High school is designed to prepare students for the real world or



their lives after graduation. This could include their endeavors in the collegiate world. However, it was reported in the *Colonel News Magazine* that undergraduates at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, are "noticing a significant decline in professors handing out final exams 'for the more than 500

graduate-level courses offered, just 14 had finals.'" Not only do final exams provide an anxious situation for high school students, they no longer prepare them for their future.

Additionally, the student declaration of, "Why do we have to learn this? We won't use it in the real world'..." is often repeated. Although the complaint is usually built on the foundation of laziness, this whining has truth behind it. "Conducting final exams on subjects with little to no bearing on future careers seems pointless'...", as

See FINALS, page 2

### HUFFIN' and PUFFIN'



Photo by Michael Feifel

Shaina Mazzocca heads down-field for the juniors in this year's Powder Puff tournament. More photos on page 11.

# SPENDING

From page 1

on holiday gifts, up from \$885 in 2018 and reaching a total of more than \$1 trillion in holiday spending.” Imagine you had a pie of 37 slices, and you took out one slice. That pie is a visualization of all the world’s money (about \$37 trillion), and that one slice is the amount of money that *America alone* spends on holiday gifts. This doesn’t even include the amount of money Americans spend on decorations or food for the holidays.

There are about 327 million people living in the U.S., and around 73 million of them are under 18. On average, American consumers are projected to spend \$61 on holiday decorations this year. So, excluding the number of children in the United States, many of whom are not likely to buy Christmas decorations, America will spend almost \$15.5 billion on Christmas decor.

Additionally, Americans will spend around \$166 for greeting cards and food, which adds up to around \$42.2 billion nationally. Consumers are also projected to spend an average of \$81 on real Christmas trees, and about \$104 for artificial trees this season, totaling about \$46.99 billion nationwide.

So, when all the trees and houses are decorated, Christmas meals are enjoyed,



and all the gifts unwrapped, the U.S. will spend almost \$1.105 trillion during its holiday season. Has anyone ever stopped to think that any aspect of this was excessive?

Christmas has become something that many Americans simply can’t live without. Whether it’s setting up the tree with your family, or buying gifts and

cooking for loved ones, Christmas has become embedded in American tradition.

While some people *do* go a little overboard shopping for toys and gifts or when decorating their houses, for some people, a thousand bucks or two isn’t that much to spend on something so special. Christmas is not just a money topic, it is a memory topic as well.

While a trillion dollars sounds like a lot of money to spend on traditions or memories, when you cut it down to a person-by-person amount, it isn’t so far-fetched. Don’t get me wrong -- a trillion dollars is *a lot* of money. But for hundreds of millions of people to spend that on something so important to so many, the numbers are not that substantial. 🐾

## THE SLATE

Northern Lehigh High School  
1 Bulldog Lane  
Slatington, PA 18080  
610-767-9832

theslatenews@nlsd.org

### The Slate Staff

MANAGING ADVISER  
Mr. Christopher Barnes

EDITOR IN CHIEF  
Ava Rosario

SPORTS EDITOR  
Brianna Schuck

STAFF WRITERS  
Brittney Diehl, Lily Groover,  
Bree Hoppes, Cody Grabarits,  
Owen Levan-Uhler, Emily Hewitt,  
Madison Hoffman, Chloe Hawk,  
Gavin Tischler, Alex Feifel,  
Sabrina Marsh, Dylan Kuntz,  
Collin Winter, Giana Rosario,  
Brianna Kuntz, Dylan Miller,  
Nia Nicholson

PHOTOGRAPHER  
Brooke Bower

COMIC GUY  
Chase Jones

### Administration

SUPERINTENDENT  
Mr. Matthew Link

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT  
Dr. Tania Stoker

HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL  
Mr. Robert Vlasaty

SECONDARY ASST. PRINCIPAL  
Mr. David Hauser

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!



# FINALS

From page 1

stated by the *Colonel News Magazine*. Therefore, students who are taking required classes for their graduation most likely will not pursue that career in the future.

This could lead anyone to question the pertinence of a final examination. If a final no longer prepares a student, what is the point of offering one in the first place?

“Comprehensive tests” are known to have such harsh judgment considering that the “topics covered earlier in the semester have already begun fading.” This problem could be due to the students’ inability to recall every detail of information like machines, or it could be the cause of a teacher

unable to educate effectively. The final exam seems counteractive to the educator’s goals.

Finals are recognized as a burden and problem to many. The cons seem to outweigh the pros in this circumstance. Most issues, however, also have solutions, yet what resolutions are going to fill a final exam’s shoes?

Already, some schools, including colleges, offer a final project, essay, or presentation to compensate for the loss.

