

# The Oracle

Volume 39 Issue 4

Student Newspaper Of Shaler Area High School

January 2011

## FBLA members to compete in statewide competition

by Amity Hudak

After a few years of absence, the Future Business Leaders of America, also known as the FBLA, has been resurrected into a very successful organization in the Shaler Area. The club is advised by Mr. Ron McAdams, a computers and webpage development teacher at the high school.

"I wanted to become the advisor because I wanted to give the students opportunities to learn about these areas more and give more real life experience. Also, I was hoping to create more interest in the field," McAdams said.

On Thursday December 16<sup>th</sup>, 16 Shaler Area students travelled to The Fez in Hopewell Township to compete in a regional Future Business Leaders of America and Regional Leadership Competition (RLC). Students went head to head with other schools from around the area including North Allegheny, Hampton, Fox Chapel, and Pine Richland.

During the competition, students could battle in over 40 different areas in business such as marketing, sports management, economics, and business communications. There also were multiple guest speakers, one of which Greg Joseph, a singer/songwriter for the popular band, The Clarks.

"I competed in the Sports Management competition. The questions were about different leagues and competitions worldwide, business practices of franchises, and some statistical questions," senior FBLA Melissa Dorow stated.

Due to their impressive performance at the RLC, eight Shaler Area students will be travelling to Hershey, Pennsylvania April 4-6 to compete in the Pennsylvania Leadership Conference. Melissa Dorow, Zac Duffy, Ken Girty, Dave Grubic, Micher Logan, Christine Sinkovich, Sydney Smyers, and Matt Webb will all be competing at the state level for the high school.

Though the regional and state competitions are the only true massive events for this group, there are plenty of workshops and other events the FBLA members will be participating in.

"I'm really excited for states. It's going to be a lot of fun, and I expect to do pretty well. A lot of our FBLA members qualified and it's going to be a great experience for all of us," Dorow said.



Future Business Leaders of America members (Mr. Ron McAdams)

## Wells named new Dean of Students

by Anna Porter

As he sits in his office, adding pink slips to an already overflowing pile, Mr. Craig Wells has recently seen quite a change in position. Two years ago, the Manufacturing and Engineering teacher was asked to take on the responsibility of the Dean of Students. This year, Wells has resurrected the role and will finish off the year with this title.

After assistant principal Mr. Mike Brooks left in December, the high school administration searched for a replacement. However, instead of another assistant principal, the school chose to hire a Dean of Students.

"They posted the position right before Christmas and they had interviews the day before Christmas break; they ended up hiring me this year again," Wells said.

Compared to an assistant principal, Dean of Students focuses much more on students and their discipline.

"The job description is to take care of any of the disciplinary infractions and day-to-day discipline with the students as well as their attendance," he said.

Wells knows that he has hard work ahead of him during the remainder of this year. Thankfully, his prior experience as a teacher has taught him a few things about discipline; he already has ideas about reforming aspects of the high school.

"Attendance needs to be better in the district and detentions need to be served. A lot of times a kid gets a detention and if they aren't reminded about it or told fifteen times they won't do it. You make the consequence high enough, and the kid will want to do the detention," he said.

Wells believes that the most difficult barrier to overcome as the new Dean will be forming his presence at the school, and letting students know that he is equal and fair in discipline.

"My experience has taught me to be consistent with every kid so that every kid is receiving the same disciplinary consequences. Whether it is a kid that does it once or a kid that does it a hundred times, be consistent," Wells said.

Having taught at Shaler for nine and a half years, Wells knows the district.

"My favorite thing about Shaler is the atmosphere and the diversity of the students...the plan is that I will be the Dean until the end of the year, and the hardest thing about it is that its going to take time. It's going to take time to get the kids to say 'Wait, I'm going to do this because I don't want to be in his office,'" Wells said.

**"You make the consequence high enough, and the kid will want to do the detention."  
-Mr. Craig Wells**

## Shalerpalooza 3 another big success



Dale Mangold of Tobacco Road at Shalerpalooza

Shalerpalooza 3 was held this past Saturday and brought in its largest crowd ever. Well over 300 people bought advanced tickets and organizer Dale Mangold estimated another 50-100 bought tickets at the door.

"I'd like to personally thank all the students involved who did a heck of a job promoting and volunteering their time during lunches for two weeks with our various fundraisers," Mangold said. "These students truly care about what goes on here at Shaler."

Mangold did not have the final total of the amount of money raised at the event, but he stated that he was extremely happy with the results of the event.



# Titan of the Month

## Senior Matt Schaefer swims his way into LSU

by Anna Porter

For high school athletes, there is only a .08% chance of signing with a Division 1 college. Despite those odds, senior Matt Schaefer has joined this elite group of athletes, having signed with Louisiana State University on a 4-year swimming scholarship.

Schaefer started swimming when he was just eight years old for the Shaler Area Aquatics Club. His parents, John and Melissa Schaefer, still remember the first day he swam.

"We took him to a Shaler Aquatic Club practice where they told us that if he could swim 25 yards unassisted without stopping, then he could join the club," his mother said. "We really doubted that he could do it, but he did. When I saw the way Matt's competitiveness came out of him at swimming meets, I saw an athlete that was not going to be satisfied with just competing. He always wanted to win."

