

The Oracle

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February 2013

Annual Shalerpalooza concert set for weekend

by Katie Rees and Julie Rankin

Tonight, Mr. Smalls Theater will be hosting the fifth annual Shalerpalooza concert. Each year, bands made up of students and teachers from Shaler Area perform in a benefit concert to raise money for class funds. Last year the concert raised over \$2,000. Tickets will be pre-sold for \$8 and will be sold at the door for \$10.

This year, the bands playing in Shalerpalooza are Restricted Highways, Civil Riot, Prominence, and Tobacco Road. Some of the bands have been playing together for many years while others, such as Restricted Highways, are just getting started.

"We started about a year ago practicing together and recording some demos in my basement. After a few weeks we started to play in some gigs around Pittsburgh," drummer Jake Stretch said.

Restricted Highways now have their own professional studio. The band has performed at past Mr. Small's concerts and at the Altar Bar. They are recording their first EP and have been preparing for Shalerpalooza.

"We practice about two or three times a week," Stretch said.



Alex Pickl and Mike Saunders from Restricted Highways



Mr. Dale Mangold and Mr Aaron Anthony perform at Shalerpalooza 2012

Instrumentalists from the bands.

Tobacco Road is also going to be performing at Shalerpalooza. The band is made up of staff from Shaler Area, such as janitor Dale Mangold. Mangold is the organizer of the event and believes this year's concert will be a success.

"This year's Shalerpalooza will be different from past ones because this year not only will there be solo acts, but also more genres of music will be represented," Mangold said.

Performing at Shalerpalooza and other concerts

is a great creative outlet for singers and instrumentalists alike.

"(My favorite thing about performing is) whenever I totally shred bass and see people's faces melt because they've never seen bass solo," Senior Sean O'Connor said.

Civil Riot is another band that will be performing in the concert. They have taken the stage at Smalls in the past and are thrilled to be back in the concert.

"Shalerpalooza is always a groovy time and this one should be bloody brilliant," member of Civil Riot, Scotty Hughes, said.

School exploring options to enhance security

by Victoria Mikita and Julie Rankin

As recent events have made many schools across the country question their security and safety, Shaler Area School District is reviewing and updating current regulations and emergency plans. Principals and staff members will be meeting to evaluate and maximize the safety protocol.

The district currently has a comprehensive emergency plan in place. The plan is updated often and was just updated in November. In-service time will be used for teachers to evaluate and work on the plan as well as other safety precautions. Each principal has been asked to talk to his or her staff about safety issues and concerns. The district has already put new plans into action.

"Immediately you should notice all teachers and visitors wearing ID badges so that students can identify if a stranger walking through the halls is a school employee. All visitors will be asked to show ID and to leave their ID and/or car keys in the main office until they leave the building," Superintendent Dr. Wes Shipley said. "All employees and students are asked to never open a door for a visitor, but to ask them to "buzz" the office and enter through the main doors. And, of course, we're asking everyone to never wedge a door open which leaves the entire building vulnerable. Small things like this will go a long way to make sure our schools are safer."

Each school in the district follows the same safety system. Doors are to remain locked during school hours and visitors must be granted permission to the building. Once they are allowed in, they are to report to the office. If staff members see someone they do not know wandering around the school they are to stop them and ask why they are there, where they are going, and make sure they have checked into the office. The high school has a slightly different system. Visitors are to go through the security vestibule after the school doors are initially locked in the morning. The security guard in the vestibule is to sign the visitor in and then send them to the office so they can be directed to where he or she is going.

Shipley holds the safety of his students and staff very important to him.

"I think that at times like these, we are always looking for ways to improve our safety plan."

**-Dr. Wes Shipley
Superintendent**

the district. None of the schools had ever experienced a threat, but after the shooting at Sandy Hook, he recognized and acted upon the fact that anything is possible.

After testing retired troopers for their ability to shoot a possible threat, Frank Circha, 46, was hired to carry a gun at Summit Elementary school. Circha is there to protect the students in case of a possible threat, but his goal is also for things to feel as normal as possible for them.

"It's a fine line between protecting the kids' environment and changing it," said Circha in a Post-Gazette article.

The teachers in our district have had the same code system for several years, and it is reviewed annually. In the future, some in-service time will be used for extra training.

"The safety of students and staff is the most important obligation I have as Superintendent. I think that at times like these, we are always looking for ways to improve our safety plan," Shipley said.

OPINIONS

Social networking: waste of time or entertaining?

by Brett Ford

Why is everyone so obsessed with social networking? The one that really seems pointless is Twitter. Do you really find it *that* necessary to make it known how much you hate homework? How unique of you. At least try to be creative with your tweets.

This next social network, Snapchat, honestly baffles me. How sending random pictures of yourself making the most inconceivably stupid faces came to be so popular is beyond me. You people really have NO idea how stupid you look when you're trying to take a picture of yourself "boofing" in the hall. If you don't know what any of this crap I'm saying means, I envy you. No, seriously I do. I wish I was ignorant to society's collective stupidity too.