Teachers also utilize final exemption for those who have performed exceptionally during the semester. This exception may prove to be useful for those in academic and general classes, but what about the honors and advanced placement students? Almost all of them are diligent and successful in their studies. Therefore, most of the class

would receive such an exemption.

Yet, applying a final exemption to only one set or design of courses would be considered unfair in the eyes of others. This could bring conflict between the school and the students’ parents and could even bring about legal action. Additionally, preparation that comes with rewriting a curriculum may also hinder the changes that result in eliminating finals.

With this information in mind, not only do final exams prove to be useless to students, but the solutions that fill their shoes offer a more beneficial route.

Therefore, schools and their administration should take a step back to try and understand the negative aspects that go along with the usage of finals. 🐾



# Traditions go beyond trees, lights and... pickles?



Many communities across the globe hold a "Running of the Santas" race each holiday season.

BY LILY GROOVER  
STAFF WRITER

Christmas traditions are something people look forward to every year. Though if you've ever sat down and really thought about what some people do to celebrate, you have probably found out that it's pretty bizarre.

From pickles in trees to giving a turkey a presidential pardon, Americans cling onto these unusual traditions in order to have more "holiday cheer."

By far, the most unusual Christmas tradition Americans seem to have is the pickle in the tree. Long story short, families hide a fake pickle in the tree and the first child to find it usually receives an extra Christmas present that year. This tradition supposedly stems from the German culture of the Weihnachtsgurke, where the pickle is made out of a shiny or matte green glass instead of the actual cucumber.

But, based on a YouGov.com survey, they found that only 7 percent have ever heard of a Weihnachtsgurke. It turns out, no one really knows where the tradition came from. Most believe that the Christmas Pickle tradition is just an ingenious marketing scheme by an American retailer to help shift a load of leftover pickle ornaments. This is due to an excess amount of glass ornaments made in the 19th century — mostly of fruits and vegetables.

Bizarre as it is, another Christmas tradition that seems to go right over people's heads is caroling. When you think about it, caroling is weird and kind of dangerous. Ever heard of "stranger danger"? Going up to a random neighborhood, at a random house, and singing for them sounds a bit strange. Caroling originated in Europe during the 4th and 5th centuries.

Since it is an oral tradition, no one quite knows what caroling was intended for. Some think that caroling was the way of spreading the news of Christ's birth. Others believe that carolers were unable to perform in churches, so they went door-to-door.

Wassailing is also thought to be the start of caroling. Wassail, a hot-spiced beverage, caused children to go door-to-door and sing their hearts out. In return for their song, they would get some delicious wassail to bring home. Lastly, some think that caroling was named after a little girl named Carol Poles, who went missing during the nineteenth century. People searching for her supposedly went door-to-door, singing to declare good intentions.

Although it's a sweet story, it has no factual evidence to back it. Though caroling goes back centuries, it's still quite a weird tradition today.

When thinking of Santa Clause, most people think of a big, jolly man with a white beard who loves cookies and milk and flies around on Christmas Eve with his fleet of reindeer. For America, that's true, but it's not for other places around the world.

His flying reindeer and ability to obtain any commercial product is all American-made. It's strange how Americans always decide to make things "extra" for their own personal enjoyment. Yet, this crazy tradition of a jolly, old, fat guy is still passed down from generation to generation today.

If you like turkey and all things Thanksgiving, Jingles Turkey Company sends a turkey to the White House each year. Thanksgiving, name and all, is a holiday that confuses foreigners when coming to the United States. But, those people probably don't know that every year the President pardons one lucky bird from getting eaten during the holidays. Pointless? Yes.

Still done every year since the Kennedy administration? Absolutely. Despite the utter ridiculousness of the tradition, Americans always seem to love the gracious act of bringing two turkeys to the White House and only murdering one. Isn't kindness what the holidays are about?

After all these years, tradition and its values seem to stay intact — even with some of those bizarre notions. 🐾





## HARDING

FUNERAL HOME

INCORPORATED

DAVID M. HARDING  
SUPERVISOR / PRESIDENT

NATHANAEL J. HORVATH, FD

**25-27 N. Second St.**  
**Slatington, PA 18080**  
**610-767-3011**

*Serving the Northern Lehigh area  
for over 65 years.*

# The world will not gain perfection on its own

*Act now, change today, live later for future generations*

BY BREANNA HOPPE  
STAFF WRITER

Envision the world transforming into a beautiful place. Imagine the year is 2050.

The coral has regrown and led to a better life for the ocean species. Tropical storms have lessened and the fires we had believed would never end have finally been stopped. Many held the belief that this would never be experienced. The lives of people have now improved for the better since they had acted upon the events occurring in the world years before.

Through the years, there has been a vast change to our earth, especially the climate and at a rapid pace. Calamitous fires have struck the Amazon and obliterated the homes of thousands of species. Pollution has begun to consume a great deal of the planet's air. Despite the lingering negativity occurring on our planet, there is hope for a lively and beautiful world.