Since he started, he has dominated in the water. Just a few of Schaefer's accomplishments include holding the Eastern Zone Championship meet record for 1500 meters, medaling in numerous Eastern Zone Championship and Sectional meets, and being voted



Schaefer takes a break in the pool (John Schaefer)

the Athlete Representative to USA Swimming, representing all swimmers in Western Pennsylvania.

"At Nationals I've swam at finals, which is top eight," he said. "When I was 14, I was ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the country for my age group."

Schaefer's success has certainly drawn much

attention to his hard work in the water. The University of Minnesota, The University of Maryland, and Louisiana State University were three colleges interested in the swimmer.

"I signed with LSU in November," he said. "It's about 70-80% scholarship and it can change depending on how you do."

Not only does the swimmer have a promising college career, but he is also aiming for an even larger feat: competing in Olympic Trials 2012. The USA picks two swimmers for each event, usually the two swimmers with the fastest times at Olympic Trials.

"Representing the USA in the Olympics is probably every swimmer's goal at some time in their career. Matt understands that setting achievable

goals are the only type of goals to set," his mother said. "He understands that he has absolutely no control over how fast other swimmers swim. He can only control how fast HE swims."

Schaefer swims for a club team, Pine-Richland

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# Shaler residents choose a military lifestyle

by Taylor Miksic

Imagine waking up before the sun to go through ruthless training in order to fight for your country; to keep the home of the brave the land of the free safe. Thousands of American soldiers do it every day to keep the citizens of the United States, YOU, living a safe and comfortable life. There are people living in the township of Shaler who have and are willing to do just this; to risk their lives in order to save another's.

People in the community, people you see every day: a teacher, a family member, a friend, a friend of a friend, everyday people are signing up for the life changing experience and a responsibility that is the military.

Gym teacher Adam Rosenwald is one soldier who enlisted and started active duty in 2005. Although his active duty is now complete after about three and a half years of service, he feels that he made the right decision in signing up for the military.

"I wouldn't change my decisions. I met some of the most incredible people of my life over that 3 and a half year span. I traveled all over the world. I met my wife on a flight from Pitt to Atlanta while on leave. Some good things happened to me in the service. I was in the 173rd Airborne 2/503 B Co. I am proud to have served and to have been a part of that unit."

Other members of Shaler Area who have decided to participate in a branch of the Military are Leah Young (Air Force), Hanna Sowden (Marines), Jeremiah Skertich (Marines), and Jordan Turowski (Army).

"I worked at Eat n Park on McKnight Road," Young said. "My boss handed me an Air Force recruiting card one day. He said, 'Give them a call, you're better than working here for the rest of your life,' so, I did."

After making this huge decision in life, Young hasn't regretted it one bit.

"I am very happy with my decision. I love the atmosphere of the Air Force,

and I believe it affords the best opportunities. I love the Air Force."

Skertich concurs with Young's outlook on the decision of joining the military.

"I am happy with the branch I chose. It's a hard life, but we are better trained and better equipped for close and hand to hand combat than the other branches. The sacrifice of a harsher lifestyle is worth it in the end."

Many young people nowadays feel as though it is their duty as an American to join the military. There are young men and woman signing up every day. Seniors Collin Miloser, Wayne Harms, and Kari Nogacek are three students who are considering this.

Miloser and Harms are both looking into the Army for after high school, whereas Nogacek is determined to get into the Naval Academy this summer. She has been training and filling out paper work for quite some time in order to get admitted.

"I have completed my NROTC application and my Naval Academy application. Both include working out, multiple interviews, nominations, applications, and etcetera," Nogacek said.

Miloser and Harms are still undecided on whether or not the military is right for them and therefore do not know whether they will enlist or participate in ROTC within college.

"It is a big decision and I am still thinking it over and discussing it with my parents. They are supporting me in whatever I decide, but I am not sure yet if the military is right for me or not," Harms said.

This decision takes a lot of consideration and entails a lot of support from family members.

"[My family is] happy for me, as long as it's what I wanted to do and not what I thought I should do," Nogacek said.

"My family is nervous for me, but it's part of what I signed up for," Young said.

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# Day in the Life of Zach Grabowski

by Samantha Raible

Imagine being blindfolded for an entire school day; getting to school, finding your locker, navigating the halls and learning your class material. Now imagine doing that every day, for the rest of your life; Zach Grabowski knows exactly that feeling. Unfortunately he cannot take the blindfold off, but his life is no different than the rest of us.

Between 7 and 7:10 Zach arrives at school, just like every other student. Mrs. Loretta Haas, his aide, escorts him down the stairs to the Braille room by the cafeteria.

"I walk him over to a safe area and I'll give him his back pack and I guide him until we get to the steps, then he is on his own from there, but I walk right next to him or a little in front of him going down the steps to make sure he doesn't fall," Haas said.

Zach generally starts his day in a technology class. What many people don't know is that Zach has excellent computer skills. He works on the computer with another teacher Mrs. O'Bryan; however, this is no ordinary computer, it is the only one available in the school that has special programs such as JAWS. JAWS is a computer program that repeats everything Zach types and clicks. Zach mentioned that after using the program for four years, it's a lot easier to understand, especially since it talks very fast.

Not only does he use the regular computer, but he also has special devices such as a Braille note and a Braille. Imagine an ordinary lap top, but a lot smaller and with only ten buttons and Braille sentences that appear at the bottom of the device, that is basically the Braille note. It has all of Zach's school work downloaded onto it by Haas.

