



MEET THE TEACHER:  
MS. CUMMINGS. 9



DIARY OF  
A PANDA'S  
LAST NDA  
SOCCER  
GAME. 2

# THE GAVEL



Clare Butler (11), Marisa Gamel (12) and Riley Crawford (11) enjoy the season's first snow. (Shannon Gormally photo)

## It's beginning to look a lot like exam week

When Notre Dame Academy began Christmas break, many Pandas left with visions of exams dancing in their heads. A later start to the school year stretched the second quarter after the break; exams begin Jan. 16. Did the scheduling switch help Pandas get in the holiday spirit earlier? The answer might surprise you. **Story, page 2.**



The Pandas pose with the state runner-up trophy after a 1-0 loss to West Jessamine in the championship game in Lexington. NDA's Cassidy Craig, Audrey Muck and Maddie Wilhoite were named to the all-tournament team. (Photo: NDA Soccer Shutterfly/Mark Carothers)

## The last day of my high school soccer career

BY CASSIDY CRAIG

Gavel staff writer

*The Notre Dame Academy soccer team advanced all the way to the state championship game this fall, coming just short of the title with a 1-0 loss to West Jessamine in a penalty-kick shootout. Senior goalkeeper Cassidy Craig kept a chronology of her final NDA game day for The Gavel:*

- **10 a.m.:** Breakfast at First Watch for soccer seniors. (No wait in recognition of state game that evening!)
- **11 a.m. to 2 p.m.** Rest for game by watching multiple episodes of a favorite show.
- **2 p.m.** Get everything together, putting on warmup shirt, socks, game day shorts, hair up in a ponytail, packing up soccer bag (checking if I have two cleats, two shinguards, two gloves, all four jerseys, tape for my cleats and socks, and, of course, "pixie dust" for good luck).
- **2:45:** Arrive at NDA. Team moms are running about, making sure all their state decorations are up to par. My mother hands me posters made by freshman players ("Cass says no", "#1 on the field and in our hearts"), and gets me to take a picture with them, like many other mothers are doing with their daughters.
- **2:55-** FaceTime call to wish me luck, from a close friend who isn't able to make it to game.
- **3 p.m.** Prayer service for team in Alumnae Hall, followed by team prayer and release of balloons.
- **3:30:** Depart from NDA with police escort, hanging outside the bus windows to wave to our fans.
- **3:40:** On the ride down to Lexington, seniors read letters from former NDA state championship soccer players aloud for the rest of the team to hear.

**5 p.m.** Team arrives at Lafayette with speaker blaring "Mr. Brightside" by the Killers (a popular tune among the soccer team). We sit in the bleachers and watch the boys' title game (St. X vs. Daviess County).

- **5:45:** Team goes to locker room to be taped up and mentally prepare, followed by warmup.

- **6:30:** Change into jerseys and circle time to discuss the big game. We say our prayer (below). Finally, team mascot Big Mama is passed around for all to kiss.



Cassidy Craig comes up with a save in penalty kicks. (Bob Jackson photo)

**NDA SOCCER TEAM PRAYER**

“Let me do my best today  
 Not for all my friends to say  
 Not for glory  
 Not for fame  
 Not for all that know my name  
 Not for show  
 Not for thanks  
 Not to rise above the ranks  
 Not to hear the crowd’s applause  
 Let me do my best for God.”

- **6:40:** After St. X wins 3-0, Panda players take the field to resume warmups. I go to goal to be shot on. The crowd gets bigger.

- **7 p.m.** Starting lineups are announced, followed by final pre-game cheers and prayers. The game starts.

- **7:40:** Halftime arrives, tied 0-0. As the break winds down, I walk to goal to receive more shots to prepare myself for the second half.

- **7:50:** Second half begins.

- **8:20:** Maddie Wilhoite scores, but the goal is called back.

- **8:30:** End of regulation time, still 0-0.

- **8:40:** End of double overtime, onto penalty kicks. Each team picks five players and decides who shoots first, second, etc. I’m pacing back and fourth on the bench, wanting only to be alone in order to prepare myself

for something I hated to do. Coach Gronotte asks if want to know what side their shooters shoot on based on their last game, against Sacred Heart; I say yes, but I know this something I can't 100% base the present on.

- **8:45:** Start of PKs. Before I walk out, Coach Gronotte yells for me, telling a change of direction for #11; I can barely hear him. I would tend to start off shaded right in order to make the shooter think I'm best on my right side, causing them to shoot left; I actually prefer to dive on that side. This works for a few. but some are impossible to reach. I block two (after the first, I couldn't contain myself from the biggest smile). But so does the West Jess keeper. I never heard a crowd so loud, but I could only focus on the shooter in front of me.