A group of ambitious teenagers, known as the Coral Gardeners, have been replanting coral in our oceans to salvage the reefs. Within the past few years, the coral in the waters has greatly deteriorated. Without coral – a shelter during tropical storms — thousands of species would lack their natural habitat.

Despite there being a horrific series of events occurring on the Earth, there is no



such thing as change being unreachable. Improvements can happen in various ways. The world has a strong potential to be a place that we have all dreamt of it becoming.

With change in the world, this not only includes the idea of saving our planet in an economic aspect, but in numerous other ways. Since mankind has come about, there has been an ongoing dispute of equality and there has never been true world peace.

Regardless of the belief that this is impossible to truly accomplish, what is the sense of giving up on something we have merely attempted to succeed? Everyone imagines a world in which there is an ongoing sense of positivity and euphoria, yet not many are motivated to attempt to truly perfect the world.

Time may not be able to successfully heal the world we have created, yet there needs to be a starting point. In the world that we dream of, things go the way we desire them to go. Realistically, we all have different goals and perspectives on things.

There is a great amount of creativity and aspirations in the minds of children of this generation. Many of these teens and children hold the belief that they do not truly hold something incredible within them. If all the well-motivated children in the world came together, we would be fully capable of transforming the world into an incredible place.

Some people hold the belief that it is not truly possible to change the world. The truth is quite the opposite of this. In order to change our world and our envi-

ronment, we must change ourselves. Are you happy with yourself? At a young age, the answer to this question is consistently alternating.

Our opinions change each and every day when it comes to the way we view ourselves. Always striving to do more and become more is a great component in making our world a better place. Previous generations still hold an impact on the world and its well-being, but we (adolescents) have a greater sense of power. The world is in our hands, what will we do with it?

The arising problems occurring with our atmosphere and the world overall seem insurmountable. Nothing is unable to be conquered. The people in this world hold a power greater than anyone has ever known. These current issues are truly life changing for the worst and potentially deadly to upcoming generations. We must act now. No matter how big or small, any change is a progressive step.

Envision the world as you want it to be and make an attempt to encourage those around you to strive for the same. If we continue to neglect the problems around us, problems will grow and eventually leave us at a loss. The world is waiting for us each and everyday that we wait for it to change itself. Will you remain a part of a problem that could potentially be conquered or will you bring about change? 🐾



## The Walden & Randall Team

**Your Neighborhood RE/MAX® Real Estate Team**

610-266-4000

"It's YOUR Move...WE Make It Happen!"

**Serving Northern Lehigh and the Lehigh Valley for almost 40 years**

**Ready to Sell?**  
Contact us for your market valuation and your home's personalized marketing plan

**Ready To Buy?**  
Contact us so we can find what you are looking for  
We work with local lenders who can get you pre-approved!

Go to [www.WaldenRandall.com](http://www.WaldenRandall.com)  
Create your own home search with the most up to date market info

Follow us on   for all things Real Estate and Home

**Steve Walden**  
610-390-3275  
[SteveWalden@remax.net](mailto:SteveWalden@remax.net)

**Kate Randall**  
610-709-7650  
[KateRandall@remax.net](mailto:KateRandall@remax.net)



**RE/MAX Unlimited Real Estate    1080 Schadt Ave.    Whitehall, PA 18080**

# NL Patriot Club recognized by board

BY DYLAN KUNTZ  
STAFF WRITER

Earlier this year, the Northern Lehigh Patriot Club was recognized by the Board of Commissioners of Lehigh County. It was a formal recognition in regards to all the club has done to serve the community. It has been the duty as well as honor for the Patriot Club to serve veterans, especially since they are the ones that guaranteed our freedom to organize a club like this in the first place.

In addition to the recognition of service to the community, Patriot Club was also recognized for visiting places of solemn significance, such as Arlington National Cemetery and the Flight 93 Memorial, as well as the reverence to the United States and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania flags, and reverence to deceased veterans. The fact that the Board of Commissioners took the opportunity to recognize Northern Lehigh's Patriot Club for its actions means that the club has made an impact on the area.

As many know, Patriot Club was founded in order to provide the services that it was recognized for. The club strives

to do more and more for our country in as many ways as it can. A great example of a new way the club aims to serve the country is the decision made early this year to donate to a charity that directly aids disabled and recovering veterans.

In the past, the Northern Lehigh Middle School Sons of Liberty club, with Mr. Herzog as the Advisor, participated in a fundraising event with the 22 Kill. 22 Kill is a nonprofit organization that aims to help veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, focusing especially on preventing veterans from committing suicide. 22 Kill also strives to raise awareness of suicide among veterans, and none of this would be possible without fundraising from many different people.