Zach also uses a device known as the Braille. The Braille is similar to a typewriter, but with ten keys and thick oak tag paper. With this device, Zach must type everything in Braille and get it right; he also uses the Braille to do math problems from his book. The difference between the Braille and the Braille note is the Braille note types everything out

with the regular alphabet and then prints everything that Zach typed in Braille code. The Braille; on the other hand, is just typing the correct Braille code and Nemeth code (blind's math system).

After technology, Zach and Mrs. Williams, his teacher for eight years, review math and learn new math skills. He begins by reviewing in a binder that Williams created for him and practices numbers, Roman numerals, and decimals. Throughout the week he will learn a new math problem just like everyone else and then on Fridays he takes a test based on what he learned that week.

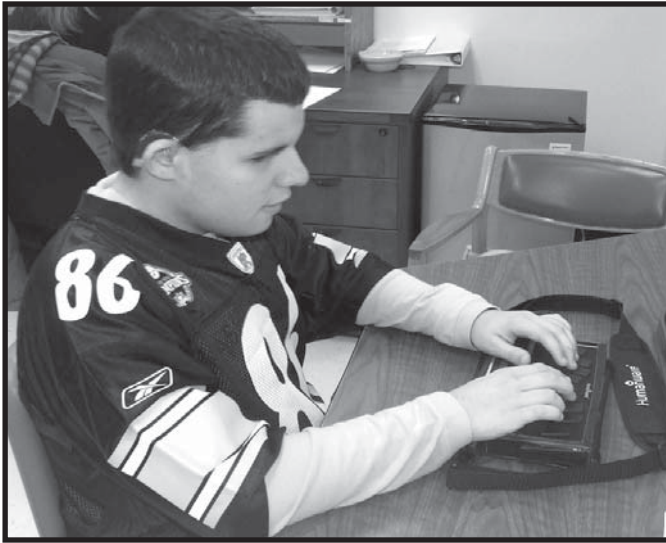
After math, Williams and Zach ease into English, where he is reading Pride and Prejudice. Throughout the years, he has also read Gulliver's Travels, some mysteries, and westerns. Not only does he read novels,

but he also uses the Prentice Hall book everyone carries around, except his is in 32 volumes. Just like in math, he takes a review test on what he learned throughout the week.

"Literature is one of my favorite things," Williams said. "I love books and we've read westerns, mysteries, science fiction, and the classics. And that opens worlds to him too; to see into people's lives, that you wouldn't otherwise know, different time periods, different ideas."

On Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, Zach's fourth period consists of Techniques of Daily Living (TDL). He learns handwriting, shoe tying, wallet management, and other things. Whenever he practices with his wallet, he must keep all of his money sorted correctly. For example, all of his one dollar bills are flat, while his five dollar bills are folded once and placed behind the dollar to the right of his wallet.

An interesting fact about Zach's TDL class is that he also uses another technique for writing Braille called the Slate and Stylus. It's a wooden board with a metal slate at the top with multiple indentations. He uses an awl to poke small imprints into the paper to



Zach Grabowski typing on this Braille note (Sam Raible)

Cont. on page 4

# Homeschooling can benefit students but can also be a disadvantage

by Kelsey Meehan

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, thirty-six percent of high school students have parents who are concerned about giving their children moral or religious instruction; twenty-one percent are concerned about drugs or peer pressure in public high schools. Nearly seventeen percent of parents said that they are dissatisfied with the academic instruction available at public schools; seven percent of parents said that they are interested in a nontraditional education method. Due to their concerns, some parents choose to home school their children.

Some students believe that participating in home schooling would be easy: no waking up early, and no eight hour days in school. However, these students have the wrong idea about home school.

According to guidance counselor Mrs. Debbie Stepnick, the first thing to clarify when discussing alternate forms of education is the difference between home school and Cyber School.

"With Cyber School, I think that students believe that they can wake up whenever they want to and take a few classes online, but they aren't all set up that way. Students have to be up at a certain time, and they have to be available for video conferencing, so it's really like a full day of school at your computer. With home school, it's largely the same, except the courses are usually taught by a parent, and the computer is only used as a tool," Stepnick said.

Students who are home schooled must work with the school district that they live in to select coursework and to also authenticate their education. An independent service must test home schooled students to make sure that the students are truly learning their courses. Students are required to take academic assessments to make sure they are maintaining "adequate educational process." Home schooled students must also provide proof of their secondary education when it comes time to apply for college.

"When a student asks me to send a transcript, no college is going to question the student's education because we are an accredited high school in the state. Students that are home schooled must provide more proof of their education and proof that they're truly ready for college," Stepnick said.

In 2010, the National Home Education Research Institute reported that there were 2.04 million home schooled kids. That number indicates an increase of 2.11 percent in the number of home schooled students from 2007 to 2010. A total of twenty-five students from Shaler Area were home schooled last year; nine of these students were of high school age.

Despite the increases in numbers of students who are home schooled, issues are still apparent in the structure of home schooling, particularly in the social aspects, or lack thereof. Home schooled students do not get the chance to interact with other students or teachers, and are largely isolated in their own learning environment.

"High school is a stepping stone to college and after; I worry that home schooled students don't get the chance to navigate structural issues that students in a regular high school are forced to deal with. After high school, we ask these students to go into a post-secondary environment, and then they're completely on their own, and I would think that it would be extremely hard to deal with issues that they never had the chance to encounter in high school," Stepnick said.