The only social network that is somewhat enjoyable is Facebook. It makes my day when I get a poke from someone! Why didn't someone think of that sooner? That's sarcasm in case you didn't know. In all honesty, social networks would be cool if only interesting people were the ones sharing information and unfortunately 99% of you are not.

Another issue with social networking is how time consuming it is. It seems like any direction I look people are sucked into their phones. People think their bad grades are due to their teacher's inability to teach. Maybe if you spent more time studying instead of staring at your phone screen all night your GPA wouldn't be 2.1.

There are even some social networks designed to show people where you are at any given time. I have no idea why anyone would want this but don't come crying to me when you're kidnapped by a strange man. That was your stupid mistake.

The future of social networking looks promising at the moment due to some of the good things it has done such as allowing people to contact family from far away. The thing about social networking is, like any other fad, eventually it will die out and the day it does I'll be the happiest person alive.

Physical Education lacking in benefits

by Casey Funtal

Each student in Shaler is required to take physical education classes in order to graduate, yet each time you pass a gym in the school, maybe half of the students are participating while the other half just stands around. Gym class is not for everyone; some students simply do not enjoy doing physical activity, but if gym classes were improved to focus on the physical education aspect of the class instead of playing games, it would be more beneficial for students.

According to the student handbook, the 9th grade guidelines consist of "focusing not only on the development of physical skills, but on concepts essential to building self esteem, group problem solving, and the importance of team work to accomplish success." For the sophomores, the guidelines change to "a core program that is designed to develop basic skills and expose the student to a wide variety of activities."

These goals consist of activities to build self esteem and play games while only learning "the basics". The actual physical education of gym is buried in the guidelines and therefore it is not presented in the class. Learning how to dribble a basketball for three weeks will not help students build muscles and stay fit in the future.

There should be different guidelines depending on if a student is an athlete, an off season athlete, or students who do not work out at all. It can be intimidating for students who have no idea what to do to be thrown in with

students that are well educated on the weight room due to after school activities. Each student should have a workout plan of his or her own to focus on instead of standing around and doing the minimal amount of work because they do not know what to do.

Since gym class is a required credit, it should be run the same way that classes in classrooms are run. Different levels should be offered to students, such as CP, Honors, or AP styled classes because each student learns and competes in a different way. Since there are options for other enforced core classes, gym class should be no exception.

Playing games in class is fun, but it does not teach students the benefits of physical education. In kickball one student is kicking and some get involved by playing the bases, but the rest of the class stands around talking and goofing off because they are not engaged in any activity. Phys Ed is not recess, so it should not be treated as such. If students are required to take gym, it should not be free time to play games because that is what recess is for elementary school students, not high school students.

Gym class can be beneficial if students were taught more about their bodies and how to improve them. Running a mile every once in a while and grading it will not boost the times over a half year course. Overall the guidelines need to be changed to increase the actual act of learning physical education that students can carry on further in their lives.

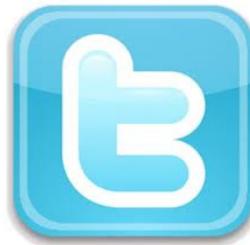
by Casey Funtal

Social networking has been integrated into everyday life. It is an easy means of communication as well as entertainment for students and even adults today. Although some may say that social networking is time consuming and a violation of privacy, when it is used properly it can be stress free and fun.

There are dozens of social networking sites out there, but the three most popular are Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Currently Facebook has become less popular than the other social networking sites, but it can still be used to invite friends to large events such as graduation parties, band gigs, and events for charities. Facebook is also useful for high school students to join groups on facebook regarding their future college and possibly find someone they are interested in rooming with their first year. It is a good way to find someone you have common interests with without putting out a lot of personal information.

Twitter and Instagram are similar in the way that there is just a news feed renewing all the time. They are both used for entertainment purposes, not really for getting to know someone. Twitter is often used to vent about the stupidity that occurs throughout the day, but for a busy person it can also be a way to find out real news. For example, for students in school who were not watching the news on the day of the Newtown shooting, the news was flooding Twitter's news feed all throughout the day with new updates about the event. On the other hand, Instagram shows only pictures with no news. There is no real purpose other than entertainment with Instagram, but what's wrong with pure entertainment?

Social networking has become a part of society today. When it is used right, it can be fun and entertaining. Each can also be used for practical reasons if you are willing to look for specific reasons to use them, but even if there is no reason other than entertainment, use them simply for that.



School security should be improved

by Katie Rees

Due to the recent tragic events around the world, it is time to start thinking about tightening up security at the high school. Even though our school has security guards to monitor the hallways, there are still factors that could be taken into consideration when it comes to revamping the security system.

During the school day, Paul Schweiger Way, the road connecting Anderson and Wible, should be closed off to passing cars. It is not necessary for this road to be open during the school day, as drivers will still be able to get to their destination because the two roads connect at an intersection not far from the high school. Cars will not be able to pass through the shortcut through the campus which will prevent any strangers from being able to easily access the building while school is in session.

