

Obama administration accused of wiretapping



Graphic/Catherine Hilliard and Connor Menzel

By Leanne Khov

Through a series of tweets in early March, Donald Trump directly accused former President Obama for wiretapping the phones at Trump Tower before Election Day 2016. In the content of his tweets, Trump insisted that his claimed situation was similar to that of “Nixon/Watergate,” calling the former President a “bad (or sick) guy.” Continuing to accuse Obama, Trump proclaimed that Obama was meddling with a “very sacred election process,” relating his act to McCarthyism.

“Wiretapping can deeply affect how others view a president and can often lead to undesirable consequences for him or her,” said junior Julianna Mathew.

Uncertainties and skepticisms quickly arose from these “tweets,” as Trump provided no evidence that such an action was executed by the Obama administration. Due to the lack of evidence surrounding the issue, Obama quickly dismissed the accusation imposed by Trump. According to CNN, a spokesperson for Obama by the name of Kevin Lewis, declared that “any suggestion” Obama or any White House official ordered for surveillance against Trump is false as no White House official interfered with the independent investigations led by the Department of Justice.

Officials of the government are continuously rendering Trump’s claims false, according to CNN. A former US official with knowledge of the Justice Department’s investigations declared that Obama could not have ordered such a request to wiretap Trump. If Obama were to ask for a warrant, it would have to be run through a team of investigators; however, the investigators claim that they never sought a warrant to monitor Trump’s phones.

In order for Obama to legally wiretap Trump, it must be accepted by a federal judge as well; however, the federal judge must be given a significant reason for doing so. Wiretaps on

Trump’s phones would have been accepted by the federal judge if he or she found that Trump committed a federal crime or was a foreign spy. Trump was neither involved in such a crime nor was a foreign spy in this case, contributing to the flawed statement made by Trump.

Not only are Trump’s statements denied and groundless as it is, neither Trump nor his aides are able to cite or back up Trump’s accusation about Obama. According to the Chicago Tribune, some believe a report on a conservative website, the Breitbart, and a commentary from talk radio host Mark Levin, in which he spoke out about the Obama administration using “police state” tactics to monitor the Trump team, could have stirred the distortion of the wiretap to Trump.

“The possibility that his claims are true seems unlikely if even the accuser is unable to find evidence,” said junior Ammie Faunce.

As more and more people doubt “Trump’s claims,” some began to interpret “Trump’s tweets” differently, questioning if they were even referring to an actual physical wiretap executed by Obama. On CNBC, the White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer argued that it was possible that Trump could have been addressing a “broad surveillance,” rather than an actual physical wiretap. He contended that the reporters were focusing too much on the baseless accusation instead of the statements that denied Trump



Graphic/Catherine Hilliard and Connor Menzel

campaign officials for having a relationship with the Russian officials. “Trump’s accusations remain baseless either way. It’s unlikely that such wiretapping or surveillance could have occurred,” said junior Amber Kim. Although Trump’s accusation remains evidently groundless and confusing, Trump continues to persist that the Obama administration was involved in wiretapping Trump Tower.

Nike launches “Pro Hijab” line for female Muslim athletes

By Regina Thomas

After 53 years worth of selling sportswear, Nike has decided to reach out to a new audience- female Muslim athletes. In early March, Nike announced its new product: “The Nike Pro Hijab.”

Hitting stores in spring 2018, the product will be made out of stretchy mesh polyester with tiny holes, making it breathable, and will come in dark/neutral colors.

According to Nike’s website, they began this project after female Muslim athletes complained about the struggles of wearing the traditional hijab during competitions. A female Olympic weightlifter from the United Arab Emirates, Amna Al Haddad, expressed to Nike how the lack of breathability, heavy weight, and constantly shifting traditional hijab disrupts her focus when weightlifting.

“There weren’t any hijabi athletes to look up to when I was growing up,



Nike launched the “Pro Hijab” in an effort to reach out to female Muslim athletes.
Graphic/Dorothy O’Connor

and I had to be my own pioneer, and now girls today have women like Amna Al Haddad and Zahra Lari to look up to as role models, which is so inspiring,” Manal Rostom, a runner and triathlete currently living in Dubai, told The New York Times. “For young girls to see these women and to see this revolutionary shift will change the face of sport for Muslim Arab girls, whether they wear hijab or not.”

Along with all the praise, the Pro Hijab has received backlash as well. Marathoner Rahaf Khatib, the first hijabi woman to cover a U.S. fitness magazine last fall, told Bleacher Report, “Why now? Why did it take them this long? It’s 2017—kind of sad that it took them so long to acknowledge us,” she said. “Some of my friends are angry, because they feel like Nike is trying to capitalize on this demographic and the political atmosphere.”

Some took to Twitter to convey how the Pro Hijab is not groundbreaking because small companies such as Capsters and ResportOn have been making athletic wear hijabs for years.