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	Junior Zack Taylor	Nothing	Zach Efron	Boxers	Being too good looking



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## Zach Grabowski — From page 3

create sentences and letters, but the one tricky thing about the slate and stylus is that everything has to be written backwards because instead of the Braille code popping up, they are pressed down. Then once the paper is flipped, the sentence is the right way.

After TDL he heads off to fifth period lunch, he leaves a few minutes early with Haas to get in line and purchase his food. After Zach is done eating, he heads off to gym with Mr. Mosbacher. In gym he plays basketball, soccer, garbage ball and other fun activities.

"He is a great kid," Mosbacher said. "He tries everything. He is really good in the weight room. When we play garbage ball the class will tell him they are throwing him the ball on the count of three. He catches it and when he tries to shoot someone will make noises by the garbage can so he knows where it is."

Once Zach is done exercising he heads back to the Braille room to learn Social Studies, Reading, and Study Skills with Williams. However, on Tuesdays he goes out with his mobility teacher. The teacher teaches him how to walk around the school safely with his cane.

In Zach's spare time after school he enjoys playing the piano. He has been playing since he was five years old. He has lessons, but he is expanding his horizons. Currently he is learning to read music in Braille.

"He can listen to any song and play it," Williams said.

Although he is a senior Zach will not be graduating with his fellow classmates. He will be withholding his diploma to continue coming to Shaler until he is 21 to expand his education. However, he will not be here all day, in the afternoon he will either go to a job training or he will go to a mock apartment where he will learn skills to take care of himself.

"You have the same fears that you would have of any student, that they have a fair shake in life and people judge them fairly not on the disability," Williams said. "The only fear would be that people treat him with fairness like everybody else."

"He is more confident, he learns pretty well. He learns to accept changes and we are all human and we make mistakes and it's ok to do that," Haas said. "You don't need to get frustrated over everything because everything he does in here is fixable."

His disability doesn't stop him from being an ordinary kid; he enjoys school, music, and exercising.

"I like to play the piano, I like to exercise, I love to swim," Zach said. "I row in the summer time, and I go camping with my father up at Sandy Lake."

Imagine having that blindfold on your whole life, but living life to the fullest; Zach Grabowski does that every day. He is inquisitive, creative, smart, and has a heart of gold. Although he faces challenges in life, it doesn't stop him from doing what he wants to do.

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# Q&A: Science teacher lays out his skeletons

by Nicholas Schmitt

**Q: Why did you become a teacher?**

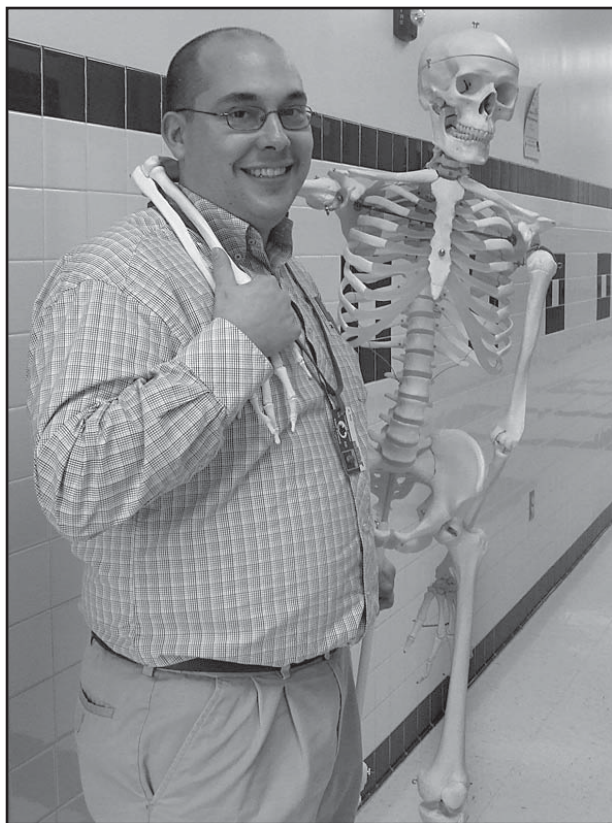
A: Originally I just thought that I would be good at teaching and that I might even become the superhero of teachers. I also knew that I had a niche for Biology and thought: how hard can teaching be? After I got through my teaching certification, I realized that teaching was not as easy as I expected. I found myself working really hard and realize that a lot of teachers that I have had were not lazy and that a lot of back work goes into a well-taught class.

**Q: What do you enjoy most about teaching?**

A: I really enjoy taking to student because everyday someone says something that makes me laugh. Usually, kids have a lighter sense of humor because they have not been beaten down by the world yet! They have more humorous personalities which always makes my job easier.

**Q: What do you dislike most about teaching?**

A: I hate paper work: tests, progress reports, etc.! Put it like this, if I won the Powerball, I would not quit teaching. Instead, I would hire a man, let's say Farnsworth, so I could say "Farnsworth get all that paper work done!" This would still allow me to teach, without all the extra hassle.