When entering the building after school has started, it is convenient when the security guards buzz you in without any form of identification. However, this action is extremely unsafe. I used to have to show the guards in the office my student I.D. card before they let me into the building, but the past few times I have arrived late, they let me in without one. There are about three thousand students in the high school so it is impossible for them to tell if you are an actual student without a student I.D. card. Not requiring identification or just having the person sign in to enter the building does not authorize who you are.

Other schools such as Butler have been redoing their safety systems. The school has just added metal detectors to the entrance of the school. This small feature would be able to possibly stop any violence before it happened.

Overall, Shaler Area practices satisfactory safety precautions, but there are factors that could be thought out better. Regarding the events that have been taking place in the world over the past few months, it is necessary that the school district makes the students feel safe in their learning environment.

The Oracle

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The Oracle is the official student newspaper of Shaler Area High School. Although it is published by the journalism classes, one does not have to be enrolled in a class to contribute.

Opinions expressed in **The Oracle** are those of the individual writers.

Letters to the Editor are encouraged and welcome. Any letter intended for publication must be signed, but names will be withheld upon request. Articles and letters may be mailed to the high school (ATTN: The Oracle) or emailed to oracle@sasd.k12.pa.us.

The Oracle reserves the right to condense or omit any letters or articles unfit for publication.

Titan of the Month: Nate Burwell

by Anna Cunningham

Students know that it can be hard to balance after school activities and classes. Senior Nate Burwell, the Titan of the Month, is a hardworking student and dedicated sports player. Burwell plays football in the fall, runs outdoor track in the spring, and swims in the winter. Burwell's schedule consists of Honors and AP classes and swimming practice before and after school.

Swimming takes up a lot of Burwell's day. The swim team practices before school on Monday's, Wednesday's, and Friday's starting at five o'clock.

"I get up at four thirty, and we're in the water at five. It's definitely hard. I'm not used to it, no one ever gets used to it," Burwell said.

Afternoon practice starts right after school and runs until six o'clock. Burwell takes AP Calculus and AP Literature, and he doesn't have a lot of time to do homework.

"I try to do as much homework as I can on my free time. Practice goes from after school to six so that gives me about three hours to do homework," Burwell said.

Burwell makes good use of study hall, lunch, and free time in class.

Burwell is the captain of the boys swim team this year, along with Bill Schmelzer.

Swimming consists of four strokes: freestyle, backstroke, butterfly, and breaststroke. Burwell swims the 100 meter breaststroke and part of the 200 meter medley relay.

"The 100 meter breaststroke is my specialty. That's my best stroke," Burwell said.

Burwell is also an important part of the 200 meter medley relay, where he swims breaststroke.

"The relay consists of four people, each doing 50 meters. The first guy does 50 meters backstroke, the second guy, that's where I am, does 50 meters breaststroke, the third guy does 50 meters fly, and the fourth guy does the 50 meter freestyle," Burwell said.

The swimming team has had a successful season so far. They have only lost one meet against Fox Chapel, and Bur-

well is confident that the team will do well for the rest of the season.

"It's looking pretty good, we have a lot of strong swimmers this year. I think this is the biggest team we've had in my school career. We have five freshmen this year," Burwell said.

As captain, Burwell helps motivate the team at practices and meets.

"Once everyone is out of the boys' locker room, we all go in there. The coaches talk to us, and then the captains talk every once in a while. I'll give a speech, try to make it fun for the guys. I crack jokes, tell them to have fun and work their hardest, get them pumped up," Burwell said.

Burwell is ready for the rest of the season and is hoping to make WPIALS for the 100 meter breaststroke.

"I think we'll win the rest of [the meets]. We're going to have a lot of trouble with North Allegheny but that's to be expected. That's the only one I'm worried about," Burwell said.

In swimming, every event has a qualifying time that a swimmer has to beat to get into WPIALS.

"For the breaststroke, you have to do 100 meters in 1:07, and if you can go faster than that, you go to WPIALS. I've been pulling 1:08 regularly, but my fastest time is 1:04," Burwell said.

Swimmers compete against other swimmers, but Burwell focuses on his race against the clock.

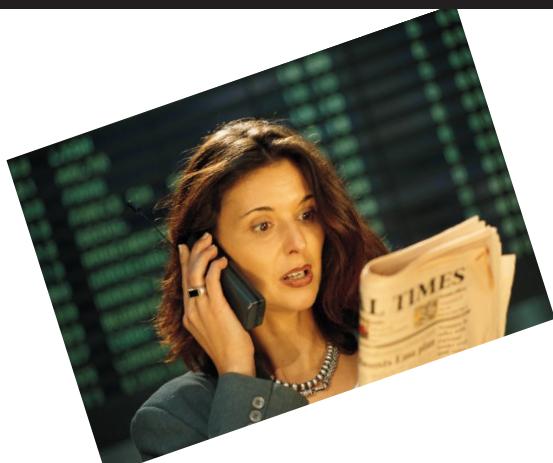
"I like the fact that you compete against yourself more than other people. It's pretty much you against the clock; you see how much you can push yourself," Burwell said.

Burwell has been swimming since seventh grade. He was put in a swimming class in sixth grade by his mom.