This year has been a very successful one for the Patriot Club. Since the school year started, the club members were all



busy planning for upcoming opportunities at different school events, such as the Bonfire, the Salute to Service football game, Powderpuff, and more to come this spring. Selling food and merchandise at these events was a success, and it helped the club raise a significant amount of funds.

This spring, the Patriot Club will be donating a part of the funds raised to a nonprofit organization. It has yet to be decided, but whichever organization is

chosen will be similar to 22 Kill in regards to helping veterans.

This year is the first that Patriot Club will be donating to a nonprofit organization, but it will be the first of many. Since the Patriot Club was founded in order to help veterans, there is no better way for the club to accomplish its goal. Part of accomplishing this goal, however, relies on the support of the community. The great support Patriot Club had this year allowed the club to give back even more in addition to hosting the Salute to Service football game.

Looking forward, Patriot Club will continue to host different fundraisers year-round. Help from Northern Lehigh students and the community during these events will allow the club to give back even more through all the donations to come. It is an honor for Patriot Club to have been recognized by the Board of Commissioners of Lehigh County, but it was not the main goal of the club's actions. Patriot Club was created to help the school, community, veterans, and country without expecting anything in return. 🐾

# Nomophobia can cause 'text neck' — consult your family 'tech'

BY BRIANNA KUNTZ  
STAFF WRITER

Cell phones — electronic devices that 90 percent of American adults have, including most youth. They are convenient, containing millions of apps that can help you with your day to day life and to entertain you when you are bored. It's the one object you have on your person all day, every day.

However, there is also a dark side to cell phones. Have you ever had those moments where you just can't seem to put your phone down? You are completely aware that you shouldn't be on it so much but you just can't seem to get off of it.

Nomophobia is the fear of being without a mobile phone. Although it is not an official psychological diagnosis yet, there are many terrible side effects to these mobile devices.

Smartphone addiction can negatively impact your life in countless ways. A small number of symptoms are increasing loneliness and depression, anxiety, stress, diminished ability to think deeply or concentrate, lack of sleep, and narcissism. That's just scratching the surface. They can change you and make you think differently. Not to mention, when their cell phone is unreachable, people will go through withdrawal. Imagine going one week without your phone. Most people wouldn't be able to because we rely on them so much for everything in our lives.

Symptoms of withdrawal include anger, tension, depression, irritability, and restlessness.

Withdrawal can affect a person in-

tensely, more than people think. A person may get angry much easier than normal and have intense mood swings. Additionally, there are many physical effects of cell phone overuse that may cause permanent damage or be difficult to treat. "Text neck" is a very common side effect.

It's pain resulting from looking down at devices for too long. Not to mention digital eye strain where your vision begins to blur, your eyes can begin to itch, and it will cause major headaches. Car accidents are another factor to consider.

People are so absorbed with their phones that they risk their lives just to be on it for a slight minute. Research has revealed that texting and driving can be just as dangerous as drinking and driving. Yet we still do it.

This is life now. People have everything in the palms of their hands and they don't even recognize it.

They have so much power on their person with the ability to put on any song at any given time. Along with being able to text someone from any state or country in seconds and receive a reply in an instant. And any information you want to know — just go onto Google and search it.

Technology truly has come such a long way. Just compare 2019 to the 1980s. There is a world of difference. With landline phones, you could only



walk a couple of feet from it when you wanted to use it and only one call could be made at a time. Most kids now don't even know what a landline phone is. Technology is on a silver platter for them.

For instance, the very first computer was made in 1981. Computers were not very popular or in many households. They were mostly used in schools and offices. Now, almost every kid has at least a household computer or a laptop. Times have changed tremendously. Is it a better world with all this technology?

Some of the most popular apps are Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter. Most people that have a cell phone have these apps. For example, Instagram is a photo-sharing app where people post selfies, aesthetic pictures, memes, or whatever they want.

Normally, when most people feel confident in how they look, they will snap a couple of photos of themselves and post them. Completely harmless, right? Wrong.

Social media has proven to be extremely mentally toxic. Some people will base their self-worth and social status due to the number of likes the picture they posted got or the number of followers they have. Additionally, they might keep seeing attractive people on the app and think that they aren't good looking enough.

Mulling on this day after day is a very mentally toxic thing. Especially when you are on your phone all of the time, always reminded of it. Twitter and Snapchat is also a battlefield of hate. From enemies fighting back and forth on the apps publicly, to starting rumors and making drama. There is an endless amount of negativity on all these popular apps. Is it healthy to be on them all the time?

We all know that one kid without a cell phone. We wonder to ourselves, "How can they *not* have a cell phone? How can they have a life? What do they do all day?" Our society cannot even fathom a life without a cell phone. Without one, these kids seem to miss out on a lot. Nowadays, a lot of people talk about something funny or interesting they saw on Instagram, Snapchat, etc. and they can't contribute to the conversation.