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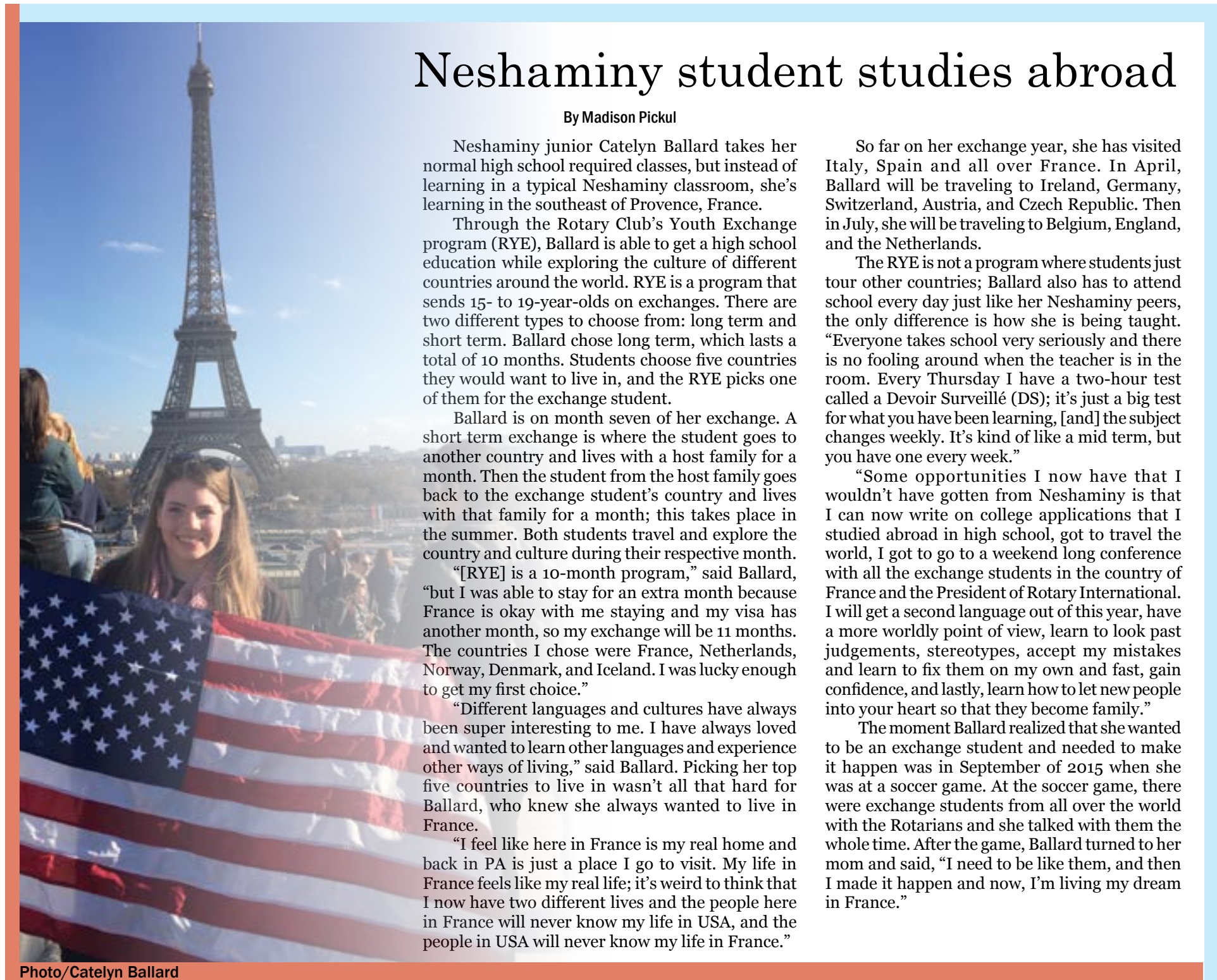


President Trump has been accused of having personal connections with Russia and hacks during the DNC.

Construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline has been resumed under the Trump Administration.



Trump’s new executive order removes the clean power plan and other emission regulations of businesses in hopes to end the war on coal.



Photo/Catelyn Ballard

Neshaminy student studies abroad

By Madison Pickul

Neshaminy junior Catelyn Ballard takes her normal high school required classes, but instead of learning in a typical Neshaminy classroom, she's learning in the southeast of Provence, France.

Through the Rotary Club's Youth Exchange program (RYE), Ballard is able to get a high school education while exploring the culture of different countries around the world. RYE is a program that sends 15- to 19-year-olds on exchanges. There are two different types to choose from: long term and short term. Ballard chose long term, which lasts a total of 10 months. Students choose five countries they would want to live in, and the RYE picks one of them for the exchange student.

Ballard is on month seven of her exchange. A short term exchange is where the student goes to another country and lives with a host family for a month. Then the student from the host family goes back to the exchange student's country and lives with that family for a month; this takes place in the summer. Both students travel and explore the country and culture during their respective month.

"[RYE] is a 10-month program," said Ballard, "but I was able to stay for an extra month because France is okay with me staying and my visa has another month, so my exchange will be 11 months. The countries I chose were France, Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland. I was lucky enough to get my first choice."

"Different languages and cultures have always been super interesting to me. I have always loved and wanted to learn other languages and experience other ways of living," said Ballard. Picking her top five countries to live in wasn't all that hard for Ballard, who knew she always wanted to live in France.

"I feel like here in France is my real home and back in PA is just a place I go to visit. My life in France feels like my real life; it's weird to think that I now have two different lives and the people here in France will never know my life in USA, and the people in USA will never know my life in France."

So far on her exchange year, she has visited Italy, Spain and all over France. In April, Ballard will be traveling to Ireland, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and Czech Republic. Then in July, she will be traveling to Belgium, England, and the Netherlands.

The RYE is not a program where students just tour other countries; Ballard also has to attend school every day just like her Neshaminy peers, the only difference is how she is being taught. "Everyone takes school very seriously and there is no fooling around when the teacher is in the room. Every Thursday I have a two-hour test called a Devoir Surveill   (DS); it's just a big test for what you have been learning, [and] the subject changes weekly. It's kind of like a mid term, but you have one every week."

"Some opportunities I now have that I wouldn't have gotten from Neshaminy is that I can now write on college applications that I studied abroad in high school, got to travel the world, I got to go to a weekend long conference with all the exchange students in the country of France and the President of Rotary International. I will get a second language out of this year, have a more worldly point of view, learn to look past judgements, stereotypes, accept my mistakes and learn to fix them on my own and fast, gain confidence, and lastly, learn how to let new people into your heart so that they become family."

The moment Ballard realized that she wanted to be an exchange student and needed to make it happen was in September of 2015 when she was at a soccer game. At the soccer game, there were exchange students from all over the world with the Rotarians and she talked with them the whole time. After the game, Ballard turned to her mom and said, "I need to be like them, and then I made it happen and now, I'm living my dream in France."

Neshaminy pieces together autism awareness

By Connor Menzel

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, about one in every 68 children is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The disorder is about 4.5 times more likely in boys than in girls. Assuming Neshaminy High School has an enrollment of 3,000 students, theoretically about 44 students have ASD.

While this number may seem quite meager, this one percent of students requires understanding and acceptance, just like the rest of the students. With April being Autism Awareness Month, people could do some research and become a little bit more aware of what Autism really is.