"My mom really pushed me to swim because she can't, so she always wanted me to swim. She enrolled me in a class and that's how I picked it up," Burwell said.



Nate Burwell in the pool (Lisa Montini Photography)



Sept 2012—National news: The high school class of 2012 has taken its College Board exams and the results are NOT good. More than half (57%) of the 1.66 million SAT test takers FAILED to hit the combined score at which a student is deemed ready for college level work. Worse, 75% of the 1.66 million ACT test takers ALSO FAILED to meet the readiness standard.



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Public Relations jobs tough but rewarding

by Emily Pirt

Within a blink of an eye, it seems that the first half of the school year has come and gone. As we try to recover from the holidays and adjust our sleep schedules to "school time" many seniors eagerly await their college acceptance letters. As the future rapidly approaches for the class of 2013 there are many job opportunities to think of when applying to college. This might seem like something only seniors should be worrying about, but it is never too early to figure out what you want to do when you grow up.

In our day-to-day lives we are constantly surrounded by the media. Whether it is through Twitter updates on our cell phones, reading the newspaper, or catching up on our favorite reality TV show, it is safe to say that we are always looking to be "in the know".

When thinking about the communications field, the first jobs that come to mind are journalism, and TV/radio broadcasting. Not quite as well known, the public relations field deals with both of these mediums to help portray a certain image to a particular audience.

Often combined with the advertising field, the goal of PR is to get a message out, whereas advertising is trying to get sell something or get money for their message. Reenie Kuhlman, Senior Director of Communications for Discovery Communications, helps to show the difference between "earned media" versus "paid media".

"Public Relations is *earned media*, versus Advertising or Marketing which is *paid media*. *Earned media* is when one crafts a message and relies on communications vehicles such as newspapers, websites, blogs, television news or social networks to convey a particular point of view; whereas *paid media* is a traditional advertisement or sponsored brand content," Kuhlman said.

When compared to other communications jobs,

public relations is very stressful and fast paced.

"Just last month, CareerCast.com listed Public Relations as the #5 most stressful job of 2012, following behind Commercial Airline Pilot, Firefighter, Military General and Enlisted Military Personnel. That's just a little insight into how a PR executive stacks up against other communications counterparts," Kuhlman said.

"With a 24 / 7 news cycle, and the growing stress of the influence of social media, PR professionals never sleep. Well, we do, but it's very little. You are expected to be on at all times – with knowledge of the top news stories and with a finger on the pulse of the next trends – so you can properly inform your clients' businesses and messages."

A job that is as demanding as public relations might sound intimidating at first, but there are definitely benefits to being a PR professional. By working in the media there are many interesting and exciting projects to promote. By working on a well-known project there is also a chance to meet celebrities and promote their image as well.

Kuhlman, a 12 year veteran of Discovery Communications, has worked on virtually every network associated with Discovery including the Discovery Channel, TLC, and Animal Planet. Through her work she has had the opportunity to work with popular TV shows and even meet some of today's well known celebrities along the way.

"By far, the most popular television show I've ever worked on was *Jon & Kate Plus 8*. I was one of the publicists that worked with Jon, Kate and the kids before they moved the show from Discovery Health Channel to TLC. It was very fun to work with the sextuplets, who at the time were only two years old. It was a lot of cuteness!"

"I also got to work with Tom Bergeron – the host of *Dancing with the Stars* – when Discovery launched the television network, Planet Green. I mention this because like Ryan Seacrest, Tom is one of the hard-

est working hosts in Hollywood. He was so down to earth and caring, yet I was blown away by his professionalism. My favorite moment with Tom – he actually bought me a coffee at Starbucks!"

Kuhlman even has her imprint on one of Discovery's most well-known and popular events: *Shark Week*.

"My most memorable project was managing talent at Discovery Channel's *Celebrity Shark Week* taping more than 10 years ago at the Atlantis Resort in the Bahamas. It was a jam packed, celebrity filled week of shark diving with some of the world's greatest shark experts. And it's where I finally got over my fear of swimming in the ocean with sharks."

Due to the demand for social media, the public relations field is always growing.

"The impact of consumers being able to interact with and create their own news and information feeds poses a very real challenge on advertising and direct marketing. People want to feel like they are in control of their choices. For this reason, PR can and does play a very impactful role," Kuhlman said.

In the PR field there are five main branches: consumer/lifestyle PR, financial PR, crisis communications, internal communications, and governmental relations.

Each of these types of public relations deals with a specific audience and it is important for the PR professional to know how the constant social media can affect the client he or she is working for.

Regardless of the audience, a PR professional should be willing to put in a lot of hard work and long hours in order to reap the benefits of the job. This includes: keeping up to date new technology, frequently travelling to meet clients, being able to think on your toes, and manage client crises.

"The fast-paced environment definitely gets your adrenaline pumping, which is my favorite part of the job. I love a challenge, and this job keeps me on my toes and feeling young all the time," Kuhlman said.



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SPORTS

Lady Titans basketball team working hard to get a playoff spot

By Nick Polito

The Lady Titans' basketball team has had a very up and down season. The season started off disappointing with the girls going 1-5 in their first six games.