They may be ridiculed for it and feel like they're out of the loop and living in a different world because they almost are. All in all, cell phones can be very useful and convenient but when you look over everything, they are one of the most mentally toxic inventions that have ever been created. 🐾

# OPINIONS

Page 6

## Editorial

### Those Z's are preventing A's

*Don't overdo the work hours; remember to be kids for now*

We are *all* tired bulldogs. Our school starts super early, a lot of you work super late, it's winter, it's dark, it's cold – we get it. But, there is one reason that supersedes all the Z's that is easier to accept... Or at least, *should* be.

"Sorry. I was working late," teachers have heard more frequently in recent years. This totally triumphs over the other typical responses we hear from nappers suddenly awakened to the sight of disgruntled faces. "Huh?" or "I was playing video games" or "Where am I?" do not go over quite as smoothly.

But when you young people are out there clocking in weeknight and weekend hours at local grocery stores, restaurants, pizza joints and other things in between, do not lose sight of what matters next to the paycheck you collect.



In the end, as grown-up as you want to be now, you are still a "kid" by definition, and you are still, *ebem...* a student. Your first obligation is to graduate — with grades better than just "getting by." We are not demanding A's but it's enough with the Z's.

According to an article by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Learning to budget time and to use it well is a skill that many students don't learn until they're in college or in their actual careers. Yet knowing how to handle numerous responsibilities helps students prepare for the academic vigor of college. While the line between how much work is too much may seem nebulous, experts have found that students who work more than 15 to 20 hours a week see a decrease in academic performance."

If you are reading this, you are awake. If you are awake, you can listen. If you can listen, you are able to absorb all the incredible, vast acumen and ingenuity we so lovingly offer daily.

(Don't know those terms? Stay awake and we will explain). Nonetheless, you young workin' folk are to be commended. Your fatigue is well-earned. But save some energy for our classrooms. 🐾

## 'I was not there for cosmetology'

*Naïve LCTI boys were not ready for this female machinist*

BY ALENA SNYDER  
GUEST COLUMNIST

"What do you want to be when you grow up?" I was often asked this question when I was younger. I would just say a *veterinarian* or a *police officer*, like most other little kids. Had someone told me then that I was going to be a machinist when I was older, I would probably have fallen to the floor laughing.

I'm 16 now, and this is my third year at LCTI. I go to tech for something called "Precision Machine and Tool Technology," where I work on these behemoth machines that cut metal. I am also one of the only girls in this lab.

I actually really like being in machining. I can pretty much make anything from a license plate to a fidget spinner. These machines can be very dangerous though, and can take someone's life in seconds if an accident were to occur.

My favorite machine is the lathe, which spins at 3,000 rotations per minute while holding a part, and is nicknamed "the maneater" because of the number of accidents that have occurred in industry.

My point is the machines can be scary, but the people in the shop can be even scarier.

I work in a room with 20 other teenage boys, which some have said would be amazing, but they haven't seen and heard what I have.

I cannot forget my first day of my second year there. I walked in and one of the guys said to me, "Cosmetology is across campus." Their surprised faces said it all when I pulled work boots from my backpack and gave the teacher my papers. I guess these naïve

little boys have never seen a female machinist before.

My second year at LCTI was probably my best for learning to love myself. Everyday I would get remarks like, "You don't belong here" or "switch to a different lab", or my favorite, "you should be cleaning instead of working on

learn more. *My little female mind* started to learn the more complicated and even scarier machines.

I received four certifications that year, which can help me get into a good college or get a high-paying job right out of high school. Now I can relax and not have to worry about them my



**"My little female mind started to learn the more complicated and even scarier machines. The people who had harassed me now look up to me."**

these machines." The irony? That boy was kicked out three months later for sexual assault.

Being in a place with all of this happening was obviously hard for me. I didn't feel motivated to work and always considered dropping out. It made me mad and frustrated that I was being put down by a bunch of teenage boys. I felt lost and unaccepted.

Plus, hearing this on the daily felt like a punch to my face. It took some time, but I started to

senior year.

Now in my third year, I am considered an "upper level" and all of the people who have harassed me now *look up* to me. They stay quiet now and are normally the ones who ask *me* for help. They can find their own answers.

I now know what I want to do with my life, and I won't let entitled boys think that they can prevent me from being the best female machinist I can be. 🐾

# LGBT+ taking steps, not leaps, in media

Representation in pop culture is expanding but still falling short

BY CODY GRABARITS  
STAFF WRITER

It is soon to be 2020, and it is very clear that not every person on the planet is a heterosexual, cisgender (identifying with their birth sex) human being. Even so, most TV shows and movies portray people as straight and cis, leaving little representation for queer people.