Mr. Taylor smiles with his skeleton (Anna Porter)

**Q: When you are not busy teaching students and have some free time what are some of the things you enjoy to do? What are your hobbies?**

A: I really don't have a lot of hobbies because I have two kids and a wife and they are who I surround myself with. Actually, outside of school I am really anti-social: no cell phone, etc. I feel like I get all my talking out at school so when I go home I just like

to relax with my family. Things that I like to do at home include: building and working on projects; however, I hate cleaning!

**Q: Some say you are the best teacher here at Shaler. Any comment?**

A: Someone is really trying to get an A because I am way down on the line!

**Q: In your teaching career if you could go back in time and do something over again, what would it be?**

A: When I was student teaching at Arsenal, I made a 7<sup>th</sup> grader cry by not giving him a rewards sticker, and it broke my heart. But generally speaking, it's just being not organized.

**Q: What is the funniest thing that has happened in Anatomy, since you have been teaching it?**

A: We do the "cracker challenge" when we study digestion. One year a student had a mouthful of saltines when someone made him laugh. A fountain of half chewed Saltines flew out of his mouth all over the floor. Another student was able to eat 7 saltines in a minute to com-

plete the challenge. For an encore, he put away 8 more in a minute. Coincidentally, he was also by far the most outspoken student that I had that year.

**Q: In your class you dissect cats, so do you think that you could own a cat?**

A: My wife is extremely allergic to cats, so no. She takes some sick pleasure in the fact that I dissect cats, but personally I like them. Sometimes I think that live cats look at me like "I know what you do for a living!" When I pet cats I secretly can't stop thinking about which muscles I'm touching and how buff the cat is. I could probably quit teaching and use my cat muscle knowledge to be a kitty masseuse.

**Q: How do your co-workers feel about you having the students dissect cats in the school?**

A: I have had some teachers stop in to observe our dissections, so I know that at least a few are into it. But then again, not too many teachers invite me over to hang out or anything, so maybe everyone secretly hates me.

**Q: Living in Pittsburgh what is it like being a Flyers/Eagles fan?**

A: It is very frustrating, I usually have two choices: it is either at home by myself or I go watch it with someone else and get a ton of smack down. I think if the Steelers win another Super Bowl I am going to have to move!

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## SPORTS

# Hockey team rebounds after five game losing streak

With five games left, the Shaler Hockey team is looking to secure a spot in the playoffs

by J.T. Schwartz

The Shaler Hockey team put an end to their five game losing streak with big wins against Erie McDowell and Hempfield, and looks for continued success as the season winds down.

Right now, the Titans are on a roll. The team came up with 2-0 victory at Erie McDowell, with goals coming from captains Conor Burke, and Josh Hetz. Steve Definbaugh made some big saves and got his first shutout of the season.

The Titans also had a very convincing 10-3 thrashing of Hempfield. Against Hempfield, the Titans were great offensively, but the defense stepped up and helped to create turnovers which led to scoring opportunities. Jake Hetz led the team with four goals, while Dalton Shiring and Dillon Burkarth had two apiece. Both Brian Stein and Mike Klena also added a goal for the Titans.

"Our coach changed some lines and we moved the puck very well, which created more scoring opportunities. Our defense has also improved the past couple games too," Josh Hetz said.

The Titans have worked hard to turn their season around. Coming back and working hard in practice is difficult after tough loss after tough loss, but the Titans used their situation to their advantage.



Players celebrate after Brian Stein's breakaway goal (JT Schwartz)

the shutout while the offense went into overdrive, scoring seven goals in the 7-0 lopsided game.

Right now, the Shaler Hockey team is in eighth place in the overall standings, and with five regular season games left, they are looking to get some wins to improve their 6-6-2 record, and to start preparing for the playoffs.

"We just need to build from these games and take the rest of the season one game at a time," Burke said.

"It was hard for all of us because we had some tough losses, but it helped us to re-focus and work harder on what we need to improve on," Stein said.

Despite their record, the Titans have not played bad hockey. Overtime has been a problem for them this year. So far, four of the games they have played have gone past regulation, and the Titans have yet to come out on top in those games.

"It's frustrating because some of the losses have been luck, which we didn't have. We did not get any bounces to come our way," Josh Hetz said.

Another thing to consider is the competition that Shaler has played. The Titans have played undefeated Fox Chapel twice and Canon McMillan once. Fox Chapel and Canon McMillan are the top two teams in the PIHL.

Even after their 4-7 loss to Upper St. Clair, the team continued its offensive and defensive success in the game against Seneca Valley, which was senior night. Ian Zacharias came up with

## Shaler Area swimmers dive into success

by Shelby Tabrosky

The Shaler Area swim team is trying to recover after losing the eight talented seniors from last year's team.

In the past two years, the swim team dove into the WPIALS, and broke amazing records, like the 200 meter free-style. Some of those swimmers included Jeremy Banachoski, Nikolai Scott, Heather Wakeley, and Sara Daversa.

This season, there are 21 swimmers: Four seniors, one from North Catholic High School, five juniors, five sophomores, and seven freshmen. This year's seven freshman have to regain the strength of last year's team in order to qualify for WPIAL's.

"We lost a lot of experienced swimmers and gained a lot of new swimmers, so it's harder for us to get back the skills we had from our previous season," senior captain Natalie Peduto said.

Another challenge the team faces is injuries, like for junior Rebecca Wakeley. Wakeley had knee surgery, making the recovery to swim again painful. But with her head held high, she got through surgery and physical therapy, and was able to calculate some points in the Penn Trafford meet on January 6<sup>th</sup>.