However, the team found a way to fight back and go on a three game winning streak. Within this three game span the girls' basketball team won the Hampton Tournament. Despite the wins being out of conference, they still helped to boost the confidence of the team. The girls were hoping to gain some confidence from these victories as they headed back into conference play.

Whatever momentum the team had was ephemeral. The team lost its next three games, which were all conference games. Two of these three losses were crushing defeats to the Oakland Catholic Eagles and the Butler Golden Tornados by four and three points, respectively.

After these two games the girls suffered a big loss to the hands of the North Allegheny Tigers by a score of 43-25.

This tough loss did not stop the Lady Titans as they defeated the Deer Lakes Lancers in the Gateway Tournament the next day, by a score of 46-28. This proved to be an impressive victory for the Titans as it handed Deer Lakes its first loss of the season. The Lady Titans' record is now 10-9 overall and 4-5 in conference play.

Even with the struggles this season, there have been some good moments for the team.

"Some of our most memorable moments were giving three different teams their first loss all season," junior guard, Abbey Conrad, said.

These three teams were the Burrell Bucs, Deer Lakes Lancers, and Hempfield Spartans.

With six games remaining, all of them being conference games, for the girls' basketball team; they hope to improve on the big victory against Deer Lakes and continue to win.

The first section win came in a timely manner when the girls' defeated the Pine Richland Rams by a score of 49-45.

In order to make the playoffs, it looks like the girls will need to win the rest of their section games.



Sophomore Andi Lydon defends (Andi Lydon)

Although this may seem like a big obstacle to overcome, it is something that can be done.

"We have played each of our section opponents at least once, so we know how they operate and can make adjustments to our game," Abbey Conrad said.

In order to have success throughout the second half of section play, the Lady Titans need everyone to contribute in the scoring category.

"The great thing about our team this year is that we all contribute equally. Each night, a new person is on fire and carries the team," Conrad said.

This is one of Coach Martin's keys for the team down the stretch.

"We score by committee, last year there were seniors that did a terrific job carrying the scoring load. However, we need people to step up and score. Balanced scoring creates good chemistry, but if you need to get your 6 points on a given night, you can't lay a goose egg in the scoring column. Everyone has to contribute," Coach Martin said.

If the team picks up its scoring and play, it may find itself sitting in a playoff spot.

Boys' basketball struggling near the end of the season

By Brett Ford

After starting out with a 4-1 record, the boys' basketball team has cooled off down the stretch and is now sitting at 7-11. With a 1-9 record within the conference, they are on the outside looking in at a chance to make playoffs. This record certainly hasn't gotten coach Paul Holzshu down due to the strength of the Titan's conference this season.

"I think it's clear that the section that we play in is the very best quad-A section in the WPIAL. If you look at the Pennsylvania state rankings for quad-A, three of our teams: New Castle, North Allegheny, and Hampton are in the top ten in the state," coach Holzshu said.

On January 11th the Titans had an excellent opportunity to get a section win against one of the easier teams in the conference but faltered, losing 67-57 to Butler. Preceding that was probably the most difficult game all season for the boys when they lost to New Castle 82-48. On January 15th they beat Pine Richland 66-60 and finally received their first conference victory. Three days later they took on Seneca Valley and fell 54-40. The following Tuesday they hosted 14-1 North Allegheny and lost 69-48, further lowering their conference record to 1-9.

Looking at the section they play in, the Titan's record does not reflect the team's talent and ability. They currently hold a 6-1 record against non-section opponents and have beaten Lincoln Park 8-4 earlier in the season. Although the playoffs seem unlikely, the Titans have other things to be proud of. Senior Guard Geno Thorpe is second in WPIALs in scoring. He averages 26.3 points per game and every aspect of his offensive capabilities was showcased in his 45 point performance against McKeesport earlier in the season.

Looking ahead, the Titans have matchups against Montour at LaRoche College, at North Hills, against New Castle, against Butler and at Pine Richland. Their senior night is on February 5 at home against Butler, which is when Geno Thorpe, Greg Lydon, Bill Reinheimer, Louis Ferraro and Chris Brasile will all be playing their last home game as a Shaler Titan. The season ends on February 8 at Pine Richland.

Hockey team making late push toward playoffs

By Nick Polito

The Titans hockey team has finally shown what it is truly capable of. After having a disappointing 1-3-1 start to the season, the Titans have come alive and are 5-2-1 in their last eight games. Their overall record is now 6-6-2.

"We got guys back from injury and we have been executing our game plans," senior captain, Joe Dorow, said.

Additionally, changes made by the coaches have also helped the team.

"We changed up our lines a little bit and have received really good results from that," Dorow said.

"The team is fairly young with a mix of 9th thru 12th graders. We were experimenting with line combinations earlier in the season and it took us 4 or 5 games to find the system that works for this team. We moved Mike Klena up in a forward position to build 2 stronger lines and since doing so, we have been much more competitive and it has resulted in some nice wins," Coach Curt Hetz said.

Early in the season, the Titans failed to play consistently. At one time, this lack of consistency was a concern for the team, but the boys seem to have overcome it.