It is clear by now that watching a hetero or homosexual relationship on the big screen does not change sexual orientation in individuals. Where is the representation for the LGBT+ members of the world? Steps are slowly being taken toward more inclusive media.

According to Bill Keveney in a USA Today article, Amazon, Hulu, and Netflix have showed a 45 percent increase in LGBT+ series regulars, taking the numbers from 75 to 109, though cable only went from 120 to 121. These numbers are small but have indeed at least made progressive steps to including more open ideas. The progress is slow-going, but at least there is forward movement.

Moreover, Disney has only one canonically gay character — LeFou from *Beauty and the Beast* — but he happens to be a sidekick of the villain, Gaston. An overwhelming number of people wanted Elsa to be a lesbian and have a girlfriend in *Frozen II*, shown by the trending hashtag going around — #GiveElsaAGirlfriend, but Disney did not make that happen.

Disney accidentally made Li Shang into a bisexual man. He fell for Ping — which was *Mulan* in a male disguise — and still loved her when he found out that she was not actually male. Other



than this, Disney is one of the companies that is very far behind in the LGBT+ representation that the world is widely demanding.

*Doctor Who* is one of the handfuls of TV shows that has been relatively queer-friendly since 2005. Captain Jack Harkness was an absolute joy, being vibrantly pansexual. He flirted with everyone — no matter the gender or species — and lasted on the show for a long while. Once Captain Jack left, a few seasons later, there was Bill Potts who was a confirmed lesbian. Now, with the new Doctor being female, a lot of people want her and companion, Yaz, to be romantically involved. Though they are not in a relationship, the show has strongly hinted that Yaz is bisexual.

There are more positive examples

where LGBT+ members are the main character or a supporting role other than *Doctor Who*. The most popular LGBT+ movie nowadays is *Love, Simon* with Simon being a gay man, but there are also other movies that have good LGBT+ representation.

Another example is Patrick in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* being gay. *Design for Living* is an older movie about a polyamorous triad. They're two men and a woman in a happy relationship together. In *The Perfection*, the two main characters are lesbians.

There is also representation in TV shows. In *Orange is the New Black*, Sophia Burset is a transgender woman. In *Steven Universe*, there is a polyamorous couple as well, a group of six. There's also *One Day at a Time* where the daughter, Elena,

is a lesbian.

Most of today's LGBT+ representation leans heavily toward gays and lesbians. According to the same USA Today article, there are only 38 transgender characters. The article does not mention any bisexual characters.

It also does not talk about nonbinary representation, which are people that do not identify as male or female. There is no talk about pansexuals, either, nor does it speak of polyamorous relationships or asexuality, which is having no sexual attraction to anyone. Though some of these aspects were touched upon in this article, it gets mainly overlooked in other media. There

are other pieces of the LGBT+ community that do not even get touched upon, leaving the general public unaware and those members feeling left out. Overall, representation is slowly increasing — the article says it wants LGBT+ characters to make up only 20 percent of the overall total by 2025 — but there is not much, if any, representation for 'minorities' in the community. Everyone wants to be seen as a person, and there just is not enough in the media to show that.

Steps are being taken, and moving forward is a good thing. However, these steps seem to be smaller than baby steps. It is no good to rush things, but progress is not moving very fast. It is not keeping up with the rest of the world's expectations in LGBT+ representation. 🐾

## Los estudiantes de la escuela secundaria fueron a Slatington Elementary para ofrecer lecciones valiosas



The NLHS Spanish Club and Honors Spanish III class recently went to Slatington Elementary and taught a Spanish lesson to third, fifth, and sixth grades.

# Through My Lens

By Brooke Bower



*Looking in the mirror is difficult.* There is a vision in our heads whether it's what people say, or what pops up in our minds. Society has a standard of what "gorgeous" looks like and that is what everyone deems as "beautiful." It's not a surprise that people are starving themselves and feeling insecure because of this. No one can force love on you, love will come on its own terms.

The image you have of yourself may seem weak, but you have the strength to keep getting up after getting knocked down. When classmates start talking about you

(good or bad) it doesn't matter. What matters is if you're able to look in the mirror and say, "I'm happy." The way you look doesn't reflect who you are as a person you have worth and a purpose.

There is something greater than just looking good which is your personality. Society today isn't worried about personality and that's what sucks. People get treated terribly and that's the norm now. Sometimes you can't worry about other people's emotions because it kills self-esteem. There are times where you must take one for

the team and notice that things aren't okay. People lower their standards and it causes an agonizing pain of not focusing on the important issues. There is no such thing as perfection, but there is such a thing as being you. The most beautiful thing about a person is showing their unique side.