Autism is a spectrum disorder, meaning that it affects every person in a different way. As a whole, however, autism is understood to impact a person's ability to interact or communicate with others. Signs of the disorder, such as the lacking of social skills or developmental problems, can be seen in children as early as 18 months.

New symptoms do not usually appear after age three or four. Symptoms are usually recognized at developmental landmarks, such as a baby not saying single words by 16 months or not babbling or cooing by 12 months.

"I've seen kids with autism that can perform calculus in their heads," Christina Rago, a long-term anatomy and physiology substitute, said. "And then there are kids that can't even care for themselves; they can't eat, shower, or maybe even walk by themselves." Autism can mildly affect the social

skills of an individual, or it could have a major impact.

Neshaminy High School helps each student with autism in a unique and specialized way, due to the spectrum nature of the disorder. Students with more mild social disabilities must be treated differently than those who are nonverbal with more severe intellectual disabilities.

"Neshaminy has some self-contained classrooms for students with autism, but we also have many autistic students switching classes just like everyone else,"

Traci Hindle, a guidance counselor at Neshaminy High School, said. "Neshaminy also houses some self-contained classrooms for the Bucks County IU, for the children with autism that wouldn't normally go to this school."

In addition to understanding what autism really is and what the school does for those who have it, it helps to be aware of how autism affects someone's life. Evan Sleppy, a

Neshaminy sophomore with autism, was delighted to give everyone a little insight about what living with autism is really like.

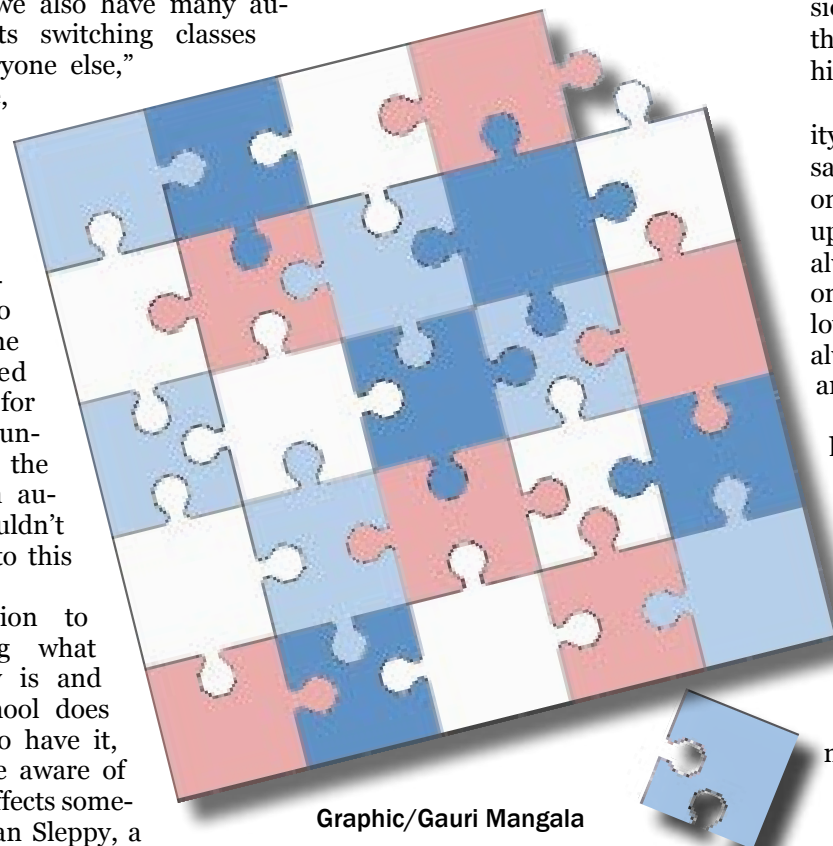
"I was always told that I was diagnosed at three years old," Sleppy began. He explained that throughout his childhood he faced multiple social problems. "It was harder to socialize, and then I would explain it to my mom,

and she would say it's because of my autism. I don't really have a filter, and I can't really converse as normally. My social skills have gotten better, but it's still hard sometimes to converse with my friends."

Sleppy is very involved in the school music program, recently starring in Neshaminy High School's Colabar  t and participating the school's production of Godspell. He stated that he also has social anxiety and depression, but that he does not allow those things, along with the autism, to define him.

"What defines me is my personality and the decisions I make," Sleppy said. This power over his identity is one of the things that allows him to get up on stage and amaze the crowd. "I always feel so confident when I get up on stage, and then afterwards, I always love meeting the people, because they always have such nice things to say, and I always appreciate it."

Sleppy also stated that he would like everyone to understand that "everyone has a challenge, not only people with autism, but everyone. Everyone has some type of challenge that they are going through, and I think that people need to give love, and give friendship and positivity. Those are two of the most important things with a relationship with other people: communication and positivity."



Graphic/Gauri Mangala

Walk helps raise suicide awareness

By Nina Taranenko

Suicide has lost some meaning throughout generations; many of today's adolescents are desensitized to suicide, by jokes being made in the classroom and on social media. But when it actually happens, there's no joking.

Many schools in the Bucks County area are affected by suicide, having suffered the loss of students, friends and family. To help ease the pain, the Bucks County Suicide Prevention Task Force has designated a walk, titled #HoldOnYouMatter, which aims to bring the community together and do something good in lieu of a bad situation.

The Bucks County Suicide Prevention Task Force works to eliminate suicide "through advocacy, education, prevention, intervention, and postvention" as stated in its mission.

The website associated with the walk, lenapevf.org is accepting donations. Walkers who donate or raise a minimum of \$10 receive a walker t-shirt.

Representatives of Neshaminy High school, Joe Werner, a social worker, and Anthony Devlin, head of pupil services, came to talk about the walk to several Neshaminy clubs, including Spectrum, Neshaminy's Gay-Straight Alliance, and Friends Helping Friends. A walk similar to the upcoming one was held at the same location last year, the Out of the Darkness walk.