In addition, there are little tasks the team has to work on too. For example, in the Penn Trafford meet, senior captain Emma Crawford won the 500 meter free-style by just a second, but was disqualified after she jumped too soon off the block.

"When I'm on the block before a race, I try to get focused on specific things I want to do in my race to make me faster," senior captain Ben Werner said. "Do not false start, you must touch the walls at each length, and swim the correct stroke for the event you are in."

Relay races have been a factor too, especially with section teams being larger than Shaler.

"The primary challenge we face this year is establishing strong relay teams after losing eight teammates that graduated last year," Werner stated.

"We can only put swimmers in four events per meet and we don't even have enough girls to make three relays per relay event," Peduto stated. "The teams that are double and even triple our size can fill up spots easier than we can."

The senior captains, Crawford, Peduto, and Werner are helping the underclassmen out though so the team can be better next season. Peduto's sister, sophomore Anita Peduto, is a big help to the team, having the record time at 1:01.11 for the 100 meter backstroke. She also helped out graduates Sara Daversa and Heather Wakeley with the 200 meter medley relay record time of 1:55.87 last season.

With the total of nine practices a week, three one hour and 30 minute morning session, five two-hour sessions in the afternoons, and a two hour practices Saturday mornings, the team has a lot of time to fix their mistakes. They just need to stay focused, and try their best to improve, for there is still time for success.

"The only thing between me and success is a little water," junior Darren Kusar said.



Shaler swimmers about to dive in (Shelby Tabrosky)

## Lady Titans battling for section title

by Amity Hudak

After winning the championship of their bracket at the Holiday Tournament in Disney, the Lady Titans basketball team came back to begin their section play. In losing no seniors from last year and maintaining the same varsity lineup, it is no surprise that the team is having so much success.

The team easily defeated Butler and started out section play on a high note. On January 3<sup>rd</sup>, the team battled with a new section rival Oakland Catholic. This is only the second year Oakland Catholic has been playing within the WPIAL AAAA Section 3. In just the few games the teams have faced each other, there was an unspoken hatred and the game was vital to both teams respectively.

After a hard fought battle, the Lady Titans came up just short with a score of 54-51. This loss accounts for their only section loss in the season thus far. The teams will have another much anticipated duel on January 27<sup>th</sup> at Oakland Catholic.

"The loss against Oakland was tough to face. We were winning at halftime and then gave up our lead in the second half," senior Val McQuade said.

They are currently 14-2 overall and 7-1 in section with wins against North Allegheny, North Hills, Seneca Valley, Pine Richland, and Butler.

— Cont. on page 7



## SPORTS

## Boys basketball remains unbeaten in first 14

Varsity basketball out to a phenomenal start; team undefeated at 14-0 and ranked WPIAL #1

by Ben Mulig

The Shaler Area Boys Basketball team is off to its best start in program, winning its first 14 games. A few notable victories came against teams such as Butler, Pittsburgh Central Catholic, Pine-Richland, and North Allegheny, who were all ranked in the WPIAL AAAA top ten.

"We play in probably the toughest section in the WPIAL, so every game is a battle. So far, we've been playing the best basketball in the section, and we need to continue to do what we're doing. We need to finish strong," junior Mike Titterington said.

The Titans have spent the past two weeks ranked as the number one team in WPIAL basketball with a record of 14-0, according to MSA Sports Network. The hype hasn't seemed to slow them down as they have fought their way to a 7-0 conference record in arguably the toughest conference in the WPIAL.

"We're just playing solid basketball. Our teamwork has been great and games have been in our favor, there is still room for improvement though," Geno Thorpe said.

Thorpe is the leading point scorer in Shaler's lineup this season, averaging 19.4 points a game.

Shaler has already surpassed the amount of wins they had last season with still eight games to play. The Titan's offense is averaging 65 points a game, but the most impressive statistic is their high-powered defense who has only allowed an average of 43 points per game.

"Any quality of a championship team in any sport, at any level is good defense. You may come out and play a poor offensive game, but you can consistently come out and play solid defense every night," head coach Mr. Paul Holzshu said.

The Shaler defense proved its dominance this past Friday in a contest at North Allegheny, which was a battle of the first and second ranked teams in the WPIAL. The game was neck and neck until Shaler went on a 20-2 run late in the second quarter sparked by sophomore Geno Thorpe, and senior guard J.T. Schwartz. In the second half, the Titans put North Allegheny away with some timely turnovers and strong defensive play. They won the game 59-44. Thorpe finished with 22 points and Schwartz added 18 points.

Shaler has already made history this season, but eight regular season games still remain. They want to finish the season strong and get prepared for the WPIAL playoffs.

"As long as we can continue to stay defensive minded, work hard in practice, keep a level head, and continue to get guys to come off the bench and play hard, then the rest of our season should be just as successful as the beginning," Schwartz said.



Sophomore Geno Thorpe shoots a foul shot (Ben Mulig)

## Lady Titans chasing title

From page 6

"We have a loss that we shouldn't [Oakland Catholic], but I really hope it helped open up the girls' eyes and that it was a learning experience for them," head coach Eric Mozzetti said.

The Lady Titans still have their second game against all WPIAL AAAA Section 3 teams.

It seems they're on their way to a third consecutive playoff berth and possibly its first section title in many years.