"Consistency is key," junior forward, Matt Bour, said.

Most of this need for consistency comes in the goal scoring department.

"The only concern is whether we can produce enough scoring on a consistent basis. To win most games I think we need to keep the goals against under 3 and we need to score 3 or more per game. This can be a difficult feat with a young team but we are getting there; but if we can't score consistently it will present problems," Coach Hetz said.

Another area that hurt the team at times is their discipline. Mike Klena and Ryan Boch have combined for 71 penalty minutes, thus far, to lead the team. If the Titans can find some consistency scoring goals and staying out of the penalty box, success will be in their future.

Also the team needs to continue to defend well.

"Strong, consistent goaltending and steady play from the strength area of our team, which is our nucleus of good experienced defensemen, will lead to more success. Cam Stott, Joe Dorow, Matt Bour and Braedon Harbison have been taking most of the work load defensively and have performed as expected," Coach Hetz said.

There are twelve teams that make the AAA hockey playoffs and the Titans are currently sitting in tenth place overall and tied for second place in the division. The Titans are five points behind the division leading Central Catholic Vikings. There is still a great chance for the team to win the division, but tenth place overall puts the team in good position to make the playoffs with nine games remaining.

"Right now, I believe our team can beat any other team on any given night; but we can lose just as easily. We are competitive with the best teams but we have to bring our A game to the rink with us. So I am pretty comfortable that we will get the chance to play in the post season," Coach Hetz said.

In order to continue their late success, the Titans need to keep doing what they are doing.

"We need to continue to effectively use our strategies and have a high work ethic for the remainder of the season," Dorow said.

If the Titans continue to work hard and play well, they will be comfortably sitting in a playoff spot at the end of the season.

SPORTS

Hetz chases his dream to Alaska

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his play. Scoring does not come as easily at this level so I think he is a little frustrated with that part of his game; but he is getting a regular shift to play through hard work. His coaches are showing a lot of confidence in his abilities, given he is one of the younger kids on his team, so I think that is a big plus," (Curt) Hetz said.

Statistics have not been one of the main concerns for Hetz, considering he is playing at a much higher level. Also, he has to earn his spot in the lineup in order to play.

"The game is much faster, more physical, and you have to compete in every practice and in every game in order to earn a regular spot in the lineup. There is no promise of playing time. Jake's coaches say he brings a strong work ethic to practice and does what they ask him to do in games. As a result, he has played on a regular basis since joining the Fairbanks Ice Dogs," (Curt) Hetz said.

Although Hetz is not producing the same kind of numbers he was producing in Pittsburgh, he has added a new physical presence to his game. He has been racking up in hits and also participated in his first fight.

"It (the fight) was definitely an adrenaline rush. It was five seconds long, but it seemed like it took forever," Hetz said, "But I definitely won."

His offensive play and new physical style has made it a very enjoyable experience for Hetz.

"The experience is something words can't describe," Jake Hetz said.

Even though hockey is the main part of Hetz's life in Fairbanks, he still has to attend school. The main reason why he went to play in the NAHL is because he wants to play Division 1 college hockey. It is a great way for collegiate prospects to get scouted and eventually receive offers from schools.

Currently the Ice Dogs' coaching staff has been negotiating with Division 1 hockey teams on Hetz's behalf. However, Hetz does not need to worry about finding a school right now because he is eligible until he is 21.

"The quest to get a Division 1 offer can take to the end of your Junior Hockey eligibility which is age 21. Jake has 3 years of eligibil-



Jake Hetz shoots in front of the net

ity left. Five of Jake's older teammates have landed D1 commitments so far this year. So he certainly has opportunity knocking at his door," (Curt) Hetz said.

If Hetz's main reason to play in the NAHL was to play Division 1 hockey, then he has to continue his schooling. He is enrolled in a high school in Fairbanks and is under strict supervision of an academic advisor. The NAHL shows that it cares about schooling by trying to pattern the schedule around weekend games in order to minimize conflicts with schooling.

Along with going to a different school and living in a different state, Hetz also has to live with a host family. Hetz is currently living with what is called a billet family. Billet families offer room and board to hockey players who leave home in order to play for an elite team in a distant city.

Hetz's billet family is two older individuals who he says are very much like the grandparents that he never had. They make him feel very at home.

"It's just like living with my family at home," said Hetz, "I don't even second think it anymore. They are the best."

Although living with a different family and moving across the country are big changes, Hetz is thrilled to have this opportunity.

"I live in Alaska. The people are amazing, and I can't ask for anything better than this city," Hetz said.

Swimming team ready to send swimmers to WPIALs



Titan swimmers dive in versus Montour (Lisa Montini)

by Brett Ford

Although the boys' and girls' swimming teams have differing records, they are still having similar seasons that are full of success on both the individual and team level.

The girls' team is off to a 2-5 start, but senior Anita Peduto and junior Molly Powers have both qualified for WPIAL cuts.

