The Oracle

Volume 39 Issue 3 **Student Newspaper of Shaler Area High School** **December 2010**

Brooks to leave Shaler Area

by Anna Porter

Assistant Principal, Mr. Mike Brooks (Anna Porter)

When students and faculty enter Shaler Area High School on Monday, January 4th an important part of the school will be missing, Assistant Principal Mr. Mike Brooks. Brooks was offered the position of high school Principal at Riverside High School in Beaver County, and after careful consideration, accepted the job.

"It wasn't an easy decision for me, but it's a decision I had to make personally," Brooks said.

He was offered the head principal job at Riverside on Friday December 3rd and accepted it then. Brooks' resignation was then approved by Shaler's school board on Wednesday December 8th, making it a three week process.

"There's so many [experiences]," he said. "Honestly it's just seeing you guys in a different light- at football games on Friday night and the interactions that I have on a daily basis with kids here. It's not about the day to day paper work. Shaler is a hidden gem and it's a great place. It wasn't an easy decision for me."

In the seven years that he has been in the district, Brooks has become accustomed to the many students and teachers here at Shaler, and says they will be what he will miss most.

"Kids come first," he said. "It's about relationships and making the connection. And once you have that you can do anything."

Brooks has gained much knowledge, experience, and many memories during his time at Shaler. He hopes to bring what he does every day here, to Riverside.

"Our motto here is 'Give every kid every day' and [I] hope to bring that there," Brooks said. "Just being out and having interactions with the kids and the adults to make it a positive place- a place where people want to come every day. That's the most important thing."

Addition of ATM debated

by Nicholas Schmitt

Ever feel you are in a pinch and need to get money from the bank before school is over? This feeling is actually shared by many, and Shaler Area High School and some neighboring districts have come up with the idea to place ATM's within their school districts. For Shaler Area High School Activities Director, Mrs. Mindy Thiel, the question of getting an ATM has been asked about consistently.

"Over the past two years, I have gotten asked the question 'Do you have an ATM or do you take VISA' several times from students and parents and so I started to think, why not have one," Mrs. Thiel said.

"This led me to begin to plan my presentation for the school board because anytime you have a new or big idea you have to take it to the school board for approval. So, I prepared my presentation and afterward, I told them we could either buy an ATM or lease one from a bank," Mrs. Thiel said.

The Educational Committee's decision came back inconclusive on the grounds that it needed more information before they would make their final decision.

"So when they turned it back to me, I did a bit more research of what kinds of accounts the student body at Shaler Area High School has. This was really difficult because there are many different types of banks used by our students. So I decided to research the top four and decided that the school would buy the ATM and it would be registered as the 'Bank of Shaler Area High School,'" Mrs. Thiel said.

Mrs. Thiel said, "Such an idea has proven to be extremely successful in Mars High School. Mars has had an ATM in their school for three years and have had no problems with great success, so I gave them a call the second time around and they informed me that everything was going great, and they actually charge their students a $2.50 service fee."

Some perks of having this ATM in the school would be that it would be on all the time, and would charge you only a one dollar service fee charge. An additional fee would be strictly due to the student's policy with their bank. Furthermore, the one dollar fee would go to raise money for class funds, and would just be offering a service to the students that many already have. The money received at the end of each school year would be divided into four and each quarter would be given to a corresponding class within the high school.

Finally, with all this new information it went back to the Educational Board and will be voted on in their mid-December meeting.

Baby Boom

Several Shaler students learning to deal with variety of teen pregnancy issues

by Holly Doerfler and Kelsey Meehan

According to Planned Parenthood, each year about 750,000 girls between the ages of 15 and 19 become pregnant in America. In January 2010, the Guttmacher Institute reported that in Allegheny County, there have been more than 1,000 teen pregnancies in three of the last four years.

Shaler Area senior Hope Phillips is someone who is no stranger to the rising pregnancy rates. Phillips is balancing school, a job, and morning sickness; she is expecting a baby in April. As an expecting mother, Phillips is being forced to realize what it takes to be a single teen mother.

"When I first found out that I was pregnant, I cried for a good 45 minutes. I had the father come downtown to get me because at that point I couldn't figure out how to get home because I was that upset," Phillips said.