"Questioning one's sexuality and/or gender identity are two of the biggest causes of teenage suicide," Sean Daly, Spectrum adviser, said. "Spectrum's participation was a perfect fit."

The walk will take place on April 30 at Bucks County Technical High School. Registration starts at 9 a.m. and the walk begins at 10 a.m.



The yellow ribbon represents suicide awareness. Photo/Google Creative Commons

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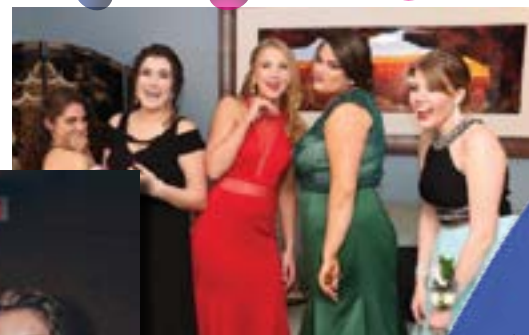
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Isabella Mazzoni, grade 10

I used a technique called stippling to create the shadows of this drawing.



Sam Turner, grade 12
I'm not scared of clowns but I know many people are. I painted its mouth like that to make people feel uncomfortable when looking at it.



Watercolor is a tricky medium, but I still like the way the picture is represented. It's one of those scenes you appreciate in real life so why not paint it.



Morgan Walter, grade 11

Drawing is my favorite way to show my artistic talent. Using pencil is what I do most and I'd say what I'm best at. This picture is one of my first portraits.



Jessica Whelan, grade 12

Overall, it was fun to do the mannequin leg wrapped in Christmas lights and to give the piece a really creepy feel.



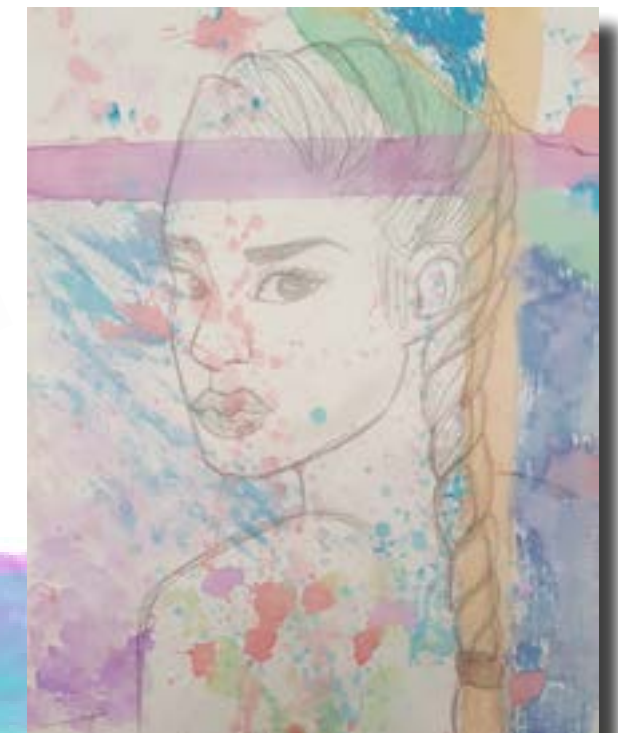
Artists of Neshaminy

The District Art Show will take place May 24 & 25 at Neshaminy High School from 7 to 9 p.m. in Gym 1.

Aidan Kircher, grade 9



I feel like many artists have an entire novel of a backstory to tell of why they started art.



Izabella Groysman, grade 10

The majority of the painting is yellow to represent being busy. The texture in the bee was stippling and shading.



Hunter Troescher, grade 11



I've never been great when it comes to school work so I thought to do what made me happy, what I enjoyed doing, and I realized I wanted to pursue a career in art.



Anastasiya Datsenko, grade 9



Through art I am able to put down my thoughts and emotions onto paper and create something extraordinary.

Mistake leaves a scar on Oscar history

By Catherine Hilliard

Cameras flashed on the red carpet, as limousines pulled up to the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles, Calif. on Feb. 26. With hundreds of celebrities gathered in recognition of the year's best cinematic achievements, nervousness and excitement could be seen on nominees' faces as they hoped to receive the world-famous Oscar silhouette at the end of the night.

Hosted by comedian Jimmy Kimmel, the late-night talk show host joined a long line of famous faces who have also taken on the role of hosting the awards ceremony.

Kimmel took the stage after Justin Timberlake's performance of his Oscar-nominated song, "Can't Stop the Feeling" and warmed-up the crowd with his opening monologue which included numerous political shots.

The Oscar's were not without some political commentary. "This is Meryl Streep's 20th Oscar nomination... Everybody please join me in giving Meryl Streep a totally undeserved round of applause, will you?... Nice dress by the way. Is that an Ivanka?" Kimmel stated, aiming at President Trump after his post on Twitter criticizing the actress.

However, Kimmel also put his political shots aside and gave the audience a more serious tone, recognizing the present divide in the country. He stated, "... I don't want to get too serious, but there are millions and millions of people watching right now—and if every one of you took a minute to reach out to one person you disagree with, someone you like, and have a positive, considerate conversation—not as liberal or

conservatives, as Americans—if we could all do that, we can make America great again. We really could. It starts with us."

Lin-Manuel Miranda, creator of "Hamilton," and 16-year-old Auli'i Cravalho, voice of Moana, also performed for the audience, singing Miranda's Oscar-nominated song, "How Far I'll Go" from Disney's animated movie, "Moana." Cravalho stood out on stage in her red floor-length gown which transformed during the performance to mimic the blue ocean.

Nominated for 14 Oscars, the popular drama film "La La Land" tied with the films "All About Eve" and "Titanic" for achieving the most Oscar nominations. At the end of the night, the film walked away with six awards including, Best Director, Damien Chazelle; Best Actress, Emma Stone; Best Original Song, "Audition"; Best Achievement in Cinematography; Best Achievement in Production Design; and Best Original Score.