- **8:50:** Now it’s sudden death. We miss our first. I walk out knowing the rest of this rides on me. The West Jess shooter hits it upper 90 (top corner of goal), which I can't reach.

End of high school soccer career.

# What so proudly she hailed ...

Nina Pauly's anthems started volleyball games on perfect note

**BY SHANNON GORMALLY**

Gavel staff writer

It is a Friday night when two rivals come together. It is playing for a purpose, one of the biggest games of the season for Notre Dame volleyball. With the gym of Thomas More College packed, the 5-foot-7 girl with the curly red hair, wearing No. 15 for the Pandas, walks forward to take her place on the floor. But not on the court.

Not yet.

Junior Nina Pauly steps to the microphone. And she begins to sing.

“O say, can you see? By the dawn’s early light. What so proudly we hailed...”

You see, Nina doesn’t just play for the Pandas. She sings the national anthem at every home game, and has been doing it since her freshman year. She continues to shock many with her voice and volleyball talents.

“Nina has an amazing voice and we love that she is willing to showcase it prior to playing,” athletic director Myanna Webster said. “It is always impressive to have a student that is successful in multiple areas and Nina is a shining example of that.”

Outside of Nina’s national anthem performance, she has sung in competitions and regularly in church since fourth grade. She has



Nina Pauly sings the national anthem before the Pandas’ home game against Assumption. “I love being able to represent my country and honor those who served,” the junior said.

also performed in both *Jane Eyre* and the Showcase last year. Still, after dozens of performances, she still gets nervous.

“I repeat the song over and over in my head until I start singing and I am not nervous anymore,” she said.

Although it has become routine for Nina to sing the national anthem, she takes pride in singing it every time.

“I love being able to represent my country and honor those who served. My grandfather loved hearing me sing and he is a World War II veteran so singing this reminds me of him.”

But Nina’s talent doesn’t stop with singing. Nina was third on the team in assists and fifth in digs. Nina also works very hard in the classroom. She is definitely not the average teenage student.

With all the talk regarding the national anthem today, Nina has found a way to make many speechless by bringing her talents of singing and volleyball together.

# Final points about fall sports



## Volleyball

- The varsity Pandas went 28-10, winning conference and district titles and finishing runner-up in the Ninth Region to St. Henry. NDA beat St. Henry in Playing for a Purpose and battled through injuries to key players like Belle Morgan and Julia Sears.
- Natalie Hardig (above) was named first-team all-state and honorable mention Under Armour All-American. She signed with Northern Kentucky.
- Lainey Stephenson (Wright State) was second-team all-state.
- Seniors Olivia Montelisciani (Morehead State) and Sears (Otterbein) also committed to colleges.
- The JV team was 19-8 and finished second in the Louisville Invitational Volleyball Tournament. The freshman team was 24-3 and second in the freshman LIVT.

## Cross country

- The varsity Pandas finished first at the Panda Classic and the Diocese meet. They were second at Ryle, at Lexington Catholic and at regionals, and 11th at state.
- Dorothy Hafertepen replaced Chris Herren as head coach.
- Kate Williams (above left) was first at both Diocese and the Panda Classic. She was 81st at state, the best finish of any NDA runner.
- Karen Horner (above right) had top-five finishes at the Panda Classic (second), Diocese (fifth) and Ryle (fourth). She was 85th at state. Other state places: Manon Stovik 92nd, Erika Nageleisen 108th, Lauren Janzaruk 114th.
- The JV team won the Williamstown Invitational; Open team was first at the Diocese meet.

## Soccer

- The varsity Pandas reached the state championship game, finishing runner-up to West Jessamine. NDA's 22-6-2 record included 35th District and Ninth Region titles.
- Maddie Wilhoite (above) was Ninth Region offensive player of the year and first-team all-state, among other honors. She'll play at Toledo. Maya Decker (Marian) also made all-state first team.
- The KHSAA all-tournament team included Cassidy Craig, Audrey Muck and Wilhoite.
- Allison Robertson, who will play at Ashland, set school assist records for a season (17) and career (27).
- The JV team went 12-4-2 and won the NDA tourney. The freshman team (9-4-2) reached the championship of the Ryle tourney.

## Golf

- Varsity was third at the Cooper Invitational and second at Beechwood and the NKAC meet.
- Junior Lauren Abner was fifth at Ryle and eighth in the conference; Caitlin Zieleniewski, the team's only senior, was 10th at NKAC.
- JV was third in regionals, led by third-place Elizabeth Dunaway.



Alaina Brauer, Clare Butler, Cassidy Craig, Riley Crawford, Ryan Cleves and Molly Reese reported on fall sports for Publications. Final season information was shared by Susan Colvin of the athletic department.