"If they [the team] do what they're capable of, the season should end very well and give us all something to be proud of and satisfied with," Mozzetti said.



Haley Sauer shoots a layup (Tribune Review)

## Titan of the Month

From page 2

only control how fast HE swims."

Schaefer swims for a club team, Pine-Richland Aquatics.

"Other than summer and weekends, I don't have morning practice. I have practice every day though, for about three and a half hours," Schaefer said. "My workouts exceed 12,000 yards per session at the peak of a season."

During his 08-09 season, he swam more than 1.1 million yards, and his 09-10 season swimming over 1.2 million yards. With the extent of his practices, Schaefer can burn 3,000 calories a day, at some parts of his training burning around 8,000. In order to do this, he eats over 6,000 calories a day and his parents are sure to provide healthy and high-energy foods.

"His training and dedication to his sport for the past 10 years has proven that Matt is able to achieve his goals. We, as his parents, can only support his decision and do what is necessary for him to go as far as he can go," his mother said.

Although the work load is hard and the chances are limited, Schaefer said that it is all definitely worth it.

## Wrestling still winless, inexperience to blame

by Shelby Tabrosky

Shaler Area wrestling coach Drew D'Agostino has had a rough start with his team this season with the record of 0-3.

"Our challenge is that fact that we have injured athletes and a lot of inexperience," D'Agostino said.

The wrestling team lost valuable seniors from last year like Jamal Conroy, Josh Fleming, Josh Stangel, and John Trojan.

Additionally, Shaler has more wrestlers with less experience than their competition, making it tougher for the underclassmen.

Although the inexperience has been tough for the team this year, the Titans did well in an out-of-state tournament, having many wrestlers placing.

"We attended a tournament in West Virginia and we received 6th place," D'Agostino said.

Another challenge the team faces this year is injuries. Five wrestlers have been out due to either concussions or other injuries. This does not help Shaler because the team is small to begin with, and with injured wrestlers, the team only has a few wrestlers when game time comes around.

"We are already behind," assistant coach Ben Yeckel said. "We only had seven guys out of fourteen weight classes, and injuries haven't helped our line-up at all."

Since last year, the wrestling program here at Shaler is new, meaning there are a lot of inexperienced wrestlers. In the short run, it is a negative aspect, but it will be very beneficial in the long run. Especially because the older wrestlers, like senior captain Joe Jackson and senior Sam Greco, are sharing their skills and talents to the younger wrestlers.

"Sam Greco is second year wrestler and he has been pretty good any time he wrestles," Yeckel said. "Teddy Major who is a freshman has improved throughout the season, and has contributed all year also."

With approximately 12 hours of practice per week, the team's skills should be improving, so next year's season should be more successful in skills and experience.

"Hopefully we can pull up a successful season in the end," D'Agostino stated.

"We should have another good group coming up next year with the ninth and tenth graders so we will have a full team to improve in our section and overall record," Yeckel said.

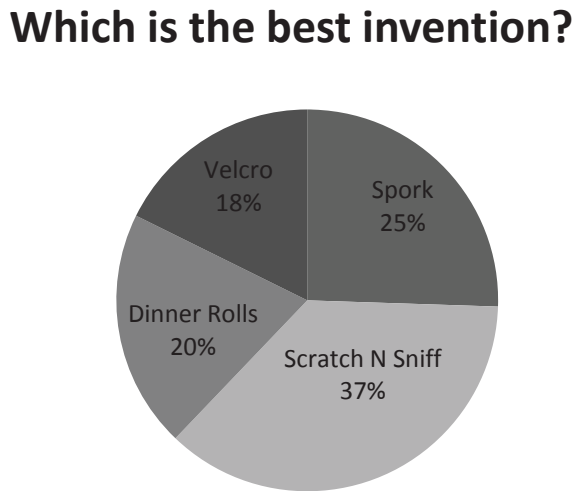
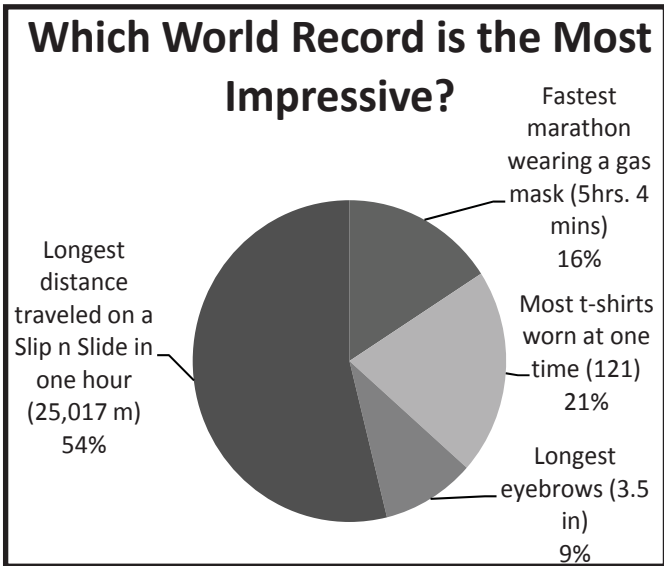
If the ten players on the team can tackle the next few games, then all they have to do is stay strong for the next season.