In these situations, support is extremely important. Ultimately, a teen mother is only a child herself; having a child forces girls to grow up faster than others. Without the support of family and friends, having and raising a child seems impossible. According to high school social worker Mrs. LeeAnn Guido, for teens expecting a child, the first step is to tell their parents.

"Telling my parents was really hard and I was really scared. At first I had the father's support with things, but now I don't," Phillips said.

For girls like Phillips, there is some support that the school can offer.

"The level of support I provide depends on the level of support they have at home and what they need," Guido said. "It's important to have support at home, and having someone there who has already been through it is extremely helpful."

For sophomore Courtney Brown, finding support was not difficult. Like Phillips, Brown is expecting a baby in April. Fortunately for the 15 year old, she has a strong support system at home.

"I'm still with my boyfriend. Neither [he or I] work, so his mom and my mom are going to help and have a baby shower. I have it pretty easy," Brown said.

After telling their parents, girls who are pregnant must make a big decision regarding whether to keep the baby or not. According to Pregnant Teen Help, teenagers account for 19 percent of abortions. However, for Brown and Phillips, abortion was not an option.

"People normally don't find out that they're pregnant until after their first trimester. I went to the doctors at 10 weeks and got a sonogram and it was already moving around and doing everything that is normal. At the point when people normally find out that they're pregnant, they say that that isn't killing the baby, but it definitely is," Phillips said.

"For me, it was either adoption or I keep the baby. The father thinks that adoption would be really hard, though, so we're going to keep it," Brown said.

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Teen pregnancy becomes a reality to students

From page 1

Senior Ally Burrell, who became pregnant last year, had to make the decision about whether or not to raise her baby. She chose to raise her son, and found support through her family and friends, who surprised her with a baby shower.

"Half of the time I don't even ask [my family] and they'll just take him for the night. With that, I take advantage of it and go out with my friends; sometimes I'll bring him along with me. He is pretty much my sidekick," Burrell said.

Even with support from home, Burrell found that it was important to meet other girls going through the same situation she was. She gained more support and friends from a camp called YoungLives.

"YoungLives is a mentoring group for teenage parents. It was so nice to have other girls to relate to; there's always someone to talk to. I can talk to my parents or to my friends, but it's different when you have someone to talk to who's going through the same thing," Burrell said.

Teen mothers have not only their futures to think about, but a baby's as well. A statistic from TIME Magazine states that fewer than half of teen mothers finish high school and only two percent of girls who are mothers before their 18th birthday will finish college before their 30th. Phillips knows all too well about future plans being ruined.

"I had a full scholarship to Wheeling Jesuit, but now I'm going to CCAC. The only people who could watch the baby while I was in West Virginia are my grandparents, and I don't think it would be good to leave the baby with them. Basically, my future plans have been ruptured and messed up," Phillips said.

With her high school graduation only a few months away, Phillips has little time to think about her future plans for college. On the other hand, Brown is only a sophomore and has two full years of high school left ahead of her; she is already considering other alternatives that will make it possible to finish her education with a baby.

"I am only a sophomore and I have to finish school with the baby so I might be going to night school," Brown said.

Some people argue that pregnant teens don't fully understand what they're getting themselves into. There is no question that there are few teens that are fully capable of raising a child on their own. Raising a child becomes a full time job, forcing teenagers to give up their former lives. For some girls, this is a risk they are willing to take. A statistic from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention stated that one in five teenage girls who have had sex said they would be pleased if they got pregnant. For other girls, however, teen pregnancy was something that was entirely unplanned.

"I've always wanted to have kids, but I assumed I'd at least be engaged or married with a college degree and doing want I've always wanted to do. I thought I'd have that many steps taken before I considered having a family. I feel like I'm doing things backward," Phillips said.

Already a mother, Burrell is in a different place in her life than most teen girls. What she can offer now is advice for all girls. Pregnant girls need to focus on the important things and know that, just like everything, there are good things and bad things about it.

"For girls who aren't pregnant, I think the advice is pretty obvious: just wait. And just be careful," Burrell said.

New opportunity for class funds

by Amity Hudak

Since students' freshman year, there has been a ruckus made over the money, or lack thereof, in class funds. The levels are the lowest they have been for a many number of years. Class funds are necessary to participate in many of the special events organized specifically for senior year. People often question and criticize that nothing is being done to help out the situations of each grade level.

Usually each year, there are fundraising opportunities given to the class levels. However, there are very few people that participate in these attempts to raise money.