The film "Moonlight" also made history, earning Best Picture after the Oscar was mistakenly awarded to "La La Land." Junior Charles Marone watched the situation unfold and stated, "As La La Land was first announced as the winner for Best Picture, I was so excited. It is one of my favorite films of the year. However, Moonlight deserved it—challenging the norms of the movie world to shed light on an important topic is definitely a bold move."

"Moonlight" also went on to win Best Writing Adapted Screenplay and Best Supporting Actor, with Mahershala Ali making history as the first Muslim

to win an Oscar. The actor recognized his newborn daughter and wife stating, "I just wanna thank my wife, who was in her third trimester doing awards season. We just had a daughter four days ago. I just want to thank her for being such a soldier during this process."

An Oscar also went to "Fences" star Viola Davis, who is also nominated for her role in "Hidden Figures." She earned her first Oscar for best actress in a supporting role. "There's one place with all the people with the greatest potential are gathered and that's the graveyard," Davis began. "People ask me all the time what kind of stories do you want to tell Viola and I say, 'Exhume those bodies. Exhume those stories, the stories of the people who dream big and never saw those dreams to fruition, people who fell in love and lost.'"

Kevin O'Connell also landed his first Oscar for the sound mixing in "Hacksaw Ridge" after 21 nominations—his first one for "Tears of Endearment" in 1984. He thanked his mother, who got him his first sound mixing job 39 years ago. "I asked her, 'Ma, how can I ever thank you?' She looked at me and she said, 'You know, I'll tell you how you can thank me. You can work hard. You can work really hard and then someday, you go win yourself an Oscar and you can stand up there on that stage and you can thank me in front of the whole world,'" he recalled. "Mom, I know you're looking down on me tonight. So thank you."

Photo/Google Creative Commons

Ringling Brothers continues legacy, stuns audience

By Dorothy O'Connor

There's something bittersweet about "the last." The last song of a concert, the last scene of a play or musical, the last time a show is performed. There's always a sense of loss, knowing that the experience is ending, and that it won't be repeated. Yet that does not stop people from enjoying themselves, and losing themselves to the spectacle. Seeing the Ringling Brothers Circus in their last year was an experience tinged with this emotion, but it was an incredible experience nonetheless.

After 98 years, the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus is still the greatest show on Earth. Their traveling showcase "Out of This World" contains all the delights of the circus, which made Ringling Brothers famous, wrapped in a fun, galaxy-traipsing story.

The show begins with a "Spacewalk," an incredible balancing act in which performers move seemingly effortlessly around a rotating frame, before the galactic circus sets off on its voyage to find the best acts in the universe in the musical number, "Blast Off!" What follows contains everything from the antics of alien clowns, to boisterous big cats and meteoric motorcycleists.



The performance by the Cossack Riders was an incredible mix of riding skill and gymnastic ability, with stunts such as a five-person pyramid atop two moving horses and one woman going beneath a horse's belly before climbing back into the saddle. This circus performance also included ice-skaters performing astounding acrobatic feats. Some skaters launch off of trampolines and through hoops; others are propelled into the air by their fellow performers.

The animals acts were among the most memorable. Alexander Lacey's lions and tigers do tricks that show off their inborn strength and fierce beauty. He returns later in the show with wife Katie Lacey to perform with a more varied menagerie. Llamas, goats, pigs, and kangaroos all show off their unique skills, though the canine acrobats stole the show for me.

The Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus tradition is coming to an end this year and is certainly closing with a bang. This spectacular show brings back a sense of childlike wonder—only fitting for the show which welcomes "children of all ages..."

O' Connor enjoys an unforgettable experience at The Ringling Brothers circus show. Photo/Dorothy O' Connor

Tale as old as time retold for next generation



Drawing/Dorothy O'Connor

By Sydney Crocker

Disney's newest live-action release, "Beauty and the Beast," lives up to the expectations of many excited fans. The enchanted tale was brought to life with Emma Watson as Belle and Dan Stevens as the Beast. This classic love story was retold with much attention to detail on screen. This version showcased Belle as a strong female lead unlike her animated cookie cutter counterpart.

The computer-generated imagery was absolutely stunning. During the song "Be Our Guest," Lumiere and the rest of the castle staff serenaded Belle with dinner and a show; the roast beef and pudding seemed edible and the flying silverware appeared extremely realistic. The elaborate detail on Belle's dress appeared as though real gold leaf had come to life and attached itself to the dress.

Disney incorporated historical references into the movie. When Belle and Beast visit the place where Belle's mother died, the two find evidence that Belle's mother died of the Black Plague, which explains why Belle's father Maurice never wanted to talk about it. Additionally, viewers are flashed back into history when LeFou attempts to spell Gaston, but realizes he doesn't know how due to his illiteracy.

Disney included an interracial cast and a main character who is homosexual. When the castle staff turns from furniture back into people, viewers see that two of the castle staff members are African American. During this scene, everyone joins in a dance. LeFou can be spotted dancing with a male townsman. Controversy arose because of this- a theater in Alabama boycotted the film and Russia has banned kids younger than 16 from watching it.

Overall, the movie continues to delight fans of many generations. The classic songs take viewers on a magical journey to the past as well as a trip to the future in terms of computer generated animation and special effects.



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The following is an excerpt from Policy 600, which the Playwickian staff must follow. The excerpt is not representative of Policy 600 in its entirety. The Playwickian has been directed to publish this excerpt of the Policy in its masthead. The staff feels this section of the policy is also important to be featured in the masthead: It is the intent of the Board of School Directors of the School District that School District publication be considered government speech for purposes of the First Amendment and to the extent permitted by the First Amendment. Playwickian Policy; The policy of the Playwickian which shall be published as part of the masthead of the newspaper shall be as follows: "Policy. Subject to applicable law and the terms, conditions and limitations set forth in Policy 600 of the Board of School Directors of the Neshaminy School District and this policy statement, it is the policy of School District that student journalists shall have the right to determine the content of the Playwickian. Except for advertisements, all content shall be prepared by students, subject to editing by others. Students: (a) strive to produce media based upon professional standards of accuracy, objectivity and fairness; (b) review material to improve sentence structure, grammar, spelling and punctuation; (c) check and verify all facts and verify the accuracy of all quotations; and (d) in the case of editorials or letters to the editor, determine controversial issues, determine the need for rebuttal comments and opinions and provide space therefore if appropriate. As examples, and not limitations on the proper authority of school officials, the following types of expression will not be approved for publication: (a) material that is obscene; (b) the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value; (c) indecent or vulgar language is not obscene; (d) material that violates the legal or constitutional rights of others; (e) material that will cause a material and substantial disruption of school activities; and (f) any other material that the school authorities reasonably believe should be prohibited. Within the terms, conditions and limitations of Policy 600 and this policy statement, students are free to express opinions. Specifically, a student may criticize school policy or the performance of teachers, administrators, school officials and other school employees. The viewpoints expressed by anyone in this paper shall not be deemed to be the viewpoints of the School District, any official or employee of the School District, or any student other than the student or students who expressed the viewpoint.