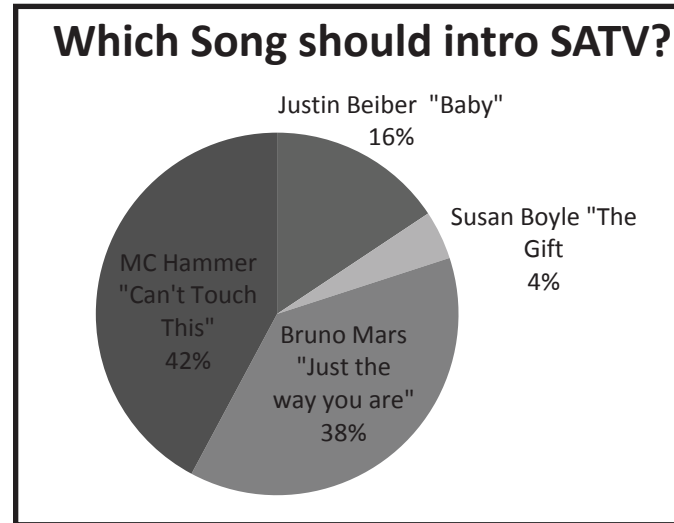
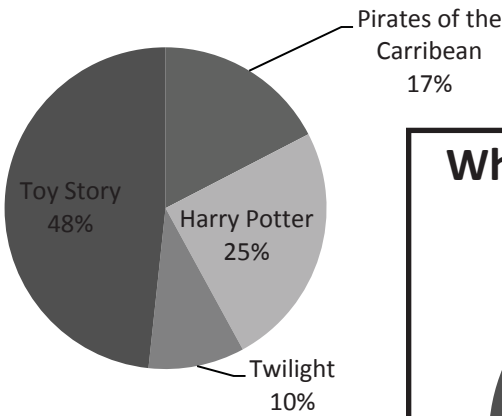
# The Back Page

## Pop culture: pulse of Shaler

by JT Schwartz and Steve Kimpel



### Which Movie Series is the most popular?



## A guide to resolution success

by Steve Kimpel

According to proactivechange.com, 40-45% of all Americans make a New Year's resolution almost every year. Of those who are consistently making a new resolution, more than a fourth of the participants quit after the first week and more than half cannot maintain their resolution through the month of June. If New Year's resolutions are indeed made in order to invoke a sincere change in one individual, then why is it so difficult to maintain these declarations throughout the year? The issue is not found with the actual making of the resolution, but rather in the execution of the pledge. As a direct result of the issue surrounding the resolutions, I have developed a list of steps that one would need in order to successfully prolong a New Year's Resolution.

**Prepare for War-** Even though the start of the New Year's resolution does not begin until the first of the New Year, it is best to prepare oneself for whatever the challenge is before the actual declaration is made.

**Set a Reachable Goal-** If your goal is to keep a goal for a year or achieve this goal in 365 days then your resolution needs to be reachable. Do not go easy on yourself. It is better to set your ambitions high, so don't settle for complacency.

**Support-** As labeled earlier, roughly 40% of Americans currently make New Year's Resolutions. There is no better way to succeed in a tough situation than with accountability. The good news is you have at least 124,120,000 people that are going through the same thing. Choose a good one!

**Don't undo what was just done-** Even if at the end of 2011 your resolution is still intact and you have maintained all consistency, in order to make the entire process a success, it is necessary to keep your improved status. Do not undo what you just did.

For some though, even the fool proof steps may not be more powerful than the horrible trap of complacency and resolution failure. Some may fall short of their resolutions and ultimately contradict the standards that were previously made. However disappointing this failure may be, do not lose all hope. Despite popular belief you will live to fight another day. In the notorious words of Andy Bernard from the show "The Office", "They (the News Year's Resolutions) may have won the battle, but I will win the next battle."

## Knapsacking

How-to and how-not-to-do

by Vince Lamanna

Only at Shaler do you find students guarding their backpacks, with the straps around the leg of their chair. Only at Shaler do you have the need to watch out for knapsacking. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the art, knapsacking is when one person takes another person's backpack, removes the books and papers from inside, flips the backpack inside out, and refills the backpack, finishing it off by zipping it shut. The bag is then left for the owner to undo.

There are different methods for knapsacking, most end with the same result, but the most efficient way to perform a knapsack, is with two people. One person holds the backpack, while the other removes the insides. Then the two flip the pack, while one holds it, while the other refills the backpack. There are also ways to jazz up the knapsacking game. If you knapsack two people at the same time, then you can switch the backpacks and leave the recipient with an even bigger surprise: somebody else's backpack. It's best to commence the knapsacking when a person is already preoccupied or has left the room. It is risky to attempt this while the person is present. Also, it is recommended to knapsack towards the end of the period so the person has minimal time to un-knapsack themselves. Lunch is an ideal place to knapsack. It provides for an excellent environment; it is also good to note that you need to contain your excitement and not alert the teacher, or the target. If you find yourself in a situation where you are caught knapsacking, drop the backpack, and get out. If not, physical confrontation may occur during the struggle.

When the knapsacking is done, always remember to take deep breaths to steady your heart rate and calm your breathing. Any sign of fatigue can be indicative of wrongdoing. When the target returns and you are confronted, just deny, deny, deny. If you are not confronted, pretend you are oblivious to the entire situation and act natural. If you get away without being accused, then you, my friend, have performed a successful knapsack.

## Super Bowl Search

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