However, there is a new way of fundraising that could actually be very successful, if students choose to participate. While driving in the car or just listening to the radio, chances are that people have heard the commercial that advertises certain items at discounted price. FM Station 100.7 talks about this every Wednesday, and it is known as the "deal of the day".

"The company Ezbuygroup contacted me. They were looking for a school district to join their group and raise money. The idea actually started out with North Allegheny, and once things went well there, the company wanted to expand with other schools and organizations," Activities Director Mrs. Mindy Thiel said.

Shaler has setup a relationship with this

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Plenty to do over holiday break in the Pittsburgh area

From ice-skating downtown, to light shows and santa displays, there's plenty of fun to be found

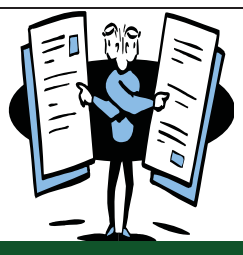
by Anna Porter

The Rink at PPG Place- PPG's ice skating rink is a popular holiday activity for many locals. Your typical water fountain in the summer is transformed into an outside ice skating rink every holiday season. For a small price, you can view Downtown from the ice while skating around a 60 foot tall Christmas tree. Santa Claus also makes his regular visits here, with the rink offering "Skate with Santa" every Saturday in December from 2 pm to 4pm. Along with its regular hours, the rink is open on both Christmas Eve and Day and New Year's Eve and Day from 11:00 am to Midnight. Admission for adults is $7, children and seniors $6, and skate rental costing $3. Also, From January to March from 6 pm to 10 pm, students receive $3 off admission by presenting a valid student I.D. or report card.

Hartwood Celebration of Lights- This being its nineteenth season running, Hartwood Acre's Celebration of Lights has become a customary holiday event. Every year, over two million lights are strung over 3.2 miles, illuminating the famous Hartwood Mansion and showing over 400 holiday light displays. Although there is a $12 donation fee, the money goes to charities such as Children's Miracle Network, St. Joseph's House of Hospitality, Salvation Army's and other local non-profit organizations. Unfortunately, the Light's usual sponsor, Rite Aid, has pulled out; meaning this could be the last year for this tradition. Make sure you don't miss out. The season runs until January 9, 2011, including Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

Santas from Around the World- Along with ice skating, PPG offers many other events and activities during the holidays. One of these events is the "Spirits of Giving from Around the World" exhibit at PPG Place in Downtown Pittsburgh. The exhibit mixes history, culture, and the spirit of Christmas displaying life sized Santas from over 16 countries. Some of the Santas represented include "Babbo Natale (Father Christmas) from Italy, "Ded Moroz" (Grandfather Frost), and of course who we refer to as"Kris Kringle" or "Santa Claus." Each Santa is shown with authentic attire and a picture of celebrating Christmas in that country. The showing is free and runs until January 7th.

Gingerbread House & Train Display- To accompany the ice skating rink and Santas, PPG's Gingerbread House and Train Display is another must see this holiday season. A massive Christmas tree is surrounded by over 470 elaborately decorated gingerbread houses, all submitted by locals. Some replications included Heinz Field, Noah's Ark, Alvin and the Chipmunks and Disney World. Anything you've ever wanted to see in gingerbread is right here. Houses and trains can be seen in Wintergarden and also from the exterior windows of Two PPG Place.