The boys' team is on fire with a 6-1 record and they also have two swimmers qualifying for WPIAL cuts: freshman Dillon Brown and sophomore Nate Porter. The boys' team has had success in practically all events so far due to the fact that they can have at least three people partake in each one. For the girls, however, things are more of an uphill battle.

"The only issue that has hurt us, regarding the girls' win-loss record is that there are only nine girls on the team this year and you need 16 swimmers to fill all of the events. Our girls are giving every team we swim against a 12 point lead before we start the first event," coach Keith Simmons said.

Seemingly one of the most impressive events for both swimming teams is the relay. Among the swimmers Nate Porter, Dillon Brown, Nate Burwell, Billy Schmelzer, Morgan Harris, Jeremy Wakely, Gino Cercone, Brendan Donovan, Anita Peduto, Molly Powers, Megan George and Brittany Herndon all have qualified in relays.

Another lesser participated, yet still successful event for the team is diving. The team has no girl divers but has three boys. In years past the lack of divers would hurt them in each match; this is no longer the case. Since Shaler's pool doesn't contain diving boards, the divers have to go to North Allegheny or Hampton 3-4 times a week to practice. Sophomore Thad Piett has qualified for WPIAL cuts in this event.

Down the stretch swimmers are looking forward to their senior night, which is against North Allegheny on February 7. Their season comes to an end on February 14 at Pine Richland.

"The swimmers who are going to WPIAL's continue swimming until WPIAL tournaments begin, which is on February 28 and March 1," Powers said.

Wrestling team succeeding despite difficult competition

By Brett Ford

The wrestling team is currently sitting atop a 4-6 record and is 2-3 against section opponents. The team's age diversity is one of its main strengths. Several young wrestlers are beginning to become leaders and have boosted the team greatly. The wrestling team is in a very difficult section to succeed in and has needed all the help they could get to be where they are at this time.

"We wrestle in the toughest region in the nation. For instance, we just had two Olympians come out of the WPIAL," coach D'Agostino said.

The younger wrestlers on the team have really stood out for most of the season. Freshman Mike Heinl is currently ranked 4th in WPIALs and has placed in all three tournaments the team has gone to. Freshman Logan Heinl has the best record on the team. Aaron Rouda and Jordan McGonagall have been standing out as well.

The tournament that the boys performed especially well at was the Allegheny County tournament at Fox Chapel. Both Mike Heinl and Jordan McGonagall took 2nd place, Logan Heinl took 3rd place and both Jesse Elrick and Aaron Rouda took 8th in their respective weight classes. Despite having five injured wrestlers, the team placed 8th out of 32 teams, which is the best they have done in seven years.

Following the Allegheny County tournament was the team's tournament at Burgettstown. With seven wrestlers unable to participate the team finished in 12th place.

On February 6th the team will take on Pine Richland at home and then will cap off the season against Knoch on senior night, February 13th. After this the best wrestlers on the team will be invited to compete in sections and then possibly states. The only wrestler on the team who has prior experience in WPIALs is junior Austin Heinl.



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The Back Page

Valentine's Day Edition of Date Night

by Sarah Breen

Date Night for Valentine's Day can be a little rough around the edges. It's hard to plan a fun yet romantic evening. My BEST advice is to NOT let the girl stay at home stuffing her face with ice cream and watching sappy romantic movies, especially The Notebook.

A good idea would be to surprise your girlfriend or boyfriend with dinner. Reservations are necessary when planning this special evening. There are restaurants other than Applebee's, Eat n Park, and McDonalds trust me.

I am not saying to pay \$100.00 for a bill at the Le'mont, but go out to eat somewhere that is at least a little bit fancier than usual. You don't have to travel far. Areas such as Waterworks, The Pittsburgh Mills Galleria, and the South Side have many restaurants and places to choose from. Although I cannot stress enough: make reservations. If you're not sure what time you are going to arrive then call ahead, doing that will give you less of a wait time when arriving.

Waterworks has a couple restaurants that are a tiny bit upscale such as Ichiban and The Walnut Grove. Ichiban Hibachi Steak House is an Asian affiliated restaurant. My advice is to not eat in the dining room. Ichiban isn't just a dinner, it's a show as well. Dine within the Habachi section. In this section you will watch fire and juggling while your food is cooking in front of you. If your partner isn't into the fancier stuff take them for a burger and milkshake at Burgatory. From what I understand, the food is to die for and the milkshakes are out of this world. Ask for a seat next to the fire if you can. The fire will keep you warm and make the night seem a little more romantic.

If you drive up a little further on Route 28 you will find yourself at The Pittsburgh Mills Galleria which features many restaurants within the mall and outside as well. In the mall across from the movie theater there are restaurants such as Houlihan's and Johnny Rockets. Johnny Rockets is kind of like Burgatory in a sense, but it features an old time diner theme. Houlihan's is a more modern designed restaurant. It also has great steak and appetizers.

My next options are located in the South Side both on East Carson St Double Wide Grill, and the Milkshake Factory. Double Wide Grill is a family owned restaurant who took a repair shop and transformed it into a grilling sensation. What guy doesn't like a big old rack of ribs or steak? After, head over to the Milkshake Factory for dessert. This factory features over 55 flavors of pure brain freeze wonder!