## Winter sports

- Bowling: Thursday vs. Dixie
- Swimming: Thursday at Sycamore
- Basketball: Saturday at Grant County
- Archery: Jan. 13 at St. Henry

# Happy for holidays, but mindful of exams

**BY MARISA GAMEL**

Gavel staff writer

With NDA undergoing major construction over the summer, school began about a month later than usual this year. To even out the academic quarters, the second quarter will stretch into the new year, pushing exams back from the usual last school days of December to the middle of January.

The publications class wondered; With exams being after the break, would it be easier for students to get into the holiday spirit earlier? Of the 167 students who responded to our Google Forms survey, nearly three-fifths (58.7 percent) said no.

“Personally, walking out of school on Wednesday after exams was one of the best parts of Christmas break,” said junior Nina Pauly. “We still have full days of school, and I have to study for multiple tests (in the last week before break).”

Sophomore Grace Kramer said, “Since there are no exams, I have lots of homework over the break, which holds back my Christmas spirit.” Added senior Sophie Middendorf: “No, now we have to worry about studying over break.”

But some liked the chance to celebrate Christmas before focusing on exams.

Junior Noelle Philips said, “We have time to enjoy Christmas things such as ice skating, lights, or family parties without the stress of studying for exams. We have room in our minds to get in the Christmas spirit.”

Junior Elly Piatt said, “I am not stressing out about exams, which I enjoy!”

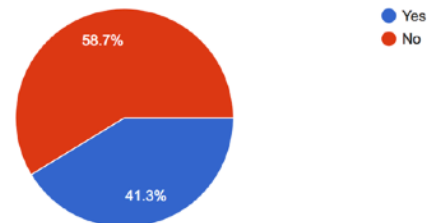
Freshman Claire Schmidt: “I don’t have to stress about studying before Christmas and can focus on my family and getting into the Christmas spirit.”

Added sophomore Lainey Renaker: “I am able to keep my focus on one thing at a time, so I am happier.”

Said freshman Anne-Marie Wright: “Who doesn’t love Christmas?”

With exams being after Christmas break, is it easier to get into the Christmas spirit earlier?

167 responses



## Pandas make a difference at Women in IT Conference

The annual Women in Information Technology conference at Xavier University creates a great opportunity for students to be introduced to new technologies and opportunities.

This year’s conference in November was even more rewarding for groups of Notre Dame Academy students, who finished 1-2 in the conference’s problem-solving competition. The winning group included Katie Schuh, Liza Muller, Addy Stanley, Stephanie Meyer, Libby Smith, Macy Seiter, Emily Guerin and Jillian Seither. Each received a \$25 Amazon gift card.

NDA students also listened to different women speak about their career paths in technology and the challenges they have faced in a work force dominated by males. They explained how IT is a great career because every company needs an expert in IT.

- Abbey Tierney

# Tech Week: the production behind the play

**BY GEORGIA LAIRD**

Gavel staff writer

Notre Dame Academy's fall theatre production was the Greek tragedy *Antigone*, in which a feud between the title heroine and her uncle, King Creon, causes heartbreak, betrayal, and death.

With each show comes a lot of work, on and off the stage. Not including Tech Week, the actors and actresses put in nine hours a week after school to make this show the best it can be. Some put hours in on the weekends, or stay well into the evening on school days just to make sure everything is ready for tech week.

Then comes Tech Week.

Tech week is the week before the show where cast and crew alike do final preparations for the performances.

"It's a week where you just run the whole show," said senior Katherine Horsford, who played Antigone. "It takes a lot of time. It can be really stressful, but in the end it's worth it because you need it for a good show."

Tim Belton, who played Creon, said Tech Week shares one aspect with the Navy SEALs' "Hell Week": While it's not fun, at the end of it you will feel good about the outcome.

Tech Week puts a lot of stress on the cast and crew to know lines, pull costumes together, design and seamlessly produce the hair and makeup, and many other important tasks. During the week, students stay as late as 10 p.m. They have a break for dinner before they run through the show, and have minimal social time.

**NEXT: Showcase: Revolutions, Feb. 2-4.** NDA students "examine the ways in which rebellion, revolution, and change have manifested throughout our musical/theatrical history."

The purpose of Tech Week is to run through the show as many times as it takes to make sure everything is perfect. "You run the show. You go through it," said stage manager Lucy Pastura, a junior. "Then you have notes at the end to fix the trouble spots. And then the next day you run it again and try to fix the trouble spots."