The Viewpoint: New education bill jeopardizes learning opportunities

Education, a building block for the foundation for success, is a crucial component for advancing in society. By informing and inspiring students, students are educated on essential material that will not only have a longstanding impact on their development as individuals, but on the country as a whole. As future leaders of the nation, these students should be given substantial opportunities to grasp imperative concepts such as skills-based health education and critical thinking skills in order to succeed in the future. However, the H.R. 899, a bill introduced on Feb. 7, has proposed to terminate the Board of Education on Dec. 31, 2018.

The Department of Education's priority is "...to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access." It collects data on U.S. schools, represents national policies on curriculum standards, and enforces federal educational laws, civil rights, and student aid. In turn, proposal to abolish this department from the federal government puts students' educational opportunities and their futures at a significant risk.

Education is envisioned as an equalizer for all students, as the Board of Education has helped to ensure that factors such as race, income, language and disability are not barriers to a quality education by providing protections and supplemental resources. As a result, high school graduation rates have soared to an all time-high; dropout rates have declined dramatically; college going rates are the highest they have ever been; test scores across the nation are improving each school year.

Therefore, the dissolution of the Board will not only widen the achievement gap, but notably hinder the achievements gained. In addition, federal funds supplied to assist states and school districts will decrease, as K-12 education will lose more than \$175 million used to help improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools across the nation while students with disabilities and military families, Native American students, students living in U.S. territories, and students living on federal property or Native American

lands would lose a total of \$13.8 billion per year for their schools. In addition, \$1.3 trillion in student loans would be at risk, 8 million students would lose Pell grants every year, and 490,000 or more teacher positions could be eliminated.

Progress in the classroom also means progress in the nation. By eliminating the Board of Education, the ability for a classroom to successfully advance is difficult. While some would argue that the Board of Education is at fault and is in need of reform, it is ineffective to allow the states and local communities to take charge in students' learning and development. Existing among the local level is an educational disparity that varies from socioeconomic class to religious values to cultural values.

Getting rid of the Board of Education would cause many students to learn at a different pace or in divergent curriculums, creating confusion among students and complication in getting the students caught up in the future. Therefore, federal intervention is crucial to ensure that every student gets the same high quality or equal level of education.

While the implementation of the H.R. 899 would eliminate the Board's \$68 billion annual budget, saving American taxpayers' money, the bill could have long term effects that could be detrimental to the student population, as lack of regulation in educational policies and public oversight would result in privately funded institutions that shape learning around personal and religious beliefs.

In effect, students have a distorted view that does not shape their own analysis and consideration, but rather reflects the beliefs imposed on them by the local establishment. Diversity therefore, is limited among students, as they are dissuaded from thinking independently and creatively, resulting in all aspects of life becoming politicized to the extent where there is no longer unity between the 50 states.

Although the H.R. 899 puts the students' education and future at jeopardization, those in favor of the

bill have argued that the state and local communities are in the best position to shape the curriculum that will correctly meet the needs of their students. In other words, parents, home schools, public schools, or private schools have the right and ability to choose the most appropriate educational opportunity for its children. In their reasoning, the government has put too much of its regulation into the education system and has developed a Common Core that is inefficient. The government-managed Board of Education does not have the experience to execute an educational system for the whole student population as it removes the independence of local districts to determine what students learn.

With this perspective, those in support believe that the government will not be able to understand the needs of the schools and its students on an individual basis. Thus, they strongly advocate that education can only advance forward if the responsibility of the students' educational opportunity rests primarily with parents, teachers, and state and local officials who already know the individuals on a personal level. Despite these counterarguments, America's education program is extremely decentralized. The government is not heavily influencing the system and the specific educational standards for each school as each individual state is able to maintain a good level of power.

In order for society to progress to continue to maintain a prominent status of advancement in the world, it is important to offer students the best education system and learning development possible. Therefore, a unified educational system is vital to the success and strength of this country. By ensuring common educational opportunities and standards for everyone, students will receive vital, unbiased, and equal levels of knowledge and skills. The country as a whole will be able to push forward. For this to happen, a government regulated group, the Board of Education, must be maintained.

This unsigned editorial represenst the unanimous view of the editorial board.

family members, or the parents and children waiting to board their flights.

ESPN commentator Sage Steele was directly affected by these protests. She herself was trying to board a flight out of LAX airport when the protesting was underway.

"So THIS is why thousands of us dragged luggage nearly two miles to get to LAX, but still missed our flights," Steele posted on Instagram. "Fortunately, a seven-hour wait for the next flight to Houston won't affect me that much, but my heart sank for the elderly and parents with small children who did their best to walk all that way but had no chance of making their flights."

Not only has the recent protesting been a disruption to the function of society, but some of the protests have turned violent. Protesting always has the chance to turn violent and even deadly. Protests on occasion can turn

Perez wins DNC chair election: Savior or the final nail in the political coffin?

By Jacob Van Dine

Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez won the Democratic National Committee (DNC) chairmanship election Feb. 25 after two rounds of voting, his second round contender being Minnesota Representative and Deputy Chair of the DNC, Keith Ellison. Without a Democratic president, it was the first time since 1985 that the DNC held a contested election for the chair, whose job it is to lead the Democratic Party is both realms of policies and politics.