Never be what someone else wants you to be. Don't feel like you must please everyone because there are people who aren't going to like you for whatever reason. 🐾

**NOW OFFERING RESTORATIVE YOGA**

FIND YOUR ROAD TO A WELL-NOURISHED LIFE AND LIVE WITHOUT LIMITATION

**Empower**  
NUTRITION & WELLNESS

187-191 Main Street, Suite 300  
Emmaus, PA 18049

DISORDERED EATING | WELLNESS & LIFESTYLE MANAGEMENT | SPORTS NUTRITION

LIVEEMPOWERED365.COM

## The pumpkin craze has gone crazy

BY GIANA ROSARIO  
STAFF WRITER

The Spice Craze. We all know it. As soon as fall rolls around, there is pumpkin spice-flavored everything. From coffee and toothpaste to pretzels and dog treats, there is no limit to this interesting flavor. Coffee is one of the most common pumpkin spice flavored products on the market today. It is honestly absurd to know how many different products are made with pumpkin spice.

There are pumpkin spice almonds, Pringles, hummus, and ramen and so many more that are just bizarre. But these are just a few weird examples that don't make any sense and shouldn't exist. And did you know that pumpkin spice isn't even made of pumpkin at all? It's just a bunch of spices mixed together. It's weird, but it's true.

You may be thinking, "How far will this trend go?" And I was wondering the same when I saw that pumpkin spice kale chips existed. I don't know how any company in the world could make any profit from this product.

Not surprisingly, Starbucks makes a lot of money selling pumpkin spice products. In fact, Starbucks sold over 200 million cups of pumpkin spice lattes within the first decade of its recipe release and continue to make close to \$80 million a

year. Their pumpkin spice lattes normally outsell some of the other popular drinks like the peppermint mocha and the eggnog latte.

One good thing is that pumpkin spice is very healthy for you, studies show that the ingredients in this spice may have good effects on your brain. The ingredients are cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, clove, and allspice. Cinnamon helps to control blood sugar. Nutmeg helps to relieve pain, clear your skin, minimize insomnia, improve blood circulation, and many other things. Ginger helps to reduce muscle pain and can manage certain forms of nausea. Cloves help to improve liver health, promote bone health, and kill some bacteria. Allspice helps to fight cancer, is a sedative, and an antiseptic.

What I don't understand is why pumpkin spice is mainly sold in autumn. The spice isn't even made from pumpkins, so it could be made year-round. Many people around the world seem to like this particular flavor, so why not just sell it and make a profit all year long? It's a very famous flavor too. Companies would be able to make more money and many people would be happy to drink pumpkin spice lattes whenever they want.

At times, the pumpkin spice trend at times can seem to be a little bit crazy, but the benefits look very promising. 🐾

**Follow Us!**  
**@theslatenews**

Weekly Ad  
facebook.com/  
ThomsonsMeatMarket

430 Washington Street  
Walnutport, Pa. 18088  
610-767-4592

**Thomson's Meat Market**  
You Can't Beat Our Meat  
Mon-Thur 9-7 Fri 9-8 Sat 9-5 Sun 9-2  
Jake Thomson - Owner

**Advertise With Us**


Local Businesses! Leave your paw print in the community's high school voice! Contact us to place an ad today! Prices are beyond reasonable, plus you help support the Bulldogs!

**theslatenews@nlsd.org**





Forget Breaking News, this dedicated Slate staff is going to take a break from the news. We will return with a journalistic vengeance in February. Pictured left to right: Mr. Christopher Barnes (adviser), Brianna Kurtz, Lily Groover, Owen Levant-Uhler, Ava Rosario (editor in chief), Cody Grabarits, Brianna Schuck (sports editor), Breanna Hoppes, Emily Hewitt. (in front) Brooke Bower (photographer) and Britney Diehl. We appreciate the support and look forward to four more issues in the new year!



# LCCC the future

**GET STARTED TODAY!**

At LCCC, we're your first step down the path to success. AND that success is our top priority. Whether you're looking to earn your associate degree and start your career, or transfer your credits to a top college or university, you'll leave LCCC with an incredible foundation to go anywhere and do anything.

- 90+ Degree Programs
- Six Convenient Locations
- Day, Night and Online Classes

**Start here. Go anywhere.**  
lccc.edu « 610-799-1575



Lehigh Carbon  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# SPORTS



Page 10

## Football '19 in the rearview

*Coach Tout looks back on this year, preps for 2020*

BY BRIANNA SCHUCK  
SPORTS EDITOR

Going into the season, the Northern Lehigh football Dawgs knew they were not a part of the initial pick of the season. As Coach Joseph Tout says, "We knew we were sort of picked toward the bottom, actually." However, that did not stop them from absolutely crushing it this year.

The teams to beat were Northwestern, Southern Lehigh, and Bangor. And even though Northern Lehigh was not amongst that list, they chose to use that as motivation to better themselves. With consistent numbers and a new place to hold workouts, the coaches believe they had a "pretty good feeling going into the season because the summer workouts were better. We tried something different and I thought our kids were a little bit more committed and had better team-building." Being said, they worked all summer in silence knowing they were at the "back of the pack" in preseason standings.