If you are looking to stay away from the long waits, have a quiet dinner in the comfort of your own home. For example, ordering a pizza would be a cute idea. A lot of times on Valentine's Day, pizza shops such as Papa Johns and Lucianos get orders to make heart shaped pizzas.

Now you're asking yourself what should we do after dinner. You could go the simple approach and take your special someone to the movies, or you could think outside the box. Take him or her to a place such as Wildwood Highlands, Dave n Busters, or Funfest. Wildwood Highlands is a family fun center but, I'm sure playing against your partner in skee ball would give you both a good giggle. Wildwood Highlands also has laser tag and my personal favorite: snow tubing! Hold on; connect your tubes and slip and slide down the hills laughing. Even the ride up the hill is a little relaxing.

Dave n' Busters is basically the adult Chuckie Cheese. Now you can race against your partner to see who wins the most tickets at the end of the night. Then you could use your ticket winnings to pick out a prize. They also have specials that include an eat and play combo for only \$15.99 a person. This includes eight different entrées to choose from and a \$10.00 game card.

Funfest is an entertainment center also located on 28 near the Pittsburgh Mills and Waterworks. Every Thursday night they have what's called a ladies night from 9:30 to 12:30. Ladies bowl absolutely free; and the guys can get 3 hours of unlimited cosmic bowling for only \$10.00. Fun fest also has pool tables and laser tag within the vicinity.

My last advice is to enjoy your evening. Have fun; and most importantly, laugh with one another.

How To... Be Alone on Valentine's Day

by Julie Rankin

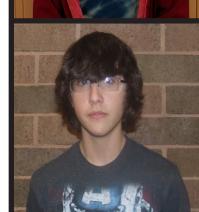
Valentine's Day is a day to reflect on how alone you've been every year since you went to your first school dance and sat in the bleachers while your peers awkwardly slow danced to that cliché love song that you still know every word to. I sometimes worry the source of my loneliness may stem from the fact that I'd rather sit at home and watch re-runs of Wipeout than go out and socialize.

At any rate, you should indulge in your loveless life. You can make fun of all of your friends that are running around, trying to find a box of chocolates that their date won't actually want, because biting into one is like people watching at Wal-Mart: you never know what you're going to get. Or maybe they're scrambling to get a reservation when you know you can walk right into the Great China Buffet in your pajama jeans and not be judged. What's better than eating there's-no-way-that's-Asian Cuisine with a date? That would be eating it alone while snap-chatting a picture of yourself and your sweet n' sour chicken to your grandma.

Instead of torturing yourself by going to see the latest Nicholas Sparks movie about an unrealistic romance that you'll never experience, it's high time you re-watch some classic YouTube videos. Don't be shy, practice your British accent as you imitate "Charlie bit my finger". Then indulge in the video of the baby Panda sneezing. The fact that you've already watched this video 10,000 times probably has some relation to the fact that you're single. I personally enjoy watching the Backstreet Boys sing "I Want It That Way" to me again and again, 90's represent.

Another no fail option is to crash your parent's date. Some may say this is verging on pathetic, but to them I say, are you eating filet mignon on someone else's bill tonight? Then, when your mom harrumphs because your dad unknowingly got her a gardening hat for the fifth year in a row, you can eat her dessert. You also just scored yourself new headwear for those lonely gardening months.

Stop fretting about not having someone to secretly hold hands with in the bag of popcorn at the movies. Go buy yourself a tea-cup pig (license required). They're cute, they're smart, and they won't leave you until they die (life span 15-20 years).

SCG SHALER CULTURE GRID		Go out or stay in on Valentine's Day?	Would you rather get chocolate or flowers?	Describe Valentine's Day in one word.	What kind of Valentine's did you give out in Elementary school?
	Senior Sean O'Connor	I have a date with thick crust pizza 	You can't eat flowers	Cool/un-necessary	Star Wars like everyone else
	Junior Caroline Little	Cry in my bed watching Harry Potter	Reese's Cups	Fake	Harry Potter ones, last year
	Sophomore Daniel Borgan	Depends on if I have a Valentine	Chocolate	Stupid	Power Rangers 
	Freshman Julie Loesch	Stay In	Chocolate 	Pointless	Cards

Ten things I hate about Valentine's day

by Emily Pirt

I hate the idea of Valentine's Day
An entire 24 hours devoted to love is such a bore.

I hate Valentine's Day cards
Those messages make me want to snore.

I hate eating the candy hearts
They taste like pastel chalk.

I hate seeing people cry because they're single
Just go on Facebook and find someone to stalk.

I hate when people get armfuls of roses
Don't you think that's a little bit excessive?

I hate watching sappy Nicholas Sparks movies
The Notebook just makes me depressive.

I hate reading everyone's love-y dove-y Facebook statuses
Your overuse of smileys and hearts makes me want to gag.

I hate how everyone is so over-the-top
All the red and pink is such a drag

I hate that Valentine's Day is in February
What's more romantic than 3 feet of snow?

I hate dealing with everyone and all their drama

I've given up on my sanity long ago.