The need for a new chairman came after the DNC email leak on July 22, 2016, where thousands of emails between party officials showed collusion to assist Hillary Clinton's campaign during the Democratic primaries, contrary to what both the DNC and the Clinton campaigns previously stated.

The Chairwoman at the time, Florida Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz, reluctantly resigned from the position after the public opinion was overwhelmingly against her in the wake of the emails; Wasserman Schultz's temporary replacement until the election, Donna Brazile, was also exposed in assisting Clinton by emailing her questions she was going to be asked before a primary debate in March.

With exposure after exposure of the Democratic Party's undemocratic internal favoritism during the primary, they doubled down in support of Clinton and launched a series of political attacks against the then supposed- and now confirmed- hackers and leakers of the emails: Russia and WikiLeaks.

Intending to have their cake and eat it too, they invoked Cold War Era fear-mongering and self-victimization for being the victim of the hack, instead of taking responsibility for the emails or an even more radical idea, not gaming the primary in the first place.

Although Perez won narrowly by 235-200 delegates, it tells a larger story about the state of the current Democratic Party's struggle to regroup and rethink the essence of their message, not just out of numerous scandals, or losing the Rust Belt in the electoral college, but losing the 2016 election overall. Republicans now hold a majority in both the Senate and the House, the Executive Branch, the Supreme Court, 31 governorships, and 32 state legislatures.

Moreover, the new administration earlier this month ordered for the resignation of 46 Obama-appointed U.S. Attorneys- essentially scrubbing clean the Justice Department of dissenters. To call the results from November and their actions since anything but a bloodbath, and more importantly, a wake up call, for the Democrats is disingenuous.

What makes Perez so promising for a better Democratic Party moving forward? The answer can be found in an organization that the Democrats usually detest and antagonize, Fox News.

Fox News released a bipartisan poll earlier this March, asking questions to a randomized selection (all notable variables were held within the margin of error, so no group is overrepresented) of registered voters. The poll found that Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders held an overall favorability of 60 per-

cent- the most favorable politician in the United States by a landslide. Trailing behind Sander's net favorability of +29 percent is Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren and Vice President Mike Pence, with net favorability of +8 percent and +4 percent, respectively.

Perez, as Secretary of Labor, was Left of the Democratic party pre-2016 election. He was the "muscle" behind the 75 months of private sector job growth, totalling in 14 million jobs. The unemployment rate down to 4.8 percent, when it was at 10 percent in 2009, gradually halving it over the last eight years. Alongside his handling of the job market is his similarities with Sander's focus of a grassroots organization and small funding by many people, as well as reforming campaign financing laws, fighting voter ID laws, and gerrymandering borders in favor of either side.

The underlying theme behind this shift is if the Democrats can not beat the Republican populism of Donald Trump during his campaign, or barely beat out the Independent populism of previously unknown Bernie Sanders in the primary, then they need to join in on the populist fervor in the United States.

However, Keith Ellison was unanimously re-elected his former position of Deputy Chair, whose job it is to gather the Party members to cooperate and support one set of policies or one plan of action. Ellison was thoroughly a Clinton-loyalist, meaning that although the "soul-searching" within the Democratic Party appears to be waning after Perez's election, there may still remain some growing pains.



Official portrait of Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez from 2009. Photo/Google Creative Commons



Thomas Perez gives a speech at the National Partnership for Women & Families Annual Luncheon in 2015. Photo/Google Creative Commons

European Court of Justice ruling restricts religious freedom

By Brynn MacDougall

The European Union's highest court ruled against religious freedom by allowing employers to ban Muslim women from wearing face and head coverings in the work place.

The decision handed down by the court allows employers to ban any religious symbol, including Christian ones.

But given the tide of religious intolerance in Europe, it will not be applied equally to everyone.

"There's no doubt that Muslims are the main group in the line of fire," Iman Amrani wrote for The Guardian. "That's why far-right groups across the continent were so delighted with it."

The targeting of Muslim women's expression of their faith is nothing new in Western countries. Bans

on headscarves and the like have been present since 2003, though they have increased in recent years.

"For its wearers the hijab is a core part of their way of life, linked to the way they choose to practise their faith," Amrani wrote. "It is not up for debate. By permitting a ban on the hijab, Europe is essentially permitting a ban on Muslim women in the workplace."

There is no real reason to ban Muslim women's head coverings

Headcoverings don't prevent said women from performing their duties.

If a customer has a problem with the way a Muslim woman presents her faith, the problem is with the customer.

"Do we really believe that women who have a religious conviction to wear the headscarf are just

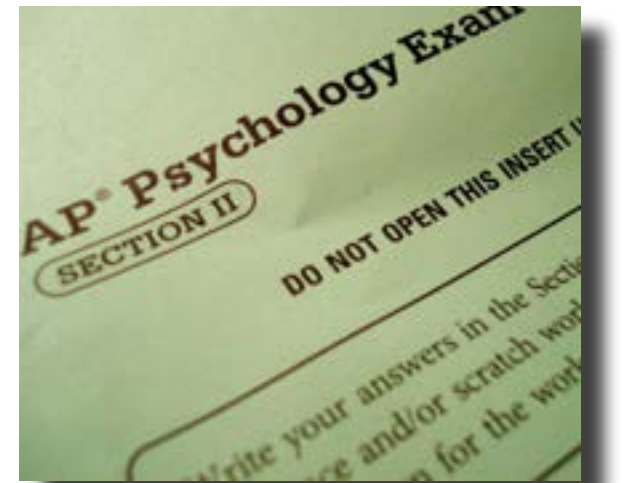
going to take it off when they start their job each day?" Amrani asked in her article. "I'm sorry, but that's not how it works. Identity isn't something you suppress for public spaces. I don't stop being a Muslim when I come into work and turn into a journalist. I practise my faith in the canteen by not choosing the pork option, or when I ask for a soft drink instead of wine at the after-work drinks. If my colleagues notice that I'm doing this, and it makes them uncomfortable, should I be forced to behave differently?"