SAT?  **ACT ?**

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	SAT	ACT
Skills Tested	Reading, Math and Writing	Reading, Math, English and SCIENCE
Testing time	3 hrs, 45 minutes	2 hrs, 55 minutes (plus optional essay)
# of sections	10 sections total. (There are seven 25 minute sections, two 20 minute sections and one 10 minute section.) ** With each new section, the topic being tested switches (reading, math, writing) so be prepared to mentally shift gears multiple times!*	4 sections total. (There is one 45 minute English section, one 60 minute Math section, one 35 minute Reading section and one 35 minute Science section.) ** Once you complete a section, you are done with that topic – there is no jumping back and forth like the SAT.*
Total # of Questions	170 questions total. (Three *scored* sections each of Reading, Math and Writing for a total of 67 Reading, 54 Math and 49 Writing multiple choice questions.	215 questions total. (There are 75 English, 60 Math, 40 Reading and 40 Science questions.)
Question format	All multiple choice EXCEPT 10 Math questions where you calculate an answer.	ALL multiple Choice.
Experimental Section?	Yes. The SAT includes an "experimental" section that is NOT scored but used to evaluate future test questions.	No. ALL questions are scored and count towards your total points earned.
Essay?	Yes. The essay is mandatory and an integral part of your overall writing score.	Yes. However, the essay is optional (Note: some *colleges* REQUIRE) and is scored separately.
Penalty for guessing?	Yes. The SAT deducts ¼ of one point for each incorrect answer. There is no penalty, however, for leaving a question blank.	No. There is no penalty for an incorrect answer so it is to your advantage to fill in every blank – even if you have to guess. .
Reading Content	3 different styles of questions: **Sentence Completion** (you complete a sentence from which 1 or 2 words have been omitted.), **Long Reading Passage** and **Short Reading Passage** (both test reading comprehension with either multi or single paragraph passages taken from social and natural sciences, and humanities.) Passage based reading questions are presented in the same order as story content.	Reading questions are based on 4 types of reading selections: P**rose fiction, Social Sciences, Humanities and Natural Sciences**. Similar to the SAT, question categories include main idea, context, sequence, cause and effect, drawing conclusions/inference, specific facts and authors tone. Passage based reading questions are presented in random order (do not follow story content order).
Math Content	Primarily tests 3 areas: **Arithmetic** (fractions, decimals, percentages, ratio/proportion and general problem solving), **Algebra I/Algebra II** and **Geometry**. The formulas for calculating area, volume and circumference are printed in your test booklet so you do not have to memorize them. You are also provided with angle measurements for circles, lines and triangles.	Primarily tests 3 categories of questions – **PreAlgebra/Elementary Algebra** (fractions, decimals, percentages, and basic algebraic expressions), **Intermediate Algebra/Coordinate Geometry** (linear equations, exponents, radicals, polynomials and placement of points, lines and geometric figures on a Cartesian grid), and **Plane Geometry/Trigonometry** (geometric solids, lines, angles, triangles, circles, quadrilaterals, and trigonometric identities)
Science Content	N/A	Covers a wide range of topics in biology, chemistry, physics and earth/space sciences.
Writing/ English Content	Consists of 2 components – multiple choice questions test your grammar skills in identifying errors, improving sentences and improving paragraphs plus the essay.	Questions fall into 2 categories – **Usage/Mechanics** (which tests punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure) and **Rhetorical skills** (which tests writing strategy, organization and style).
Scoring	The maximum score possible is 2400 (800 points per section). The 2009 National Average SAT Score was 1509 (501-Reading, 515-Math and 493-Writing).	The maximum score you can attain is 36. The 2009 National Average ACT score was 21.0.

Teacher to leave Shaler Area after 20 years

by Samantha Raible

In 1991, Ms. Ritzu Shimizu walked into Shaler School District and brought with her new ideas, lively colors, and laughs to go around. Unfortunately, she will be retiring in January after teaching for almost 20 years.

After teaching business in city schools and later at North Clarion, Shimizu decided to get her teaching certificate in Japanese. She was sitting in a teacher's conference and was approached by a Shaler teacher asking her if she would like to teach a Japanese course at the then Middle School; she jumped at the opportunity.

She has dedicated a lot of her free time to get involved in the Shaler community like participating in the Homecoming parade, Japanese Honor Society, and the Sakura project.

The Sakura project is a cherry tree planting project which she recently just got involved with. She and some students travel to North Park and with help from Allegheny County plant cherry trees.

"Even after I leave, I like Diversity group is going to do, and say next Japanese teacher I hope he or she is going to take over. But also Ecology club or even middle school teacher, bring the students and be with this nice project," Shimizu said.

Ms. Ritzu Shimizu teaches in her eccentric way (Sam Raible)

She might be leaving, but the memory of her will live on with students and faculty forever. Junior Beth Snider will miss her crazy antics in the classroom, but will always remember how she grew to love Japanese because of Shimizu.

"I'll miss everything about her. First of all she was an amazing teacher, regardless of how insane she is, she is such a good teacher," Snider said. "She taught us more than just a language, it was like everything."

Even outside the classroom, she brought smiles and laughter to all the faculty members.

During construction Mrs. Adrienne Endy shared a classroom with her and recalled many hilarious stories that will always remain in her heart.