Feeling pretty good going into it, the Dawgs knew what they had to do to get to where they wanted to be. They knew that Northwestern was going to be the "big pick" and "team to beat" because they knew they had a successful season the year before, and they knew they had the majority of their starters returning. But, their philosophy was that they do not play Northwestern until week nine, so there was no sense in talking about them week one.

"We wanted to focus on the front half of the schedule with Wilson, as we knew that was a must-win to open our season. Not just for us, but to help build school spirit right away. They were the toughest game on our schedule until Southern Lehigh."

After starting out with a "W" in the books, all of the preseason talk became a reality. "My expectation was to be similar to last year, because we had a decent amount of players returning but it wasn't one of those 75 percent of the starters

returning. We had about 50 percent. But, I was wrong. We were actually better," Coach Tout reflects. Record-wise, they only improved by one win. However, the coaching staff believes as a team, they improved in all aspects of the game. It was noticeable that there was more energy, and that they worked very hard to get there.

That noticeable energy and leadership came from not only the seniors, but the juniors and underclassmen as well. Coach Tout recalls the connection and brother-

hood throughout the locker room this year, and he says that all teams are different: "Not every team responds the same and bonds the same. That is not something that we as coaches can teach." Yet, his team seemed to mend well together. "Our guys didn't act out of character, but they did a good job coming together and getting the job done."

hood throughout the locker room this year, and he says that all teams are different: "Not every team responds the same and bonds the same. That is not something that we as coaches can teach." Yet, his team seemed to mend well together. "Our guys didn't act out of character, but they did a good job coming together and getting the job done."

hood throughout the locker room this year, and he says that all teams are different: "Not every team responds the same and bonds the same. That is not something that we as coaches can teach." Yet, his team seemed to mend well together. "Our guys didn't act out of character, but they did a good job coming together and getting the job done."

hood throughout the locker room this year, and he says that all teams are different: "Not every team responds the same and bonds the same. That is not something that we as coaches can teach." Yet, his team seemed to mend well together. "Our guys didn't act out of character, but they did a good job coming together and getting the job done."

hood throughout the locker room this year, and he says that all teams are different: "Not every team responds the same and bonds the same. That is not something that we as coaches can teach." Yet, his team seemed to mend well together. "Our guys didn't act out of character, but they did a good job coming together and getting the job done."

hood throughout the locker room this year, and he says that all teams are different: "Not every team responds the same and bonds the same. That is not something that we as coaches can teach." Yet, his team seemed to mend well together. "Our guys didn't act out of character, but they did a good job coming together and getting the job done."



hood throughout the locker room this year, and he says that all teams are different: "Not every team responds the same and bonds the same. That is not something that we as coaches can teach." Yet, his team seemed to mend well together. "Our guys didn't act out of character, but they did a good job coming together and getting the job done."

hood throughout the locker room this year, and he says that all teams are different: "Not every team responds the same and bonds the same. That is not something that we as coaches can teach." Yet, his team seemed to mend well together. "Our guys didn't act out of character, but they did a good job coming together and getting the job done."

hood throughout the locker room this year, and he says that all teams are different: "Not every team responds the same and bonds the same. That is not something that we as coaches can teach." Yet, his team seemed to mend well together. "Our guys didn't act out of character, but they did a good job coming together and getting the job done."

hood throughout the locker room this year, and he says that all teams are different: "Not every team responds the same and bonds the same. That is not something that we as coaches can teach." Yet, his team seemed to mend well together. "Our guys didn't act out of character, but they did a good job coming together and getting the job done."

hood throughout the locker room this year, and he says that all teams are different: "Not every team responds the same and bonds the same. That is not something that we as coaches can teach." Yet, his team seemed to mend well together. "Our guys didn't act out of character, but they did a good job coming together and getting the job done."

hood throughout the locker room this year, and he says that all teams are different: "Not every team responds the same and bonds the same. That is not something that we as coaches can teach." Yet, his team seemed to mend well together. "Our guys didn't act out of character, but they did a good job coming together and getting the job done."

hood throughout the locker room this year, and he says that all teams are different: "Not every team responds the same and bonds the same. That is not something that we as coaches can teach." Yet, his team seemed to mend well together. "Our guys didn't act out of character, but they did a good job coming together and getting the job done."

# POWDER PUFF GOT POLAR IN 2019



The Seniors were victorious in this year's Powder Puff tournament, held on a colder-than-normal November evening.

Photo submitted by Brianna Schuck



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL FEIFEL



# PROJECT BULL DOGS WILL GET UP IN THE AIR!

BY CHASE JONES