Muslims are people and have the right to exist as Muslims in public spaces. These bans and restrictions placed on Muslims essentially criminalize an entire religion and are unacceptable.

If Europe has any moral integrity, this court decision will be challenged and overturned.

AP classes secure futures, ensure smooth path to college

By Andy Nguyen



Students who take AP tests can receive college credits while still in high school, which can help cut the cost of college. Photo/Google Creative Commons

In schools across the country, Advanced Placement (AP) classes are being offered for students who go above and beyond the average expectation of an honors student. Many students who have the ability to take AP classes are stepping up, hoping to gain high scores on the national exam and gain the college credits.

An AP class is designed for students who are not engaged by honors courses and want more of a challenge. The College Board creates a high school class curriculum that is based off of a college curriculum and tests.

With a more challenging curriculum, any student who takes an AP course will definitely be challenged. However, many students choose to take honors instead of AP because of the main difference: how challenging the course is. The difficulty is not the only difference. Another difference is the college credit that can be acquired if a student scores high enough on the national exam.

The real question here for most students is will AP classes actually help in the long run?

Since AP students are being pre-exposed to college

curriculum, they are better prepared for the excess note-taking and have more study skills under their wing than the average student.

Not only do the courses give students a preview into the life of college, they also help students obtain college credits. AP credits are a major steal for many students. They can be acquired by paying less than \$100 to take the national exam.

Some colleges will accept the credit if the student scores a three. Most colleges, however, will only accept it if the student gets a four or five. Taking AP courses only for the credits does have downsides, though.

Even if a student scores a perfect five on a national exam, it all depends on whether or not the college accepts the class for credit.

There is no reason to not take AP classes. Not only will these classes prepare students for college curriculum, but they also can make college cheaper if a student gets a high enough score on an AP exam. For those students up to the challenge, taking an AP class can provide them with a useful introduction to the college environment.



Photos/Natalie Pietrowski

Senior wrestler competes at state championships

By Natalie Pietrowski

For Neshaminy Senior Kyle Osterhoudt the love of wrestling started long before high school. Osterhoudt began wrestling during his middle school years, and hasn't stopped since. "[In middle school] My social studies teacher said 'come out for wrestling', I did, and fell in love with it," he said.

This season, Osterhoudt placed 28th at the PIAA District 1 regional competition securing a spot at the PIAA State match wrestling against the best athletes in the state. "[My favorite thing about wrestling] is the individual aspect of it," he said. "You control the outcome of the match."

The stress of competing at such high stakes would likely get to anyone, but Osterhoudt attempted to keep his cool. "I just kept focus, just kept thinking of my match in my head and what I wanted to do," he said. "I looked past the crowds of people, the big arena and focused on what I was going to do to win the match, even though it didn't work out the way I wanted it to."

Although he did not advance past the first round at the state championships, he sees the circumstances as a learning experience. "It was a wakeup call," Osterhoudt said. "It was like you've got one more chance, if you win you move on to the next day, if you lose you're going home."

In addition to wrestling, Osterhoudt plays Varsity football and throws shot put for the track team.

"I think wrestling is a great sport to go with football, because... wrestling conditioning helps a lot with football," he said.

Year-round workouts after school results in a very tight schedule and leaves little room for other activities. "[There are many] long nights of doing work, no time for social media at all, no time for goofing around. (It's) basically get home, eat dinner, and do homework for the rest of the night," he said.

Finding time to focus on schoolwork, though difficult, is beneficial. Osterhoudt is currently exploring options for his post-high wrestling career and education at multiple different universities. "I want to go to college," he said. "I'm stuck between Muhlenberg, Albright and King's college."

On top of the opportunities for college, wrestling also taught Osterhoudt important life lessons. "It made me more responsible for making sure I had all my equipment, making sure I was ready for the match, and had water and food for tournaments," he said. "It has taught me to mature a lot, I picked up leadership skills, in a way."

In the end, wrestling has proved to be a positive experience for Osterhoudt throughout high school, offering many opportunities for success. "Believe in yourself, and be confident in your ability to become great," he said. "Because in the end yourself is your biggest enemy."

COMING UP

Today

3:30 pm boys tennis at Jenkintown MS/HS
3:30 pm baseball at Council Rock South HS
3:30 pm softball at Council Rock South HS
7:00 pm girls lacrosse at Pennridge HS

Tomorrow

3:30 pm boys tennis at Bensalem
TBA boys and girls track, Penn Relays, at University of Pennsylvania
5:00 pm boys volleyball at Archbishop Wood HS

Saturday

9:00 am boys and girls track, Penn Relays, at University of Pennsylvania
7:00 pm Harlem Wizards come to Neshaminy



Sophomore Ben Dunn hits a forthcoming ball.

Photo/Maggie Aldrich

Despite obstacles, track team holds high standards for season

By Julia Capaldi

After heavy snowfall in the midst of spring and unpredictable temperatures, Neshaminy spring sports have been struggling to practice. Track coaches have been forced to move their practices indoors in order to keep the season moving.

"We've been forced to get creative with our practices and do our best training our athletes indoors," Shawn DeLosAngeles, track coach, said. "All that running on hard surfaces can lead to injuries, so avoiding this is the key."

Despite the change in practice environment, the team has stayed persistent and continued to practice to the best of their ability. The coaches have continued to train their team with difficult workouts.

"The team endures challenging workouts that are designed to prepare them both mentally and physically," DeLosAngeles said. "We work on form, technique and do our best to motivate our athletes to strive for more each day. It is our job to put our athletes in the best position possible to compete at their highest level."

The season has not been delayed and the team will have had its first meet of the SOL schedule against Council Rock High School Wednesday, March 29. They have kept their goals to high standards and hope to accomplish them by the end of this season.

"Our goal for both teams is to compete for an SOL title each year," DeLosAngeles said. "...but outside of working together as a unit to do that, we aim to teach athletes form and technique in events they can excel at, have our athletes earn personal best performances in every time out, get several individuals and relays teams to qualify for the District I Championships, and have several of those team members earn a spot to compete at the PIAA State Championships in Shippensburg at the end of May."



Photo/ Maggie Aldrich