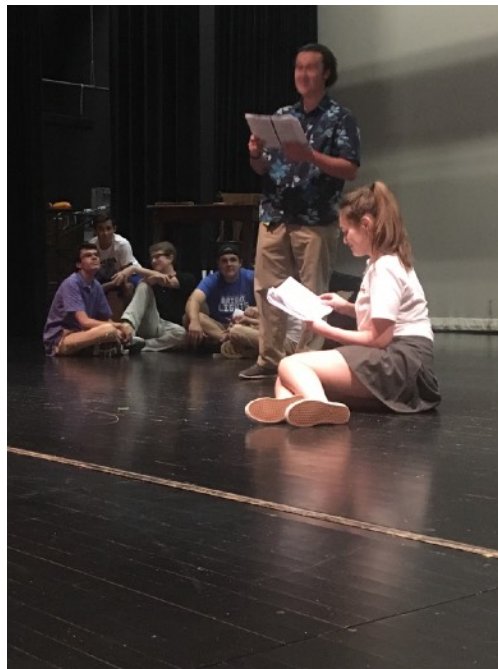
Tech Week starts the Sunday before opening night and runs until the next Sunday, when everything has to be cleaned up after the last show.

Each actor, designer, and crew member put in long hours together. Many participants in the shows come together on and off the stage, because they are with each other all week long.

Horsford said that her favorite times of Tech Week are spent with friends: "Going to Reality's everyday and picking up coffee before each run."

To create the chemistry on stage, cast and crew must all get along off stage. They come together almost like a family, because they all understand each other's struggles. It's the little things that make people's days in the program, like helping someone change from one costume to another, grabbing props for people who are busy doing other things, or even just smiling at each other.

Overall, tech week is bearable because of the people you are around. The camaraderie and friendships make hard work not so hard, and the show that much better.



The *Antigone* cast reads through lines during a Tech Week practice.

# What's new for the PaNDAs?

Many renovations still to come, but we're enjoying these now



## 1. Study booths

Chloe Hilvers and Abbey Kathman (11) study at one of the two new charging stations on the first floor, nooks cut into the soccer-field side of Hilton Hall. This will help the Pandas study for tests and do homework (and charge iPads). The future is bright for the Notre Dame Academy Pandas!

## 2. Updated restroom

Abby Nordloh and Chloe McDowell (12) wash their hands in our new first-floor bathroom. Chloe says, "It's amazing to see how far this school has come since I was a freshman. The renovations are modernized and everything looks so nice." The new bathroom is modernized with automatic hand dryers and sinks.



## 3. New art room stuff

AP art student Riley Best (12) uses the brand new art table to compile a colored pencil drawing. New to the art room this year: sinks, cabinets, and furniture. As a GSA graduate, Riley enjoys the new and improved art room: "I love being down in the basement where I can express myself and create art with all the new supplies."

- Elena Alcantara, Chloe McDowell



## Meet the teacher: Ms. Cummings

*Ms. Kelsey Cummings is the new music teacher at Notre Dame Academy. She is a Notre Dame Academy alumna who attended Northern Kentucky University to study performance. She teaches History of Rock n' Roll, Piano Lab, and Panda Tones. She spoke with staff writer Macaira Mullen for The Gavel.*

**Question: Did you ever see yourself coming back to NDA to teach?**

**Answer:** No and yes. It is absolutely amazing where God places you when we don't think that we would come back. Notre Dame has always had a special place in my heart because of my friends and still being close from high school. I didn't see myself coming back to NDA, but now that I'm here, it feels very natural and right.

**Q: How is the school year gone so far?**

**A:** I am having a lot of fun so far! These girls are absolutely wonderful, and they are so interested in the subjects. They are enjoying learning new music, which was my intention to have them broaden their music listening. I want them to realize there is more music out there than they listen to today. I also feel so wonderfully blessed that the girls that take my classes want to be here.

**Q: What is your favorite class to teach?**

**A:** I really love all of my classes so far, just because there is such a high interest and it is very motivating for myself. Music is just my passion in general, so as long as I'm teaching something music related I'm happy.

**Q: What kind of music do you listen to in your free time?**

**A:** It definitely depends on the mood that I am in. When working or studying, classical music tends to help you focus, but for me it doesn't help me concentrate because I stop and listen to analyze the music. I then think about the technique in the music and the artist. Although, if I am feeling lazy I'll listen to classic rock or the Beatles. The Beatles are my all-time favorite band. Sometimes during the summer I'll listen to country, which is somewhat a guilty pleasure of mine. I am always open to new music. If it is important to them that's all that matters.



NDA alumna Kelsey Cummings returned to campus to teach music this year.

*(Macaira Mullen photo)*

# Looking back: Picturing fall at NDA



**Playing for a Purpose:** Olivia Montelisciani delivers a serve to rival St. Henry in NDA's victory at Thomas More.



**Red Ribbon Week:** Senior Ryan Cleves shares an anti-drug message.



**Around NDA:** Santa knows when you're awake, and at 10:30 a.m. on a December morning, from his perch atop a clock, he saw a hall lined with Pandas.



**Halloween:** Here's a salute to the seniors' choice of Girl Scout-themed costumes.



**Common Reader Day:** Reyna Grande, author of *The Distance Between Us*, signs autographs.