"One day, there was a green pig drawn on the board, and she said 'You know what, marker is permanent! No erase!' Endy recalled, " I was going in to teach a class and she is telling me about this pig she drew on the board in permanent marker, and did not have any clue on how to get it off. The French teacher who I replaced left me this miracle concoction of cleaner, I pulled it out of my stuff. I said 'Listen you cannot have this. This is mine. It's secret special cleaner.' And she went to the board and sprayed and said, 'ooohhhhh' because it started to (clean the board), and she was all excited. 'You know what, I keep.' And I said 'no, I told you, you could not keep it!' 'Oh but it work, I keep' and she ran away with it."

Endy worked with Shimizu for five years and thought of the things she will miss most about working with Shimizu.

"She is a good person, and there are very few good, truly good people remaining," Endy said. "She has a heart of gold. I will miss hearing her every day and laughing at just the funny little things she does. I'll miss seeing her; there is just something about her that I do have a special place in my heart for her."

Mr. Chris Gaul recalled one of his favorite memories about Shimizu that will always be his favorite.

"She had a study hall and one of the kids got his hands on the TV remote for the room. He would flip the TV on and she would run up to the front of the room, turn it off; she'd get about half way back to her desk and he'd do it again. I was walking down the hall and she came up to me and was like, 'Mr. Gaul come here.' So I came in and she goes 'the TV going on, I turn it off, it go on, I turn it off, it go on.' I said, 'Ritzu I think someone got a hold of the remote and I think someone is playing a joke on you.' 'oooohhhhh, what is remote?' I said 'Alright it's going to be a little thing, it's about this long and it's going to have numbers and buttons and the volume.' And she said, 'oooohhhh, I don't know what this is.' I said, 'Alright, it's going to look like a calculator, but without the screen.' So three days later one of the students, who I had in my AP class who was in that study hall came to talk to me and said, 'Mr. Gaul you have to talk to Ms. Shimizu.' I said 'Why?' 'She won't let us do any math homework in class. She won't let us take the calculator out cause she thinks we are playing with the tv.'"

Although there are countless stories about her that also include the copy machine, grade quick, or tai chi in the teacher work center, she will always be loved by the faculty and students.

Mr. Sarkis who has been working with Shimizu for about 19 years talked very highly of her, as a friend, colleague, and a person all around.

"She is a great friend. I've never seen someone more resilient, more loyal of a friend than her." Sarkis said. "She has an incredible sense of humor. She's the best kind of funny, she is funny and she doesn't realize she's funny. She doesn't try. I'm going to miss the color that she brings to the place; I mean just the lively, humorous, ability to laugh at yourself, easy simple mistakes."

Not only will the faculty and students miss her, but Shimizu will miss them as well.

"I really enjoyed and a really really good school. I miss the students," Shimizu said.

SCG
SHALER CULTURE GRID

	What's your favorite Christmas movie?	If you were granted one wish, what would it be?	If you could be anyone for a day, who would you be?	What is your secret music obsession?
Freshman Jenna Reese	A Christmas Carol	To live on the beach	Justin Bieber's best friend	Probably country music
Teacher Mr. Tepshich	The original Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer	Eternal life; then I can teach band for 3,000 years	Jackie Chan	Alicia Keys: I don't know why, but I know all of her songs
Sophomore Bill Reinheimer	National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation	To stop world hunger	Jonathan Baldwin (Pitt wide receiver) PITT	Elton John
Sophomore Emily Pirt	The original Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer	To pay off my parents mortgage	Mr. T (the band teacher)	Glee

New opportunity for class funds

From page 2

website. If one were to go onto the website and join the Shaler Area group, that person will receive an e-mail every day containing what is that "deal of the day". Past deals include a gift certificate worth $40 to the Shaler Lounge for only $20, and a certificate worth $20 to the Cole Café for only $10.

For every item that is purchased, the company will donate $1 of its sales to our school to help out with the funds that are clearly struggling. The daily deals are not only segregated just to businesses around the Shaler Area. Many of the other deals have been for places in the Downtown area and some are even located quite a distance away from the Shaler Area.

"We received our first profit check for $36, which may not seem like a lot, but considering I only sent out an email to district workers, is not bad at all," Thiel said.

This "deal of the day" fundraiser is a new, creative way to earn money for the dragging class funds for all. Not only by joining this site will class funds be increased, but families will receive some very generous deals to quality places.